United States of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 115th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 164 WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, MAY 16, 2018 No. 80

House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
May 16, 2018.

I hereby appoint the Honorable CLAY HIGGINS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

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

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 8, 2018, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

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

HIGHER HOPES FOR PROFESSIONALS AROUND THE PRESIDENT

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

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, we can only imagine what the President and Sean Hannity talk about every night on the phone. The two TV hosts have a lot to discuss, I am sure.

Maybe they talk about their mutual lawyer, Michael Cohen, and what he might or might not have in his files that could incriminate one or both of them. Or maybe they just discuss their mutual admiration for Russian dictator Putin.

We can be reasonably sure that neither of them spends too much time discussing things they have done for which they are ashamed or things they have done or said for which they should apologize.

All of that blathering this past week about whether the White House or the President would apologize for comments by a White House staffer about a gravely ill American war hero, Senator JOHN MCCAIN, was just wasted breath, if you ask me. In our President, we have someone who does not ever apologize or regret something he or his staff has done, no matter how egregious.

This week, the White House is not alarmed that a senior staff made light of Senator MCCAIN's illness and life expectancy but, rather, that the comment about the former prisoner of war, an American hero, was made public.

Clearly, someone on the White House staff who heard the comment knew it was wrong—just wrong. Moreover, they recognized the comment was emblematic of the attitude at the White House, from the President on down, and thought the Nation and the world should know about it.

But it was the leak of accurate information from inside the White House that raised the ire of the President, not the fact that someone said things really awful about a true American hero.

We should know by now that this President and his henchmen do not apologize:

Tweeting racist videos from right-wing British groups? Nah, no apology.

Booting able-bodied Americans who want to serve their country out of the military because they are transgender? Not even.

Bragging about sexually assaulting women by grabbing their private parts? Well, he came close to apologizing, but not really.

Some speculate that being unapologetic is just the President's brand. He is brash, and he says mean things and doesn't back down because doing so would make him look weak, and revealing his weakness in public is clearly among the President's greatest fears.

The President and his late night phone buddy, Sean Hannity, remember? They complained about the last President being too apologetic.

But looking tough to cover up a fear of inferiority is only one explanation for why this President does not apologize. He often doesn't apologize because he thinks he was right in the first place, like when he said there were good people on both sides of the Nazi rally in Charlottesville where a woman was murdered by racist KKK extremists.

The President is not going to apologize, and not because it would make him look weak in the case of Charlottesville, but because he believes what he said was true: Nazis and the rest of Americans, the same.

He will never apologize for his founding campaign sin: calling immigrants rapists and criminals. In fact, he is basing a broad anti-immigration and anti-immigrant policy agenda on the bedrock belief that crime and the skin color of a person are synonymous.

This puts everyone around the President in a difficult position. Do they point out the emperor's nudity or do they praise his new suit? His chief of staff, remember, was dispatched to tell a Black Member of Congress that she was lying about how the President treated a soldier killed in action until the chief of staff was shown to be lying, himself, about what the Congresswoman said.

In the end, the American people knew what they were getting with this President, and a minority—not the majority of Americans, but a minority—still elected him to the White House

anyway. But the American people are learning important lessons about the President's enablers at the three most important branches of the Republican Party: at the White House, in the Congress, and at FOX News.

We know the President doesn't lose sleep wrestling with the moral implications of his behavior, but all of us had higher hopes for the professionals around the President—expectations which were apparently too high, indeed.

One thing is sure: this country owes a great debt to Senator JOHN MCCAIN, and our thoughts and prayers are with him, even if the President's thoughts are somewhere else.

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

IRAN HOSTAGES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, last week all Americans were relieved when three of our own citizens were released and returned home from North Korea. We are happy for them, for their families, and we rejoice in their reunification.

However, Mr. Speaker, this success only serves as a reminder that we have American citizens and legal permanent residents being unjustly detained elsewhere around the world, particularly in Iran. We know that the Iranian regime has played this game of detaining citizens from the U.S. and Western nations in an effort to get political and financial concessions from us. They hold these folks hostages, use them as bargaining chips, destroying lives and families in the process.

Last year, my south Florida colleague and ranking member on our subcommittee, the Middle East and North Africa Subcommittee, TED DEUTCH, and I held a hearing titled: ''Held for Ransom: The Families of Iran's Hostages Speak Out.'' We heard from Doug Levinson, the son of Bob Levinson, who has been missing in Iran since 2007—11 years. Bob is the longest held civilian hostage in America's history. He is also a constituent of TED's, and I know that Congressman DEUTCH has worked tirelessly over the years to do whatever he can to bring Bob home and to reunite him with his family.

We also heard from other individuals—Babak Namazi, whose father and brother have been unjustly detained by the Iranian regime. I have met with Babak many times, and my heart just breaks each one of those times, especially when we hear of Americans being freed from North Korea while Baquer and Siamak, his father and brother, linger in Iran's prison.

And our subcommittee also heard from Omar Zakka, son of Nizar Zakka, a U.S. legal permanent resident and hostage of the Iranian regime. Nizar has gone on hunger strikes about a dozen times since first being detained in 2015.

I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that the Iranian regime used the news of the freed Americans from North Korea as a means to torture their hostages. The mental, physical, and psychological abuse that these individuals must be undergoing is beyond comprehension.

The White House has said that this is a priority: to release all unjustly detained persons in Iran—not just American citizens and U.S. legal permanent residents, but all foreigners who are unjustly detained.

President Trump spoke about how this would not happen if he were President, so it is time for President Trump to make that a reality. He can start by urging our European friends, some of whom have citizens detained in Iran as well, to make this more of a priority for them as well and to condition any further talk on the release of all prisoners. We have to increase the pressure using all levers that we have, and we have to bring these brave individuals home.

I was pleased to see President Trump announce his intent to appoint a special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs earlier this week. This is a positive first step, Mr. Speaker. It signals an intent to make a more concerted effort to bring these Americans home.

For the sake of Nizar and his family, for the sake of Baquer and Siamak and their families, for the sake of Bob Levinson and his family, and for the sake of Princeton graduate student Xiyue Wang and his family, and for all the Americans and other foreigners being held in Iran, we need to make this a priority. We need to secure their immediate release.

SUPPORT FOOD SECURITY FOR AMERICANS

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

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss the situation we are currently facing regarding the House version of the farm bill.

The House farm bill, traditionally, for over 40 years, is one of the most bipartisan things that we do here in Congress, Democrats working with Republicans throughout the various regions of America. This is the third farm bill that I have had the opportunity to participate in, working together.

So where are we today? We are exactly where we should not be. We are facing a vote this week on a partisan farm bill that is both, in my view, bad policy and divides us even further as a country. This bill does not promote or demonstrate the successful programs, I think, necessary to strengthen our trade in the agricultural sectors across the country.

America trades throughout the world, and our agricultural economy is dependent, in large degree, on our ability to produce more food than we can consume; and, therefore, trade becomes very important.

American agriculture needs a farm bill that supports and promotes not only trade, but, now perhaps more than ever with looming escalation of a trade war sparked by the administration's efforts with steel and aluminum, we see tariffs taking place on a host of products grown in the Midwest—sorghum, corn, and wheat—and in California potential increases in beef and pistachios and almonds. So that doesn't fare well.

This version of the farm bill also does not adequately support the dairy safety net. Of course, our dairy economy is big throughout the Midwest and in California, actually, the largest dairy State in the Nation. Nor does it do enough for our specialty crop farmers who grow the fresh fruits and vegetables that are a part of a healthy diet. California grows half of the Nation's fruits and vegetables.

This bill also proposes to make changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, otherwise known as SNAP, which will likely devastate parts of the food program that are working well. This, after all, is America's safety net, and we have a lot of not only children and elderly, but people who are disabled who depend and rely on these important food nutrition programs.

We do all believe that able-bodied people should be working, and all of us have the same goal in ensuring that those able-bodied people are self-sufficient. If we want people to become self-reliant, let's give them a SNAP program that does just that.

We have 10 pilot projects in 10 different States that are working, and they are to report back next year on what best works to get able-bodied people working and what doesn't work. But this proposal in this House version is doomed to failure, and the House CBO has scored it accordingly. Instead, it will likely cause our SNAP education to create training programs that will collapse, costing billions of dollars, creating a new Federal bureaucracy that was never given a chance to succeed.

We should not be in this position, Mr. Speaker.

Where should we be? We should be working together, as we have with previous farm bills, Democrats and Republicans, deliberate, negotiating, and, yes, even disagreeing over ideas and approaches, but coming together with important compromises.

The farm bill is America's food bill. It is also a national security item. People don't think about it that way, but the ability to produce all for America's dinner table every night the most healthy, nutritious food in the world is a national security issue, I believe.

Therefore, we must support our food security and safety for our fellow Americans. Our Nation's food policy must feed Americans and ensure our

farmers, our ranchers, and our dairy producers can all be successful.

□ 1015

It should not serve some and abandon others, and it should not further divide us as a country.

As I have said, this is the third farm bill that I have had the privilege to work on. We have worked through these differences in the past, and we have worked through the challenges. It is my hope that Congress can do this again. But it will not happen if we allow the partisan arm-twisting to ram this bad policy through the House.

A vote against the House version of the farm bill is a vote for something better, which is the Senate version, where they are working together, traditionally, in a bipartisan fashion—that is what we should be doing—and not engaging in these partisan games that create bad policy.

Therefore, a vote against the current bill on the House version is one that is a good vote, and it is one that protects our past farm policies as they have worked. A ''no'' vote is a vote for more support for our farmers and for our families. It is demanding that Congress do better because we can, and we must, do better.

The Senate version is currently the version that I think, ultimately, is going to succeed. I look forward to continue working with our colleagues on the other side—Republicans and Democrats—who are fostering a bipartisan bill—Senator ROBERTS and Senator STABENOW.

I look forward to moving past this version of the farm bill so that we can set aside this outrageous effort in partisan politics and get back to work on America's food bill, a national security issue, to be sure.

UNDIAGNOSED GYNECOLOGICAL CANCERS IN AMERICAN WOMEN

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

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to inform the House about our team's work on behalf of women in my district and across the Nation.

Last month, data from Yale University gynecologists demonstrated that between 2 percent and 10 percent of American women undergoing gynecological operations end up having missed cancers. It is shocking to think that these cancers are found only after women undergo these surgeries. These missed cancers are at high risk of being spread by the very surgeries these women are undergoing to help them.

My physician constituents, like the Reed family, tell me that this represents an unacceptable and seismic epidemic of undiagnosed gynecological cancers that are prone to spread and upstaging with catastrophic results.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I have asked the CDC to immediately consider guiding gynecologists towards the use of more precise preoperative tissue biopsy methods in order to identify the women at risk. I am now awaiting a response from CDC leadership with a plan of action aimed at containing what is likely to be a shocking epidemic of undiagnosed gynecological cancers in American women.

Mr. Speaker, we must stay focused on this situation in order to protect all women from this grave health risk.

NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, this week is National Police Week, and I am proud to recognize a member of the law enforcement community in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, whose quick thinking delivered justice to a survivor of abuse.

Officer Michael Marks of the Middletown Township Police Department promptly and professionally investigated an allegation of abuse of a nonverbal patient who had suffered blunt force trauma. His diligence led to a grand jury inquiry, which ultimately brought charges against a caretaker, who was later found guilty. Because of the work of Officer Marks, this individual will no longer be able to prey on the defenseless members of our community.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to personally thank Officer Marks for his work in defending our community and send a message to all of my neighbors in Middletown Township that they are undoubtedly safer for having him on our police force.

RECOGNIZING MAKEFIELD WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, over the past year, women all over our country collectively raised their voices and are continuing to change our culture for the better.

Today, I would like to recognize a group of women in our district actively working to make Bucks County, Pennsylvania, a better place. The Makefield Women's Association in Yardley last month donated over $27,000 to local charities, including: A Woman's Place, the Family Service Association Emergency Homeless Shelter, the Penndel Community Food Pantry, Wrapping Presence, and the Yardley-Makefield Volunteer Fire Company.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the work of the Makefield Women's Association, which greatly improves the quality of life for our community. I would especially like to thank the organization's president, Jennifer Ketler, for her leadership and for her service.

FARM BILL

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed listening to my colleague from California talk about his deep concerns and reservations about the farm bill that is slowly grinding its way, perhaps, toward the floor being considered today by the Rules Committee.

While we have somewhat different perspectives and different districts, we are united in the fact that this farm bill does not remotely reflect the needs of the American public. One of the problems is that we fail to address the disparate array of subsidies under the farm bill, benefiting a few States, a few districts, a few types of farming operations, and ignoring the rest.

The famous nutrition professor, Marion Nestle, of NYU has written a great essay, ''The Farm Bill Drove Me Insane,'' dealing with her attempts to try to understand and rationalize it.

One of the most memorable portions is how she describes what an American diet would look like if it was based on the way that our farm bill subsidies are arrayed. The diet would consist of a giant corn fritter because 78 percent of the farm bill resources goes to the production of industrial corn and soy, not fruits and vegetables, which would be a tiny microscopic part of that plate. There would be a little hamburger patty because that is less than 5 percent, and there would be a little cup of milk. And she points out that that meal, based on the farm bill allocation, would be accompanied by a giant napkin because 13 percent of the farm bill is allocated to cotton subsidies.

The farm bill shortchanges the vast majority of American farmers and ranchers, who are not heavily subsidized, who produce food—the fruits, vegetables, and orchard, products that deal with nurseries. The majority of States and the majority of farmers and ranchers are shut out.

There is an area of crop insurance subsidy. I will tell you, I was stunned when I read the Statement of Administration Policy because they are concerned with two areas, one dealing with a necessary subsidy for people with nutrition assistance. They are afraid that a few poor people would have access to lower cost food through the Food Stamp program. They want to crank that down, limit it, and force people to work.

Well, if you look at the farm bill that they are supporting, they are doing nothing to encourage wealthy farming interests to rely less on subsidization. They are concerned about expanding the subsidizes for people under the SNAP program.

At the same time, we are given a farm bill that explodes the limits on the amount of subsidy that can flow to wealthy farming and ranching interests, and it expands the subsidy so that nieces and nephews and cousins are eligible. People who aren't working on the ranch are somehow eligible for Federal largesse, but they would deny hungry people, or near hungry people, low-income people, that same sort of benefit.

There are also concerns that they want to crank down on the environmental programs; they want to make them more productive. Yet this farm

bill ignores the fact that we right now do not have enough money for the conservation programs to help farmers and ranchers who want to improve the environment.

Only one in four grants gets funded, some of them swallowed up by big industrial agricultural interests that could afford to take care of their own environmental problems. But more telling is that they allow payment for things that don't even improve the environment.

Why allow large agribusiness to compete for scarce environmental funding for things like hog lagoons and fences. That is the cost of doing business. That doesn't improve the environment.

Mr. Speaker, I have introduced legislation that would correct this in terms of cutting down, capping, and containing unnecessary subsidies; reducing overly generous crop insurance; and making conservation programs performance driven. I hope the day will come when we might be able to debate something like that on the floor of the House.

NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

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

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning, during National Police Week, to recognize and remember the men and women in blue, who protect and serve our local communities each and every day.

Law enforcement officers leave the safety of their homes each day not knowing if they will pass back through their own front doors when their day is done. They leave their families behind to ensure the safety of our loved ones at schools, in neighborhoods, and on roadways. These individuals are true public servants who answer the call and put their lives on the line.

Among their many roles in the community, law enforcement officers serve as role models for our children, keep the peace in our neighborhoods, direct traffic for football games, and are the first to respond when help is needed. Far too often we take their services for granted.

This week, I am proud that the House is taking up a number of important bills to support our local law enforcement. From legislation to prevent attacks on our officers to providing funding for additional resources, we are working to ensure that these dedicated individuals have the tools they need to do their jobs and keep us safe.

See, our law enforcement officers are heroes who put their lives on the line each day to keep our citizens from harm's way. National Police Week is a time for us to stop and show our appreciation to these heroes for all that they do for our communities. Our law enforcement officers serve selflessly, facing the many dangers of the job with courage and bravery.

Mr. Speaker, I have had the opportunity to ride along with members of the Baldwin County Sheriff's Office in southwest Alabama. It was an eye-opening experience.

At every single traffic stop, the deputies had no idea what to expect. Every call was different, but each one came with an inherent risk of the unknown. Despite the uncertainty, the deputies always conducted themselves with respect and professionalism.

Whether it is a routine traffic stop or responding to a domestic call, these officers have no idea how their encounters will turn out. There is always the risk their interaction on the job can turn hostile and, in some cases, even deadly.

National Police Week is also an opportunity to honor the heroes who have lost their lives while serving our communities. In 2017, 136 officers were killed in the line of duty. Already this year, 54 officers have lost their lives while serving our communities. Sadly, one of these deaths occurred in my home State of Alabama earlier this year.

Mobile Police Officer Justin Billa paid the ultimate sacrifice when he was shot and killed while responding to a domestic violence call on February 20. At just 27 years old, Officer Billa left behind a loving wife, Erin, and a 1-year-old son, Taylor.

In such a time of immense grief, we saw the city of Mobile rally together to support the family and friends of fallen Officer Billa. You see, these officers are much more than enforcers of the law; they are an integral part of the community.

Mr. Speaker, I loved seeing the community wrap Officer Billa's family up in a shield of prayer and love, but we shouldn't just do that when we lose an officer, and we shouldn't just do it during National Police Week. Each and every day, we should show our deep appreciation to members of law enforcement, at every level, who put their lives on the line so that we can live in safe communities. May we not forget that we get to lay our heads down on our pillows at night feeling safe because of the brave men and women out there patrolling the streets.

Mr. Speaker, as we observe National Police Week, I can think of no better way to show appreciation for our men and women in blue than encourage every American to take the time to say ''thank you'' to your local law enforcement officers. May their sacrifices never be forgotten.

□ 1030

TINDER FIRE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. O'HALLERAN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. O'HALLERAN. Mr. Speaker, Arizona's First Congressional District is home to some of the most beautiful forests in the country, including the Grand Canyon, but paired with the dry conditions and high heat, the First District is historically home to some of the worst wildfires in the country.

Earlier this month, my constituents in rural Arizona faced off against the Tinder Fire, which spread more than 16,000 acres before being mostly contained. It could have been far worse.

I rise today to commend the hundreds of brave first responders, community leaders in Arizona and across the West, public safety officials, who worked tirelessly over the past 3 weeks to contain the fire and protect residents and their homes.

It was their quick thinking and expert training that prevented this fire from spreading even further and destroying hundreds of homes.

The fire, which was reported on April 27 by Coconino Forest officials, and before the fire even reached 50 acres on the second day, the decision was made to bring in the Type 1 Southwest Area Incident Management Team to oversee the firefighting efforts and safety efforts.

This is unheard of for fires of this size, but it turns out that it was the right call.

The Type 1 IMT team was able to set up a strong line of defense and get hotshots and firefighting crews on the ground to save hundreds of homes, ranches, and lives.

This was not the only proactive measure that was taken during the early stages of the fire, Mr. Speaker.

During my visit to the Type 1 incident command center earlier this month and to the fire site, the team shared with me their work. I have to extend my sincerest gratitude to the Coconino National Forest, Coconino County Sheriff's Office, and the county staff in their work.

They saw the dry conditions in the area, they saw the weather report of high winds coming, and the decision to evacuate residents was made before the fire grew to a significant size. It was made correctly.

They made this decision as that fire moved towards large subdivisions, and it was moving at a rate of 3 miles in 1.5 hours. The wind speeds were up to 50 miles an hour.

This contributed to one of the smoothest evacuation efforts these teams have ever seen, and it made a difference. It saved lives.

My team worked with local county and State officials to deliver information and resources to those who were evacuated to the centers.

In addition to the more than 800 personnel on the ground, I want to thank the communities who stepped up to help from all across the Western United States and from all across Arizona. In both Coconino and Navajo Counties, businesses opened up their doors to evacuees and their livestock and their pets, and volunteers signed up to assist at evacuation shelters.

It was interesting when I visited the site, the trees were not burned except for underneath. The fire was moving so

fast, that the crown fire did not occur, but you could see where the trees were bent and the needles on the tree were all pointing in the direction of the wind.

The fire spread out throughout and then hit those homes, and then the homes went up in fire, over 3 dozen homes.

Fighting efforts were aided by the work of homeowners. These residents over time had personally cleared fuel, like small trees and underbrush, from their home. They followed fire-wise community planning.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I thank all of the brave men and women who worked to contain this fire.

I would advise anybody to look into this more to understand the difficult conditions that they have to work in: 18 hours, 19 hours, 20 hours on the line, going back to pup tents to sleep for a few hours, and then going back out into the field to save lives and save homes. Then after this fire, they will move right on to another one. That is, sadly, the condition of our forests in the West.

This fire and the prevention of loss of life and death from other destruction was to be accomplished only by professionals who did this in a way that brought honor to their service.

TENNESSEE FARMER OF THE YEAR, JOHN VERELL, III

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

Mr. KUSTOFF of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor John Verell, III, of Madison County, Tennessee.

Johnny, as he is better known to his friends, was named Farmer of the Year by the University of Tennessee.

Johnny is a third generation farmer who began farming in 2005, 40 years after his grandfather started the family business.

Farmers from across the State were nominated for the honor by their county extension agents. Johnny's commitment to land stewardship, community service, and savvy business tactics stood out among all other nominees.

The Verells' farm is over 5,000 acres of wheat, soybean, and corn. Johnny manages all the land for sustainability, including installing wildlife food plots, planting buffer strips along streams, and using best practices that reduce the amount of fertilizer and pesticides applied to the crops.

He has even planted 20 acres designated as pollinator habitat to help native bee populations survive and thrive.

With the help of technology and precision agriculture, the Verells have been known to produce in excess of 300 bushels per acre.

That is the way things are done in west Tennessee.

Congratulations to Johnny, his wife, Crissy, and their daughter, Emmi.

MIGHT CANNOT MAKE WRONG RIGHT

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

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is always an honor to stand in the well of the House. I consider this an extraordinary privilege.

Mr. Speaker, there are seminal moments in time, moments in time that can impact the rest of time; seminal moments, sometimes where wrong is placed on the throne, where might is used to justify wrong; seminal moments in time, but, Mr. Speaker, might cannot make wrong right.

Might cannot make wrong right; it can only prolong wrong.

Seminal moments in time, where might is used to justify wrong.

Might did not make slavery right. There were those who used false religiosity to try to justify slavery. They had the might, they had the power, they could impose their will, but might will not make wrong right.

Might did not make segregation right, to force people to go to separate areas, to use a level of power to impose an indecency upon a people. Might can never make wrong right.

Mr. Speaker, might has not made invidious discrimination right. It still exists today. No matter how much power we have, we will not make it right simply because we have the power to try to justify it with the might that we have.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, might will not make bigotry emanating from the Presidency right. It will not.

There are many who want to just let it go, let it go, the bigotry, put it behind us.

Bigotry emanating from the Presidency impacts this country. It gives this country a stained image in the world.

The President represents this country. He represents every one of us. We may differ with him, but he is the standard-bearer. The bigotry that emanates from the Presidency is something that we all have to concern ourselves with. We can't just say it is all over with, let's let that go.

Yes, it has happened and it continues to happen, and might will not make it right.

He has power, but his power is not going to cause his invidious and harmful commentaries to become right.

I am here today to simply say this, Mr. Speaker, that while the President has the power, impeachment is the remedy.

A President who has said that there were some good people among those in Charlottesville; a President who would ban Muslims from the country; a President who has said LGBTQ persons shouldn't be in the military; a President who has called the sons of some professional athletes—called their mother's dogs, SOBs; a President who has said that in——

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KUSTOFF of Tennessee). The gentleman will suspend.

For what purpose does the gentleman from Pennsylvania seek recognition?

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, this type of language is not allowed in the people's House, directing it towards the Presidency.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, this type of language has been accepted on the floor of this House. People address language to the Presidency——

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All Members will suspend.

Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

The gentleman may continue.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the Presidency is about the people. It is about the people's House. And the people have a right to address this invidious discrimination emanating from the Presidency. I am not going to stand for it. Others may stand for it.

You know that there is bigotry emanating from the Presidency, yet you would not want me to stand here and address it. I will address it.

This President has exhibited a kind of bigotry that this country ought not tolerate.

When he said that there were some s--hole countries as he was addressing his immigration policy, he was putting his bigotry into policy. And that is something we all should concern ourselves with, the fact that the President's policies are based upon his bigotry.

Impeachment is the remedy.

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

AMERICAN SUGAR

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

Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the American farmer.

Mr. Speaker, will this body recognize the heritage and culture, the sacrifice of American farmers, who for generations have provided for our country and our world.

I rise today in support of one of America's most important agricultural commodities that supports an industry which produces $20 billion of domestic economic activity annually: sugar.

I have the honor of representing southwest Louisiana, where sugar contributes $3.5 billion to our State economy annually and employs over 16,000 hardworking Louisiana citizens.

Mr. Speaker, these men and women have come into their lives embracing the heritage and hard work of their mothers, their fathers, their grandmothers, their grandfathers. For generations, by the toil of their labor and the sweat of their brow, they have tilled the soil and raised sugar.

The United States has historically been a reliable supplier of high-quality,

low-cost sugar that is used by consumers domestically and internationally. In fact, Americans on average spend over 20 percent less for sugar than consumers in other nations, and manufacturers pay roughly the same price for American sugar that they did in the 1980s.

American sugar growers last year produced 32,000 tons of sugar, 13,800 tons of which came from south Louisiana.

While sugar prices have remained flat for the past three decades, the cost of farming has not, as equipment, fuel, and fertilizer costs have all risen between 90 percent to 200 percent in that same timeframe.

□ 1045

We must protect the future of American sugar and American sugar farmers, American sugar farm families.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to support American farmers and pass H.R. 2, the Agricultural and Nutrition Act of 2018, as amended, by the House Committee on Agriculture.

RECOGNIZING THE CAREER OF CAPTAIN TIMOTHY A. TOBIASZ

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

Mr. KEATING. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the retirement and many distinguished accomplishments of Captain Timothy A. Tobiasz, Commanding Officer of the United States Coast Guard Air Station Cape Cod, Massachusetts.

Captain Tobiasz has honorably served our country with over 32 years of Active-Duty military service. His career began in the U.S. Army as a Black Hawk assault pilot, where he served in the 9th Cavalry Brigade, 9th Infantry Division ''Old Reliables'' at Fort Lewis, Washington.

In 1991, he was accepted to the United States Coast Guard's Officer Candidate School, commissioning as an ensign in 1992.

From there, he quickly rose to the rank of captain, and during his 32-year military career, Captain Tobiasz amassed over 7,000 flight hours and qualified in nine different aircraft, to include the MH–60 Jayhawk, MH–90 Hornet, HC–130 Hercules, MH–65 Dolphin, and the HC–144 Ocean Sentry.

He served at Coast Guard Air Stations Clearwater, Florida; San Diego, California; HITRON–10 Kodiak, Alaska; New Orleans, Louisiana; Savannah, Georgia; and Cape Cod, Massachusetts; and as the commanding officer of two bases.

In addition to his remarkable aviation career, Captain Tobiasz served in the U.S. Senate as a military liaison officer, as a budget and program reviewer at U.S. Coast Guard headquarters, a senior military adviser to the U.S. Northern Command/NORAD combatant commander, and a National Security Fellow at the Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government.

Of his many outstanding achievements during his storied career, I would like to highlight three.

In 1999, then-Lieutenant Tobiasz was one of only six pilots selected to pioneer Helicopter Interdiction Squadron 10. This successful concept led to one of the most significant policy changes in Coast Guard aviation history through the development of the aviation use of force policy and establishment of a permanent command in Jacksonville, Florida, now responsible for armed counterdrug operations around the entire globe.

In 2005, while serving as the operations officer at Coast Guard Air Station New Orleans, Lieutenant Commander Tobiasz led rescue operations during and immediately after Hurricane Katrina ravaged the Gulf Coast, and in a 10-day period, aircrews under his leadership saved over 1,400 lives.

Most recently and just last year, Captain Tobiasz was called upon again to lead air rescue operations following landfall of Hurricane Harvey over Texas and Louisiana. Thanks in great part to his extraordinary coordination and unflappable judgment, he strategically directed 53 aircraft and 415 aviation personnel for 21 different units, saving lives of over 1,700 civilians.

Mr. Speaker, I join a very grateful Nation in thanking Captain Timothy Tobiasz and his family for their service and sacrifice, and wish them the absolute very best in their next careers.

A TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM ''DON'' THOMAS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KELLY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, this morning, I would like to recognize one of my constituents in Pennsylvania's Third Congressional District, Mr. William ''Don'' Thomas, who will make history this evening when he becomes the oldest student to ever graduate from Butler County Community College, also known as BC3.

Mr. Thomas began taking classes at BC3 in the fall of 2010, and this evening, at 80 years old, he will proudly receive an associate of arts degree in history.

Furthermore, Mr. Thomas also represents the most senior graduate in the class of 2018 among our State's four other western institutions within the Pennsylvania Commission for Community Colleges.

Now, you have got to know something about Mr. Thomas. He is an Air Force veteran who honorably served our country as an Airman Second Class with the 17th Squadron.

I want you to think about something. This man, while serving in France from 1956 to 1959, enrolled in classes provided by the University of Maryland held outside the northeastern French town where he was stationed, and while there, he earned 28 credits.

All these years later, following a successful life and career, Mr. Thomas decided to enroll at BC3 in order to finish the degree he started in 1956.

Mr. Thomas credits much of his academic success to BC3, which has been rated the top community college in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in back-to-back surveys.

BC3 president, Dr. Nick Neupauer, is beyond proud of Mr. Thomas and believes his accomplishment is symbolic for the entire community college.

Now, additionally, Don Thomas receives an abundance of love and support and encouragement from his beloved wife, Nancy; their six children; their eight grandchildren; and their four great grandchildren.

Can you imagine tonight's graduation ceremony when he stands there with all those people and receives his degree?

Now, Mr. Thomas was not a traditional college student. He inevitably faced obstacles along the way, but regardless of the circumstances, he never abandoned his goal of earning his degree.

Mr. Thomas reminds all of us that, with faith, hard work, and determination, anything is possible. Mr. Thomas embodies the spirit of a lifelong learner and is a living testament to the saying: ''If there is a will, there is a way.''

His unwavering dedication, passion, and perseverance in pursuit of his dream is not only inspiring and amazing, it is quintessentially American. It is who we are as the American people.

Mr. Speaker, I am so blessed to be able to stand on the floor of the people's House today and congratulate Mr. Thomas on a job well done and count him as one of our district's finest constituents.

Mr. Speaker, I say to Mr. Thomas: Happy graduation day. Happy graduation day.

MOTHER'S DAY, GRADUATIONS, DREAMERS, AND PUBLIC HOUSING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to begin discussion on the floor for issues that, I think, against the backdrop of Mother's Day, the desire to be family friendly in this Nation, and really to answer the question of Americans: Can our government do well by them?

So I raise to the body how we can be more constructive, and I do it on the basis, as we all do, when we go home and interact with our constituents, and so I did as I went home this past weekend a couple of days in the midst of the exciting graduations that we all had a chance to go to and to make remarks, and I want to congratulate those students that I had the privilege of being and speaking at their graduations, the

Historically Black College Texas Southern University, the Lone Star Community College, what an amazing group of graduates. There were large numbers of people who are adults and veterans, and students who were what we call early college graduating. And then, of course, to the system, the Houston Community College, I spoke there.

It looks like I was going to graduations and celebrating with their families. That was good.

Mr. Speaker, they were diverse, all backgrounds, religions. That is what Houston is all about.

At the same time, I visited with and had a press conference with a collective body of humanitarians, Sister Rogers, a Catholic Sister, and many others, about the unfortunate circumstances of where we are with the Dreamers and why we haven't addressed that question and why would Dreamers, who need to be statused, who are lawyers and doctors, and some are serving in public service—we had a paramedic standing with us—why we can't get them statused. Why can't the Nation do what is right? Why can't the President stand up and work with us and sign the bill?

And then I indicated that I am going to introduce the restatusing of TPS statused persons, some who have been here for 20 years with mortgages and people in college, young people in college, and to status them for 2 years to allow the Congress to fix it and that their status be tied to the laws and requirements that they be in sync with those who would get citizenship so they would not be, if you will, awry of the law, that they would be in step with the law, as most of these families are from El Salvador, Honduras, and Haiti, and beyond.

And then I went to stand with mothers at public housing and indicated to them that it is long overdue in all of our communities that we introduce an infrastructure bill of $150 billion to fix our public housing. Because as I was standing with these mothers at Cuney Homes, their air conditioning was out.

But we stood there the day before Mother's Day to salute them and say they deserve to live in quality housing. They are raising their children. Some of their children go off to the United States military.

Finally, I think it is important to acknowledge, Mr. Speaker, maybe this is a confused statement by the administration, but I have to speak against, and these are my friends, we want to work internationally—I was here for the permanent trade agreement that was done with China—but it is important to know that our economy is based on innovation. Why would the administration support the Chinese firm of ZTE that our intelligence community has taken note that they have interfered with our innovation and our technology and suggest that he wants the Chinese workers to have their jobs again?

I certainly want the best for any country, but I do know it is important to restore the jobs of the American people, and there are many call center American companies that would make a great infusion of energy and dollars in various communities across the Nation.

It is important to note that the House Intelligence Committee report of 2012 indicated and concluded that ZTE cannot be trusted to be free of foreign state influence and thus poses a security threat to the United States and our systems.

Well, it is odd that this President, who has put extensive sanctions on Iran and North Korea, is now willing to overlook a House Intelligence report indicating, of course, that ZTE cannot be trusted.

So I started, Mr. Speaker, by congratulating my graduates, but I indicated throughout that I am baffled by these policies of the administration, but I do say that I have a faith in this institution, and I ask my colleagues: Stand with me on the restoration of a 2-year status for TPS so we can get it right. Let us not separate mothers from their children in the immigration structure, and let's pass a Dreamers bill, and let's work to introduce funding for our public housing that exists and that mothers are living in across America.

Mr. Speaker, your kindness is appreciated.

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 59 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

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

PRAYER

Dr. Ted Kitchens, Christ Chapel Bible Church, Fort Worth, Texas, offered the following prayer:

Father, we praise You for allowing us to be the land of the free and the home of the brave. We embrace the truth that we are all created in Your image. We all have value and purpose in this life and in this country because of Your love for us.

Your Word says: The foundation of prosperity is righteousness and that ''when righteousness increases, the people prosper and rejoice.'' Would You cause personal and national righteousness to be our banner and our vision, that we might know your good favor across our great country.

Father, this House has business to do for ''we the people'' today, and I pray that all transactions that take place in these halls today would be made with spiritual wisdom resulting in the best for all.

I pray in the name of the giver of all grace and good favor, Jesus.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

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

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

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

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

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

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

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. CICILLINE) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. CICILLINE led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

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

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

RECOGNIZING THE 64TH ANNIVERSARY OF BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to stand before you to recognize the 64th anniversary of the Supreme Court's landmark decision in Brown v. Board of Education. Because of the relentless courage of Linda Brown, her parents, and civil rights leaders, the abhorrent segregationist policy of ''separate but equal'' education came to an end.

As a result, millions of children were afforded the educational opportunities they deserve and their rightful shot at a successful life.

Mr. Speaker, as an educator, as a lifelong learner, as chair of the Committee on Education and the Workforce, I believe with all my heart that

education is the key to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Sixty-four years ago, the end of legal segregation in public schools recognized that inherent value as well. I honor the courage of those students who brought about that change.

FIXING AMERICA'S INFRASTRUCTURE

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

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, Americans depend on good roads and bridges to get to work every day and to take care of their families. Good infrastructure drives our economy.

Americans depend on water systems to provide clean and safe drinkable water. But in this country, we have failed to make the necessary investments in water infrastructure, in roads and bridges, in essential infrastructure that is important to drive our economy.

I will work with anyone on any side of the question on both sides of the aisle to make sure that we invest in America's infrastructure. It is what we need to do to grow our economy, but, unfortunately, what the President has suggested really puts the burden on State and local governments, communities like the ones I represent. My own hometown of Flint, for example, if they had the money to put into their water system to prevent the disaster that occurred, they long ago would have done this. We need—our communities need a strong Federal partner.

And the Democrats, we offer A Better Deal. We have a plan to rebuild America's infrastructure. This is what the Congress ought to be doing. We ought not wait for the President to offer his suggestion. We should do the work ourselves. It is long overdue.

IN HONOR OF NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

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

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to welcome all the law enforcement officers and their families who have come here to Washington in honor of National Police Week. You know, there is a saying in the law enforcement community: ''In this family, nobody fights alone.''

When an officer goes down, the whole force feels the loss and carries that burden. It is so moving to see that spirit of solidarity right here in Washington on display this week. This year, the names of 360 fallen officers have been added to our National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial, including four from the State of Wisconsin.

One of them is Detective Jason Weiland of the Everest Metropolitan Police Department. He was shot and killed in the line of duty last March. His daughter Anna, 10 years old, spoke at his memorial service. She said: ''All of the amazing people in the world will always outnumber the criminals.''

Those words resonated so much that Anna's teacher helped her start a group called Be Amazing. They honor her dad's memory by doing community service projects. Now, how inspiring is that?

Another Wisconsin story I want to share is that of Officer Brian Murphy of the Ashwaubenon Police Department. Last July, Officer Murphy was hit by a drunk driver on Interstate 41. He sustained a number of life-threatening injuries. Yet, just weeks later, he left the hospital able to stand on his own, surrounded by his family and fellow officers. It probably comes as no surprise to you to hear that he is back on the job. This week, Officer Murphy said that the decision to return to work was not difficult at all. It is about a ''good sense of purpose,'' he said.

We have seen this resilience and this devotion of duty right here in the United States Capitol. I don't think I will ever tire of seeing Agents David Bailey and Crystal Griner back at their posts.

As Speaker, I have had the chance to work very closely with the dedicated professionals at the U.S. Capitol Police. It has been an incredible honor—it truly has.

Mr. Speaker, I know this is a very challenging time for law enforcement. If there is one thing that we have come to recognize, it is that we must not take any of this for granted—whether it is the dangers of the men and women who wear the uniform and wear the badge face, or the sacrifices that their families make, all the long nights, all the holidays that they do not get to spend together. We must not take any of it for granted. It is where our safety comes from each and every single day.

We should consider it a privilege to serve those who serve and protect us. To all the cops on the beat and to all your loved ones: You do not fight alone. We are with you. We are behind you always, every day. Thank you, and God bless you.

REFORM THE PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY

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

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, when it comes to affordable healthcare and prescription drugs, President Trump and the Republicans are forcing the American people to swallow a raw deal.

They have voted to dismantle protections for preexisting conditions. They have voted to raise out-of-pocket expenses. They have voted to take away health coverage from 23 million Americans. And they gave billions of dollars in tax breaks to pharmaceutical companies and other healthcare organizations. Last week, President Trump outlined his plan to further line the pockets of big drug companies and their CEOs.

Democrats have A Better Deal. Our plan will fundamentally reform the pharmaceutical industry, will put government on the side of consumers and middle class families—not giant corporations—by cracking down on outrageous prescription drug price increases, allowing Medicare to negotiate lower prices for drugs, and requiring drug manufacturers to publicly release hard data justifying any significant price increase.

This is the kind of deal the American people deserve: A Better Deal that will produce higher wages, lower costs, and the tools to succeed in the 21st century—not the raw deal that the President and the Republicans are offering on prescription drugs.

AMBASSADOR HALEY SPEAKS AT U.N. SECURITY COUNCIL

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, at an emergency session of the U.N. Security Council, Ambassador Nikki Haley spoke truthfully about the horrific Hamas terrorist attacks in Gaza over many years by tunnel and firebombs using human shields financed by Iran.

Ambassador Haley explained, as our President said: ''The location of our Embassy has no bearing on the specific boundaries of Israeli sovereignty in Jerusalem or the resolution of contested borders. . . . It does not undermine the prospects for peace in any way.''

''But let's remember that the Hamas terrorist organization has been inciting violence for years, long before the United States decided to move our Embassy,'' Ambassador Haley said. ''This is what is endangering the people of Gaza. Make no mistake: Hamas is pleased with the results of yesterday.''

The real story I saw in The Jerusalem Post is ''Promises Made, Promises Kept,'' not the fake news of Hamas sympathizers.

In addition, last night, at the Willard, I was grateful to attend the International Republican Institute dinner led by President Daniel Twining where Ambassador Nikki Haley was honored with Secretary James Mattis to receive the Freedom Award.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

RETURN TO DISCUSSION ON THE FARM BILL

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

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the farm bill and the Republican majority's scorched earth and irresponsible

approach to a historically bipartisan bill.

Throughout this Congress, the Republican majority has cast aside bipartisan efforts by keeping Democrats out of negotiations. The farm bill is no different.

From sabotaging the Affordable Care Act to giving wealthy families and corporations a tax break at the cost of hardworking families, to make deep cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, SNAP, this bill is on a dangerous path. We need to return to bipartisan discussion that made the farm bill a win-win for both urban and rural communities.

If this bipartisan bill becomes law, roughly 265,000 low-income children will lose access to free school meals, and more than 1 million Americans will no longer receive a benefit they rely on to buy food. We can do better because America's farmers and children deserve better.

We have a farm bill every 5 years. Is it worth kicking children and families off SNAP? No, Mr. Speaker.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

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

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of National Police Week to honor the heroes who dedicate their lives to keep our communities safe and secure.

Montana's courageous law enforcement officers are the epitome of selfless public service. Yesterday marked the 37th annual National Peace Officers' Memorial Service. It is only fitting that I honor one of Montana's fallen heroes.

One year ago today, Broadwater County sheriff's deputy, Mason Moore, made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty. A routine traffic stop turned into a pursuit of two violent suspects who callously took Deputy Moore's life.

Deputy Moore was a dedicated husband and father of three, including twin teenage boys. His sacrifice to keep his community safe will not be forgotten.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I honor the law enforcement community in Montana during National Police Week for their dedication, service, and sacrifice. I am grateful for those in uniform who serve and protect our communities and pray for their safety.

□ 1215

GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT CENTER

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

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Speaker, every week, we seem to learn more about the sophisticated network of social media bots and online ads used by Russia to spread disinformation during the 2016 election. But, as we approach our next election, the Trump administration refuses to see the very real threats or take the very necessary actions.

Earlier this year, we learned the office tasked with countering foreign propaganda, the Global Engagement Center, the GEC, at the State Department had not deployed any of the $120 million it had been allocated to counter Russian information warfare, nor had it recruited a single analyst who speaks Russian.

Mr. Speaker, the administration needs to take this threat seriously and act with appropriate urgency. That is why I have introduced legislation with my colleague, TED LIEU, to clarify responsibilities for the GEC, expand its hiring authorities, and establish stronger congressional oversight. The GEC has a crucial role to play, understanding, exposing, and countering foreign propaganda and disinformation efforts.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join us on this legislation to ensure we are better prepared to counter all efforts to interfere in our electoral process.

NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

(Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today during National Police Week to remember all members of law enforcement who have given their lives to protect and serve others.

The National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial here in Washington, D.C., displays the names of law enforcement officers who have fallen in the line of duty, dating back to 1791.

One of the names added this year was Lieutenant Aaron Allan of the Southport Police Department, the first police officer from the Department to be killed in the line of duty. When responding to an overturned vehicle last summer, Lieutenant Allan was shot and killed by the driver of the vehicle he was trying to assist.

Sadly, we already know an officer who will also be listed in the memorial next year with Lieutenant Allan's name: Boone County Sheriff's Deputy Jacob Pickett.

Last night, I joined members of the Indiana Concerns of Police Survivors, COPS, who are the spouses, children, and parents of fallen police officers. These people selflessly work to provide resources to people like them: families who have also experienced the pain of losing their loved ones in the line of duty. These volunteers help people cope with tragedy and loss and are incredibly strong and inspiring members of our communities.

Today, may we honor the valor and commitment of our fallen heroes and support those who are missing their loved ones.

CUTS TO SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

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

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, 41 million Americans and over 1 million North Carolinians' ability to put food on the table hangs in the balance this week, as House Republicans push to pass their farm bill with over $23 billion in cuts to the SNAP program. These cuts, Mr. Speaker, quite frankly, could mean food taken off of the table of hungry children—that is no exaggeration—seniors, and veterans.

Despite these benefits averaging only $1.40 per person per meal, this program is a lifeline for tens of millions of Americans. It serves as an effective tool for ensuring long-term health and well-being, especially for vulnerable children.

The farm bill, as it is currently written, includes detrimental changes to SNAP that would make it harder for many people to remain in the program. Over 400,000 households nationwide, and at least 133,000 individuals in North Carolina, would lose SNAP benefits if this legislation becomes law.

Even more disturbing is that my Republican colleagues understand what these cuts would do but remain unfazed in their assault on these families.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on H.R. 2: too bad, too long for our children.

CONGRATULATING CENTRO MATER CHILD CARE SERVICES

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Centro Mater on celebrating its 50th anniversary this year.

This outstanding organization was founded by Mother Margarita Miranda Otero in 1968, with the goal of providing greatly needed childcare services to newly exiled Cuban families in Miami. Mother Otero succeeded and, over the next five decades, Centro Mater has grown and expanded its mission to provide quality healthcare and services to disadvantaged children of all backgrounds.

With centers in Little Havana and Hialeah, Centro Mater offers a positive and nurturing environment for over 1,200 underprivileged children. Centro Mater's staff also offers enriching and educational social programs for the parents of the students, such as English classes and training workshops. These life-changing services empower children and their families within our greater Miami community.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate everyone involved at Centro Mater for all that they have accomplished in the past 50 years, and I thank them for improving the lives of so many in my congressional district.

REPRESENTING ARIZONA'S EIGHTH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

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

Mrs. LESKO. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you and the Members of this distinguished body for welcoming me. Representing the people of Arizona's Eighth Congressional District is truly an honor, and I am eager to work with you all to ensure that we accomplish what my constituents sent me here to do: secure our borders, strengthen our military, and create a strong economy.

Earlier today, I met with Mike and Colleen Sutter from my district. Mike and Colleen have been small-business owners for over 27 years in Arizona.

Due to the recent tax cut package, Mike and Colleen were able to give across-the-board pay increases and bonuses to their employees, including a $3 an hour increase for hourly employees. The tax cuts have meant real dollars getting into the pockets of Americans and small businesses.

PUERTO RICO'S POWER MISSION

(Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico. Mr. Speaker, today I ask that Federal support for Puerto Rico power restoration must continue until full completion. We still have 20,000 homes without service on the island.

Last weekend, Representative LAMALFA and I were visiting one of the towns in Yabucoa. People are still without power on the island, and this Friday, May 18, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and FEMA are going to be leaving the island.

That is the reason that the current electrical restoration mission through FEMA and the Army Corps of Engineers must continue, and the contracts under it, without that expiration date. That is the reason the alarming situation we are still living, just 16 days away from the next hurricane season, must be stopped.

I request FEMA and the Army Corps of Engineers to extend the mission so crews can remain on the job full-time until all areas are restored. This is an urgent situation on the island, and I request that FEMA and the Army Corps of Engineers deal with it.

NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of National Police Week. Tens of thousands of law enforcement officers from across the country are in Washington in honor of National Police Week.

Established by joint resolution of Congress in 1962, National Police Week pays special recognition to those law enforcement officers who have lost their lives in the line of duty for the safety and the protection of others.

National Police Week is a collaborative effort of many organizations dedicated to honoring America's law enforcement community. It is also a time where we pause to remember officers who have made the ultimate sacrifice and lost their lives in the line of duty protecting and serving others.

This week honors the men and women in blue who gave everything to protect their country and their communities. Our officers put on their uniform each day knowing that they can be in harm's way at any moment.

Mr. Speaker, I say thank you to all of our officers who answer the call to serve, and I wish each and every officer a happy National Police Week.

NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE WEEK

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, in addition to National Police Week, it is also National Infrastructure Week.

Currently, much of our Nation's infrastructure is in disrepair. Dilapidated roads, crumbling bridges, and battered levees and dams litter the country from coast to coast.

In large rural areas like my district in northern California, the infrastructure gap is even more exaggerated, where funding is even more difficult to come by, as it is in all rural areas of the U.S. We have to stretch every dollar as far as possible. It is not enough to simply put more money into the system, but to make those dollars more effective.

Currently, local counties must jump through multiple, duplicative regulatory hoops from both the State and Federal Government. That only wastes time and money, and it makes no sense.

We have seen that local agencies have proven to be far more effective than their Federal counterparts. That is why we have to streamline the permitting process to allow States more authority to conduct environmental reviews on their own and reduce the regulatory burden.

The President's MOU to have ''one Federal decision'' policy, one-stop shopping, and, indeed, one lead agency will streamline that vastly and help us get our highways done and our levee projects, multiple things that need to be done to make us safer and more economically sound—basic bipartisan reforms that will make sense for the American people in a timely manner.

RESIGNATION AS MEMBER OF COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ISSA) laid before the House the following resignation as a member of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, May 16, 2018.

Hon. PAUL D. RYAN,
Speaker of the House,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER RYAN: Due to my election to the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, this letter is to inform you of my resignation from the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.

Sincerely,

JIM BANKS,
Member of Congress.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the resignation is accepted.

There was no objection.

RESIGNATIONS AS MEMBER OF COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following resignations as a member of the Committee on Homeland Security and Committee on Veterans' Affairs:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, May 16, 2018.

Hon. PAUL D. RYAN,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER RYAN: Due to my election to the House Committee on Appropriations, I write to inform you that I resign my seats on the House Committee on Homeland Security and Committee on Veterans Affairs.

Sincerely,

JOHN H. RUTHERFORD,
Member of Congress.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the resignations are accepted.

There was no objection.

RESIGNATIONS AS MEMBER OF COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS AND COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following resignations as a member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and Committee on Armed Services:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, May 16, 2018.

Hon. PAUL D. RYAN,
Speaker of the House,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER RYAN: Due to my appointment to the Committee on Ways and Means, I hereby resign my seats on the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the House Committee on Armed Services. I want to thank you for the honor and the opportunity to serve on Ways and Means.

Let me also take this opportunity express my appreciation for the opportunity to serve on the Veterans Affairs' Committee and the Armed Services Committee. It has been an honor to serve those committees, to work on behalf of our nation's veterans and our men

and women in uniform, and to serve under two able chairmen, Chairman Roe and Chairman Thornberry. Please know that although I am departing these committees, I'm not leaving in mind and spirit and will be always want and be willing to contribute to their and the House's efforts on behalf of our veterans and troops.

Thank you again for this opportunity to serve our nation in a new capacity, and please let me know what I can do to make sure the transition is a seamless one.

Sincerely,

BRAD WENSTRUP,
Member of Congress.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the resignations are accepted.

There was no objection.

ELECTING MEMBERS TO CERTAIN STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the House Republican Conference, I offer a privileged resolution and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 897

Resolved, That the following named Members be, and are hereby, elected to the following standing committees of the House of Representatives:

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS: Mr. Rutherford.

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE: Mr. Banks of Indiana.

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY: Mrs. Lesko.

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY: Mr. Palmer, to rank immediately after Mr. Abraham; and Mrs. Lesko.

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE: Mr. Gallagher.

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS: Mr. Mast.

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS: Mr. Wenstrup.

Mr. WOODALL (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be considered as read and printed in the RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 5698, PROTECT AND SERVE ACT OF 2018; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF S. 2372, VETERANS CEMETERY BENEFIT CORRECTION ACT; AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2, AGRICULTURE AND NUTRITION ACT OF 2018

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 891 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 891

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 5698) to amend title 18, United States Code, to punish criminal offenses targeting law enforcement officers, and for other purposes. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. The bill shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and on any amendment thereto to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Judiciary; (2) the further amendment printed in part A of the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution, if offered by the Member designated in the report, which shall be in order without intervention of any point of order, shall be considered as read, shall be separately debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question; and (3) one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. Upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (S. 2372) to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide outer burial receptacles for remains buried in National Parks, and for other purposes. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. An amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of H.R. 5674 as reported by the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, as modified by the amendment printed in part B of the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution, shall be considered as adopted. The bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended, are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill, as amended, and on any further amendment thereto, to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs; and (2) one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 3. At any time after adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2) to provide for the reform and continuation of agricultural and other programs of the Department of Agriculture through fiscal year 2023, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Agriculture. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. It shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Agriculture now printed in the bill. The committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read. All points of order against the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute are waived. No amendment to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be in order except those printed in part C of the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against such amendments are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment pursuant to this resolution, the Committee of the Whole shall rise without motion. No further consideration of the bill shall be in order except pursuant to a subsequent order of the House.

□ 1230

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to section 426 of the Congressional Budget and Empowerment Control Act of 1974, I make a point of order against consideration of the rule, House Resolution 891.

Section 426 of the Budget Act specifically states that the Rules Committee may not waive the point of order prescribed by section 425 of that same act.

Section 3 of House Resolution 891 states that: ''All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived.'' Therefore, I make a point of order pursuant to section 426 of the Congressional Budget Act that this rule may not be considered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Massachusetts makes a point of order that the resolution violates section 426(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

The gentleman has met the threshold burden under the rule, and the gentleman from Massachusetts and a Member opposed each will control 10 minutes of debate on the question of consideration. Following debate, the Chair will put the question of consideration as the statutory means of disposing of the point of order.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts.

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

The Unfunded Mandates Reform Act, it was a Republican bill passed in a Republican Congress, but this act was supposed to stop Congress from passing bills that forced huge new costs on State and local governments without giving them the money to pay for those costs.

Well, apparently it didn't work, because the farm bill, which is part of this rule, would impose massive new mandates on State and local governments in the Republican majority's quest to kick families off of SNAP.

For anyone unfamiliar, that is the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, which helps to feed millions of struggling American families every day. But one provision in the farm bill would force States to deny SNAP benefits to families with an absent parent unless those households cooperate with child support enforcement agencies.

According to the CBO, that is the Congressional Budget Office, it is a nonpartisan group of experts that analyze this stuff. This additional burden on single-parent families would save

the Federal Government $4 billion, but my Republican colleagues don't seem to have thought this through, because it would cost child support agencies over $7 billion to recoup those child support payments. So they are spending $7 billion to recoup $4 billion.

CBO, that is the group of nonpartisan experts, says that the cost to States, who have no say in this matter, would be over $1 billion.

Now, I don't know who wrote this provision, since it sure didn't come out of the Agriculture Committee or the hearings that we conducted, but whoever it was, they really need to work on their basic arithmetic skills.

When you spend $7 billion to recoup $4 billion, that is what I call a terrible idea, not legislating.

Now, another unfunded mandate would require States to offer employment and training services to SNAP recipients as part of the bill's devastating new work requirements. But according to CBO, again, these are the nonpartisan experts, the bill won't provide States with enough funds to implement those training programs.

So not only are Republicans heartlessly kicking 1 million Americans off of SNAP with these additional burdens, but they also are not providing States with enough money for training programs so that these people can find jobs and get their benefits back. I mean, you seriously can't make this stuff up.

CBO, again, the Congressional Budget Office, those nonpartisan experts, reported yet another intergovernmental mandate that would prevent communities from restricting the use of dangerous pesticides, even if they determine the restrictions are necessary to protect children's health, like stopping harmful insecticides from being sprayed near schools or hospitals.

This bill also requires that every State allow the sale of all legal agricultural products from other States, preempting States' food safety and environmental standards.

Now, you heard me right. The Republicans are preventing local communities from protecting their children from toxic chemicals and forcing States to allow products that break laws meant to protect the health and safety of their own citizens.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I thought the Republicans were supposed to be all about States' rights. The Unfunded Mandates Reform Act was a Republican bill, as I mentioned.

What about the rules of this institution? It is actually against House rules, believe it or not, to bring a bill to the floor that imposes unfunded mandates on State and local governments.

Not a problem, Mr. Speaker. The Republican-controlled Rules Committee, or as I like to call it, the ''Break the Rules'' Committee, waived that rule and gave this disastrous farm bill a get-out-of-jail-free card.

But it turns out that waiving the unfunded mandates rule is also against the rules of the House. That is right. Republicans, once the party of States' rights, are rigging the rules and ignoring the law so that they can pass this disastrous bill.

So here is a moment, I think, where liberals and conservatives can come together, where all my Republican friends who oppose unfunded mandates can join with many of us on the Democratic side and actually do something. This is your chance to prove it and to stand up and to be counted.

Don't let the Rules Committee run roughshod over your values in the name of passing this lousy bill. Or maybe unfunded mandates on State and local governments are actually fine with my conservative friends just so long as they are imposed on a process that takes SNAP benefits away from millions of people.

As I find myself saying far too often these days, a bad process produces bad policy. And this farm bill is a bad policy, plain and simple. It is not thought out. It is a bunch of unfunded mandates. It is a disaster.

It is bad for the millions of working families, children, older adults, and other vulnerable Americans who will be kicked off of SNAP or see their benefits reduced. It is bad for farmers and ranchers, who are already suffering from low prices, low overhead, and market uncertainty, not to mention a new trade war, courtesy of Donald Trump. It is bad for State and local governments, who will have massive unpaid-for costs despite having no input whatsoever on the drafting of this bill.

So let's send it back to the drawing table so we can sit down in a bipartisan way, in the bipartisan tradition of the Agriculture Committee, and come up with smart, compassionate, forward-thinking legislation instead of this.

So I ask my colleagues to join with us in a bipartisan way against considering this rule, which ignores the costs this bill imposes on State and local governments, in violation of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act.

If you believe unfunded mandates are wrong, then you shouldn't support this rule. I mean, where are my conservative friends? Where is the Freedom Caucus, who rail about unfunded mandates? Where are you? I mean, I hope you are going to stand up and have the courage of your convictions and vote with us on this and send this bill back to committee, where we ought to do a farm bill in a bipartisan and a thoughtful way.

This process has been lousy from the beginning, and now we have a bill that has all kinds of protections, because there are all kinds of unfunded mandates on our States.

Wait till your governors begin to read the fine print in this farm bill, wait till your local agencies read the fine print in this farm bill.

So if you are for unfunded mandates, then vote against what I am suggesting here today. But if you want to put an end to these unfunded mandates, then you need to take a stand.

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

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I claim time in opposition to the point of order and in favor of consideration of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Georgia is recognized for 10 minutes.

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

Mr. Speaker, I don't claim to know as much about the farm bill as my friend from Massachusetts does. He has the privilege of representing his constituents both on the Rules Committee and on the Ag Committee.

I represent my constituents on the Rules Committee and on the Budget Committee. I work with CBO day in and day out, as my colleague knows.

CBO is absolutely charged with being the nonpartisan scorekeeper in all of these budgetary matters. But as the gentleman recalls, having worked for a former member of the Rules Committee himself, when Republicans passed and President Clinton signed the unfunded mandates point of order, it was designed with one goal and one goal only in mind, and that was to make sure that when Congress acts, it considers the impacts of folks back home. It considers whether or not it is shirking a responsibility in Washington and shifting that responsibility to State and local governments back home.

I will tell you with certainty, Mr. Speaker, that not a single Member on this side of the aisle has wavered in that commitment from when this bill passed in 1995 until today.

What my friend from Massachusetts references are programs that are implemented by the States in order to receive a Federal benefit. We see this happen all the time, day in and day out. You get all the transportation money that you want, but you need to alter your speed limit if you want to receive that transportation money. You can get all the transportation money you want, but you need to deal with your drinking age if you want to get that money.

What we are talking about today at its core, Mr. Speaker, is whether or not, at a time when we have the lowest unemployment rate in my lifetime, at a time when we have more jobs available to be filled in America than ever before in American history, whether it is a burden to say if you want to receive a Federal benefit, that being food stamps, that you should try to find a job first. If you can't find that job, we should get you enrolled in a job training program so that you can find the job.

At the end of the day, the farm bill aims to do two things with the SNAP program: number one, is continue to provide a safety net for families in need. But number two, to make sure it remains that net and tries to lift folks

out of poverty instead of trap them in poverty for generations to come.

Mr. Speaker, this unfunded mandates point of order, I was in Congress at the time that it passed, has been a speed bump, a needed speed bump in the consideration of legislation time and time again.

Now, sadly, more often than not, we see it as a dilatory tactic on the House floor. We see it raised as something just to try to slow down the process and gum up the works.

That is not what is happening here today. I want to stipulate that that is true.

My friend from Massachusetts raises a legitimate concern, but what I would say to my colleagues is this is a task, an obligation that has been placed on the States in consideration of receiving a Federal benefit. Folks are not mandated to do anything at all, but if we are to participate in the program, if folks are to continue to work through the program, if we are to get people back to work, if we are to provide this safety net, if we are to succeed on behalf of our constituents, as we all want to do, then we are going to have a partnership between the Federal Government and the State governments to make that happen.

□ 1245

Again, I respect my friend from Massachusetts, Mr. Speaker. He is an authority on the farm bill and an authority on the SNAP program. But as far as the unfunded mandates point of order goes, I would encourage my colleagues to reject that request today and to vote in favor of proceeding with consideration of the bill.

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, how much time do I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Massachusetts has 3 minutes remaining.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I would encourage my colleague and anybody else to do something radical: actually read the CBO study.

Basically, what it says here is that the bill would impose intergovernmental mandates by amending SNAP eligibility requirements, placing new responsibilities on States as administrators of child support enforcement, and requiring new State activities in the SNAP program.

For large entitlement programs like SNAP and child support enforcement, UMRA defines an increase in the stringency of conditions on States and localities as an intergovernmental mandate if affected governments lack authority to offset those costs while continuing to provide required services. The bill's requirements would increase the workload of State agencies in areas where they have limited flexibility to amend their responsibilities and offset additional costs and, thus, would be intergovernmental mandates.

In other words, on a whole range of issues, this bill requires States to do so much more, and the Federal Government does not provide the funding to meet those obligations. So if States want to provide SNAP benefits to their citizens, which I think every State continues to want to do, they are going to have to embrace all these unfunded mandates, add all these additional costs on to what they are already paying.

These are big, fat unfunded mandates. And I want to tell you, when your Governors read this bill, when you read this bill, you are going to be amazed about all these additional burdens that are going to be imposed on States and localities. If this isn't an unfunded mandate, if this wasn't what that Republican initiative was all about when it was first implemented, I have no idea what it is.

But I will tell you, even on the work training programs, this bill would provide maybe about $30 per person for education and training. We are told that education and training programs, on average, range from $7,000 to $14,000 to be effective. So this is an unfunded mandate, plain and simple. If you care about unfunded mandates, you are going to support us in our initiative here today.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, again, I recognize my friend's passion. I tell you, this is not going to be the end of my friend's passion. We are going to be here for another hour, together, talking about the farm bill, and I suspect we will see even a new degree of passion because my friend from Massachusetts is incredibly committed to his point of view on the SNAP program.

What I would tell you, Mr. Speaker—and I will speak on behalf of my Governor from the great State of Georgia; I will speak on behalf of my legislators and my administrators in the great State of Georgia—folks want to be a part of lifting people out of poverty. Nobody wants to be a part of trapping people in a cycle of poverty, and there is absolutely, Mr. Speaker, a degree of complicity that this Chamber has often been involved in by saying: This is the best we can do. We can't do any better, and we are just going to resign ourselves to the fact that generational poverty will continue. I say nonsense, and this bill is a step in the right direction.

I share my friend's frustration that what should have been a bipartisan farm bill, what traditionally is a bipartisan farm bill, went off the rails somewhere in the process and folks walked away from the table. We can assign blame however we choose to do it; but in this case, Mr. Speaker, we are talking about a bill that is going to take a major step forward in lifting folks out of poverty, a major step forward in putting people back to work, a major step forward in making sure that folks who receive Federal benefits are those who need Federal benefits, but those who have opportunities to do more and to do better for their families have partners in both their Federal and State governments to make that happen. I think that is what all my colleagues here want.

I encourage my friends to reject my friend's point of order and to vote to consider this bill today.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

The question is, Will the House now consider the resolution?

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 223, nays 181, not voting 23, as follows:

[Roll No. 184]

YEAS—223

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bergman
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Brady (TX)
Brat
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Cheney
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Curtis
Davidson
Davis, Rodney
Denham
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Emmer
Estes (KS)
Faso
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foxx
Frelinghuysen
Gaetz
Gallagher
Garrett
Gianforte
Gibbs
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guthrie
Handel
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins (LA)
Hill
Holding
Hollingsworth
Hudson
Huizenga
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Kustoff (TN)
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
Lesko
Lewis (MN)
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Massie
Mast
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Newhouse
Noem
Norman
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Pittenger
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Posey
Ratcliffe
Renacci
Rice (SC)
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney, Francis
Rooney, Thomas J.
Ros-Lehtinen
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce (CA)
Russell
Rutherford
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)

Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smucker
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (PA)
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NAYS—181

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

NOT VOTING—23

Beyer
Brown (MD)
Cárdenas
Chu, Judy
DeGette
Engel
Gabbard
Gutiérrez
Labrador
Lipinski
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham, M.
McNerney
Reed
Reichert
Richmond
Rogers (KY)
Roskam
Shea-Porter
Shuster
Thornberry
Webster (FL)
Wilson (FL)

□ 1316

Ms. KAPTUR, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, and Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

So the question of consideration was decided in the affirmative.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CRAWFORD). The gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WOODALL) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN), an Ag Committee member and my fellow Rules Committee member, pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

I thank my colleagues for standing with me to consider this rule and then these three underlying measures today.

GENERAL LEAVE

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

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

There was no objection.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, the rule before us today, House Resolution 891, makes in order three pieces of legislation. The one that you heard discussed already today is H.R. 2, the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018. Two other measures included in this rule are H.R. 5698, the Protect and Serve Act of 2018, and S. 2372, the VA MISSION Act of 2018.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, this week is Police Week, and police officers serving our communities every day with distinction get this 1 week a year that we all take a moment to pause and say thank you. President Trump made that point yesterday just outside the Capitol talking about these heroes who put their life on the line absolutely every day.

To quote the President, he said: ''Your moms and dads were among the bravest Americans to ever live'' when he was talking to the children of fallen officers. Of course, he was absolutely right.

For that reason I am particularly pleased that the rule today brings up the Protect and Serve Act of 2018. It brings it to the floor under a structured amendment process. The bill makes it a Federal crime to intentionally cause or to attempt to cause serious bodily harm to any law enforcement officer. I say that again, Mr. Speaker. It makes it a Federal crime to attempt to cause or intentionally cause serious bodily harm to any law enforcement officer.

Mr. Speaker, we are trying to speak in the absolute strongest terms when we speak on behalf of our men and women in law enforcement uniforms. In fact, just last night in the Rules Committee, my friend, Mr. MCGOVERN from Massachusetts, said there is virtually no disagreement between the parties and the Chambers on this legislation.

Another bill we can agree on, Mr. Speaker, is the VA MISSION Act. In fact, I was with one of The American Legion chapters in our district just Monday talking about the very provisions in this bill and how they can make a substantive difference for our men and women who have served us in the Armed Forces.

This is a four corners agreement bill, Mr. Speaker, and by four corners, I mean the chairmen and the ranking members on the House side and on the Senate side have agreed on this legislation. They have worked together on this legislation, and they have put it together in a way that we can all be proudly supportive of that final product.

Let me tell you what this bill will do in specifics, Mr. Speaker.

It consolidates seven duplicative community care programs into one program that is easier for our veterans to understand and to access. It ensures that the Veterans Choice Program has enough funding to continue working for our veterans for yet another year as the committees continue to perfect that program. I am sure you hear the same constructive counsel that I do, Mr. Speaker. Good for Congress for letting us opt out so that we can get the services we need quickly. But the Veterans Choice Program still has work to do to get those agreements approved promptly and get those doctors reimbursed promptly.

The VA MISSION Act, Mr. Speaker, also creates a fair and transparent process for a comprehensive audit of the VA's physical facilities. Where are those regions of the country that are underserved? Where are those regions of the country where consolidation would better serve?

The VA can transform its aging infrastructure. This bill provides a comprehensive audit process so that we can modernize the VA for today's veterans. It expands the caregiver program, Mr. Speaker, to provide the benefits to pre-9/11 veterans so that they are in parity with those benefits of post-9/11 veterans, and it provides VA provider recruitment and retention efforts so that our veterans have access to those medical personnel that they desperately need.

These reforms aren't just supported by those four corners that I mentioned, the Republicans and Democrats who lead the Veterans' Affairs Committee in the House and who lead the committees in the Senate, but they are also supported by over 30 veterans' service organizations from across the country, Mr. Speaker, as Chairman ROE highlighted in the Rules Committee just last night.

I don't pretend that these measures do everything for everyone, Mr. Speaker. They do not. But it is another in a long step of bills making progress on behalf of the American people. Whether we are talking about our men and women in law enforcement uniforms, Mr. Speaker, or whether we are talking about our men and women who have worn our military uniforms, it is another example of how Chairman ROE

and Ranking Member WALZ and our colleagues in the Senate are taking steps forward to repay our debts.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, as we have already heard discussed, this rule would make in order H.R. 2, our Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018. It doesn't just make in order the base text, Mr. Speaker, it also makes in order 20 amendments that have been offered by both Republicans and Democrats in this Chamber who would like to try to make that bill even better. Twenty amendments have been made in order already, and when we finish debate here on the floor, my colleague from Massachusetts and I will return to the Rules Committee upstairs, and we will consider yet another round of amendments this afternoon so that we can continue to perfect this bill throughout the week.

Mr. Speaker, one rule, three bills—three bills that have the ability to make a difference for families across the country north, south, east, and west. I hope my colleagues will support this rule, get involved in that underlying debate, and support those bills on final passage as well.

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WOODALL) for the customary 30 minutes, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. MCGOVERN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Georgia just said one rule three bills, which has become kind of a habit around here where we try to bunch a whole bunch of bills together in one rule so we don't actually focus on any one issue in a way that is meaningful. It is, I think, an attempt to try to stifle debate.

We have a bill that would protect our police. We have a bill that would deal with veterans. And then we have the farm bill. Mr. Speaker, I want to focus on the farm bill, if I may.

I have served on the Agriculture Committee since 2011. Historically, it has been one of the most—if not the most—bipartisan committee in the House of Representatives. That is how farm bills are normally crafted, through compromise and through a coalition of Members from urban and rural America coming together to get something done.

That is why I have always had faith in this process—faith that minority views would be heard. Even when it wasn't easy and even when the final product wasn't perfect, the end product was traditionally bipartisan. Until today.

The process for this farm bill was a sham. In no way did it reflect the Agriculture Committee's long, bipartisan tradition. I am the ranking member of the Nutrition Subcommittee, and even I wasn't able to see a word of text until this bill was publicly released. I am not even sure when Republicans on the subcommittee first saw the language.

Over the last 2½ years, the Agriculture Committee held 23 hearings on SNAP. Apparently, they were just for show, because not a single witness—Democrat or Republican—recommended any of the drastic cuts or draconian policy changes to SNAP included in this Republican farm bill.

When our distinguished ranking member on the committee, Mr. PETERSON, was finally asked for Democratic feedback on the nutrition title, he gave a long, thoughtful list of objections and suggested changes. His input was ignored with the majority changing barely a handful of words in this whole bill.

The Republican farm bill is filled with controversial provisions, and no one will tell us how they even got into the bill. Believe me, Mr. Speaker, I have asked. I can't get an answer. Maybe President Trump's ethically challenged White House opened its doors even wider to lobbyists and let them write key parts of this bill. Or perhaps an arch-conservative think tank was given the chance to airdrop its wish list into the bill.

But I suspect something more mundane and damaging. I think the Speaker viewed this bill as his last chance to enact sweeping cuts to safety net programs before he retires. Even the number of this bill, H.R. 2, was always reserved by the Speaker for his so-called welfare reform bill.

So I warn my colleagues on both sides of the aisle: make no mistake. This legislation is a transformation of our social safety net dressed up as a farm bill. It beats up, belittles, and demonizes poor people all across this country. It doesn't even try to put lipstick on this pig.

Mr. Speaker, last week it was reported that the Republican Conference brought in communicator Frank Luntz to try to wordsmith how Republicans can justify supporting this bill. They must be terrified. They know that just explaining the reality would appall and enrage most Americans.

Now, Mr. Luntz is the same guy who helped craft Speaker Gingrich's Contract with America. He earned PolitiFact's lie of the year in 2010 for one of his debunked claims on healthcare reform and even tried once in an interview to turn the term Orwellian into something positive. Mr. Speaker, he has his work cut out for him here because I don't even think Mr. Luntz can wordsmith something so cruel into something positive.

Now, here is how mean this bill really is. SNAP is our Nation's premier anti-hunger program, our first line of defense against hunger. People, including the most vulnerable among us—kids, the disabled, and the elderly—turn to it when there is no other option. For them, there is no plan B when they are struggling to figure out where their next meal is coming from. With this bill, Republicans are cutting SNAP by over $20 billion. Millions of people would see their benefits slashed, and many would be cut off from assistance entirely.

□ 1330

Why are the Republicans doing this?

To pay for hoisting their latest unproven and way underfunded State-based workforce bureaucracy experiment on the entire Nation. That is why. I say ''unproven'' because I don't see any evidence or studies suggesting that any of this will even work. In fact, I have a study here that points out the flaws in this proposal.

It expands work requirements for poor parents while making millionaires and billionaires eligible for subsidies even if they don't live or work on a farm.

You can't make this stuff up. There is no evidence that this approach is effective. We have no idea whether States have the manpower or infrastructure to take this on. We have no idea how much it will cost States to put a recipient through a job training program. This bill would give States just $30 to train each person, when we know it costs thousands of dollars per person to fund robust job training programs.

Mr. Speaker, it would be laughable if this weren't so serious.

Currently, States are testing the effectiveness of job training programs as a way to help SNAP recipients move out of poverty. But we aren't expecting to get the results of these pilot programs until 2021.

Shouldn't we wait to see the results of State pilot programs? Shouldn't we wait until we know what might work and what doesn't? Why should we force our Governors and States to gamble on a sweeping, untested bureaucracy that appears doomed to failure?

Clearly, the Republicans aren't going to let a lack of facts stop them from creating this massive, new government bureaucracy that will affect millions of vulnerable Americans. This is from a party that claims to want a government so small, they could drown it in a bathtub. Apparently, they want a government just small enough to leave millions of poor and working Americans with nowhere to turn.

This isn't about helping people; this is about putting up roadblocks that make nutrition assistance difficult, if not impossible, to get.

This legislation also severs the link between SNAP and the Low Income Heating Energy Assistance Program, or LIHEAP. This connection is what has allowed disabled and working families to receive credit for out-of-pocket heating and cooling expenses without unnecessary trips to the SNAP office. But the changes in this bill would force recipients to make those unnecessary trips, and they would lead to more hassles and avoidable errors and people falling through the cracks.

I think the Republican leaders in the House are the only people on this planet who believe that creating unnecessary hassles count as some kind of laudable reform.

The Republican farm bill would also eliminate broad-based categorical eligibility. This has been a critical option that States have used to help working families with kids and seniors during tough times. More than 40 States today use this option, including 12 States with Republican Governors. Eliminating it would cause 400,000 eligible households—close to 1 million people—to lose their food benefits. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimated that 265,000 students will lose access to free school lunches if this bill were to become law.

You know, when I was growing up, it was school bullies that went after kids' lunch money; it wasn't the United States Congress. This is shameful.

But let's also be clear here that eliminating broad-based categorical eligibility would throw close to 1 million people off of SNAP who work. Basically, it would deny SNAP benefits to people who earn under $16,000 a year.

Mr. Speaker, what the hell is wrong with this place?

These people can't get through the year on that. That is not enough to feed one's self or one's family.

The Republican Congress, who rushed to raise taxes on 86 million middle class families to pay for a tax cut for large corporations and the richest 1 percent, is now trying to stop kids from getting school lunches and taking assistance away from families struggling with hunger.

This entire Congress has been one long, slow march toward making life harder for the poor, the hungry, and working Americans. I am tired of a Congress that prioritizes the rich, that looks out only for the wealthy.

The legislation we take up here today should reflect our values. But this bill doesn't reflect my values, Mr. Speaker. This is a farm bill that doesn't even make significant improvements to our agricultural programs to help farmers who are caught in the middle of the President's trade war.

It is an attack on those living in poverty. It trades in stereotypes to justify shredding our social safety net, and it is hell-bent on making hunger worse in this country. This Republican farm bill is disgusting, and the process that got us here is disgusting.

By the way, just so Members are clear, the average SNAP benefit is $1.40 per person per meal. I say to my colleagues, you try living on that.

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

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds to say I agree with my friend. Asking single, working-age, healthy, nondisabled men to go to work is going to make their life harder. Going to work every day is hard. But I would also say to my friend that it is going to make their life better. It is a value that we should share, not a value that we should repudiate.

This happens to be an area of disagreement, Mr. Speaker. There are so many areas of agreement we could be focusing on.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN), the chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee.

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the rule and the good work that was done there and the VA MISSION Act, which improves access to care for our veterans, funds the Choice Program, and expands the caregivers program for pre-9/11 veterans.

I would like to thank the chairman and ranking member for their work on this important legislation. I would particularly like to applaud the inclusion of the VA Medical Scribes Pilot Act. This was legislation that I helped write with Chairman ROE to set up a pilot program for including scribes in primary care teams at the VA.

Research in the private sector has shown that allowing scribes to handle electronic health records allows the healthcare providers, the doctors, to do more of what they do best, which is to treat the patients. So we have doctors treating patients rather than spending their valuable time doing paperwork.

Chairman ROE joined me in my district last fall on a tour of the VA clinic in White City, Oregon, where we heard firsthand about the administrative challenges the VA doctors face and how that affects their ability to care for veterans. The underlying bill that we will bring to the floor will help. The entire bill will help. This will help our docs have more time to spend with their patients.

We will continue to work with the VA on their implementation of this program, but I am pleased that it was included in the underlying legislation, Mr. Speaker.

Once again, I applaud the entire Veterans Affairs Committee on their work to give veterans the access to healthcare they have earned and deserve. I urge support and passage of the underlying VA MISSION Act and approval of the rule.

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

Under this bill, somebody who is working and earns like $15,800 a year up to like $23,000 a year, who works right now, and who currently receives SNAP would lose it under this. This is how you are rewarding their work. I just find that appalling.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SCHNEIDER).

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to the cruel and partisan safety net cuts masquerading as the farm bill.

The farm bill has long been a partisan cause, offering assistance and security to farmers and needy families alike in a way that both Democrats and Republicans can support. But this extreme bill cuts more than $23 billion from nutrition assistance programs through eligibility restrictions, kicking a projected 1 million households off the SNAP program and reducing benefits for millions more.

Let me be clear: these are vital, lifesaving benefits to help Americans put food on the table during moments of need. The average family spends just 10 months on SNAP, receiving assistance just long enough to get back on their feet. At the same time, the program helps set our kids up for success. Hungry children perform worse in school, and studies have shown that children on SNAP achieve higher test scores and are more likely to graduate from high school. Children on SNAP achieve higher test scores and succeed, and they have the opportunity to do well later in life.

Mr. Speaker, the partisan approach was the wrong way on tax reform, it was the wrong way on healthcare, and it is the wrong way now. I urge my Republican colleagues to abandon this party-line legislation and instead approach the farm bill in the fair, bipartisan manner we have in the past.

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

I agree with my friend. I think, as a general rule, partisan approaches are the wrong way. This is certainly not what my chairman desired. It is certainly not where any of us wanted to end up. When folks walk away from the table, it is where we do in fact end up.

This is the start of the process. This is not the end of the process. I regret the way that this has sorted out for my ag friends. But we can't do nothing because folks have gotten up and walked away from the table. We have to continue to do what our constituents have asked us to do, and this is a good step in that direction.

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. POLIS), a distinguished member of the Rules Committee.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I want to draw attention to provisions of this bill which attack bedrock environmental laws and recklessly promote logging over clean water, recreation, and wildlife.

In a district like mine, where the holdings of the U.S. Forest Service are extensive, this bill is a critical part of helping to protect our economy, our way of life, and the way we enjoy our public lands.

Title 8 of the bill includes blatant attempts that undermine the Endangered Species Act, NEPA, and the roadless area conservation rule. This bill allows for congressional exemptions—basically, an earmark—to prevent environmental reviews and public comment periods that actually prevent communities from having a say over what happens quite literally in their backyard. I think that we need to make sure that we involve our local communities. This bill empowers Washington,

D.C., decisionmakers by taking that control away from our communities.

It weakens the Endangered Species Act by eliminating scientific expert opinion about whether projects would harm endangered species and their critical habitats, and it prioritizes logging over recreation, even going so far as shifting incentives to emphasize logging over environmental restoration in other areas that support the outdoor recreation economy, one of the biggest sources of jobs in my district and in my State.

Before the ink is even dry on the omnibus, this farm bill threatens to renege on the bipartisan wildfire budget deal with more proposals that weaken protections and mitigation on our public lands.

In my State, the 6,000-acre congressional exemption or earmark would have a detrimental impact, but it would have an even worse impact on the much smaller Eastern and Midwestern forests, where 6,000 acres would vastly exceed the annual sustainable maximum harvest.

When the Forest Service needs to do a 6,000-acre project, it already can. It needs to take input from the public nearby in our neighborhoods and in our communities about how they would be affected. Of course, it should consider how water, soil, and wildlife habitat can be protected.

For years, congressional debate over forest management has been framed by the need to address hazardous fuels for wildfires. This bill takes a step away from that and makes it clear that reform efforts weren't actually about wildfire; they are about efforts to give away our public lands to timber and other industries and silence the voice of residents.

Congress should stop trying to legislate logging projects and take control. Washington should allow our communities to have a say. The Forest Service has many tools today that include local input. All Americans deserve is a say in how our public lands are managed. Endangered species should certainly not be sacrificed just so more of our forests can be logged.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a letter from over 120 conservation groups opposed to these harmful forestry provisions in H.R. 2, and I urge my colleagues to vote ''no.''

MAY 11, 2018.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of our millions of members and supporters we urge you to strongly oppose the extreme and divisively partisan federal forest provisions in the Forestry Title of the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018 (H.R. 2), also known as ''the House Farm Bill.''

The legislation is replete with provisions that undermine bedrock environmental laws, including the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Endangered Species Act (ESA), and Roadless Area Conservation Rule (Roadless Rule). This bill consistently prioritizes the logging industry over all other forest stakeholders. It would cause irreparable harm to our federal forests, the millions of Americans who depend on them for clean drinking water, subsistence, recreation, and economic benefit, and the wildlife that call them home.

The federal forest provisions in the House Farm Bill also run contrary to the wildfire funding agreement reached only weeks ago in the Fiscal Year 2018 Omnibus. A deal was only reached after significant environmental concessions to pro-logging hardliners, even though a comprehensive wildfire funding solution had solid bi-partisan support in both chambers going into the omnibus negotiation.

Ignoring that compromise, H.R. 2 would allow logging, grazing, and many other activities on up to 6,000-acres—almost 10 square miles for each single project—without any NEPA review or disclosure of potential harms. The numerous new exemptions are double the size of the legislated NEPA exclusion just passed in the omnibus deal and they also eliminate the requirement, preserved in the omnibus agreement, to consider cumulative effects and ''extraordinary circumstances'' such as wilderness areas and endangered species.

This partisan bill also goes further than the omnibus deal on the ESA, allowing federal land management agencies to ''self-consult'' on whether their actions would harm threatened and endangered species even though such self-consultation has already been declared unlawful by the courts. Additionally, it attacks the landmark Roadless Rule, makes resource management and forest stewardship dependent on logging revenue, creating a perverse incentive, and jeopardizes fire-vulnerable communities by deprioritizing hazardous fuels reduction efforts in the Wildland Urban Interface.

The harmful federal forest proposals in this legislation solve no problem; they only add controversy to the House Farm Bill and weaken its chances of becoming law.

For all of these reasons we strongly urge you to OPPOSE the federal forest provisions in the House Farm Bill and any amendments that further undermine environmental safeguards on our federal forests.

Thank you,

Alaska Wilderness League; Allegheny Defense Project; Alpine Lakes Protection Society; Appalachian Voices; Arise for Social Justice; Bark; Beaver Valley Preservation Alliance; California Native Plant Society; Cascade Forest Conservancy; Cascadia Wildlands; Center for Biological Diversity; Center for Sierra Nevada Conservation; Cherokee Forest Voices; Christians For The Mountains; Climate Change Major Disaster Declaration Campaign; Colorado Native Plant Society; Conservation Colorado; Conservation Congress; Conservation Northwest; Darby Creek Valley Association.

Defenders of Wildlife; Dolores River Boating Advocates; Earth Island Institute's John Muir Project; Earthjustice; Endangered Species Coalition; EnviroAce, LLC; Environmental Protection Information Center; Friends of Bell Smith Springs; Friends of Grays Harbor; Friends of Lake Monroe; Friends of Plumas Wilderness; Friends of the Bitterroot; Friends of the Inyo; Georgia ForestWatch; Grand Canyon Trust; Great Old Broads for Wilderness; Great Old Broads for Wilderness—Grand Junction Broadband; Great Old Broads for Wilderness—Rio Grande Valley Broadband; Great Old Broads for Wilderness—Select Roaring Fork Broadband; Greater Hells Canyon Council.

Greenvironment, LLC; Heartwood; High Country Conservation Advocates; Hoosier Environmental Council; Idaho Conservation League; Indiana Forest Alliance; Izaak Walton League Bush Lake Chapter; Izaak Walton League Cass Count Chapter; Izaak Walton League W.J. McCabe Chapter; Kentucky Conservation Committee; Kentucky Environmental Foundation; Kentucky Heartwood; Kentucky Resources Council, Inc.; Kettle Range Conservation Group; Klamath Forest Alliance; KS Wild; La Cueva Guardians; League of Conservation Voters; Los Padres ForestWatch; Mass Forest Rescue Campaign.

Minnesota Division Izaak Walton League of America; Montana Wilderness Association; MountainTrue; National Parks Conservation Association; Natural Resources Defense Council; Nature Abounds; Nature for All; New Mexico Sportsmen; New Mexico Wild; New Mexico Wilderness Alliance; New Mexico Wildlife Federation; New River Alliance of Climbers; North Cascades Conservation Council; Northcoast Environmental Center; Ohio Environmental Council; Olympic Forest Coalition; Olympic Park Associates; Once a Forest; Oregon Wild; Partnership for Policy Integrity.

Partnership for the National Trails System; PennFuture; Pennsylvania Council of Churches; Public Lands Media; RESTORE: The North Woods; Rocky Mountain Recreation Initiative; Rocky Mountain Wild; San Juan Citizens Alliance; San Luis Valley Ecosystem Council; Sangre de Cristo Audubon Society; Santa Fe Forest Coalition; Save Our Sky Blue Waters; Sequoia ForestKeeper; Shawnee Forest Sentinels; Sheep Mountain Alliance; Sheltowee Trace Association; Sierra Club; Sierra Forest Legacy; Sky Island Alliance; Southern Environmental Law Center.

Southern Illinoisans Against Fracturing Our Environment; Speak for the Trees; Tennessee Wild; The Enviro Show; The Lands Council; The Wilderness Society; Tulare County Audubon Society; Umpqua Watersheds, Inc.; Virginia Wilderness Committee; Water Stone Outdoors; West Virginia Environmental Council; West Virginia Highlands Conservancy; West Virginia Rivers Coalition; West Virginia Wilderness Coalition; Western Environmental Law Center; White Mountain Conservation League; WildEarth Guardians; Wilderness Workshop; Winter Wildlands Alliance; Zumbro Valley Audubon.

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

Mr. Speaker, the farm economy is the biggest contributor to Georgia GDP. Georgia families wake up every day back home and go out and often, in some cases, are working land that their father worked before them and their grandfather worked before them.

We have had the Georgia Farm Bureau in town pleading with us to bring some certainty to ag policy.

There are two parts to a farm bill, for all the reasons that folks who got here long before I did can explain: why it is we do a food stamp half of a farm bill and an actual farmer half of the farm bill.

It is so often true that the SNAP program gets all the conversation, Mr. Speaker. But as you heard from my friend from Colorado, while the money is not where the farmers and those farm families are, that is certainly where the policy is.

It has been true time and time again that, in a collaborative, bipartisan, bicameral way, we have come together as a House and a Senate and moved policy forward to provide market certainty for those farmers.

You don't always appreciate the farmers in your community, Mr. Speaker, when you can go to the grocery store and grab anything you want

at absolutely any time you want. Those things don't happen by accident. They happen with a whole lot of sweat equity, a whole lot of risk-taking, and, candidly, with a whole lot of prayer going on across farm communities in this land.

□ 1345

This bill responds to some of the marketplace needs that we are finding in the 21st century. You are going to see those collaborative veins throughout this measure, Mr. Speaker. I hope my colleagues will look not just at the SNAP program, but also at the certainty that we will provide to the very hardworking farm families across this country.

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Georgia for his comments. I think, again, if the gentleman reads this bill, he and his farmers should be concerned about this bill because it does not increase support for our farm safety net and support prices. So we have a lot of farmers who are deeply concerned about that part of the bill as well.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to urge that we defeat the previous question. If we do, I will offer an amendment to the rule to bring up Representative LAMB's legislation, H.R. 5805, which provides the fix needed to implement the VA MISSION Act to ensure that it is not hindered by budget caps.

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

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

There was no objection.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, to discuss that proposal, I yield 4 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. LAMB).

Mr. LAMB. Mr. Speaker, the VA MISSION Act is a good bill. I support it.

For too long, our veterans could really question whether this government means it when we say that we value their service. We cannot erase those doubts in one day or in one bill, but we can take a positive step forward, and we are doing that today. Both parties are doing that together.

Together, we are finally giving all caregivers the tools they need for the heroic work that they do. We are strengthening VA at its core by attracting the best and the brightest to work there, and we are giving veterans a real choice to seek the best treatment anywhere, whether in or outside of the VA.

This is a good bill, but it is not perfect. We owe it to our veterans and to the taxpayers to explain how we will pay for this.

There is a strict cap on VA's budget, and the MISSION Act will bust that cap, so all of the good things in the MISSION Act will trigger harsh, automatic cuts in the rest of VA's budget. This will force the VA to rob Peter to pay Paul.

This is not hypothetical. One year from now, these cuts will be triggered, and a veteran today would be right to ask if his favorite nurse will be laid off or if the old and slow computer systems at the VA will get even older and even slower. The money has to come from somewhere in the VA's budget.

But there is another way. The money we are spending today does not have to count against the budget cap. That budget cap was set before we ever made these improvements to the VA. It is a separate issue, and the cap number shouldn't hold us back. My bill, H.R. 5805, would simply count the new money as separate so that it does not bust the rest of the VA's budget.

Mr. Speaker, both sides of this House are working together to improve the VA. That is a great thing. Let's not make it any harder than it already is. Instead, let's finish the job. We have to spend what it takes to get the job done. No more, but also no less.

Our veterans are looking to us to make the VA stronger, not weaker. The workers of the VA are depending upon us to give them what they need for their mission. Automatic budget cuts will not accomplish that mission.

I ask my colleagues on both sides to help us, help our veterans, and help our workers. Vote ''no'' on the motion on ordering the previous question so that my bill, H.R. 5805, can be made in order.

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

Mr. Speaker, it is my first time on the floor with our new colleague from Pennsylvania. I appreciate not just his service here, but his service to our country in general. I feel his pain.

It is a good bill, but it is not a perfect bill, and we have got ways to do it. I have been here 7 years. I come down here time and time again to find good bills, Mr. Speaker, and I am always frustrated that we can't get it there.

What I have determined, Mr. Speaker, that I will share with you and with my friend from Pennsylvania is that the reason is because you folks don't agree with me. That is what I have decided is why I can't get to those perfect bills, because try as I might, I cannot get 434 other people to agree with me on everything all the time.

I will tell my friend from Pennsylvania, Mr. Speaker, the most discouraging day I have had in this institution was after we passed the Budget Control Act and we picked four of our finest Republicans and four of our finest Democrats from the House and also four from the Senate—Republicans, Democrats—and we locked them in a room together for 3 months. We said: Look at some of these mandatory spending programs like you have talked about. Look at the discretionary programs. Across-the-board budget cuts are nonsensical. They don't reflect American priorities at all. So get together, talk to one another, work through it, and figure out a way that we can make the books balance so we don't mortgage our children's and our grandchildren's futures but so that we also keep the commitments that we have made to families today.

They met for 3 months, and they walked out of that room having looked at hundreds of trillions of dollars in Federal spending and agreed on not one penny of change together. I cannot tell you, Mr. Speaker—well, you remember how discouraging that day was.

Moving these dollars from mandatory spending to discretionary spending is absolutely going to put additional pressures on the budget process—I see my friend from Minnesota nodding his head; he is a true champion for our veterans—but, by golly, we have got to stand up and say yes to those dollars.

I got excoriated back home for voting in favor of raising the nondefense discretionary limits, but I have to go home and tell the story of how I am meeting promises to veterans that were not going to get met otherwise. I have got to go home and tell the story about how I am meeting promises for children that weren't going to get met otherwise. And I have got to go home and tell the story of how I don't have 218 votes to do it my way, and the only way to get anything done around here is in partnership.

Candidly, Mr. Speaker, we don't have a better example than the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Mr. WALZ' leadership, Dr. ROE's leadership. Time and time again, I see these two men go and not follow their own hearts and passions but try to do what is best for everyone, try to find a way forward when folks had bet against them and said you couldn't find a way forward.

I hear the concerns of my new colleague from Pennsylvania, Mr. Speaker, and I believe he is absolutely right; we are going to run up against that conversation next year. The question is will we have the courage to stand up together and fund those priorities next year.

I am looking forward to the great outpouring of bipartisanship we are going to see in support of the VA MISSION Act today, and I will look forward to the great outpouring of support when the funding time comes to make sure we are as committed to those promises tomorrow as we are together this afternoon.

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ), the ranking member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Massachusetts and my friend from Georgia. We are going to see some camaraderie down here. I agree with the gentleman on this. And I thank Mr. LAMB for pointing out

clearly what needs to be done to this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to the rule. This is one of those cases, and I think this is important on the rule, because, Mr. Speaker, we may know it in here, but for Americans who are watching this, the rule is how we have this debate. And this is an honest debate.

To be absolutely clear, there is no one in this Chamber who disagrees on the care for veterans. How we get there is what is different. On these amendments that Mr. LAMB was proposing to offer or other things that we would like to bring up to fix this, we should debate it here.

Dr. ROE, the chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, did this. He had an open rule. I brought up my amendment, it was debated, and I lost. That is democracy. I understand that. But it is the conversation that brings our Members in that gets us to consensus.

So, by structuring a closed rule—for the American people watching this, we already know what the score is of this game. We already know what is going to happen ahead of time. It is in this deliberative body that we should be having a detailed debate on this very proposal and then voting it down.

I think we say it because of time; we say it because of constraint; we say it because we want to control the flow of what happens here. Well, maybe the American people don't want that flow a little bit.

We should have this debate, and I will accept losing an argument. What I cannot accept is five people up in a room up on the third floor here making something out of order that is clearly in order, and whether it is accepted or not should at least be debated.

So I don't disagree with the gentleman's assessment. He is right about us trying to find common ground. There is going to be a lot of support on this piece of legislation when it comes up, but I think not having an open rule and an honest debate is selling us short from getting toward a more perfect bill—not perfect, a more perfect bill.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to vote ''no'' on this closed rule.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I do not have any further speakers remaining, so I am prepared to close when the gentleman from Massachusetts is, but I will reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, we aren't done, so if the gentleman would like to yield me some time, that would be great.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. CICILLINE).

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the rule and the underlying Republican farm bill, which could devastate working families, seniors, and the vulnerable who rely on food assistance.

Currently, more than 41 million Americans receive benefits through the Federal food assistance program known as SNAP. Close to two-thirds are children, the elderly, and the disabled. However, this partisan bill would reduce SNAP benefits by $23.3 billion, denying hundreds of thousands of American families who rely on this food support. Millions more will see their benefits reduced because Republicans are recklessly increasing the burden on recipients and changing eligibility requirements.

In December, Republicans passed a tax bill benefiting the wealthiest Americans and the most powerful corporate special interests. This Republican tax scam increases our national debt by $2 trillion over the next 10 years, and now our Republican colleagues are hypocritically trying to pay for these huge tax cuts for the wealthy by taking away resources for Americans who need them most.

Republicans are using this formerly bipartisan process to continue to undermine the well-being of children, the elderly, and the disabled to give gifts to the wealthy. This goes against everything we stand for as a country.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to oppose the rule and to oppose the bill.

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. WELCH).

Mr. WELCH. Mr. Speaker, this farm bill is outrageous. What it is doing is breaking what has been traditionally a bipartisan commitment to including a nutrition title that helps people in all of our districts who need the food. This bill has had no process. It is a continuation of an effort to ratchet down any help that Americans need.

That healthcare bill was going to help on healthcare by taking it away from 24 million people. This nutrition bill, supposedly, is going to help people by taking $23 billion worth of benefits away from children, veterans, the elderly, and the disabled who need that food.

Why?

Well, there is a reason. We passed a tax cut. By the way, it wasn't paid for. $2.3 trillion added to the deficit for a tax bill where 87 percent of the benefits go to wealthy multinational corporations and individuals earning over $890,000 a year.

Well, the bill has come due, and we have a proposal here to come up with $23 billion to pay for it, and that is taking meals off the table of disabled people.

And, by the way, the work requirement, what is it really? Because that sounds good.

By the way, who doesn't want to work? Everybody wants to work. You need a job.

We are going to pay for this so-called work requirement by taking money away from nutrition, paying bureaucrats, and giving them the impossible job of putting people who are not able to work into jobs that don't exist. Talk about cynical; that is what this bill is.

I am from Vermont where we have lots of folks who need help, and we have lots of Vermonters who, with very little money, with enormous volunteer effort, are doing things that put meals, good meals, on the tables of those families.

Don't pass this farm bill that takes that nutrition away from our Vermonters and our American citizens.

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

Mr. Speaker, my friend from Minnesota mentioned folks who might be watching this debate from their offices or from their homes. I think it is a shame that we don't often get to the core of what some of our disagreements are.

As we sit here today, it is a fact that there are more job openings in America than at any other time in American history. That is a fact.

It is a fact that, as we sit here getting ready to move further into the new millennium, there are more able-bodied single men out of the workforce than ever before—that is a fact—folks who have decided not to work.

Now, there is no disagreement in this body about providing food assistance to hungry kids—none. None. The disagreement in this body is whether or not, with more job openings than ever before in American history, with more employers saying they cannot find workers, with more employers saying ''we need to find new visa programs to get unskilled labor into America because we don't have enough unskilled workers to do the work here in America''—should the working families who pay the bills in this country support able-bodied, childless, healthy men?

□ 1400

That is part of the question, and I would think that is something on which we can agree. But we are not going to have that pointed conversation, Mr. Speaker, because there are more sympathetic targets to go after.

If you walk in to a USDA facility or your State facility that is administrating and you apply for food stamps, Mr. Speaker, if you qualify for food stamps, you will get them. You heard my friend from Massachusetts reference categorical eligibility. That means if you qualify for a different benefit, not food stamps, we will throw in food stamps, too.

Well, now, to be fair, that idea came about in some conservative circles, as well, to say let's eliminate some of the paperwork requirements. Let's make it easier for folks to apply for a whole host of benefits. But categorical eligibility, as it exists today, Mr. Speaker, says you don't qualify for the benefit on your own, but you do if you—if you qualify for a second benefit, we will give you this one as well.

Mr. Speaker, saying that you are going to eliminate categorical eligibility is to say you are going to give food stamps to people who qualify for food stamps. You are going to give

SNAP benefits to people who qualify for SNAP benefits. If one wants to expand the pool of people who qualify for SNAP benefits, that is a debate that we can have.

But time and time again, Mr. Speaker, there are things on which we agree in this Chamber. Programs should follow the rules that programs have. People who qualify should get benefits. People who don't qualify shouldn't.

We are going to continue to have this conversation in the next couple of days, and it is going to continue to be highlighted as a source of vast disagreement among us. But if we were having this same conversation back home around the dinner table, if we were having this same conversation back home at a local park or veterans organization, we would say the very same thing: Hungry kids should have access to food, on this we agree; and healthy, childless working age men should have access to a job, on this we agree.

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 1 minute.

Mr. Speaker, I would encourage my colleague to read the bill. Broad-based categorical eligibility gives States the flexibility to offer people who are struggling—more people, the SNAP benefit. There are many States, including mine, that basically offer SNAP to people who are at 200 percent of the poverty level. That is about $24,000. This bill changes the criteria.

So you could be working and making anywhere from $24,000 to like $15,900, and, right now, you are working and that is what you make and you are eligible for SNAP. This bill says you no longer can get that benefit. These are people who work, and this bill takes this nutrition benefit away from them.

I don't know how anybody could think that that is a good thing to do. I don't know how that reward works. What that does is punish people. That punishes individuals who are doing everything they possibly can to try to make ends meet.

And a lot of people, by the way, who qualify for SNAP who aren't working, qualify maybe for a month or two because they are out of work for only a month or two. This idea that SNAP creates this culture dependency is just a myth. The majority of people on SNAP work—who are able-bodied work. I want to make that point clear.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Delaware (Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER).

Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the rule and the underlying bill. I originally had some things written down on paper, but based on the last comments, I just want to echo the sentiments of my colleague and also share that I served as Secretary of Labor in the State of Delaware. I served as head of State personnel.

Jobs are important to us. I had the opportunity to work on WIA, WIOA, all of those great pieces of legislation for workforce development. And I want to talk about some myths.

There is a myth that the majority of people on SNAP aren't working or won't work in a year. That is a myth. Two-thirds of SNAP recipients are children, seniors, and people with disabilities. People don't realize that. And there are 6 million unfilled jobs. So, for me, the problem with this bill, the biggest problem is that it was a missed opportunity.

If we are truly serious about employing people who are returning from prison, people who maybe have a disability—

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Delaware.

Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER. Mr. Speaker, if we are truly serious, then we will come to the table. But when the table is set in stone, then we don't get an opportunity to really work on those things that will support the American people.

The other piece that was disappointing to me is, I came to this as a person who wanted to be on this committee because of its bipartisan nature and that the American people are waiting and watching to see us come together for them. This is a loss of confidence, and it is also a missed opportunity.

I am excited and hopeful that we will come together because the people are watching.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a letter that I wrote to Secretary Perdue, because there were a lot of questions and assumptions that were never answered even in our markup.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, May 11, 2018.

Hon. SONNY PERDUE,
Secretary of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC.

DEAR SECRETARY PERDUE: I am writing to request that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) respond to my inquiries regarding H.R. 2, the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018, which is also known as the Farm Bill. As a member of the House Committee on Agriculture, I am one of 46 Members sitting on the committee of jurisdiction for this legislation. Given the breadth of the proposed changes in the Farm Bill, I want to take this opportunity to reach out to the agency that will be responsible for implementing the provisions in the bill.

During the markup of the Farm Bill on April 18, 2018, my colleagues on both sides of the aisle were only able to direct questions to Chairman Conaway. However, I believe it is essential that we hear from the experts involved in running these programs to ensure we are advocating for policies that are evidence-based. As a result, I respectfully ask that you address the following questions and provide a timely response.

WORKFORCE PROGRAMS

My understanding is that we would need anywhere between three to five million more slots in workforce training programs across the country if all eligible SNAP participants would like to enroll in SNAP Employment and Training (E&T) programs. The bill would provide a new federal E&T grant of $1 billion per year to finance the newly mandated work program, which comes out to less than $30 per person per month. Upon what evidence and or best practices has this number been arrived at? Does the USDA believe this is sufficient? If not, what does the USDA think is sufficient to implement a meaningful workforce development program and move people into work?

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) analysis says it would take a decade to set up a program for everyone to get a work slot. If state E&T costs are greater than their annual federal grant, will states bear the additional costs associated with operating the work programs? What breakdown does USDA expect in administration expenses between job training, IT, administrative costs, and other programs? What are the ramifications for states of not fully implementing their work programs?

What additional capacity would USDA require to oversee this new work program? Would states experience increased administrative costs under this proposal?

When specifically will we hear the results from the 2014 Farm Bill SNAP E&T Pilot Projects? Under current law, what are your expectations for sharing these findings and building them into USDA oversight of state E&T? If H.R. 2 were to be enacted as proposed, when will you be able to incorporate the findings from the pilot projects into the SNAP program, based on how this bill is written?

I appreciate your timely consideration and the work you do for farmers, families, and communities across the country.

Sincerely,

LISA BLUNT ROCHESTER,
Committee Member,
House Committee on Agriculture.

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

Mr. Speaker, I agree very much with what my friend had to say. She may be a freshman, but she has got a lot of experience working in departments of labor putting people to work, and I think that is a goal that we all share.

And, again, it is a missed opportunity. Undeniably, that is true, and there is lots of blame to go around about why it is a missed opportunity. Again, my friend from Massachusetts and I, we are going to go back up to the Rules Committee this afternoon. We are going to make some more amendments in order. We are going to work harder to try to perfect this bill.

But walking away from the table has consequences. Setting lines in stone has consequences. We are not going to get the best work product in this Chamber when anybody walks away from the table. I am just going to stipulate that is true. We never ever will.

But while my friend identified that the program benefits the elderly, the disabled, and children, and she is right, and it does, and I support that, she didn't mention those able-bodied, healthy, childless men who also benefit from the program. And we do those men a disservice, not a service, when we make that benefit available in the absence of job searching.

Categorical eligibility—we talk about it today like it is a word that we are hearing for the very first time. As my colleagues who were here remember, we have already been to the table

on categorical eligibility. As my friend from Massachusetts referenced, States that have nothing to lose by giving away Federal money were gaming the system by giving away a dollar in State benefits so that folks could qualify for hundreds of dollars in Federal benefits.

Well, we came together in a bipartisan way and said: Hey, that is not right. That is not right. Folks should have skin in the game. We should be working at this together. It shouldn't be a giveaway program. It should be a helping program. We should be making a difference in people's lives.

We did that in a collaborative way. We can come back and tell the story differently today, but we remember coming together and doing that, and we can come together and do that again, Mr. Speaker. This isn't going to be our last opportunity. We are going to have another opportunity.

Nothing goes to the President's desk unless we get 10 Democrats in the United States Senate to get on board and do it. Collaboration is not the exception. It is the rule to get things to the President's desk and to pass new laws of the land.

I wish we could talk more about what those successes are, how we found those successes in the past, and how we remain committed to finding those successes again in the future.

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, may I ask how much time I have left.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Massachusetts has 4½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Georgia has 10 minutes remaining.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a letter from the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities, who are very strongly opposed to this farm bill.

CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS WITH DISABILITIES,
Washington, DC, May 7, 2018.

Re H.R. 2, Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018 (Farm Bill).

Hon. PAUL RYAN,
Speaker, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Minority Leader, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER RYAN AND LEADER PELOSI, The undersigned members of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) urge you to continue the longstanding bipartisan commitment to protect and strengthen the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) by rejecting proposals to restrict eligibility, reduce benefits, cap or reduce funding, or make harmful structural changes to SNAP in the Farm Bill.

CCD is the largest coalition of national organizations working together to advocate for federal public policy that ensures the self-determination, independence, empowerment, integration and inclusion of children and adults with disabilities in all aspects of society.

In the United States, all too often food insecurity and disability go together. Families that include people with disabilities are two to three times more likely to experience food insecurity than families that have no members with disabilities. Similarly, people experiencing food insecurity have increased likelihood of chronic illness and disability.

SNAP is vitally important for people with disabilities and their families. By increasing access to adequate, nutritious food SNAP plays a key role in reducing hunger and helping people with disabilities to maximize their health and participate in their communities.

Using an inclusive definition of ''disability,'' in 2015 an estimated 11 million people with disabilities of all ages received SNAP, representing roughly one in four SNAP participants.

Roughly 4.4 million households with non-elderly adults with disabilities received SNAP in 2016.

Non-elderly adults with disabilities who receive SNAP have very low incomes, averaging only about $12,000 per year in 2016.

SNAP benefits are extremely modest, averaging $187 per month for non-elderly people with disabilities in 2016—or just $6 per day.

Existing SNAP time limits are harsh, unfair, and harm many people with disabilities and their families by cutting off essential food assistance. Federal law currently limits SNAP eligibility for adults between the ages of 18 to 49 without dependents to just three months out of every three years—unless they can engage in work or job training activities at least half time, or qualify for an exemption. These provisions cut off food assistance at a time when people need it most and do not result in increased employment and earnings. At least 500,000 low-income individuals nationwide lost SNAP in 2016 due to this time limit.

Many people with disabilities are already hurt by SNAP time limits, despite existing exemptions for people who receive governmental or private benefits on the basis of a disability or are able to document that they are ''physically or mentally unfit for employment.'' For example, in a study of SNAP participants subject to time limits referred to participate in work activities in Franklin County, Ohio, one-third reported a ''physical or mental limitation''.

Cutting off food assistance from SNAP would only make it harder for people to work and increase their economic self-sufficiency. We strongly oppose any action that would cut off or reduce SNAP benefits, narrow eligibility, or force more people to navigate harsh and unnecessary program rules, including people with disabilities and their families.

In particular, we are concerned that the Farm Bill advanced by the House Committee on Agriculture on April 18, 2018 includes a number of provisions that would harm people with disabilities and their families. Small increases in the proposed bill are insufficient to make up for significant benefit reductions.

New work requirements with highly punitive rules would cut off SNAP benefits for many people—including in families with children, adults, and seniors with disabilities. It may seem simple to assert that ''people with disabilities will be exempt,'' but converting such a statement into an effective policy process is complicated, expensive, and fundamentally flawed. Many people with disabilities receive SNAP, but do not meet SNAP's statutory definitions of ''disability'' or have not been so identified. Under SNAP, states have no obligation to help people prove they are exempt, even if they have difficulty obtaining the necessary records or verification from a doctor. In addition, states are under no obligation to ensure that people with disabilities have access to the full array of services they might need to work—such as accessible transportation, supported employment, and personal care aide services. People with disabilities often want to work, but need additional supports and services to obtain and keep jobs, in addition to facing discrimination and misconceptions about their ability to work.

Underfunded work programs would be woefully inadequate to meet training needs. Proposed new investments in SNAP employment and training programs—funded in large part by benefit cuts—amount to only about $30 per person per month. This amount would be grossly insufficient to provide adequate employment services for people subject to proposed new work requirements, including job-seekers with disabilities.

New reporting requirements would create major hurdles to benefits. Proposed new reporting requirements related to eligibility, employment and training, and time limits would be extremely difficult for many people with disabilities to navigate and comply with. For example, ending a decades-old simplification measure and instead requiring people to share utility bills with the SNAP office—or else, see their benefits reduced—is harsh, unnecessary, and burdensome both for SNAP participants and states.

If Congress wishes to explore meaningful opportunities for SNAP participants to increase self-sufficiency through employment, we recommend awaiting the results of the Employment & Training pilot projects authorized under the 2014 Farm Bill. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) awarded pilot grants in 2015, all 10 state programs are operational, and evaluation activities will operate through 2021. Already, a number of pilot states have cited multiple barriers faced by participants, including ''health issues.'' It will be important for USDA and the evaluators to carefully explore the experiences and outcomes of people with disabilities and their families in these pilot programs. Congress should await the final pilot evaluations before considering any changes in these areas.

We call on you to reject proposals that would weaken SNAP's effectiveness as our nation's foremost anti-hunger program by limiting access, reducing benefits, or creating administrative hurdles. We urge all Members to vote no on the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018 as approved by the Agriculture Committee on April 18, and instead to work on a bipartisan basis to strengthen and protect SNAP as part of the Farm Bill.

Sincerely,

CCD members:

ACCSES, Allies for Independence, American Association of People with Disabilities, American Association on Health and Disability, American Diabetes Association, American Foundation for the Blind, American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR), American Psychological Association, Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD), Autism Society, Autistic Self Advocacy Network, Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law, Brain Injury Association of America, Center for Public Representation, Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation, Community Legal Services of Philadelphia, Council of Administrators of Special Education, Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund, Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children (DEC), Easterseals.

Epilepsy Foundation, Institute for Educational Leadership, The Jewish Federations of North America, Justice in Aging, Lutheran Services in America Disability Network, National Alliance on Mental Illness, National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities, National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE), National Association of State

Head Injury Administrators, National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, National Disability Institute, National Disability Rights Network, National Down Syndrome Congress, National Organization of Social Security Claimants' Representatives (NOSSCR), School Social Work Association of America, SourceAmerica, TASH, The Arc of the United States, United Spinal Association.

Joined by:

Lakeshore Foundation.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. LAWRENCE).

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak out against this terrible farm bill.

Mr. Speaker, we were working together, Democrats and Republicans, to work on a farm bill. Unfortunately, the Republicans are putting all of our constituents in danger by making this bill purely a political agenda.

At the last minute, after working together and reaching consensus, the Republicans decided to include major devastating cuts to SNAP, or food stamps, instead of helping rural and urban Americans.

This bill cuts SNAP by $23 billion, which will kick 1 million households off the program. The bill will also kick 265,000 kids out of free school meals and reduce benefits for millions of families.

In Michigan 1.3 million people rely on SNAP and it keeps 141,000 children out of poverty. This bill includes so many other programs in my district.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentlewoman from Michigan.

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Mr. Speaker, my district supports urban farmers and food banks so our farmers and people can thrive. We should not put all of this in danger.

Mr. Speaker, I call on Republicans today to stop, to remove this terrible proposal for SNAP with this poisonous bill.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a statement from No Kid Hungry, Share Our Strength, an initiative strongly opposed to this bill.

[From No Kid Hungry, May 15, 2018]

CONGRESS MUST VOTE NO ON FARM BILL

WASHINGTON, DC.—This week the House of Representatives will vote on the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018 (H.R. 2), also known as the Farm Bill. The following is a statement from Share Our Strength's Senior Vice President Lisa Davis about the harmful impact the bill would have on struggling families in America. Share Our Strength officially opposes the bill.

''This week, the House of Representatives will vote on the Farm Bill. On balance, this bill will ultimately increase poverty and hunger in the United States and Share Our Strength cannot support it.

Thirteen million children today are growing up in families that worry about hunger. Even more live in families on the brink, just one lost job, one medical emergency, one broken water heater away from hunger. Consider:

A study by the Federal Reserve shows that nearly half of all Americans couldn't come up with $400 for an emergency expense.

Another study from the National Center for Children in Poverty shows that nearly half of all children in the United States live ''dangerously close'' to the poverty line. 6 in 10 Americans will spend at least one year of their lives in poverty.

And in another survey recently conducted on behalf of No Kid Hungry, two-thirds of low-income parents said they would not be able to afford enough food for their families if they were hit with a single, unplanned expense of $1,500.

These are families trying to do their best to survive. These are the families we all know. It's the single working mom in California, worried about whether to pay the electricity bill or pay for groceries this month. It's the grandmother trying to raise her grandkids in Appalachia. And it's the military veteran trying to find enough work hours to support his son in Central Pennsylvania.

And while this legislation includes some needed improvements to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), such as increasing asset limits and indexing them to inflation, these changes are significantly outweighed by harmful ones, such as eliminating Broad Based Categorical Eligibility (BBCE) and increasing administrative burdens on states and imposing penalties on adults who are unable to comply with the expanded work requirements in a given month.

We believe a good job is the best pathway out of poverty, but there is little reason to think the policies in this Farm Bill will increase employment. It imposes harsh penalties on beneficiaries who drop below the required number of hours in a month, locking them out of SNAP for a full year the first time and 3 years if it happens again. imagine a single mom barely getting 20 hours of work a week whose child gets strep throat or the flu. Or the rural dad whose car breaks down. Or the 55-year-old house cleaner whose back goes out.

This is all counterintuitive. Adding hurdles and punitive restrictions won't help people find jobs or get back on their feet. But it will increase hunger and hardship for many families.

In addition, the Congressional Budget Office also reports that this legislation will lead to more than 265,000 kids losing free school meals during the school year, a double whammy for poor, working families. Research demonstrates the deep connections between hunger and health, particularly for children. When kids don't get the fuel they need to nourish their developing minds and bodies, they are more likely to get sick and do poorly in school, and they are much less likely to access a future free from poverty.

We urge members of the House of Representatives to take a stand for children and families and oppose this legislation.''

ABOUT NO KID HUNGRY

No child should go hungry in America, but 1 in 5 kids will face hunger this year. Using proven, practical solutions, No Kid Hungry is ending childhood hunger today by ensuring that kids start the day with a nutritious breakfast, are able to get the nutrition they need during the summertime, and families learn the skills they need to shop and cook on a budget. When we all work together, we can make sure kids get the healthy food they need. No Kid Hungry is a campaign of national anti-hunger organization Share Our Strength.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a letter from a coalition of over 60 child advocacy organizations opposed to the bill.

MAY 9, 2018.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: As child advocates in the areas of hunger and nutrition, poverty, health, welfare, housing, and education, we are writing to express our opposition to the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018 (H.R. 2), which will harm the millions of children who rely on federal nutrition programs, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) for access to consistent, healthy food. In the interests of our nation's babies, children and youth we strongly urge you to vote NO on H.R. 2.

SNAP is a proven anti-hunger and anti-poverty program for children, which also lowers the odds of household and child food insecurity, and of children's anemia, poor health, hospitalization for failure to thrive, and developmental delays. Research has also found that receiving SNAP in early childhood improved high school graduation rates, adult earnings, and adult health. Today, nearly 20 million children participate in SNAP, representing 44 percent of the program's recipients and receiving nearly half of every SNAP dollar. In addition, school breakfast and lunch programs provide many of these same children a nutritious morning and lunchtime meal each day. Because children experience both poverty and food insecurity at higher rates than the general population, federal nutrition programs such as SNAP and school meals are critical supports that help them develop, learn, and succeed. To that end, we are very concerned about the impact H.R. 2 would have on our nation's children. In fact, several provisions in the Nutrition Title of H.R. 2 directly threaten access to vital nutrition programs for the countless children and youth that we represent:

Drastic Program Eligibility Changes: H.R. 2 Makes several harmful changes to state options that simplify SNAP eligibility requirements to improve access to SNAP for poor and low-income families with children. These changes would:

Expose Low-Income Children to a SNAP ''Benefit Cliff'': H.R. 2 eliminates Broad Based Categorical Eligibility (BBCE), which gives states additional flexibility and efficiency in granting SNAP eligibility. This change will reinstate a benefit cliff in a majority of states, jeopardizing food assistance for 400,000 households who are scraping by on earnings just above 130 percent of the Federal poverty line.

Undermine the Ability of Poor and Low-Income Families with Children to Build Savings: Similarly, the virtual elimination by H.R. 2 of Categorical Eligibility will mean many states will have to introduce a counterproductive and costly process of asset testing for SNAP eligibility. As a result, H.R. 2 would cause many families to lose eligibility solely because of red tape, and force other families choose between meeting their basic need for food and building up the savings and resources that would help them achieve economic mobility.

Threaten Poor and Low-Income Children's Access to School Meals: Under current law, children who receive SNAP are directly certified for free school meal programs. These meals help combat childhood hunger, while playing an important role in improving academic achievement and test scores and reducing absenteeism, tardiness, and discipline referrals. By forcing families off of SNAP due to changes in categorical eligibility, H.R. 2 would break this vital link between SNAP receipt and school meals for low-income and poor children. As a result, some 265,000 children stand to lose access to free school meals.

Undermine SNAP benefits for Poor and Low-Income Children Whose Families Rely on the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP): LIHEAP is a program that helps low-income households afford their monthly utility bills. Under current law, some states allow households to use LIHEAP benefits greater than $20/month as proof of significant energy expenses, creating a streamlined method for families to access a modest increase in their SNAP benefit. However, H.R. 2 removes this option for households that do not have an elderly member, effectively requiring poor and low-income families with children to provide substantial documentation of energy bills on a frequent basis for caseworkers to determine their utility allowance, which could discourage them from seeking the larger benefit or decrease its size.

Harsh Work Requirements: Under current law, existing SNAP work requirements aimed at childless adults already have unintended and harmful consequences for children (for instance, those who rely on pooled resources from extended family and Non-Custodial Parents) and youth (such as those aging out of foster care.) Yet in spite of limited supporting evidence, H.R. 2 intensifies and expands work requirements, reduces state flexibilities for exemptions, and requires states to implement costly training and employment programs that will take funds from food benefits to support a bureaucracy that will not provide quality services to people. The consequences of these changes could be devastating for countless children and youth, including:

The 13.4 million school-aged children on SNAP: H.R. 2 takes the unprecedented step of expanding work requirements to adults with school-aged children. This provision risks the wellbeing of children whose parents or guardians are: 1) acting as a caretaker for a loved one such as a child with a disability; 2) have physical or mental health disabilities that don't qualify as a disability under the legal definition; 3) face substantial barriers to work, including substance abuse issues or domestic violence; 4) working but struggling to meet the 20 hour per week threshold or the burdensome documentation requirements; and 5) have difficulty obtaining childcare or transportation. For these parents or guardians, losing SNAP translates to a benefit cut for their whole household, meaning there will be less food on the table for their children. Some parents and guardians may also erroneously believe that their inability to meet these new work requirements makes their children ineligible for SNAP as well, and as a result opt out of applying for or renewing benefits for the entire family.

In addition, children in very vulnerable families may be impacted by the new requirements, such as:

Children in the Care of Grandparents: Today, more than 2.5 million children are being raised by their grandparents or other relatives, in part because families are dealing with parental alcohol and substance abuse issues, which are growing rapidly due to the opioid epidemic. And already, these families face barriers to accessing the full array of benefits and services they need. H.R. 2 would further threaten the ability of grandparents and other older relatives to care for children because it expands work requirements for adults up to age 60 who are caring for children over six years of age.

Children in Families with a History of Family Violence: H.R. 2 requires parents fleeing family violence with their children to meet the new work requirements unless they receive a state exemption. In addition, H.R. 2 requires parents to cooperate with state Child Support Enforcement (CSE) efforts in order receive SNAP benefits—a drastic change from current law, under which 45 states, DC, and the Virgin Islands have declined to link the two. Yet H.R. 2 effectively eliminates existing state flexibility around CSE cooperation, meaning parents who would like to apply for SNAP but are afraid of CSE requirements which would link them to their abusers are forced to choose between safety and feeding their children.

Children in Military and Veteran Families: Many veteran and military families need help feeding themselves and their children. Today, households that include a veteran with a disability are nearly twice as likely to lack access to adequate food as households that do not include someone with a disability, and sadly, food insecurity rates are nearly double among post–9/11 veterans. Furthermore, currently-serving military families often experience food insecurity because of financial emergencies, low pay, and crisis levels of chronic unemployment or underemployment of military spouses in a society where most families need dual incomes to live. By subjecting these parents, including those suffering from PTSD, to the new work requirements, H.R. 2 penalizes families in need who have already sacrificed so much for our nation.

Youth aging out of foster care and unaccompanied, homeless youth: Youth aging out of foster care often face various challenges, including homelessness, difficulty affording education, and finding employment. Unaccompanied homeless youth and young adults (who lack safe stable housing and who are not in the care of a parent or guardian) experience similar difficulties, especially when they reach age 18. Existing SNAP work requirements already create a substantial barrier for these young people from accessing food assistance, because they technically meet the definition of a childless adult. Under the harsh requirements in H.R. 2, these vulnerable young adults will face even larger obstacles to food assistance.

The Farm Bill represents an important opportunity for policy solutions that will strengthen and improve nutrition programs for our nation's children. Instead, H.R. 2 is slated to reduce spending on SNAP benefits by more than $20 billion over 10 years and will disproportionately hurt children through its harmful provisions. We urge you to protect our nation's children and vote NO on H.R. 2.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Signed,

1,000 Days, African American Health Alliance, Afterschool Alliance, American Academy of Pediatrics, Arizona Council of Human Service Providers, Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs, Campaign for Youth Justice, Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP), Child Care Aware of America, Child Labor Coalition, Child Welfare League of America, Children's Defense Fund, Children's Leadership Council, Children's Advocacy Institute, Coalition on Human Needs, Covenant House International, Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children (DEC), Every Child Matters, Families USA, Family Focused Treatment Association.

Family Focused Treatment Association, First Five Years Fund, First Focus Campaign for Children, Food Research & Action Center, Forum for Youth Investment, Generations United, Healthy Teen Network, Jumpstart, Lutheran Services in America, Methodist Children's Home Society, MomsRising, National Alliance of Children's Trust & Prevention Funds, National Association for Family Child Care, National Association for the Education of Young Children, National Association of Counsel for Children, National Center on Adoption and Permanency, National Consumers League, National Council of Jewish Women, National Diaper Bank Network, National Health Law Program.

National Human Services Assembly, National Indian Child Welfare Association, National Migrant Seasonal Head Start Association, National Network for Youth, National PTA, National Urban League, National WIC Association, National Women's Law Center, Oral Health America, Parents as Teachers, Partnership for America's Children, PolicyLink, Prosperity Now, Public Advocacy for Kids, Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities Coalition.

RESULTS, Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law, SchoolHouse Connection, Share Our Strength, Social Advocates for Youth San Diego, SparkAction, StandUp For Kids, The Criminalization of Poverty Project at the Institute for Policy Studies, The National Association for Bilingual Education, The W. Haywood Burns Institute, UnidosUS, Western Regional Advocacy Project, Youth Villages, YWCA USA.

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a letter from the National Education Association strongly opposed to this bill.

NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION,
Washington, DC, May 15, 2018.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of the three million members of the National Education Association and the 50 million students they serve, we strongly urge you to VOTE NO on the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018 (H.R. 2) and oppose any amendments that further weaken the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. This bill makes unnecessary changes to eligibility requirements that could reduce the number of students certified for free school meals. The bill also imposes additional work requirements for adults that will make it harder for some people to get or keep critical nutrition benefits. Votes associated with this issue may be included in NEA's Report Card for the 115th Congress.

The Farm Bill, as this reauthorization is commonly known, provides funding for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which is our nation's largest anti-hunger program. By providing monthly benefits to eligible low-income people to purchase food, SNAP plays a critical role in reducing hunger, malnutrition, and poverty, and improving family security, child and adult health, and employment. SNAP reaches key vulnerable populations—78 percent of SNAP households include a child, an elderly person, or a person with disabilities; 84 percent of all SNAP benefits go to such households. SNAP lifted 3.6 million Americans out of poverty in 2016, according to the Census Bureau's Supplemental Poverty Measure. By providing much needed economic support, SNAP allows families to have sufficient nutrition during times of unemployment, fluctuating incomes, and low-wage work.

Children living in households that receive SNAP benefits are eligible to receive free school meals. The healthy meals that low-income children receive at school fight hunger, improve academic performance, and help reduce absenteeism, tardiness, and discipline referrals. According to the Food Research and Action Center, linking children in SNAP households to school meals is so important that Congress required all school districts participating in the National School Lunch Program to directly certify their students for free school meals.

H.R. 2 undermines the important link between SNAP and free school meals in the 28 states that have chosen a broad based categorical eligibility option under current

rules that expands SNAP eligibility to assist working families that still struggle to make ends meet. According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP), this could impact as many as 265,000 students nationwide. While students could apply for school meals via a burdensome paper process, there is no guarantee that they will still be eligible for the program or recertified in a timely manner. This would cost their families even more when they have just lost SNAP benefits. Further, this puts an enormous administrative burden on schools to revert to a costly paper-based system,

Direct Certification for SNAP also provides the foundation for the Community Eligibility Provision, a hugely successful option that allows over 20,000 high-poverty schools to offer free breakfast and lunch to their students. The provision eliminates the need for schools to collect and process school meal applications, which allows schools to focus on providing healthy and appealing meals instead of processing paperwork. Schools are eligible to implement community eligibility if at least 40 percent of their students are certified to receive free school meals without submitting an application.

Reducing the number of students who are directly certified by changing the rules for broad-based categorical eligibility means that fewer schools will be eligible to implement community eligibility, and many schools that are eligible will find that it is no longer financially viable, because fewer of their meals would be reimbursed at the free rate. This would increase unnecessary paperwork for schools and inhibit student success.

The proposed changes in H.R. 2 to broad-based categorical eligibility will result in working families losing much needed food benefits. It also means that their children could lose free school meals, amplifying the negative impact of the cut. It will mean more children go hungry at home as well as at school.

The bill further imposes aggressive new work requirements, which are unnecessary, unworkable and likely to do more harm than good. It would require SNAP participants ages 18 through 59 who are not disabled or raising a child under 6 to prove—every month—that they're working at least 20 hours a week, participating at least 20 hours a week in a work program, or a combination of the two. These new requirements would force states to develop large new bureaucracies that would need to track millions of SNAP recipients, but likely would do little to boost employment, particularly given that the new funding provided in the bill for job training and work slots would amount to just $30 per month for those recipients who need a work slot to retain SNAP benefits, according to the CBPP. Further, the requirements would leave low-income people with barriers to employment—such as limited job skills or family members with illness—with neither earnings nor food assistance.

We also have particular concern about amendments filed for Rules Committee consideration that would undermine the nutrition guidelines for school meals programs. These guidelines are currently being implemented in schools, and have already led to increased fruit and vegetable consumption by students. Good nutrition is particularly important for students from low-income families, who may eat as many as half of their calories every day at school. Additionally, USDA has only recently published an interim rule for school meals that provides additional flexibility on the guidelines for schools. These amendments would only add uncertainty to this process and threaten the nutritional quality of the meals offered to students.

We urge you to oppose any amendments that could threaten mandatory safety net programs beyond SNAP, such as Medicaid, Medicare, Social Security, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

The bill further includes $65 million in loans and grants administered by the Department of Agriculture to support Association Health Plans (AHP) offered through organizations that will eliminate coverage of essential health benefits (categories of care). These plans may appear to be a less expensive option than current small group market plans that include comprehensive coverage and consumer protections. However, in light of recently proposed rules, AHPs will soon not be required to cover services such as prescription drugs, mental health and maternity care leading to insufficient and inadequate care for children and adults.

We strongly urge you to Vote No on the Farm Bill, any amendments aimed at weakening the healthy guidelines for school meals, and any amendments that make it even more difficult for SNAP participants to receive critical nutrition benefits.

Sincerely,

MARC EGAN,
Director of Government Relations,
National Education Association.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL).

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, and I rise in opposition to the rule. SNAP is a lifeline for 40 million low-income Americans and millions of working families. It is the most effective antihunger program in the country.

It is a proven pathway out of poverty for America's most vulnerable families, and yet, instead of protecting successful programs like SNAP, this cruel bill would take over $23 billion in benefits away from children, seniors, veterans, individuals with disabilities, and working families struggling to make ends meet.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle argue that the requirements in this farm bill would help people find work. But if they are really interested in promoting jobs that allow people to care for themselves and their families, I would invite them to consider legislation to raise the minimum wage, ensure fair work scheduling, provide paid family and medical leave and paid sick days, and address basic living standards.

Instead, we are considering a callous farm bill that cuts benefits for those who need it most in order to pay for massive handouts to corporations in the top 1 percent. I urge my colleagues to vote against this rule.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, may I ask how much time I have left.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Massachusetts has 2 minutes remaining.

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

Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to serve on the Agriculture Committee. I am the ranking member in the Nutrition Subcommittee, and I sat through 23 hearings. I heard Republican witnesses and Democratic witnesses, and all of them said the same thing: the SNAP program is important; don't mess around with it.

I didn't hear anybody—anybody hint at embracing what is in this farm bill under the nutrition title, a title, by the way, which I, as the ranking member of the Nutrition Subcommittee, didn't even see until it was made public.

My friend from Georgia talks about bipartisanship. I mean, give me a break. I mean, you can say it all you want, but the bottom line is that it doesn't exist in the Agriculture Committee. The process was offensive, and even more offensive is what the end product is going to do to vulnerable people in this country.

You know, this is not a debate about able-bodied adults who aren't working. You know, that is a very complicated population. I actually asked for a hearing on that population, and I was denied that right. You ought to know who this population is. It is a complicated population.

Many of these able-bodied adults without dependents who are not working or who are not in the job training programs are our veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan having difficulty reintegrating in the community; they are young people graduating out of foster care; they are people with undiagnosed mental illnesses. If we did a hearing, you would know who this population is. This is more than a press release.

I am sick and tired of people being stereotyped all the time. And by the way, you punish people who are working. You know, by eliminating broad-based categorical eligibility, there are people right now who are working, who make, you know, between $50,800 a year and maybe $24,000 a year, they work, and they get this benefit to put food on the table.

□ 1415

And yet you are making changes that will deny them that benefit. They are working. You say you want to reward work. Well, what are you thinking when you take this nutrition benefit away from these people, who are doing everything right. When you take this SNAP benefit away from adults, you are taking it away from their children as well. And you heard over and over and over again that when people lose their SNAP benefit, their kids lose access to a free breakfast and lunch at school. This is awful.

Send this bill back to committee. Vote ''no'' on this rule.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

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

I told you when we started this debate, Mr. Speaker, you were going to hear some passion from my friend from Massachusetts because he is, in fact, passionate. He is a public servant, and he serves his constituency well.

But I want to read to you from Politico, one of our Washington, D.C., newspapers, that follows what goes on here

in politics. I don't sit on the Agriculture Committee, as my friend from Massachusetts does, but Politico reported this, as talks around the farm bill broke down in March:

Bipartisan negotiations over the farm bill stopped—

There were bipartisan negotiations. Those negotiations stopped, Mr. Speaker.

Thursday afternoon, after House Agriculture Committee ranking member Collin Peterson—

The ranking Democrat.

—faced pressure from fellow Democrats, who complained that discussions about changes to the food stamp program were being kept secret.

My friend from Massachusetts mentioned that. I have that same frustration on committees that I serve, Mr. Speaker. Very often, the chairman of the committee, who is a Republican, and the ranking member, who is a Democrat, and their subcommittee chairmen very often they get together and have negotiations before rank-and-file Members get involved. It happens, and I am frustrated about it, and my friend from Massachusetts is frustrated about it.

The development—

Politico goes on to say.

—is a considerable blow to the sweeping bill, which was seen by many as one of the only real chances for bipartisanship in this Congress. Congress is supposed to reauthorize the farm bill every 5 years, but political wrangling has threatened its fate. Current law expires September 30.

Peterson's decision—

COLLIN PETERSON is the ranking Democrat.

—to pause talks comes after House Democrats demanded that he stop negotiations until the text of the bill is made to everyone.

The Democratic Members have made clear that they unanimously oppose the farm bill's SNAP language as it has been described to them or reported in the press.

Well, Mr. Speaker, if when you hear things you don't like, or see things you don't like, you leave the negotiating table, I promise you we are going to get a worse result every single time.

I go up to this Rules Committee, right up here on the third floor, and we debate and talk and debate and talk and debate and talk hour upon hour upon hour, late into the evening, often into the next morning. I hear things I don't like. I hear people say things I know are not true. But I don't pick up my toys and go home. I stay at the table, I debate the issues, and I work through the issues. If it was easy, someone would have done it before this Congress got here. All that is left is hard.

My friend from Massachusetts is absolutely right, Mr. Speaker. He is absolutely right. He is absolutely right. If we are to reform the social safety net, we are going to have to expand benefits, not restrict them. He is absolutely right. But if we can't stay at the table to have that conversation, we are never going to bring people together to get that done.

You can't blame people who follow their self-interest. If the rule says you don't have to work, you don't have to work. If the rule says if you work too much, you will lose your benefits, then you don't work too much. That is crazy to encourage people to stay home.

You ought to be encouraging people to seek that next promotion, take on those extra hours, work that overtime. That has always been who we are and what we have done, and we have not taken on that challenge in welfare reform. I believe we can. I believe we can.

I need my colleagues to support this rule today. I need them to support the rule so we can bring up not just the farm bill, so that we can bring up the VA MISSION Act, a bipartisan, bicameral bill that will go to the President's desk and change the lives of veterans.

I need my colleagues to support this rule, not just so we can bring up the farm bill, not just so we can bring up the VA MISSION Act, but so that we can make the harming or threatening the harm of a law enforcement officer a Federal crime, to give the men and women who wear blue across this country the protections they deserve.

This is a bipartisan bill, Mr. Speaker, that is going to make a difference for our constituents back home. These are going to be issues that get folks exercise, Mr. Speaker. The most difficult issues we take on always do.

But if we pass this rule and take up this legislation, we will be one step closer, not just to succeeding for our veterans, not just to succeeding for our law enforcement officers, not just to succeeding on behalf of our farmers, but one step closer to taking on what is a collaborative challenge of how to return the incentives to work to the American people, while keeping the social safety net strong for all of the families that depend on it.

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

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Massachusetts will state his parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Georgia just mischaracterized the very partisan process that occurred in the Agriculture Committee in which Democrats were totally shut out.

I want to know: What are the remedies that we have at this point in the debate to be able to correct the record so we can correct the misrepresentations?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman has not stated a parliamentary inquiry. That is a matter for debate.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to reclaim the time that I have yielded back. I would be happy to yield a portion of it to my friend.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, could I inquire how much time is remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Georgia has 5 minutes remaining.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN), my friend.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I would say to the gentleman that nobody walked away from the table; only after we were totally shut out of the process.

As I mentioned in my opening statement—if the gentleman were paying attention—the ranking member, Mr. PETERSON, actually tried to offer suggestions and was totally shut out.

I am the ranking member of the Nutrition Subcommittee. You mentioned the ranking members usually get informed as to what is going on. I didn't see it until it was made public.

This was the most offensive process I have ever witnessed.

And, by the way, the product in this ag bill—which I don't think the gentleman has read, based on some of the things he has said—but this final product does not represent any of the hearings we had.

So this process in the Agriculture Committee, which has been, historically, probably the most bipartisan committee in the Congress, was basically thrown into chaos as a result of the behavior of the majority.

I just say to the gentleman: You can try to spin this all you want, but the bottom line is that this has never happened before. And COLLIN PETERSON—I just want to say—is probably the most bipartisan Member of this House. If you can't strike a bipartisan deal with COLLIN PETERSON, you can't strike a bipartisan deal with anybody.

But that is not what this was about. This was about advancing an agenda, quite frankly, that is going to hurt millions of vulnerable people in this country, and I find it offensive.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for granting my unanimous consent request to reclaim my time. I do believe that we advantage all of our causes, rather than disadvantage them, by promoting debate.

But I want to take issue, Mr. Speaker. I didn't mischaracterize anything. I read the media reporting. I will be the first—when you want to have the fake news conversation—there is too much fake news in this country—I will be happy to join you and have that debate with you. But I didn't mischaracterize a thing.

I agree with what my friend had to say about COLLIN PETERSON from Minnesota. He is a fabulous Member, who works as hard as he can on behalf of his constituents to get work done. Nothing in the article I read said COLLIN PETERSON walked away from the table. Everything in the article I read said he

was pressured by his Democratic colleagues to walk away from the table.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. WOODALL. I will not yield again to my friend. I am going to close.

I take umbrage at the fact that we would have an opportunity to use each other's time, and you would use it to continue to say I mischaracterized, that we would have an opportunity to have a discussion, and you would continue to use it to say that folks just aren't as well informed as you are about those issues.

We have opportunities in this Chamber to make things better, and we have opportunities to make things worse. And I will say to my friend, Mr. Speaker, if we take advantage of our opportunities to make things better, I believe that we will. If we take advantage of our opportunities to make things worse, I am absolutely certain that we will.

I choose the latter. I choose the latter. A vote in support of this rule is a vote for the latter.

I am sorry, I am choosing the former. I am choosing the former. My colleagues out there are saying: Hey, I know WOODALL; that is not right. He is not choosing to make things worse.

I choose the former, Mr. Speaker. I choose the former. A vote for this rule is a vote for the former.

Mr. Speaker, I apologize to the Chair for my confusion.

The material previously referred to by Mr. MCGOVERN is as follows:

AN AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 891 OFFERED BY MR. MCGOVERN

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

SEC. 4. Immediately upon adoption of this resolution the Speaker shall, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 5805) to designate certain amounts authorized to be appropriated for the provision by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs of hospital care and medical services in non-Department of Veterans Affairs facilities pursuant to contracts as changes in concepts and definitions for certain budgetary purposes, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided among and controlled by the respective chairs and ranking minority members of the Committees on Veterans' Affairs and the Budget. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. All points of order against provisions in the bill are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions. If the Committee of the Whole rises and reports that it has come to no resolution on the bill, then on the next legislative day the House shall, immediately after the third daily order of business under clause 1 of rule XIV, resolve into the Committee of the Whole for further consideration of the bill.

SEC. 5. Clause 1(c) of rule XIX shall not apply to the consideration of H.R. 5805.

THE VOTE ON THE PREVIOUS QUESTION: WHAT IT REALLY MEANS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 and clause 9 of rule XX, this 15-minute vote on ordering the previous question will be followed by 5-minute votes on:

Adoption of the resolution, if ordered; and

The motion to suspend the rules on S. 35.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 230, nays 184, not voting 13, as follows:

[Roll No. 185]

YEAS—230

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bergman
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Brady (TX)
Brat
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Cheney
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Curtis
Davidson
Davis, Rodney
Denham
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Emmer
Estes (KS)
Faso
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foxx
Frelinghuysen
Gaetz
Gallagher
Garrett
Gianforte
Gibbs
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guthrie
Handel
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins (LA)
Hill
Holding
Hollingsworth
Hudson
Huizenga
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Kustoff (TN)
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
Lesko
Lewis (MN)
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Massie
Mast
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Newhouse
Noem
Norman
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Pittenger
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Posey
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Rice (SC)
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney, Francis
Rooney, Thomas J.
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce (CA)
Russell
Rutherford
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner

Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smucker
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NAYS—184

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

NOT VOTING—13

Beyer
Brown (MD)
Cicilline
DeGette
Gabbard
Gonzalez (TX)
Johnson (GA)
Labrador
McNerney
Richmond
Rogers (KY)
Rush
Webster (FL)

□ 1449

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

So the previous question was ordered.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Stated against:

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, had I been present, I would have voted "nay" on rollcall No. 185.

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

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

RECORDED VOTE

Mrs. TORRES. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

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

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 229, noes 185, not voting 13, as follows:

[Roll No. 186]

AYES—229

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bergman
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Brady (TX)
Brat
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Cheney
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Curtis
Davidson
Davis, Rodney
Denham
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Emmer
Estes (KS)
Faso
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foxx
Frelinghuysen
Gaetz
Gallagher
Garrett
Gianforte
Gibbs
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guthrie
Handel
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins (LA)
Hill
Holding
Hollingsworth
Hudson
Huizenga
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Kustoff (TN)
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
Lesko
Lewis (MN)
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Massie
Mast
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Newhouse
Noem
Norman
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Pittenger
Poliquin
Posey
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Rice (SC)
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney, Francis
Rooney, Thomas J.
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce (CA)
Rush
Russell
Rutherford
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smucker
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NOES—185

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

NOT VOTING—13

Beyer
Brown (MD)
Butterfield
Cooper
DeGette
Gabbard
Issa
Labrador
McNerney
Poe (TX)
Richmond
Rogers (KY)
Webster (FL)

□ 1457

Mr. CUMMINGS changed his vote from ''aye'' to ''no.''

So the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MOMENT OF SILENCE IN RECOGNITION OF NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

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

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, this week is National Police Week. Yesterday was National Peace Officers Memorial Day, a day that we stop and pause

and honor the fallen officers across this Nation who have given their lives to protect our families and communities across this great Nation.

Some of you, last year, experienced this bravery and courage firsthand. All of us were affected by the friends who were present when they were in danger and our Capitol Police came to their rescue.

As some of you know, I had a 33-year law enforcement career before coming to Congress. I lost two of my best friends. One was shot and one was stabbed.

These are brave, courageous people, but they are not only that. They have been blessed with the heart of a servant. They have been blessed with that gift to put other's lives before theirs, and that is what you saw last year, those of you on the baseball field. There was no hesitation. They were there for you, as were my friends for the citizens that lived in their patrol district.

Mr. Speaker, I have embraced the families, the friends, the partners, the children, and the spouses, and there are no words in that moment when the world is spinning out of control. There are no words when the world comes crashing down. There are no words. There is only silence and tears.

Mr. Speaker, this is my last year in Congress. This is my last time that I will ask you all to join with me in a moment of silence and tears with the families who have lost their loved ones in the line of duty.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will Members and all visitors in the gallery please stand and join us for a moment of silence.

BLACK HILLS NATIONAL CEMETERY BOUNDARY EXPANSION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, 5-minute voting will continue.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 35) to transfer administrative jurisdiction over certain Bureau of Land Management land from the Secretary of the Interior to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for inclusion in the Black Hills National Cemetery, and for other purposes, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 407, nays 0, not voting 20, as follows:

[Roll No. 187]

YEAS—407

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

NOT VOTING—20

Beyer
Brooks (IN)
Brown (MD)
Butterfield
DeGette
Faso
Gabbard
Himes
Huffman
Issa
Johnson (OH)
Labrador
McCarthy
McNerney
Perry
Poe (TX)
Ratcliffe
Richmond
Rogers (KY)
Webster (FL)

□ 1509

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to travel back to Washington due to illness.

Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall No. 184, "yea" on rollcall No. 185, "yea" on rollcall No. 186, and "yea" on rollcall No. 187.

REQUESTING THE SENATE TO RETURN TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES THE BILL H.R. 4743

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I send to the desk a privileged resolution, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 899

Resolved, That the Clerk of the House of Representatives request the Senate to return to the House the bill (H.R. 4743) entitled ''To amend the Small Business Act to strengthen the Office of Credit Risk Management within the Small Business Administration, and for other purposes.''.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PROTECT AND SERVE ACT OF 2018

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 891, I call up the bill (H.R. 5698) to amend title 18, United States Code, to punish criminal offenses targeting law enforcement officers, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee). Pursuant to House Resolution 891, the bill is considered read.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5698

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Protect and Serve Act of 2018''.

SEC. 2. CRIMES TARGETING LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 7 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''§ 120. Crimes targeting law enforcement officers

''(a) IN GENERAL.—Whoever, in any circumstance described in subsection (b), knowingly causes serious bodily injury to a law enforcement officer, or attempts to do so—

''(1) shall be imprisoned not more than 10 years, fined in accordance with this title, or both; and

''(2) shall be imprisoned for any term of years or for life, fined in accordance with this title, or both, if—

''(A) death results from the offense; or

''(B) the offense includes kidnapping or an attempt to kidnap, or an attempt to kill.

''(b) CIRCUMSTANCES DESCRIBED.—For purposes of subsection (a), the circumstances described in this subparagraph are that—

''(1) the conduct described in subsection (a) occurs during the course of, or as the result of, the travel of the defendant or the victim—

''(A) across a State line or national border; or

''(B) using a channel, facility, or instrumentality of interstate or foreign commerce;

''(2) the defendant uses a channel, facility, or instrumentality of interstate or foreign commerce in connection with the conduct described in subsection (a);

''(3) in connection with the conduct described in subsection (a), the defendant employs a firearm, dangerous weapon, explosive or incendiary device, or other weapon that has traveled in interstate or foreign commerce;

''(4) the conduct described in subsection (a)—

''(A) interferes with commercial or other economic activity in which the victim is engaged at the time of the conduct; or

''(B) otherwise affects interstate or foreign commerce; or

''(5) the victim is a Federal law enforcement officer.

''(c) CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENT.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—No prosecution of any offense described in this section may be undertaken by the United States, except under the certification in writing of the Attorney General, or a designee, that—

''(A) the State does not have jurisdiction;

''(B) the State has requested that the Federal Government assume jurisdiction;

''(C) the verdict or sentence obtained pursuant to State charges left demonstratively unvindicated the Federal interest in protecting the public safety; or

''(D) a prosecution by the United States is in the public interest and necessary to secure substantial justice.

''(2) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to limit the authority of Federal officers, or a Federal grand jury, to investigate possible violations of this section.

''(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

''(1) LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER.—The term 'law enforcement officer' means an employee of a governmental or public agency who is authorized by law—

''(A) to engage in or supervise the prevention, detention, investigation, or the incarceration of any person for any criminal violation of law; and

''(B) to apprehend or arrest a person for any criminal violation of law.

''(2) STATE.—The term 'State' means a State of the United States, the District of Columbia, or any commonwealth, territory, or possession of the United States.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

''120. Crimes targeting law enforcement officers.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. After 1 hour debate on the bill, it shall be in order to consider the further amendment printed in part A of House Report 115–677, if offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) or his designee, which shall be considered read, and shall be separately debatable for 10 minutes equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent.

The gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

PERMISSION TO POSTPONE PROCEEDINGS ON ADOPTING AMENDMENT TO H.R. 5698

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the question of adopting the amendment to H.R. 5698 may be subject to postponement as though under clause 8 of rule XX.

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

There was no objection.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material to H.R. 5698.

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

There was no objection.

□ 1515

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

On October 15, 1991, the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial was dedicated to honor Federal, State, and local law enforcement officers who have made the ultimate sacrifice for the safety and protection of our Nation and its people.

The memorial features two curving, 304-foot-long, blue-gray marble walls. Carved on these walls are the names of more than 21,000 officers who have been killed in the line of duty throughout U.S. history, dating back to the first known death in 1791.

Each spring, law enforcement officers from around the country gather in Washington, D.C., for Peace Officers Memorial Day. For a week, these men and women attend events to celebrate and honor those law enforcement officers who have made the ultimate sacrifice. Each year, there is a memorial service in which the names of fallen officers are added to the long, curving marble walls of the memorial. Unfortunately, the list of names keeps growing and shows no signs of slowing down.

That is why today I am pleased we are considering the Protect and Serve Act. This bill is designed to ensure those who seek to harm police officers face swift and certain justice.

In recent years, the brave and dedicated men and women in blue who serve our communities are facing increased levels of hostility and violence. The increasing levels of hostility towards the law enforcement community have given rise to an increase in ambush-style attacks on police officers.

In 2016 alone, 64 police officers were shot and killed in the line of duty, 21 of whom were killed in ambush-style attacks. According to CNN, in the first 17 weeks of this year, 21 law enforcement officers across the U.S. have been shot and killed in the line of duty. That averages out to more than one death every week.

Only a few weeks ago, on April 19, 2018, two sheriff's deputies were gunned down and killed in a suspected ambush while they were eating at a restaurant in Gainesville, Florida.

To address this threat to the brave police, who put their lives on the line each day across our country, the Protect and Serve Act allows for Federal prosecution of criminals who knowingly assault law enforcement officers and cause serious bodily harm or attempt to do so. This bill applies to both Federal law enforcement officers and State and local officers where there is a nexus to interstate commerce.

Importantly, Mr. Speaker, this legislation recognizes that most often these crimes are wholly within the jurisdiction of a State to prosecute. Therefore, in addition to other requirements in the bill to ensure a Federal connection, H.R. 5698 states specifically that prosecution under this new statute may only be pursued if the Attorney General certifies that, one, the State does not have jurisdiction; two, the State has requested that the Federal Government assume jurisdiction; three, the verdict or sentence obtained pursuant to State charges left demonstrably unvindicated the Federal interest in protecting the public safety; or, four, a prosecution by the United States is in the public interest and necessary to secure substantial justice.

This is a critical part of the bill. It will ensure that the Federal power is

reserved for particularly egregious cases.

At the dedication of the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial, President George H. W. Bush aptly stated: ''Carved on these walls is the story of America, of a continuing quest to preserve both democracy and decency, and to protect a national treasure that we call the American Dream.''

Today, we continue to recognize this special role police officers play in our society. The Protect and Serve Act sends a uniform message that our country will not tolerate attacks on police which purposefully attempt to undermine the State, sow chaos in our communities, and wreck the lives of many of our finest citizens and their families.

I urge my colleagues to send a uniform message today by addressing the grave crisis threatening both our communities and the brave men and women in blue who put their lives on the line each day.

I would like to thank my Judiciary Committee colleagues, especially career law enforcement officers Sheriff RUTHERFORD and Chief DEMINGS, for sponsoring this bill. In addition, I want to thank Congressman BUCK for his years of tireless work to ensure that those who target law enforcement officers are punished.

Finally, I want to recognize the police organizations who have worked with us so diligently on this and many other bills, including the Fraternal Order of Police, the National Association of Police Organizations, the Major County Sheriffs of America, the National Sheriffs' Association, the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, and the Sergeants Benevolent Association, among many others. I thank them. We all salute them for their steadfast commitment and dedicated service.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, the Protect and Serve Act, while rooted in laudable goals, will not strengthen protections for law enforcement officers, and it fails to make meaningful reforms that would improve police-community relations. Although I will not oppose the bill, I believe that its consideration today reflects a wasted opportunity.

This legislation would create a new offense under title 18 of the U.S. Code for the crime of targeting law enforcement officers. Current law, however, at both the Federal and State level already makes it a crime. It is not clear why this bill changes the law in any meaningful way.

No Member of Congress questions the difficulty, danger, and stress associated with being a police officer. A white paper commissioned by the Ruderman Family Foundation reported that, last year, 129 peace officers died in the line of duty—46 from shootings—with an additional 140 reported officer suicides. Since the start of this year, 2018, at least 36 law enforcement officers across the United States have died while on duty, with 24 of the deaths caused by gunfire.

Our hearts go out to the families of those officers who have lost their lives in the line of duty.

As a result of the risk inherent to policing, there is no profession more widely protected under Federal and State law than working in law enforcement. All 50 States have laws that enhance penalties for crimes against peace officers and, in some instances, crimes against the broadly defined category of first responders.

In fact, section 2 of the bill clearly acknowledges that States have primary jurisdictions for attacks on State and local police officers and lays out very narrow circumstances where a Federal nexus would exist. This presents an open question as to whether there would be any instances at all in which the Department of Justice would exercise jurisdiction under this legislation.

I would note that my own State of New York has four separate criminal statutes addressing attacks on law enforcement officers. Moreover, Federal laws already impose a life sentence and, in some circumstances, even the death penalty on persons convicted of killing State and local law enforcement officers or other employees assisting with Federal investigations.

Simply put, the legislation under consideration today does not improve upon this existing legal framework and does not provide any more stringent punishment for anyone under existing law.

I want to be clear about the respect that we have for the difficult work undertaken by our law enforcement professionals. While attacks on law enforcement officials are completely unacceptable, the existing framework for prosecuting these crimes is more than adequate at both the Federal and State level. If it were not, I would be an ardent supporter of this legislation.

Rather than advancing a bill that amounts to an empty gesture during Police Week, the Congress should instead be focusing on real reform measures that would actually protect law enforcement officers and first responders.

We should act on the related problem of well-documented unconstitutional policing practices in communities of color across the United States that have eroded trust between those communities and the law enforcement officials sworn to protect them.

The Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department currently has 19 consent agreements with troubled police departments nationwide. Dating back to the mid-1990s, every region of the country has suffered some kind of high-profile incident.

Adding to community concerns are the increasingly well-documented incidents of unjustified deadly force against unarmed victims in police-civilian encounters. More than 50 percent of the unarmed victims in these fatal encounters with police were people of color.

The goal of protecting police officer safety would be well served by working to foster law enforcement reforms aimed at helping local jurisdictions meet their constitutional obligation of fair and unbiased policing and the resulting better trust between the communities and the police in their midst.

As we have debated the Protect and Serve Act, I have been encouraged by the expressed commitment by Chairman GOODLATTE and the bill's sponsor, Representative RUTHERFORD, to work with me on bringing the Judiciary Committee's balanced work on law enforcement accountability out into the open with hearings and the introduction of legislation. We should care equally about harms by and against police officers and their impact on local communities.

We should care about the harms on local communities because of that harm and also because of the fact that it undoubtedly leads to distrust, which in turn leads to greater violence against police officers.

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

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. RUTHERFORD), who is the chief sponsor of the legislation and a member of the Judiciary Committee.

Mr. RUTHERFORD. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman GOODLATTE and Representative NADLER for their support of this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 5698, the Protect and Serve Act of 2018. This important bill will enhance penalties for anyone who intentionally causes harm to our law enforcement officers.

I can tell you after dedicating 40 years of my life to law enforcement, I know what officers go through every day when they put that uniform on, say goodbye to their families, and walk out the door to protect their communities.

Sadly, we have seen a recent rash in increase in violence against officers, especially in ambush-style attacks. In fact, just last month in Florida, Sergeant Noel Ramirez and Deputy Taylor Lindsey were eating lunch and were specifically targeted and assassinated in that restaurant simply because they were police officers and wore that blue uniform. They are not alone. So far this year, 87 law enforcement officers have been shot in the line of duty, 28 of whom ultimately lost their lives.

Mr. Speaker, this is a 75-percent increase over last year. For this reason, I introduced bipartisan legislation with my good friend and former Orlando police chief, Representative VAL DEMINGS, that will ensure that there are the strongest possible penalties for anyone who decides to target and harm

not only Federal law enforcement officers but also local and State law enforcement officers.

We worked on this bill closely with the Fraternal Order of Police, and I am proud to have earned the support of the National Association of Police Organizations, the Sergeants Benevolent Association, and the Major County Sheriffs of America, which represents thousands of officers across the country.

This week, we remember the officers who have given their lives protecting our communities, and we, as Members of Congress, must show the law enforcement community across the country that we support them and the important work that they do day in and day out.

We must also show those who wish to target police officers with violence that those attacks will not be tolerated. I urge all Members to join me in supporting this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I should mention—I think I would be remiss if I didn't—that just yesterday morning, in Jacksonville, Florida, as mentioned earlier by my good friend from Washington, Dave Reichert—Sheriff Reichert—held a moment of silence for those officers who have given their lives in service to this community. Yesterday morning, about 4 o'clock in the morning during a horrible storm in Jacksonville, Officer Lance Whitaker gave his life on Law Enforcement Memorial Day in service to our community.

I have to say, Police Week and Law Enforcement Memorial Day always remind me of the words of Ralph Waldo Emerson, who said that the purpose in life is not to be happy; it is to be useful. It is to be honorable. It is to be compassionate, and it is to know that you made a difference because you lived and you lived well.

Mr. Speaker, I offer this bill in memory of Officer Lance Whitaker, who died yesterday morning living well.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE), who is the distinguished ranking member of the Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations Subcommittee.

□ 1530

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I was honored just a few minutes ago to be on the floor of the House with the chairman of the committee, Mr. GOODLATTE; the ranking member, Mr. NADLER; the proponent of this bill, Mr. RUTHERFORD; and our Democratic proponent, Mrs. DEMINGS, to honor those fallen officers with a moment of silence in the most powerful lawmaking body in the world, to acknowledge to the Nation and to the world that we stand united in honoring those who have fallen in the call of duty.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude during National Police Week to all the brave men and women who continue to give of themselves selflessly. I also acknowledge my own hometown leadership: Sheriff Gonzalez, and, of course, our distinguished chief of police; all of the assistant chiefs, deputy sheriffs, and leadership; constables and their deputy constables; Texas rangers; and, of course, our Federal officers, over which this committee has jurisdiction. We thank not only them for their service, but also the families whose loved ones have fallen in battle.

This is not a discussion of the respect and admiration we have for officers, and there is no argument regarding the difficulty, danger, and stress associated with being a police officer. We all have seen the reports that show, in 2017, 129 police officers died in the line of duty; 46 of those brave men and women were shot, while 140, tragically, committed suicide. That says a lot about the toll this type of profession takes on a person physically, psychologically, mentally, and on their families.

The risks inherent in policing resulted in numerous statutes that deal with protecting our law enforcement officers via Federal and State law. Our law enforcement officers are most protected under our laws, and, in some instances, the statutes give life and the death penalty for such crimes. Even crimes against the broadly defined category of first responders are well addressed under Federal and State law.

My State of Texas has several criminal statutes addressing attacks on law enforcement officers; therefore, this legislation may be deemed to be a duplicate legal framework. But I want to propose to my colleagues, as I did when we sat together at the Rules Committee, that we can work together in moving forward.

I do want to say on this legislation that it does frame itself on the focus of the targeting of law enforcement. As well, it recognizes that the first prosecution level will be State and local laws to protect or bring to justice those who have shot police officers.

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

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentlewoman an additional 1 minute.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I want to be clear that I respect the bill that is moving forward but recognize that we really need to do more.

One of the points that I want to make is this new law does not have mandatory minimums. It does allow the discretion of the judge, but I believe that there are issues that our civil rights groups have raised that are legitimate.

This bill is being contemplated during a time when our country is in need of a new look at the Nation's 18,000 law enforcement agencies. I hope my colleague, Mr. RUTHERFORD, as we have honored those together who have fallen, will join us in the Law Enforcement Trust and Integrity Act that will provide for the opportunity for credentialing, professional development training and counseling, deescalation training that is necessary for our officers, and join in the enhancements of police-community relations. This will be a true tribute to our officers and, as well, provide a framework of protecting their lives as we engage the community in more coming together between police and community.

I hope, again, that we move together as a committee and that the police working group will produce this kind of legislation. I support the Protect and Serve Act of 2018.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to express my deepest gratitude during this National Police Week, to all the brave men and women that continue to give of themselves selflessly.

There is no argument regarding the difficulty, danger and stress associated with being a police officer.

We have all seen the reports that show in 2017, 129 police officers died in the line of duty. 46 of those brave men and women were shot, while 140 committed suicides. That says a lot about the toll this type of profession takes on a person both physical, psychologically and mentally.

The risk inherent in policing resulted in numerous statutes with vast protection via federal and state law. Our law enforcement officers are most protected under our laws and in some instances life and the death penalty are imposed for such crimes.

Even crimes against the broadly defined category of first responders are well addressed under federal and state law.

For example, my state of Texas has several criminal statutes addressing attacks on law enforcement officers.

Therefore, this legislation is duplicative in nature and does not improve current legal framework for crimes against law enforcement officers.

I want to be clear about the respect that we have for the difficult work undertaken by our law enforcement professionals. However, as Mr. Chairman said at Rules yesterday in agreement with my concerns, we cannot ignore the danger in taking such a one-sided approach to the issue of police practices.

Many of the civil rights groups have raised legitimate concerns. For example, this bill is being contemplated during a time when our country is in the throes of a national policing crisis, with a never-ending stream of police shootings of unarmed African americans captured on video.

While I support protection for our officers, I am also troubled by the message this may send to all those impacted daily by the violence perpetrated by the bad apples within law enforcement.

We should focus on real reform measures like the Law Enforcement Trust and Integrity Act that will protect law enforcement, first responders, and their communities.

Over the years, well-documented, unconstitutional policing practices in communities of color across the United States have eroded trust between these communities and the law enforcement officials sworn to protect them.

Almost 1,000 people were killed by police in 2017 according to the Washington Post. Another outlet estimates over 1,100 police-related fatalities last year, with people of color representing more than 50 percent of those unarmed during fatal encounters with police.

In the two years since the creation of the Judiciary bipartisan Policing Strategies Working Group, the Committee has advanced no police reform legislation.

The country's interests would be better served by working to foster law enforcement reforms aimed at helping local jurisdictions meet their constitutional obligation of fair and unbiased policing. Repeatedly pursuing legislation, such as H.R. 5698, will sow seeds of division by ignoring the realities of police accountability issues, thus ultimately undermining public safety.

We should care equally about harms by and against police officers and their impact on local communities.

Out of respect for all who have lost their lives over the last year—both law enforcement and civilian—we must dedicate ourselves to engaging the difficult issues in reforming police practices to make lasting change in our communities.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. SCALISE), a gentleman who can speak well of the role that law enforcement officers play in saving lives. He is the chief majority whip of the House of Representatives.

Mr. SCALISE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Virginia for yielding.

I thank my colleague from Florida for bringing forward this important bill, the Protect and Serve Act, and especially, Mr. Speaker, as we celebrate law enforcement week nationally, a time to really thank those men and women who serve and put their uniform on every day to protect us, protect our communities, and keep our country and communities safe.

I know all too well just that value and importance of having law enforcement and why they serve such an important role. Nearly a year ago, when we had the shooting in Virginia where a gunman targeted Members of Congress, it was those very law enforcement officers—in this case, our United States Capitol Police—who were the heroes who went toward the danger and confronted and took down the shooter, along with Virginia police who joined in as well.

While they were risking their lives for us, they took on gunfire. They were shot themselves. In this case, it was United States Capitol Police David Bailey and Crystal Griner, who were just recently awarded incredible honors from the President and national law enforcement organizations for their heroic bravery. They went towards the fire, but they were shot and continued to take down and confront the shooter.

Why this bill is so important is because it hardens penalties against any criminal who would target law enforcement officers. They deserve this protection. We have seen too often, in the last 2 years, where police officers were targeted by people because they wore the badge and because they are part of the thin blue line.

We need to stand with them. We need to make it crystal clear that we are going to be standing with them and we are going to have their back. More often than not, they are the ones who have our back. That is why this bill is so important, Mr. Speaker.

I rise in strong support and urge all of my colleagues to support this important legislation.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD letters from the National Fraternal Order of Police dated May 9, 2018; the National Association of Police Organizations, Inc., dated May 16, 2018; the Sergeants Benevolent Association, dated May 8, 2018; and the National Sheriffs' Association, dated May 7, 2018, all endorsing this legislation.

NATIONAL FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE,
Washington, DC, 9 May 2018.

Hon. PAUL D. RYAN,
Speaker of the House, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

Hon. KEVIN O. MCCARTHY,
Majority Leader, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

Hon. NANCY P. PELOSI,
Minority Leader, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

Hon. STENY H. HOYER,
Minority Whip, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER AND REPRESENTATIVES MCCARTHY, PELOSI AND HOYER: I am writing on behalf of the members of the Fraternal Order of Police to advise you of our strong support for H.R. 5698, the ''Protect and Serve Act,'' which was favorably reported by the House Committee on the Judiciary earlier today and to urge that it be considered next week during National Police Week.

The legislation, introduced by Representative John H. Rutherford (R–FL), a former sheriff, and Val V. Demings (D–FL), a former police chief, would impose Federal penalties on individuals who deliberately target local, State or Federal law enforcement officers with violence. This year 87 officers have been shot in the line of duty and 28 of them were killed. Far too many of these murdered officers were slain in ambush as was the case with Sergeant Noel Ramirez and Deputy Sheriff Taylor Lindsey of the Gilchrist County Sheriff's Department in Florida. These two officers were having lunch together when they were assassinated by a man who fired through the restaurant's window to kill them before turning the weapon on himself. Similarly, the violent transnational criminal organization MS–13 called for the assassinations of police officers in New York so the gang could ''take back the streets''—a move clearly intended to intimidate the men and women in uniform.

Ambush attacks like this are increasing at an alarming rate. A report issued by the Federal Bureau of Investigation on the motivations of cop-killers revealed that many of these attacks are motivated by a hatred or animus toward law enforcement officers. This same report stated that these killers felt that the communities and elected officials no longer supported their officers and they would not face serious penalties for their actions. We must change this perspective and we believe the ''Protect and Serve Act'' will do just that.

We appreciate, as always, your leadership and your support for law enforcement officers and the families of those who fell in the line of duty. As our nation comes together to honor these heroes during National Police Week, I hope the House will consider taking this legislation up on the floor and passing it.

On behalf of the more than 335,000 members of the Fraternal Order of Police, thank you for considering our view on this important legislation. If I can provide any additional support for this bill or on any other matter, please do not hesitate to contact me or my Senior Advisor, Jim Pasco, in my Washington, D.C. office.

Sincerely,

CHUCK CANTERBURY,
National President.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POLICE ORGANIZATIONS, INC.,
Alexandria, Virginia, May 16, 2018.

House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS: On behalf of the National Association of Police Organizations (NAPO), I am writing to you to advise you of our strong support for H.R. 5698, the Protect and Serve Act.

NAPO is a coalition of police units and associations from across the United States that serves to advance the interests of America's law enforcement through legislative and legal advocacy, political action, and education. Founded in 1978, NAPO now represents more than 1,000 police units and associations, 241,000 sworn law enforcement officers, and more than 100,000 citizens who share a common dedication to fair and effective crime control and law enforcement.

The Protect and Serve Act of 2018 provides for new criminal provisions for deliberate, targeted attacks on officers. This bill is critical, as there is a serious and growing trend of armed attacks on law enforcement officers. According to a December 2017 report from the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) and the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, 2016 saw a significant increase in ambush attacks on unsuspecting officers, with 21 shot and killed. 61% of those officers were not answering a call for service or engaged in enforcement action or performing official duties—they were targeted and killed just for the uniform they wore. 12 officers were murdered sitting in their patrol cars.

NAPO has long been fighting to establish stricter penalties for those who harm or target for harm law enforcement officers. Any persons contemplating harming an officer must know that they will face serious punishments. NAPO strongly believes that increased penalties make important differences in the attitudes of criminals toward public safety officers, and ensure protection for the community.

On May 13th, 360 American law enforcement heroes, who gave their lives in the line of duty, were honored at the 30th Annual Candlelight Vigil. In memory of those officers and in the hope of ensuring there are fewer names added to the memorial walls next year, we ask that you join us in supporting H.R. 5698, the Protect and Serve Act.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. JOHNSON, Esq., CAE,
Executive Director.

SERGEANTS BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION, POLICE DEPARTMENT, CITY OF NEW YORK,
New York, NY, May 8, 2018.

Hon. ROBERT GOODLATTE,
Chairman, House Committee on the Judiciary, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

Hon. JERROLD NADLER,
Ranking Member, House Committee on the Judiciary,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN AND REPRESENTATIVE NADLER: I am writing on behalf of the more

than 13,000 members of the Sergeants Benevolent Association of the New York City Police Department (SBA) to thank you for scheduling the markup of the ''Protect and Serve Act.'' The SBA strongly supports this important officer safety legislation and we respectfully request that the Committee advance it to the full House of Representatives as expeditiously as possible.

Unfortunately for law enforcement officers today, it is a simple fact that they must maintain constant vigilance to the threats posed by those who seek to do them harm for nothing more than the badge and uniform they wear. It is a vigilance borne out of what we have seen in recent years, as far too many officers have made the ultimate sacrifice at the hands of cowardly criminals who have intentionally targeted law enforcement officers for violence. Last month's ambush attack in Gilchrist, Florida that claimed the lives of Sgt. Noel Ramirez and Deputy Taylor Lindsey is just the latest example of the rise in violence carried out on federal, state, and local law enforcement. We have seen similar attacks in Baton Rouge and Dallas in 2016, as well as the assassination of our own NYPD Officers Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu in December 2014. According to a recent joint study conducted by the COPS Program and the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, between 2010–2016 there were 81 officers killed in ambush-style attacks—targeted specifically because they were uniformed police or deputies. Of this number, 25 of the officers attacked were responding to a call for service at the time of the ambush. Because these types of attacks threaten to unravel the basic social fabric of our Nation—the rule of law—they must be met with the harshest of penalties.

It is for these reasons and many others that our organization is proud to support the ''Protect and Serve Act,'' which will help to address the rise in attacks on, and increase the protection of, state and local law enforcement. Specifically, the bill aims to combat targeted violence against law enforcement officers by creating a new federal crime for perpetrating, or attempting to perpetrate, deliberate acts of violence against federal, state, and local law enforcement officers. It would also permit the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) to assume jurisdiction and prosecute these heinous attacks on law enforcement in those instances where the state has requested that DOJ assume jurisdiction, or where federal prosecution is in the public interest in order to secure justice. Penalties under the act would range from up to 10 years in federal prison to a life sentence if death results from the offense, or the offense involved kidnapping, attempted kidnapping, or an attempt to kill.

On behalf of the membership of the Sergeants Benevolent Association, thank you again for your consideration of this important legislation. Please do not hesitate to contact me, or our Washington Representatives, if we can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

ED MULLINS,
President.

NATIONAL SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION,
Alexandria, VA, May 7, 2018.

Congressman JOHN RUTHERFORD,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE RUTHERFORD: On behalf of the National Sheriffs' Association (NSA) and the more than 3,000 elected sheriffs nationwide, we write to endorse The Protect and Serve Act of 2018. We believe that your proposal of this bill is necessary and vitally important to the safety and protection of our country's federal, state, and local law enforcement.

Each day deputies and officers put their lives on the line to protect and serve their communities. They are the mainstays of our communities, and should be treated with respect. Egregious acts such as targeting, injuring, or killing a law enforcement officer should be punishable to the highest degree according to the severity of the crime.

The National Sheriffs' Association strongly supports The Protect and Serve Act of 2018 as it works to punish individuals who commit crimes targeting law enforcement officers. We believe this bill is an essential to further defend the safety of our nation's law enforcement officers.

Sincerely,

JONATHAN F. THOMPSON,
Executive Director and CEO.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to close, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, as I stated at the outset of debate today, I will not oppose this bill, although it merely duplicates existing law. It does not add any protection for the police and does not increase any penalty for someone who assaults a police officer. I am not interested in falling into the trap of opposing what amounts to a messaging bill brought forth during Police Week.

But I want to be clear that I believe H.R. 5698 represents a wasted opportunity and appears tone-deaf to some of the real struggles happening in communities across our Nation. This bill is being contemplated at a time when our country is in the throes of a national policing crisis, with a never-ending stream of police shootings of unarmed African Americans captured on video.

Creating a new, yet superfluous crime for offenses committed against law enforcement is not a great idea because it doesn't do anything. It is particularly not a great idea when we are ignoring the other problem that adds to the danger for police officers, which is the disconnectedness and estrangement of many police forces from the communities they serve.

I hope this Congress will now get back to the difficult work of legislating meaningful solutions. I am encouraged that my Republican colleagues have made a commitment to pursue balanced law enforcement accountability reform with hearings and, hopefully, the introduction of legislation. There is much work to be done.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a letter from various civil rights and civil liberties groups relative to this bill.

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, May 15, 2018.

Re Coalition Opposition to H.R. 5698, the Protect and Serve Act of 2018.

DEAR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS: On behalf of the 28 undersigned civil rights, civil liberties, faith-based, and government accountability organizations, we write to urge you to oppose H.R. 5698, the Protect and Serve Act of 2018, which creates a new crime for offenses that target law enforcement officers.

First, police already have substantial protections under federal and state law, rendering this bill superfluous. Second, this bill signals that there is a ''war on police,'' which is not only untrue, but an unhelpful and dangerous narrative to uplift. And finally, bills similar to Protect and Serve that have been introduced in states around the country—so called ''Blue Lives Matter'' bills—appear to be a political response to the growing national movement for police accountability in the face of continued killings and assaults of unarmed African Americans; therefore, this bill is divisive and will have a negative impact on the relationship between law enforcement and the communities they serve.

i. Federal and state criminal laws already offer ample protection to police officers.

Federal law already has extremely strong penalties for people who commit crimes against law enforcement officers and other public officials. For example, federal laws impose a life sentence or death penalty on persons convicted of first-degree murder of federal employees or officers, killing state and local law enforcement officers or other employees assisting with federal investigations and killing officers of the U.S. courts. All fifty states have laws that enhance penalties for people who commit offenses against law enforcement officers, including for homicide and assault.

Moreover, there is no record that crimes against law enforcement go unprosecuted or are otherwise treated frivolously There is no record to suggest that prosecutors are unwilling or unable to charge individuals with crimes against law enforcement. In fact, crimes against police officers are treated as among the most heinous criminal acts, given the high degree of culpability and punishment attached to such crimes.

II. The Protect and Serve Act does not advance any stated policy goals, because law enforcement is not subject to increasing or widespread attacks.

There is no doubt that police work is a dangerous undertaking, but the reality is that there has been a continuing decline in the number of officers killed or assaulted in the line of duty over the last several decades. In the past ten years, the number of officers feloniously killed has fluctuated, yet not significantly increased or decreased, as have ambush-style killings of officers. Given these facts, this bill perpetuates a false narrative that police are under increasing attack by their communities. Such a message is unhelpful and unsupported.

Furthermore, the Protect and Serve Act does nothing to meaningfully improve officer safety and wellness if that is an intended policy goal. For example, it does not call for support services, better training, improved safety measures, increased supervision, or any of the other multiple measures available to law enforcement that are widely accepted as promoting officer safety and wellbeing.

III. Protect and Serve Act is polarizing and harms community-police relations.

This bill is being contemplated at a time when our country is in the throes of a national policing crisis, with a never-ending stream of police shootings of unarmed African Americans captured on video. Creating a new, yet superfluous, crime for offenses committed against law enforcement is a particularly disconnected and non-responsive policy choice. Unfortunately, the Protect and Serve Act is similar to other ''Blue Lives Matter'' type bills that create new criminal offenses and penalty enhancements for crimes against police.

Collectively, these policy efforts, which have sprung up amid the national call for police accountability, appear to be a political response to the powerful activism of grassroots movements that demand fair and constitutional policing. Rather than focusing on policies that address issues of police excessive force, biased policing, and other police

practices that have failed these communities, the Protect and Serve Act's aim is to further criminalize. This bill will be received as yet another attack on these communities and threatens to exacerbate what is already a discriminatory system of mass incarceration in this country. Continuing to undermine police-community relations in this manner sows seeds of division, which ultimately threatens public safety and undermines the work of law enforcement.

For the reasons summarized above, we urge you to vote against the Protect and Serve Act as it comes before the U.S. House of Representatives. There is no justification for creating a new crime for offenses committed against law enforcement. At a time when we need to foster healing between law enforcement and our communities, we should not be considering legislation which not only does nothing to advance the goal of officer safety, but will further erode the relationship between police and communities.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter. If you have any questions, please contact Kanya Bennett of the ACLU; Sakira Cook of The Leadership Conference or Sonia Gill Hernandez of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.

Sincerely,

American Civil Liberties Union; Anti-Defamation League; Campaign for Youth Justice; Church of Scientology National Affairs Office; CLASP; The Daniel Initiative; Defending Rights & Dissent; Friends Committee on National Legislation; Human Rights Watch; Government Information Watch; Law Enforcement Action Partnership; The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights; Muslim Advocates; NAACP.

NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.; National Action Network; National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers; National Association of Social Workers; National Bar Association; National Center for Transgender Equality; Nation Council of Jewish Women; The National Council for Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Women and Girls; National Council of Churches; People for the American Way; PolicyLink; South Asian Americans Leading Together; Southern Poverty Law Center; StoptheDrugWar.org.

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

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

I just want to make it very clear how important this legislation is for protecting law enforcement officers because it sends a message that we are going to handle these cases in a new way.

Some have criticized this bill, claiming that it is a hate crime. While I share those individuals' concerns about Federal hate crime statutes, I am pleased to tell the Members of this Congress that this bill before us did not create a new Federal hate crime. That is because the legislation does not use the language from the hate crime statute that requires the government prove the defendant acted ''because of the actual or perceived'' status of the victim.

What this bill does is penalize knowingly attacking a law enforcement officer. Given the increase in ambush-style attacks on law enforcement, which was detailed earlier, this bill represents a solution to a growing problem: the killing of police officers. It is narrowly tailored to accomplish that goal.

Therefore, I want to assure those Members who may be concerned about its intent that it is definitely not changing our Federal hate crime statutes.

This legislation this week, National Police Week, sends an important signal not just to our Nation's law enforcement officers, 900,000 strong, but far beyond that, to all Americans, that we are placing a very, very high priority on saving the lives of men and women who put their lives on the line to protect us, to protect our freedoms, to protect our opportunities, to protect our families, to protect our communities, and making sure that people who ambush police officers and take police officers' lives are held fully accountable, which is what this bill does. It is a good bill. It is an important bill. I urge my colleagues to support it.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate on the bill has expired.

AMENDMENT NO. 1 PRINTED IN PART A OF HOUSE REPORT 115–677 OFFERED BY MR. GOODLATTE

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I have an amendment at the desk.

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

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 3, beginning on line 13, strike ''knowingly causes serious bodily injury to a law enforcement officer'' and insert ''knowingly assaults a law enforcement officer causing serious bodily injury''.

Beginning on page 5, strike line 24 and all that follows through page 6, line 8, and insert the following:

''(1) LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER.—The term 'law enforcement officer' means an employee of a governmental or public agency who is authorized by law—

''(A) to engage in or supervise the prevention, detection, or the investigation of any criminal violation of law; or

''(B) to engage in or supervise the detention or the incarceration of any person for any criminal violation of law.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 891, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

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

This amendment makes two small, but important changes to the underlying legislation.

It first clarifies the language of the bill to assure those who are prosecuted are acting with some level of intent in injuring a police officer. It does this by changing the language from ''knowingly causing serious bodily injury to a law enforcement officer'' to ''knowingly assaults a law enforcement officer causing serious bodily harm.'' This change will avoid covering situations where someone unintentionally harms a police officer.

The amendment also amends the definition of law enforcement officer to ensure it covers all law enforcement officers who are putting themselves in harm's way each day, including corrections officers.

Mr. Speaker, this amendment is important because it ensures that, in practice, this statute can be used more efficiently to protect law enforcement officers. It also ensures that nobody who wears a badge will be unintentionally excluded from the bill's protections.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I claim the time in opposition to the amendment.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from New York is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I support the amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, that is good news, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the previous question is ordered on the bill and on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE).

The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE).

The amendment was agreed to.

□ 1545

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

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

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

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

VETERANS CEMETERY BENEFIT CORRECTION ACT

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 891, I call up the bill (S. 2372) to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide outer burial receptacles for remains buried in National Parks, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 891, an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of H.R. 5674, as reported by the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, as modified by the amendment printed in part B of House Report 115–677, is adopted, and the bill, as amended, is considered read.

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

S. 2372

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the ''John S. McCain III, Daniel K. Akaka, and Samuel R. Johnson VA Maintaining Internal Systems and Strengthening Integrated Outside Networks Act of 2018'' or the ''VA MISSION Act of 2018''.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

TITLE I—CARING FOR OUR VETERANS

Sec. 100. Short title; references to title 38, United States Code.

Subtitle A—Developing an Integrated High-Performing Network

CHAPTER 1—ESTABLISHING COMMUNITY CARE PROGRAMS

Sec. 101. Establishment of Veterans Community Care Program.
Sec. 102. Authorization of agreements between Department of Veterans Affairs and non-Department providers.
Sec. 103. Conforming amendments for State veterans homes.
Sec. 104. Access standards and standards for quality.
Sec. 105. Access to walk-in care.
Sec. 106. Strategy regarding the Department of Veterans Affairs High-Performing Integrated Health Care Network.
Sec. 107. Applicability of Directive of Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs.
Sec. 108. Prevention of certain health care providers from providing non-Department health care services to veterans.
Sec. 109. Remediation of medical service lines.

CHAPTER 2—PAYING PROVIDERS AND IMPROVING COLLECTIONS

Sec. 111. Prompt payment to providers.
Sec. 112. Authority to pay for authorized care not subject to an agreement.
Sec. 113. Improvement of authority to recover the cost of services furnished for non-service-connected disabilities.
Sec. 114. Processing of claims for reimbursement through electronic interface.

CHAPTER 3—EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMS

Sec. 121. Education program on health care options.
Sec. 122. Training program for administration of non-Department of Veterans Affairs health care.
Sec. 123. Continuing medical education for non-Department medical professionals.

CHAPTER 4—OTHER MATTERS RELATING TO NON-DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PROVIDERS

Sec. 131. Establishment of processes to ensure safe opioid prescribing practices by non-Department of Veterans Affairs health care providers.
Sec. 132. Improving information sharing with community providers.
Sec. 133. Competency standards for non-Department of Veterans Affairs health care providers.
Sec. 134. Department of Veterans Affairs participation in national network of State-based prescription drug monitoring programs.

CHAPTER 5—OTHER NON-DEPARTMENT HEALTH CARE MATTERS

Sec. 141. Plans for Use of Supplemental Appropriations Required.
Sec. 142. Veterans Choice Fund flexibility.
Sec. 143. Sunset of Veterans Choice Program.
Sec. 144. Conforming amendments.

Subtitle B—Improving Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care Delivery

Sec. 151. Licensure of health care professionals of the Department of Veterans Affairs providing treatment via telemedicine.
Sec. 152. Authority for Department of Veterans Affairs Center for Innovation for Care and Payment.
Sec. 153. Authorization to provide for operations on live donors for purposes of conducting transplant procedures for veterans.

Subtitle C—Family Caregivers

Sec. 161. Expansion of family caregiver program of Department of Veterans Affairs.
Sec. 162. Implementation of information technology system of Department of Veterans Affairs to assess and improve the family caregiver program.
Sec. 163. Modifications to annual evaluation report on caregiver program of Department of Veterans Affairs.

TITLE II—VA ASSET AND INFRASTRUCTURE REVIEW

Subtitle A—Asset and Infrastructure Review

Sec. 201. Short title.
Sec. 202. The Commission.
Sec. 203. Procedure for making recommendations.
Sec. 204. Actions regarding infrastructure and facilities of the Veterans Health Administration.
Sec. 205. Implementation.
Sec. 206. Department of Veterans Affairs Asset and Infrastructure Review Account.
Sec. 207. Congressional consideration of Commission report.
Sec. 208. Other matters.
Sec. 209. Definitions.

Subtitle B—Other Infrastructure Matters

Sec. 211. Improvement to training of construction personnel.
Sec. 212. Review of enhanced use leases.
Sec. 213. Assessment of health care furnished by the Department to veterans who live in the Pacific territories.

TITLE III—IMPROVEMENTS TO RECRUITMENT OF HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

Sec. 301. Designated scholarships for physicians and dentists under Department of Veterans Affairs Health Professional Scholarship Program.
Sec. 302. Increase in maximum amount of debt that may be reduced under Education Debt Reduction Program of Department of Veterans Affairs.
Sec. 303. Establishing the Department of Veterans Affairs Specialty Education Loan Repayment Program.
Sec. 304. Veterans healing veterans medical access and scholarship program.
Sec. 305. Bonuses for recruitment, relocation, and retention.
Sec. 306. Inclusion of Vet Center employees in Education Debt Reduction Program of Department of Veterans Affairs.

TITLE IV—HEALTH CARE IN UNDERSERVED AREAS

Sec. 401. Development of criteria for designation of certain medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs as underserved facilities and plan to address problem of underserved facilities.
Sec. 402. Pilot program to furnish mobile deployment teams to underserved facilities.
Sec. 403. Pilot program on graduate medical education and residency.

TITLE V—OTHER MATTERS

Sec. 501. Annual report on performance awards and bonuses awarded to certain high-level employees of the department.
Sec. 502. Role of podiatrists in Department of Veterans Affairs.
Sec. 503. Definition of major medical facility project.
Sec. 504. Authorization of certain major medical facility projects of the Department of Veterans Affairs.
Sec. 505. Department of Veterans Affairs personnel transparency.
Sec. 506. Program on establishment of peer specialists in patient aligned care team settings within medical centers of Department of Veterans Affairs.
Sec. 507. Department of Veterans Affairs medical scribe pilot program.
Sec. 508. Loans guaranteed under home loan program of Department of Veterans Affairs.
Sec. 509. Extension of reduction in amount of pension furnished by Department of Veterans Affairs for certain veterans covered by Medicaid plans for services furnished by nursing facilities.
Sec. 510. Appropriation of amounts.
Sec. 511. Technical correction.

TITLE I—CARING FOR OUR VETERANS

SEC. 100. SHORT TITLE; REFERENCES TO TITLE 38, UNITED STATES CODE.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This title may be cited as the ''Caring for Our Veterans Act of 2018''.

(b) REFERENCES TO TITLE 38, UNITED STATES CODE.—Except as otherwise expressly provided, whenever in this title an amendment or repeal is expressed in terms of an amendment to, or repeal of, a section or other provision, the reference shall be considered to be made to a section or other provision of title 38, United States Code.

Subtitle A—Developing an Integrated High-Performing Network

CHAPTER 1—ESTABLISHING COMMUNITY CARE PROGRAMS

SEC. 101. ESTABLISHMENT OF VETERANS COMMUNITY CARE PROGRAM.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 1703 is amended to read as follows:

''§ 1703. Veterans Community Care Program

''(a) IN GENERAL.—(1) There is established a program to furnish hospital care, medical services, and extended care services to covered veterans through health care providers specified in subsection (c).

''(2) The Secretary shall coordinate the furnishing of hospital care, medical services, and extended care services under this section to covered veterans, including coordination of, at a minimum, the following:

''(A) Ensuring the scheduling of medical appointments in a timely manner and the establishment of a mechanism to receive medical records from non-Department providers.

''(B) Ensuring continuity of care and services.

''(C) Ensuring coordination among regional networks if the covered veteran accesses care and services in a different network than the regional network in which the covered veteran resides.

''(D) Ensuring that covered veterans do not experience a lapse in care resulting from errors or delays by the Department or its contractors or an unusual or excessive burden in accessing hospital care, medical services, or extended care services.

''(3) A covered veteran may only receive care or services under this section upon the authorization of such care or services by the Secretary.

''(b) COVERED VETERANS.—For purposes of this section, a covered veteran is any veteran who—

''(1) is enrolled in the system of annual patient enrollment established and operated under section 1705 of this title; or

''(2) is not enrolled in such system but is otherwise entitled to hospital care, medical services, or extended care services under subsection (c)(2) of such section.

''(c) HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS SPECIFIED.—Health care providers specified in this subsection are the following:

''(1) Any health care provider that is participating in the Medicare program under title XVIII of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395 et seq.), including any physician furnishing services under such a program.

''(2) The Department of Defense.

''(3) The Indian Health Service.

''(4) Any Federally-qualified health center (as defined in section 1905(l)(2)(B) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396d(l)(2)(B))).

''(5) Any health care provider not otherwise covered under any of paragraphs (1) through (4) that meets criteria established by the Secretary for purposes of this section.

''(d) CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH CARE IS REQUIRED TO BE FURNISHED THROUGH NON-DEPARTMENT PROVIDERS.—(1) The Secretary shall, subject to the availability of appropriations, furnish hospital care, medical services, and extended care services to a covered veteran through health care providers specified in subsection (c) if—

''(A) the Department does not offer the care or services the veteran requires;

''(B) the Department does not operate a full-service medical facility in the State in which the covered veteran resides;

''(C)(i) the covered veteran was an eligible veteran under section 101(b)(2)(B) of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–146; 38 U.S.C. 1701 note) as of the day before the date of the enactment of the Caring for Our Veterans Act of 2018;

''(ii) continues to reside in a location that would qualify the veteran for eligibility under such section; and

''(iii) either—

''(I) resides in one of the five States with the lowest population density as determined by data from the 2010 decennial census; or

''(II) resides in a State not described in subclause (I) and—

''(aa) received care or services under this title in the year preceding the enactment of the Caring for Our Veterans Act of 2018; and

''(bb) is seeking care or services within two years of the date of the enactment of the Caring for Our Veterans Act of 2018;

''(D) the covered veteran has contacted the Department to request care or services and the Department is not able to furnish such care or services in a manner that complies with designated access standards developed by the Secretary under section 1703B of this title; or

''(E) the covered veteran and the covered veteran's referring clinician agree that furnishing care and services through a non-Department entity or provider would be in the best medical interest of the covered veteran based upon criteria developed by the Secretary.

''(2) The Secretary shall ensure that the criteria developed under paragraph (1)(E) include consideration of the following:

''(A) The distance between the covered veteran and the facility that provides the hospital care, medical services, or extended care services the veteran needs.

''(B) The nature of the hospital care, medical services, or extended care services required.

''(C) The frequency that the hospital care, medical services, or extended care services needs to be furnished.

''(D) The timeliness of available appointments for the hospital care, medical services, or extended care services the veteran needs.

''(E) Whether the covered veteran faces an unusual or excessive burden to access hospital care, medical services, or extended care services from the Department medical facility where a covered veteran seeks hospital care, medical services, or extended care services, which shall include consideration of the following:

''(i) Whether the covered veteran faces an excessive driving distance, geographical challenge, or environmental factor that impedes the access of the covered veteran.

''(ii) Whether the hospital care, medical services, or extended care services sought by the veteran is provided by a medical facility of the Department that is reasonably accessible to a covered veteran.

''(iii) Whether a medical condition of the covered veteran affects the ability of the covered veteran to travel.

''(iv) Whether there is compelling reason, as determined by the Secretary, that the veteran needs to receive hospital care, medical services, or extended care services from a medical facility other than a medical facility of the Department.

''(v) Such other considerations as the Secretary considers appropriate.

''(3) If the Secretary has determined that the Department does not offer the care or services the covered veteran requires under subparagraph (A) of paragraph (1), that the Department does not operate a full-service medical facility in the State in which the covered veteran resides under subparagraph (B) of such paragraph, that the covered veteran is described under subparagraph (C) of such paragraph, or that the Department is not able to furnish care or services in a manner that complies with designated access standards developed by the Secretary under section 1703B of this title under subparagraph (D) of such paragraph, the decision to receive hospital care, medical services, or extended care services under such subparagraphs from a health care provider specified in subsection (c) shall be at the election of the veteran.

''(e) CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH CARE IS AUTHORIZED TO BE FURNISHED THROUGH NON-DEPARTMENT PROVIDERS.—(1)(A) The Secretary may furnish hospital care, medical services, or extended care services through a health care provider specified in subsection (c) to a covered veteran served by a medical service line of the Department that the Secretary has determined is not providing care that complies with the standards for quality the Secretary shall establish under section 1703C.

''(B) In carrying out subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall—

''(i) measure timeliness of the medical service line at a facility of the Department when compared with the same medical service line at different Department facilities; and

''(ii) measure quality at a medical service line of a facility of the Department by comparing it with two or more distinct and appropriate quality measures at non-Department medical service lines.

''(C)(i) The Secretary may not concurrently furnish hospital care, medical services, or extended care services under subparagraph (A) with respect to more than three medical service lines described in such subparagraph at any one health care facility of the Department.

''(ii) The Secretary may not concurrently furnish hospital care, medical services, or extended care services under subparagraph (A) with respect to more than 36 medical service lines nationally described in such subparagraph.

''(2) The Secretary may limit the types of hospital care, medical services, or extended care services covered veterans may receive under paragraph (1) in terms of the length of time such care and services will be available, the location at which such care and services will be available, and the clinical care and services that will be available.

''(3)(A) Except as provided for in subparagraph (B), the hospital care, medical services, and extended care services authorized under paragraph (1) with respect to a medical service line shall cease when the remediation described in section 1706A with respect to such medical service line is complete.

''(B) The Secretary shall ensure continuity and coordination of care for any veteran who elects to receive care or services under paragraph (1) from a health care provider specified in subsection (c) through the completion of an episode of care.

''(4) The Secretary shall publish in the Federal Register, and shall take all reasonable steps to provide direct notice to covered veterans affected under this subsection, at least once each year stating the time period during which such care and services will be available, the location or locations where such care and services will be available, and the clinical services available at each location under this subsection in accordance with regulations the Secretary shall prescribe.

''(5) When the Secretary exercises the authority under paragraph (1), the decision to receive care or services under such paragraph from a health care provider specified in subsection (c) shall be at the election of the covered veteran.

''(f) REVIEW OF DECISIONS.—The review of any decision under subsection (d) or (e) shall be subject to the Department's clinical appeals process, and such decisions may not be appealed to the Board of Veterans' Appeals.

''(g) TIERED NETWORK.—(1) To promote the provision of high-quality and high-value hospital care, medical services, and extended care services under this section, the Secretary may develop a tiered provider network of eligible providers based on criteria established by the Secretary for purposes of this section.

''(2) In developing a tiered provider network of eligible providers under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall not prioritize providers in a tier over providers in any other tier in a manner that limits the choice of a covered veteran in selecting a health care provider specified in subsection (c) for receipt of hospital care, medical services, or extended care services under this section.

''(h) CONTRACTS TO ESTABLISH NETWORKS OF HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS.—(1) The Secretary shall enter into consolidated, competitively bid contracts to establish networks of health care providers specified in paragraphs (1) and (5) of subsection (c) for purposes of providing sufficient access to hospital care, medical services, or extended care services under this section.

''(2)(A) The Secretary shall, to the extent practicable, ensure that covered veterans are able to make their own appointments using advanced technology.

''(B) To the extent practicable, the Secretary shall be responsible for the scheduling of appointments for hospital care, medical services, and extended care services under this section.

''(3)(A) The Secretary may terminate a contract with an entity entered into under paragraph (1) at such time and upon such notice to the entity as the Secretary may specify for purposes of this section, if the Secretary notifies the appropriate committees of Congress that, at a minimum—

''(i) the entity—

''(I) failed to comply substantially with the provisions of the contract or with the provisions of this section and the regulations prescribed under this section;

''(II) failed to comply with the access standards or the standards for quality established by the Secretary;

''(III) is excluded from participation in a Federal health care program (as defined in section 1128B(f) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1320a–7b(f))) under section 1128 or 1128A of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1320a–7 and 1320a–7a);

''(IV) is identified as an excluded source on the list maintained in the System for Award Management, or any successor system; or

''(V) has been convicted of a felony or other serious offense under Federal or State law and the continued participation of the entity would be detrimental to the best interests of veterans or the Department;

''(ii) it is reasonable to terminate the contract based on the health care needs of veterans; or

''(iii) it is reasonable to terminate the contract based on coverage provided by contracts or sharing agreements entered into under authorities other than this section.

''(B) Nothing in subparagraph (A) may be construed to restrict the authority of the Secretary to terminate a contract entered into under paragraph (1) under any other provision of law.

''(4) Whenever the Secretary provides notice to an entity that the entity is failing to meet contractual obligations entered into under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on such failure. Such report shall include the following:

''(A) An explanation of the reasons for providing such notice.

''(B) A description of the effect of such failure, including with respect to cost, schedule, and requirements.

''(C) A description of the actions taken by the Secretary to mitigate such failure.

''(D) A description of the actions taken by the contractor to address such failure.

''(E) A description of any effect on the community provider market for veterans in the affected area.

''(5)(A) The Secretary shall instruct each entity awarded a contract under paragraph (1) to recognize and accept, on an interim basis, the credentials and qualifications of health care providers who are authorized to furnish hospital care and medical services to veterans under a community care program of the Department in effect as of the day before the date of the enactment of the Caring for Our Veterans Act of 2018, including under the Patient-Centered Community Care Program and the Veterans Choice Program under section 101 of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–146; 38 U.S.C. 1701 note), as qualified providers under the program established under this section.

''(B) The interim acceptance period under subparagraph (A) shall be determined by the Secretary based on the following criteria:

''(i) With respect to a health care provider, when the current certification agreement for the health care provider expires.

''(ii) Whether the Department has enacted certification and eligibility criteria and regulatory procedures by which non-Department providers will be authorized under this section.

''(6) The Secretary shall establish a system or systems for monitoring the quality of care provided to covered veterans through a network under this subsection and for assessing the quality of hospital care, medical services, and extended care services furnished through such network before the renewal of the contract for such network.

''(i) PAYMENT RATES FOR CARE AND SERVICES.—(1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), and to the extent practicable, the rate paid for hospital care, medical services, or extended care services under any provision in this title may not exceed the rate paid by the United States to a provider of services (as defined in section 1861(u) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395x(u))) or a supplier (as defined in section 1861(d) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1395x(d))) under the Medicare program under title XI or title XVIII of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1301 et seq.), including section 1834 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1395m), for the same care or services.

''(2)(A) A higher rate than the rate paid by the United States as described in paragraph (1) may be negotiated with respect to the furnishing of care or services to a covered veteran who resides in a highly rural area.

''(B) In this paragraph, the term 'highly rural area' means an area located in a county that has fewer than seven individuals residing in that county per square mile.

''(3) With respect to furnishing care or services under this section in Alaska, the Alaska Fee Schedule of the Department of Veterans Affairs shall be followed, except for when another payment agreement, including a contract or provider agreement, is in effect.

''(4) With respect to furnishing hospital care, medical services, or extended care services under this section in a State with an All-Payer Model Agreement under section 1814(b)(3) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395f(b)(3)) that became effective on or after January 1, 2014, the Medicare payment rates under paragraph (2)(A) shall be calculated based on the payment rates under such agreement.

''(5) Notwithstanding paragraph (1), the Secretary may incorporate, to the extent practicable, the use of value-based reimbursement models to promote the provision of high-quality care.

''(6) With respect to hospital care, medical services, or extended care services for which there is not a rate paid under the Medicare program as described in paragraph (1), the rate paid for such care or services shall be determined by the Secretary.

''(j) TREATMENT OF OTHER HEALTH PLAN CONTRACTS.—In any case in which a covered veteran is furnished hospital care, medical services, or extended care services under this section for a non-service-connected disability described in subsection (a)(2) of section 1729 of this title, the Secretary shall recover or collect reasonable charges for such care or services from a health plan contract described in section 1729 in accordance with such section.

''(k) PAYMENT BY VETERAN.—A covered veteran shall not pay a greater amount for receiving care or services under this section than the amount the veteran would pay for receiving the same or comparable care or services at a medical facility of the Department or from a health care provider of the Department.

''(l) TRANSPLANT AUTHORITY FOR IMPROVED ACCESS.—(1) In the case of a covered veteran described in paragraph (2), the Secretary shall determine whether to authorize an organ or bone marrow transplant for that covered veteran at a non-Department facility.

''(2) A covered veteran described in this paragraph—

''(A) requires an organ or bone marrow transplant; and

''(B) has, in the opinion of the primary care provider of the veteran, a medically compelling reason to travel outside the region of the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network, established under section 372 of the National Organ Transplantation Act (Public Law 98–507; 42 U.S.C. 274), in which the veteran resides, to receive such transplant.

''(m) MONITORING OF CARE PROVIDED.—(1)(A) Not later than 540 days after the date of the enactment of the Caring for Our Veterans Act of 2018, and not less frequently than annually thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to appropriate committees of Congress a review of the types and frequency of care sought under subsection (d).

''(B) The review submitted under subparagraph (A) shall include an assessment of the following:

''(i) The top 25 percent of types of care and services most frequently provided under subsection (d) due to the Department not offering such care and services.

''(ii) The frequency such care and services were sought by covered veterans under this section.

''(iii) An analysis of the reasons the Department was unable to provide such care and services.

''(iv) Any steps the Department took to provide such care and services at a medical facility of the Department.

''(v) The cost of such care and services.

''(2) In monitoring the hospital care, medical services, and extended care services furnished under this section, the Secretary shall do the following:

''(A) With respect to hospital care, medical services, and extended care services furnished through provider networks established under subsection (i)—

''(i) compile data on the types of hospital care, medical services, and extended care services furnished through such networks and how many patients used each type of care and service;

''(ii) identify gaps in hospital care, medical services, or extended care services furnished through such networks;

''(iii) identify how such gaps may be fixed through new contracts within such networks or changes in the manner in which hospital care, medical services, or extended care services are furnished through such networks;

''(iv) assess the total amounts spent by the Department on hospital care, medical services, and extended care services furnished through such networks;

''(v) assess the timeliness of the Department in referring hospital care, medical services, and extended care services to such networks; and

''(vi) assess the timeliness of such networks in—

''(I) accepting referrals; and

''(II) scheduling and completing appointments.

''(B) Report the number of medical service lines the Secretary has determined under subsection (e)(1) not to be providing hospital care, medical services, or extended care services that comply with the standards for quality established by the Secretary.

''(C) Assess the use of academic affiliates and centers of excellence of the Department to furnish hospital care, medical services, and extended care services to covered veterans under this section.

''(D) Assess the hospital care, medical services, and extended care services furnished to covered veterans under this section by medical facilities operated by Federal agencies other than the Department.

''(3) Not later than 540 days after the date of the enactment of the Caring for Our Veterans Act of 2018 and not less frequently than once each year thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on the information gathered under paragraph (2).

''(n) PROHIBITION ON CERTAIN LIMITATIONS.—(1) The Secretary shall not limit the types of hospital care, medical services, or extended care services covered veterans may receive under this section if it is in the best medical interest of the veteran to receive such hospital care, medical services, or extended care services, as determined by the veteran and the veteran's health care provider.

''(2) No provision in this section may be construed to alter or modify any other provision of law establishing specific eligibility criteria for certain hospital care, medical services, or extended care services.

''(o) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

''(1) The term 'appropriate committees of Congress' means—

''(A) the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate; and

''(B) the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives.

''(2) The term 'medical service line' means a clinic within a Department medical center.''.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 17 is amended by striking the item relating to section 1703 and inserting the following new item:

''1703. Veterans Community Care Program.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Section 1703 of title 38, United States Code, as amended by subsection (a), shall take effect on the later of—

(1) the date that is 30 days after the date on which the Secretary of Veterans Affairs submits the report required under section 101(q)(2) of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–146; 38 U.S.C. 1701 note); or

(2) the date on which the Secretary promulgates regulations pursuant to subsection (c).

(c) REGULATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall promulgate regulations to carry out section 1703 of title 38, United States Code, as amended by subsection (a) of this section.

(2) UPDATES.—

(A) PERIODIC.—Before promulgating the regulations required under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall provide to the appropriate committees of Congress periodic updates to confirm the progress of the Secretary toward developing such regulations.

(B) FIRST UPDATE.—The first update under subparagraph (A) shall occur no later than 120 days from the date of the enactment of this Act.

(C) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS DEFINED.—In this paragraph, the term ''appropriate committees of Congress'' means—

(i) the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate; and

(ii) the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives.

(d) CONTINUITY OF EXISTING AGREEMENTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding section 1703 of title 38, United States Code, as amended by subsection (a), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall continue all contracts, memorandums of understanding, memorandums of agreements, and other arrangements that were in effect on the day before the date of the enactment of this Act between the Department of Veterans Affairs and the American Indian and Alaska Native health care systems as established under the terms of the Department of Veterans Affairs and Indian Health Service Memorandum of Understanding, signed October 1, 2010, the National Reimbursement Agreement, signed December 5, 2012, arrangements under section 405 of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act (25 U.S.C. 1645), and agreements entered into under sections 102 and 103 of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–146).

(2) MODIFICATIONS.—Paragraph (1) shall not be construed to prohibit the Secretary and the parties to the contracts, memorandums of understanding, memorandums of agreements, and other arrangements described in such paragraph from making such changes to such contracts, memorandums of understanding, memorandums of agreements, and other arrangements as may be otherwise authorized pursuant to other provisions of law or the terms of the contracts, memorandums of understanding, memorandums of agreements, and other arrangements.

SEC. 102. AUTHORIZATION OF AGREEMENTS BETWEEN DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND NON-DEPARTMENT PROVIDERS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter I of chapter 17 is amended by inserting after section 1703 the following new section:

''§ 1703A. Agreements with eligible entities or providers; certification processes

''(a) AGREEMENTS AUTHORIZED.—(1)(A) When hospital care, a medical service, or an extended care service required by a veteran who is entitled to such care or service under this chapter is not feasibly available to the veteran from a facility of the Department or through a contract or sharing agreement entered into pursuant to another provision of law, the Secretary may furnish such care or service to such veteran through an agreement under this section with an eligible entity or provider to provide such hospital care, medical service, or extended care service.

''(B) An agreement entered into under this section to provide hospital care, a medical service, or an extended care service shall be known as a 'Veterans Care Agreement'.

''(C) For purposes of subparagraph (A), hospital care, a medical service, or an extended care service may be considered not feasibly available to a veteran from a facility of the Department or through a contract or sharing agreement described in such subparagraph when the Secretary determines the veteran's medical condition, the travel involved, the nature of the care or services required, or a combination of these factors make the use of a facility of the Department or a contract or sharing agreement described in such subparagraph impracticable or inadvisable.

''(D) A Veterans Care Agreement may be entered into by the Secretary or any Department official authorized by the Secretary.

''(2)(A) Subject to subparagraph (B), the Secretary shall review each Veterans Care Agreement of material size, as determined by the Secretary or set forth in paragraph (3), for hospital care, a medical service, or an extended care service to determine whether it is feasible and advisable to provide such care or service within a facility of the Department or by contract or sharing agreement entered into pursuant to another provision of law and, if so, take action to do so.

''(B)(i) The Secretary shall review each Veterans Care Agreement of material size that has been in effect for at least six months within the first two years of its taking effect, and not less frequently than once every four years thereafter.

''(ii) If a Veterans Care Agreement has not been in effect for at least six months by the date of the review required by subparagraph (A), the agreement shall be reviewed during the next cycle required by subparagraph (A), and such review shall serve as its review within the first two years of its taking effect for purposes of clause (i).

''(3)(A) In fiscal year 2019 and in each fiscal year thereafter, in addition to such other Veterans Care Agreements as the Secretary may determine are of material size, a Veterans Care Agreement for the purchase of extended care services that exceeds $5,000,000 annually shall be considered of material size.

''(B) From time to time, the Secretary may publish a notice in the Federal Register to adjust the dollar amount specified in subparagraph (A) to account for changes in the cost of health care based upon recognized health care market surveys and other available data.

''(b) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES AND PROVIDERS.—For purposes of this section, an eligible entity or provider is—

''(1) any provider of services that has enrolled and entered into a provider agreement under section 1866(a) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395cc(a)) and any physician or other supplier who has enrolled and entered into a participation agreement under section 1842(h) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1395u(h));

''(2) any provider participating under a State plan under title XIX of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.);

''(3) an Aging and Disability Resource Center, an area agency on aging, or a State agency (as defined in section 102 of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3002));

''(4) a center for independent living (as defined in section 702 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 796a)); or

''(5) any entity or provider not described in paragraph (1) or (2) of this subsection that the Secretary determines to be eligible pursuant to the certification process described in subsection (c).

''(c) ELIGIBLE ENTITY OR PROVIDER CERTIFICATION PROCESS.—The Secretary shall establish by regulation a process for the certification of eligible entities or providers or recertification of eligible entities or providers under this section. Such a process shall, at a minimum—

''(1) establish deadlines for actions on applications for certification;

''(2) set forth standards for an approval or denial of certification, duration of certification, revocation of an eligible entity or provider's certification, and recertification of eligible entities or providers;

''(3) require the denial of certification if the Secretary determines the eligible entity or provider is excluded from participation in a Federal health care program under section 1128 or section 1128A of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1320a–7 or 1320a–7a) or is currently identified as an excluded source on the System for Award Management Exclusions list described in part 9 of title 48, Code of Federal Regulations, and part 180 of title 2 of such Code, or successor regulations;

''(4) establish procedures for screening eligible entities or providers according to the risk of fraud, waste, and abuse that are similar to the standards under section 1866(j)(2)(B) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395cc(j)(2)(B)) and section 9.104 of title 48, Code of Federal Regulations, or successor regulations; and

''(5) incorporate and apply the restrictions and penalties set forth in chapter 21 of title 41 and treat this section as a procurement program only for purposes of applying such provisions.

''(d) RATES.—To the extent practicable, the rates paid by the Secretary for hospital care, medical services, and extended care services provided under a Veterans Care Agreement shall be in accordance with the rates paid by the United States under section 1703(i) of this title.

''(e) TERMS OF VETERANS CARE AGREEMENTS.—(1) Pursuant to regulations promulgated under subsection (k), the Secretary may define the requirements for providers and entities entering into agreements under this section based upon such factors as the number of patients receiving care or services, the number of employees employed by the entity or provider furnishing such care or services, the amount paid by the Secretary to the provider or entity, or other factors as determined by the Secretary.

''(2) To furnish hospital care, medical services, or extended care services under this section, an eligible entity or provider shall agree—

''(A) to accept payment at the rates established in regulations prescribed under this section;

''(B) that payment by the Secretary under this section on behalf of a veteran to a provider of services or care shall, unless rejected and refunded by the provider within 30 days of receipt, constitute payment in full and extinguish any liability on the part of the veteran for the treatment or care provided, and no provision of a contract, agreement, or assignment to the contrary shall operate to modify, limit, or negate this requirement;

''(C) to provide only the care and services authorized by the Department under this section and to obtain the prior written consent of the Department to furnish care or services outside the scope of such authorization;

''(D) to bill the Department in accordance with the methodology outlined in regulations prescribed under this section;

''(E) to not seek to recover or collect from a health plan contract or third party, as those terms are defined in section 1729 of this title, for any care or service that is furnished or paid for by the Department;

''(F) to provide medical records to the Department in the time frame and format specified by the Department; and

''(G) to meet such other terms and conditions, including quality of care assurance standards, as the Secretary may specify in regulation.

''(f) DISCONTINUATION OR NONRENEWAL OF A VETERANS CARE AGREEMENT.—(1) An eligible entity or provider may discontinue a Veterans Care Agreement at such time and upon such notice to the Secretary as may be provided in regulations prescribed under this section.

''(2) The Secretary may discontinue a Veterans Care Agreement with an eligible entity or

provider at such time and upon such reasonable notice to the eligible entity or provider as may be specified in regulations prescribed under this section, if an official designated by the Secretary—

''(A) has determined that the eligible entity or provider failed to comply substantially with the provisions of the Veterans Care Agreement, or with the provisions of this section or regulations prescribed under this section;

''(B) has determined the eligible entity or provider is excluded from participation in a Federal health care program under section 1128 or section 1128A of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1320a–7 or 1320a–7a) or is identified on the System for Award Management Exclusions list as provided in part 9 of title 48, Code of Federal Regulations, and part 180 of title 2 of such Code, or successor regulations;

''(C) has ascertained that the eligible entity or provider has been convicted of a felony or other serious offense under Federal or State law and determines the eligible entity or provider's continued participation would be detrimental to the best interests of veterans or the Department; or

''(D) has determined that it is reasonable to terminate the agreement based on the health care needs of a veteran.

''(g) QUALITY OF CARE.—The Secretary shall establish a system or systems for monitoring the quality of care provided to veterans through Veterans Care Agreements and for assessing the quality of hospital care, medical services, and extended care services furnished by eligible entities and providers before the renewal of Veterans Care Agreements.

''(h) DISPUTES.—(1) The Secretary shall promulgate administrative procedures for eligible entities and providers to present all disputes arising under or related to Veterans Care Agreements.

''(2) Such procedures constitute the eligible entities' and providers' exhaustive and exclusive administrative remedies.

''(3) Eligible entities or providers must first exhaust such administrative procedures before seeking any judicial review under section 1346 of title 28 (known as the 'Tucker Act').

''(4) Disputes under this section must pertain to either the scope of authorization under the Veterans Care Agreement or claims for payment subject to the Veterans Care Agreement and are not claims for the purposes of such laws that would otherwise require application of sections 7101 through 7109 of title 41, United States Code.

''(i) APPLICABILITY OF OTHER PROVISIONS OF LAW.—(1) A Veterans Care Agreement may be authorized by the Secretary or any Department official authorized by the Secretary, and such action shall not be treated as—

''(A) an award for the purposes of such laws that would otherwise require the use of competitive procedures for the furnishing of care and services; or

''(B) a Federal contract for the acquisition of goods or services for purposes of any provision of Federal law governing Federal contracts for the acquisition of goods or services except section 4706(d) of title 41.

''(2)(A) Except as provided in the agreement itself, in subparagraph (B), and unless otherwise provided in this section or regulations prescribed pursuant to this section, an eligible entity or provider that enters into an agreement under this section is not subject to, in the carrying out of the agreement, any law to which providers of services and suppliers under the Medicare program under title XVIII of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395 et seq.) are not subject.

''(B) An eligible entity or provider that enters into an agreement under this section is subject to—

''(i) all laws regarding integrity, ethics, or fraud, or that subject a person to civil or criminal penalties; and

''(ii) all laws that protect against employment discrimination or that otherwise ensure equal employment opportunities.

''(3) Notwithstanding paragraph (2)(B)(i), an eligible entity or provider that enters into an agreement under this section shall not be treated as a Federal contractor or subcontractor for purposes of chapter 67 of title 41 (commonly known as the 'McNamara-O'Hara Service Contract Act of 1965').

''(j) PARITY OF TREATMENT.—Eligibility for hospital care, medical services, and extended care services furnished to any veteran pursuant to a Veterans Care Agreement shall be subject to the same terms as though provided in a facility of the Department, and provisions of this chapter applicable to veterans receiving such care and services in a facility of the Department shall apply to veterans treated under this section.

''(k) RULEMAKING.—The Secretary shall promulgate regulations to carry out this section.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 1703 the following new item:

''1703A. Agreements with eligible entities or providers; certification processes.''.

SEC. 103. CONFORMING AMENDMENTS FOR STATE VETERANS HOMES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1745(a) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking ''(or agreement under section 1720(c)(1) of this title)'' and inserting ''(or an agreement)''; and

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

''(4)(A) An agreement under this section may be authorized by the Secretary or any Department official authorized by the Secretary, and any such action is not an award for purposes of such laws that would otherwise require the use of competitive procedures for the furnishing of hospital care, medical services, and extended care services.

''(B)(i) Except as provided in the agreement itself, in clause (ii), and unless otherwise provided in this section or regulations prescribed pursuant to this section, a State home that enters into an agreement under this section is not subject to, in the carrying out of the agreement, any provision of law to which providers of services and suppliers under the Medicare program under title XVIII of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395 et seq.) are not subject.

''(ii) A State home that enters into an agreement under this section is subject to—

''(I) all provisions of law regarding integrity, ethics, or fraud, or that subject a person to civil or criminal penalties;

''(II) all provisions of law that protect against employment discrimination or that otherwise ensure equal employment opportunities; and

''(III) all provisions in subchapter V of chapter 17 of this title.

''(iii) Notwithstanding subparagraph (B)(ii)(I), a State home that enters into an agreement under this section may not be treated as a Federal contractor or subcontractor for purposes of chapter 67 of title 41 (known as the 'McNamara-O'Hara Service Contract Act of 1965').''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall apply to care provided on or after the effective date of regulations issued by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out this section.

SEC. 104. ACCESS STANDARDS AND STANDARDS FOR QUALITY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter I of chapter 17, as amended by section 102, is further amended by inserting after section 1703A the following new sections:

''§ 1703B. Access standards

''(a)(1) The Secretary shall establish access standards for furnishing hospital care, medical services, or extended care services to covered veterans for the purposes of section 1703(d).

''(2) The Secretary shall ensure that the access standards established under paragraph (1) define such categories of care to cover all care and services within the medical benefits package of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

''(b) The Secretary shall ensure that the access standards provide covered veterans, employees of the Department, and health care providers in the network established under section 1703(h) with relevant comparative information that is clear, useful, and timely, so that covered veterans can make informed decisions regarding their health care.

''(c) The Secretary shall consult with all pertinent Federal entities (including the Department of Defense, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services), entities in the private sector, and other nongovernmental entities in establishing access standards.

''(d)(1) Not later than 270 days after the date of the enactment of the Caring for Our Veterans Act of 2018, the Secretary shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report detailing the access standards.

''(2)(A) Before submitting the report required under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall provide periodic updates to the appropriate committees of Congress to confirm the Department's progress towards developing the access standards required by this section.

''(B) The first update under subparagraph (A) shall occur no later than 120 days from the date of the enactment of the Caring for Our Veterans Act of 2018.

''(3) Not later than 540 days after the date on which the Secretary implements the access standards established under subsection (a), the Secretary shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report detailing the implementation of and compliance with such access standards by Department and non-Department entities or providers.

''(e) Not later than three years after the date on which the Secretary establishes access standards under subsection (a) and not less frequently than once every three years thereafter, the Secretary shall—

''(1) conduct a review of such standards; and

''(2) submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report on the findings and any modification to the access standards with respect to the review conducted under paragraph (1).

''(f) The Secretary shall ensure health care providers specified under section 1703(c) are able to comply with the applicable access standards established by the Secretary.

''(g) The Secretary shall publish in the Federal Register and on an internet website of the Department the designated access standards established under this section for purposes of section 1703(d)(1)(D).

''(h)(1) Consistent with paragraphs (1)(D) and (3) of section 1703(d), covered veterans may contact the Department at any time to request a determination regarding whether they are eligible to receive care and services from a non-Department entity or provider based on the Department being unable to furnish such care and services in a manner that complies with the designated access standards established under this section.

''(2) The Secretary shall establish a process to review such requests from covered veterans to determine whether—

''(A) the requested care is clinically necessary; and

''(B) the Department is able to provide such care in a manner that complies with designated access standards established under this section.

''(3) The Secretary shall promptly respond to any such request by a covered veteran.

''(i)(1) The term 'appropriate committees of Congress' means—

''(A) the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate; and

''(B) the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives.

''(2) The term 'covered veterans' refers to veterans described in section 1703(b) of this title.

"§ 1703C. Standards for quality

''(a) IN GENERAL.—(1) The Secretary shall establish standards for quality regarding hospital care, medical services, and extended care services furnished by the Department pursuant to this title, including through non-Department health care providers pursuant to section 1703 of this title.

''(2) In establishing standards for quality under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall consider existing health quality measures that are applied to public and privately sponsored health care systems with the purpose of providing covered veterans relevant comparative information to make informed decisions regarding their health care.

''(3) The Secretary shall collect and consider data for purposes of establishing the standards under paragraph (1). Such data collection shall include—

''(A) after consultation with veterans service organizations and other key stakeholders on survey development or modification of an existing survey, a survey of veterans who have used hospital care, medical services, or extended care services furnished by the Veterans Health Administration during the most recent two-year period to assess the satisfaction of the veterans with service and quality of care; and

''(B) datasets that include, at a minimum, elements relating to the following:

''(i) Timely care.

''(ii) Effective care.

''(iii) Safety, including, at a minimum, complications, readmissions, and deaths.

''(iv) Efficiency.

''(4) The Secretary shall consult with all pertinent Federal entities (including the Department of Defense, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services), entities in the private sector, and other nongovernmental entities in establishing standards for quality.

''(5)(A) Not later than 270 days after the date of the enactment of the Caring for Our Veterans Act of 2018, the Secretary shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report detailing the standards for quality.

''(B)(i) Before submitting the report required under subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall provide periodic updates to the appropriate committees of Congress to confirm the Department's progress towards developing the standards for quality required by this section.

''(ii) The first update under clause (i) shall occur no later than 120 days from the date of the enactment of the Caring for Our Veterans Act of 2018.

''(b) PUBLICATION AND CONSIDERATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS.—(1) Not later than one year after the date on which the Secretary establishes standards for quality under subsection (a), the Secretary shall publish the quality rating of medical facilities of the Department in the publicly available Hospital Compare website through the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services for the purpose of providing veterans with information that allows them to compare performance measure information among Department and non-Department health care providers.

''(2) Not later than two years after the date on which the Secretary establishes standards for quality under subsection (a), the Secretary shall consider and solicit public comment on potential changes to the measures used in such standards to ensure that they include the most up-to-date and applicable industry measures for veterans.

''(c)(1) The term 'appropriate committees of Congress' means—

''(A) the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate; and

''(B) the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives.

''(2) The term 'covered veterans' refers to veterans described in section 1703(b) of this title.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 17, as amended by section 102, is further amended by inserting after the item relating to section 1703A the following new items:

''1703B. Access standards.

''1703C. Standards for quality.''.

SEC. 105. ACCESS TO WALK-IN CARE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 17 is amended by inserting after section 1725 the following new section:

"§ 1725A. Access to walk-in care

''(a) PROCEDURES TO ENSURE ACCESS TO WALK-IN CARE.—The Secretary shall develop procedures to ensure that eligible veterans are able to access walk-in care from qualifying non-Department entities or providers.

''(b) ELIGIBLE VETERANS.—For purposes of this section, an eligible veteran is any individual who—

''(1) is enrolled in the health care system established under section 1705(a) of this title; and

''(2) has received care under this chapter within the 24-month period preceding the furnishing of walk-in care under this section.

''(c) QUALIFYING NON-DEPARTMENT ENTITIES OR PROVIDERS.—For purposes of this section, a qualifying non-Department entity or provider is a non-Department entity or provider that has entered into a contract or other agreement with the Secretary to furnish services under this section.

''(d) FEDERALLY-QUALIFIED HEALTH CENTERS.—Whenever practicable, the Secretary may use a Federally-qualified health center (as defined in section 1905(l)(2)(B) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396d(l)(2)(B))) to carry out this section.

''(e) CONTINUITY OF CARE.—The Secretary shall ensure continuity of care for those eligible veterans who receive walk-in care services under this section, including through the establishment of a mechanism to receive medical records from walk-in care providers and provide pertinent patient medical records to providers of walk-in care.

''(f) COPAYMENTS.—(1)(A) The Secretary may require an eligible veteran to pay the United States a copayment for each episode of hospital care or medical services provided under this section if the eligible veteran would be required to pay a copayment under this title.

''(B) An eligible veteran not required to pay a copayment under this title may access walk-in care without a copayment for the first two visits in a calendar year. For any additional visits, a copayment at an amount determined by the Secretary may be required.

''(C) An eligible veteran required to pay a copayment under this title may be required to pay a regular copayment for the first two walk-in care visits in a calendar year. For any additional visits, a higher copayment at an amount determined by the Secretary may be required.

''(2) After the first two episodes of care furnished to an eligible veteran under this section, the Secretary may adjust the copayment required of the veteran under this subsection based upon the priority group of enrollment of the eligible veteran, the number of episodes of care furnished to the eligible veteran during a year, and other factors the Secretary considers appropriate under this section.

''(3) The amount or amounts of the copayments required under this subsection shall be prescribed by the Secretary by rule.

''(4) Section 8153(c) of this title shall not apply to this subsection.

''(g) REGULATIONS.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of the Caring for Our Veterans Act of 2018, the Secretary shall promulgate regulations to carry out this section.

''(h) WALK-IN CARE DEFINED.—In this section, the term 'walk-in care' means non-emergent care provided by a qualifying non-Department entity or provider that furnishes episodic care and not longitudinal management of conditions and is otherwise defined through regulations the Secretary shall promulgate.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Section 1725A of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a) shall take effect on the date upon which final regulations implementing such section take effect.

(c) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 1725 the following new item:

''§1725A. Access to walk-in care.''.

SEC. 106. STRATEGY REGARDING THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HIGH-PERFORMING INTEGRATED HEALTH CARE NETWORK.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter II of chapter 73 is amended by inserting after section 7330B the following new section:

"§ 7330C. Quadrennial Veterans Health Administration review

''(a) MARKET AREA ASSESSMENTS.—(1) Not less frequently than every four years, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall perform market area assessments regarding the health care services furnished under the laws administered by the Secretary.

''(2) Each market area assessment established under paragraph (1) shall include the following:

''(A) An assessment of the demand for health care from the Department, disaggregated by geographic market areas as determined by the Secretary, including the number of requests for health care services under the laws administered by the Secretary.

''(B) An inventory of the health care capacity of the Department of Veterans Affairs across the Department's system of facilities.

''(C) An assessment of the health care capacity to be provided through contracted community care providers and providers who entered into a provider agreement with the Department under section 1703A of title 38, as added by section 102, including the number of providers, the geographic location of the providers, and categories or types of health care services provided by the providers.

''(D) An assessment obtained from other Federal direct delivery systems of their capacity to provide health care to veterans.

''(E) An assessment of the health care capacity of non-contracted providers where there is insufficient network supply.

''(F) An assessment of the health care capacity of academic affiliates and other collaborations of the Department as it relates to providing health care to veterans.

''(G) An assessment of the effects on health care capacity of the access standards and standards for quality established under sections 1703B and 1703C of this title.

''(H) The number of appointments for health care services under the laws administered by the Secretary, disaggregated by—

''(i) appointments at facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

''(ii) appointments with non-Department health care providers.

''(3)(A) The Secretary shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress the market area assessments established in paragraph (1).

''(B) The Secretary also shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress the market area assessments completed by or being performed on the day before the date of the enactment of the Caring for Our Veterans Act of 2018.

''(4)(A) The Secretary shall use the market area assessments established under paragraph (1) to—

''(i) determine the capacity of the health care provider networks established under section 1703(h) of this title;

''(ii) inform the Department budget, in accordance with subparagraph (B); and

''(iii) inform and assess the appropriateness of the access standards established under section 1703B of this title and standards for quality

under section 1703C and to make recommendations for any changes to such standards.

''(B) The Secretary shall ensure that the Department budget for any fiscal year (as submitted with the budget of the President under section 1105(a) of title 31) reflects the findings of the Secretary with respect to the most recent market area assessments under paragraph (1) and health care utilization data from the Department and non-Department entities or providers furnishing care and services to covered veterans as described in section 1703(b).

''(b) STRATEGIC PLAN TO MEET HEALTH CARE DEMAND.—(1) Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of the Caring for Our Veterans Act of 2018 and not less frequently than once every four years thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a strategic plan that specifies a four-year forecast of—

''(A) the demand for health care from the Department, disaggregated by geographic area as determined by the Secretary;

''(B) the health care capacity to be provided at each medical center of the Department; and

''(C) the health care capacity to be provided through community care providers.

''(2) In preparing the strategic plan under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall—

''(A) assess the access standards and standards for quality established under sections 1703B and 1703C of this title;

''(B) assess the market area assessments established under subsection (a);

''(C) assess the needs of the Department based on identified services that provide management of conditions or disorders related to military service for which there is limited experience or access in the national market, the overall health of veterans throughout their lifespan, or other services as the Secretary determines appropriate;

''(D) consult with key stakeholders within the Department, the heads of other Federal agencies, and other relevant governmental and non-governmental entities, including State, local, and tribal government officials, members of Congress, veterans service organizations, private sector representatives, academics, and other policy experts;

''(E) identify emerging issues, trends, problems, and opportunities that could affect health care services furnished under the laws administered by the Secretary;

''(F) develop recommendations regarding both short- and long-term priorities for health care services furnished under the laws administered by the Secretary;

''(G) after consultation with veterans service organizations and other key stakeholders on survey development or modification of an existing survey, consider a survey of veterans who have used hospital care, medical services, or extended care services furnished by the Veterans Health Administration during the most recent two-year period to assess the satisfaction of the veterans with service and quality of care;

''(H) conduct a comprehensive examination of programs and policies of the Department regarding the delivery of health care services and the demand of health care services for veterans in future years;

''(I) assess the remediation of medical service lines of the Department as described in section 1706A in conjunction with the utilization of non-Department entities or providers to offset remediation; and

''(J) consider such other matters as the Secretary considers appropriate.

''(c) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The Secretary shall be responsible for—

''(1) overseeing the transformation and organizational change across the Department to achieve such high performing integrated health care network;

''(2) developing the capital infrastructure planning and procurement processes, whether minor or major construction projects or leases; and

''(3) developing a multi-year budget process that is capable of forecasting future year budget requirements and projecting the cost of delivering health care services under a high-performing integrated health care network.

''(d) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS DEFINED.—In this section, the term 'appropriate committees of Congress' means—

''(1) the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate; and

''(2) the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 7330B the following new item:

''7330C. Quadrennial Veterans Health Administration review.''.

SEC. 107. APPLICABILITY OF DIRECTIVE OF OFFICE OF FEDERAL CONTRACT COMPLIANCE PROGRAMS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding the treatment of certain laws under subsection (i) of section 1703A of title 38, United States Code, as added by section 102 of this title, Directive 2014–01 of the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs of the Department of Labor (effective as of May 7, 2014) shall apply to any entity entering into an agreement under such section 1703A or section 1745 of such title, as amended by section 103, in the same manner as such directive applies to subcontractors under the TRICARE program for the duration of the moratorium provided under such directive.

(b) APPLICABILITY PERIOD.—The directive described in subsection (a), and the moratorium provided under such directive, shall not be altered or rescinded before May 7, 2019.

(c) TRICARE PROGRAM DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''TRICARE program'' has the meaning given that term in section 1072 of title 10, United States Code.

SEC. 108. PREVENTION OF CERTAIN HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS FROM PROVIDING NON-DEPARTMENT HEALTH CARE SERVICES TO VETERANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—On and after the date that is one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall deny or revoke the eligibility of a health care provider to provide non-Department health care services to veterans if the Secretary determines that the health care provider—

(1) was removed from employment with the Department of Veterans Affairs due to conduct that violated a policy of the Department relating to the delivery of safe and appropriate health care; or

(2) violated the requirements of a medical license of the health care provider that resulted in the loss of such medical license.

(b) PERMISSIVE ACTION.—On and after the date that is one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary may deny, revoke, or suspend the eligibility of a health care provider to provide non-Department health care services if the Secretary determines such action is necessary to immediately protect the health, safety, or welfare of veterans and the health care provider is under investigation by the medical licensing board of a State in which the health care provider is licensed or practices.

(c) SUSPENSION.—The Secretary shall suspend the eligibility of a health care provider to provide non-Department health care services to veterans if the health care provider is suspended from serving as a health care provider of the Department.

(d) COMPTROLLER GENERAL REPORT.—Not later than two years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to Congress a report on the implementation by the Secretary of this section, including the following:

(1) The aggregate number of health care providers denied or suspended under this section from participation in providing non-Department health care services.

(2) An evaluation of any impact on access to health care for patients or staffing shortages in programs of the Department providing non-Department health care services.

(3) An explanation of the coordination of the Department with the medical licensing boards of States in implementing this section, the amount of involvement of such boards in such implementation, and efforts by the Department to address any concerns raised by such boards with respect to such implementation.

(4) Such recommendations as the Comptroller General considers appropriate regarding harmonizing eligibility criteria between health care providers of the Department and health care providers eligible to provide non-Department health care services.

(e) NON-DEPARTMENT HEALTH CARE SERVICES DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''non-Department health care services'' means services—

(1) provided under subchapter I of chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code, at non-Department facilities (as defined in section 1701 of such title);

(2) provided under section 101 of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–146; 38 U.S.C. 1701 note);

(3) purchased through the Medical Community Care account of the Department; or

(4) purchased with amounts deposited in the Veterans Choice Fund under section 802 of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014.

SEC. 109. REMEDIATION OF MEDICAL SERVICE LINES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter I of chapter 17 is amended by inserting after section 1706 the following new section:

''§ 1706A. Remediation of medical service lines

''(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 30 days after determining under section 1703(e)(1) that a medical service line of the Department is providing hospital care, medical services, or extended care services that does not comply with the standards for quality established by the Secretary, the Secretary shall submit to Congress an assessment of the factors that led the Secretary to make such determination and a plan with specific actions, and the time to complete them, to be taken to comply with such standards for quality, including the following:

''(1) Increasing personnel or temporary personnel assistance, including mobile deployment teams.

''(2) Special hiring incentives, including the Education Debt Reduction Program under subchapter VII of chapter 76 of this title and recruitment, relocation, and retention incentives.

''(3) Utilizing direct hiring authority.

''(4) Providing improved training opportunities for staff.

''(5) Acquiring improved equipment.

''(6) Making structural modifications to the facility used by the medical service line.

''(7) Such other actions as the Secretary considers appropriate.

''(b) RESPONSIBLE PARTIES.—In each assessment submitted under subsection (a) with respect to a medical service line, the Secretary shall identify the individuals at the Central Office of the Veterans Health Administration, the facility used by the medical service line, and the central office of the relevant Veterans Integrated Service Network who are responsible for overseeing the progress of that medical service line in complying with the standards for quality established by the Secretary.

''(c) INTERIM REPORTS.—Not later than 180 days after submitting an assessment under subsection (a) with respect to a medical service line, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the progress of that medical service line in complying with the standards for quality established by the Secretary and any other measures the Secretary will take to assist the medical

service line in complying with such standards for quality.

''(d) ANNUAL REPORTS.—Not less frequently than once each year, the Secretary shall—

''(1) submit to Congress an analysis of the remediation actions and costs of such actions taken with respect to each medical service line with respect to which the Secretary submitted an assessment and plan under paragraph (1) in the preceding year, including an update on the progress of each such medical service line in complying with the standards for quality and timeliness established by the Secretary and any other actions the Secretary is undertaking to assist the medical service line in complying with standards for quality as established by the Secretary; and

''(2) publish such analysis on the internet website of the Department.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 1706 the following new item:

''1706A. Remediation of medical service lines.''.

CHAPTER 2—PAYING PROVIDERS AND IMPROVING COLLECTIONS

SEC. 111. PROMPT PAYMENT TO PROVIDERS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter I of chapter 17 is amended by inserting after section 1703C, as added by section 104 of this title, the following new section:

''§ 1703D. Prompt payment standard

''(a) IN GENERAL.—(1) Notwithstanding any other provision of this title or of any other provision of law, the Secretary shall pay for hospital care, medical services, or extended care services furnished by health care entities or providers under this chapter within 45 calendar days upon receipt of a clean paper claim or 30 calendar days upon receipt of a clean electronic claim.

''(2) If a claim is denied, the Secretary shall, within 45 calendar days of denial for a paper claim and 30 calendar days of denial for an electronic claim, notify the health care entity or provider of the reason for denying the claim and what, if any, additional information is required to process the claim.

''(3) Upon the receipt of the additional information, the Secretary shall ensure that the claim is paid, denied, or otherwise adjudicated within 30 calendar days from the receipt of the requested information.

''(4) This section shall only apply to payments made on an invoice basis and shall not apply to capitation or other forms of periodic payment to entities or providers.

''(b) SUBMITTAL OF CLAIMS BY HEALTH CARE ENTITIES AND PROVIDERS.—A health care entity or provider that furnishes hospital care, a medical service, or an extended care service under this chapter shall submit to the Secretary a claim for payment for furnishing the hospital care, medical service, or extended care service not later than 180 days after the date on which the entity or provider furnished the hospital care, medical service, or extended care service.

''(c) FRAUDULENT CLAIMS.—(1) Sections 3729 through 3733 of title 31 shall apply to fraudulent claims for payment submitted to the Secretary by a health care entity or provider under this chapter.

''(2) Pursuant to regulations prescribed by the Secretary, the Secretary shall bar a health care entity or provider from furnishing hospital care, medical services, and extended care services under this chapter when the Secretary determines the entity or provider has submitted to the Secretary fraudulent health care claims for payment by the Secretary.

''(d) OVERDUE CLAIMS.—(1) Any claim that has not been denied with notice, made pending with notice, or paid to the health care entity or provider by the Secretary shall be overdue if the notice or payment is not received by the entity provider within the time periods specified in subsection (a).

''(2)(A) If a claim is overdue under this subsection, the Secretary may, under the requirements established by subsection (a) and consistent with the provisions of chapter 39 of title 31 (commonly referred to as the 'Prompt Payment Act'), require that interest be paid on clean claims.

''(B) Interest paid under subparagraph (A) shall be computed at the rate of interest established by the Secretary of the Treasury under section 3902 of title 31 and published in the Federal Register.

''(3) Not less frequently than annually, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on payment of overdue claims under this subsection, disaggregated by paper and electronic claims, that includes the following:

''(A) The amount paid in overdue claims described in this subsection, disaggregated by the amount of the overdue claim and the amount of interest paid on such overdue claim.

''(B) The number of such overdue claims and the average number of days late each claim was paid, disaggregated by facility of the Department and Veterans Integrated Service Network region.

''(e) OVERPAYMENT.—(1) The Secretary shall deduct the amount of any overpayment from payments due a health care entity or provider under this chapter.

''(2) Deductions may not be made under this subsection unless the Secretary has made reasonable efforts to notify a health care entity or provider of the right to dispute the existence or amount of such indebtedness and the right to request a compromise of such indebtedness.

''(3) The Secretary shall make a determination with respect to any such dispute or request prior to deducting any overpayment unless the time required to make such a determination before making any deductions would jeopardize the Secretary's ability to recover the full amount of such indebtedness.

''(f) INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED.—(1) The Secretary shall provide to all health care entities and providers participating in a program to furnish hospital care, medical services, or extended care services under this chapter a list of information and documentation that is required to establish a clean claim under this section.

''(2) The Secretary shall consult with entities in the health care industry, in the public and private sector, to determine the information and documentation to include in the list under paragraph (1).

''(3) If the Secretary modifies the information and documentation included in the list under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall notify all health care entities and providers described in paragraph (1) not later than 30 days before such modifications take effect.

''(g) PROCESSING OF CLAIMS.—(1) In processing a claim for compensation for hospital care, medical services, or extended care services furnished by a non-Department health care entity or provider under this chapter, the Secretary may act through—

''(A) a non-Department entity that is under contract or agreement for the program established under section 1703(a) of this title; or

''(B) a non-Department entity that specializes in such processing for other Federal agency health care systems.

''(2) The Secretary shall seek to contract with a third party to conduct a review of claims described in paragraph (3) that includes—

''(A) a feasibility assessment to determine the capacity of the Department to process such claims in a timely manner; and

''(B) a cost benefit analysis comparing the capacity of the Department to a third party entity capable of processing such claims.

''(3) The review required under paragraph (2) shall apply to claims for hospital care, medical services, or extended care services furnished under section 1703 of this Act, as amended by the Caring for Our Veterans Act of 2018, that are processed by the Department.

''(h) REPORT ON ENCOUNTER DATA SYSTEM.—(1) Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of the Caring for Our Veterans Act of 2018, the Secretary shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report on the feasibility and advisability of adopting a funding mechanism similar to what is utilized by other Federal agencies to allow a contracted entity to act as a fiscal intermediary for the Federal Government to distribute, or pass through, Federal Government funds for certain non-underwritten hospital care, medical services, or extended care services.

''(2) The Secretary may coordinate with the Department of Defense, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Department of the Treasury in developing the report required by paragraph (1).

''(i) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

''(1) The term 'appropriate committees of Congress' means—

''(A) the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate; and

''(B) the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives.

''(2) The term 'clean electronic claim' means the transmission of data for purposes of payment of covered health care expenses that is submitted to the Secretary which contains substantially all of the required data elements necessary for accurate adjudication, without obtaining additional information from the entity or provider that furnished the care or service, submitted in such format as prescribed by the Secretary in regulations for the purpose of paying claims for care or services.

''(3) The term 'clean paper claim' means a paper claim for payment of covered health care expenses that is submitted to the Secretary which contains substantially all of the required data elements necessary for accurate adjudication, without obtaining additional information from the entity or provider that furnished the care or service, submitted in such format as prescribed by the Secretary in regulations for the purpose of paying claims for care or services.

''(4) The term 'fraudulent claims' means the knowing misrepresentation of a material fact or facts by a health care entity or provider made to induce the Secretary to pay a claim that was not legally payable to that provider.

''(5) The term 'health care entity or provider' includes any non-Department health care entity or provider, but does not include any Federal health care entity or provider.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 1703C, as added by section 104 of this title, the following new item:

''1703D. Prompt payment standard.''.

SEC. 112. AUTHORITY TO PAY FOR AUTHORIZED CARE NOT SUBJECT TO AN AGREEMENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter IV of chapter 81 is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''§ 8159. Authority to pay for services authorized but not subject to an agreement

''(a) IN GENERAL.—If, in the course of furnishing hospital care, a medical service, or an extended care service authorized by the Secretary and pursuant to a contract, agreement, or other arrangement with the Secretary, a provider who is not a party to the contract, agreement, or other arrangement furnishes hospital care, a medical service, or an extended care service that the Secretary considers necessary, the Secretary may compensate the provider for the cost of such care or service.

''(b) NEW CONTRACTS AND AGREEMENTS.—The Secretary shall take reasonable efforts to enter into a contract, agreement, or other arrangement with a provider described in subsection (a)

to ensure that future care and services authorized by the Secretary and furnished by the provider are subject to such a contract, agreement, or other arrangement.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 8158 the following new item:

''8159. Authority to pay for services authorized but not subject to an agreement.''.

SEC. 113. IMPROVEMENT OF AUTHORITY TO RECOVER THE COST OF SERVICES FURNISHED FOR NON-SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITIES.

(a) BROADENING SCOPE OF APPLICABILITY.—Section 1729 is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (2)(A)—

(i) by striking ''the veteran's'' and inserting ''the individual's''; and

(ii) by striking ''the veteran'' and inserting ''the individual''; and

(B) in paragraph (3)—

(i) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking ''the veteran'' and inserting ''the individual''; and

(ii) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''the veteran's'' and inserting ''the individual's'';

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by striking ''the veteran'' and inserting ''the individual''; and

(ii) by striking ''the veteran's'' and inserting ''the individual's''; and

(B) in paragraph (2)—

(i) in subparagraph (A)—

(I) by striking ''the veteran'' and inserting ''the individual''; and

(II) by striking ''the veteran's'' and inserting ''the individual's''; and

(ii) in subparagraph (B)—

(I) in clause (i), by striking ''the veteran'' and inserting ''the individual''; and

(II) in clause (ii)—

(aa) by striking ''the veteran'' and inserting ''the individual''; and

(bb) by striking ''the veteran's'' each place it appears and inserting ''the individual's'';

(3) in subsection (e), by striking ''A veteran'' and inserting ''An individual''; and

(4) in subsection (h)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking ''a veteran'' and inserting ''an individual'';

(ii) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''the veteran'' and inserting ''the individual''; and

(iii) in subparagraph (B), by striking ''the veteran'' and inserting ''the individual''; and

(B) in paragraph (2)—

(i) by striking ''A veteran'' and inserting ''An individual'';

(ii) by striking ''a veteran'' and inserting ''an individual''; and

(iii) by striking ''the veteran'' and inserting ''the individual''.

(b) MODIFICATION OF AUTHORITY.—Subsection (a)(1) of such section is amended by striking ''(1) Subject'' and all that follows through the period and inserting the following: ''(1) Subject to the provisions of this section, in any case in which the United States is required by law to furnish or pay for care or services under this chapter for a non-service-connected disability described in paragraph (2) of this subsection, the United States has the right to recover or collect from a third party the reasonable charges of care or services so furnished or paid for to the extent that the recipient or provider of the care or services would be eligible to receive payment for such care or services from such third party if the care or services had not been furnished or paid for by a department or agency of the United States.''.

(c) MODIFICATION OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS.—Subparagraph (D) of subsection (a)(2) of such section is amended to read as follows:

''(D) that is incurred by an individual who is entitled to care (or payment of the expenses of care) under a health-plan contract.''.

SEC. 114. PROCESSING OF CLAIMS FOR REIMBURSEMENT THROUGH ELECTRONIC INTERFACE.

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may enter into an agreement with a third-party entity to process, through the use of an electronic interface, claims for reimbursement for health care provided under the laws administered by the Secretary.

CHAPTER 3—EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMS

SEC. 121. EDUCATION PROGRAM ON HEALTH CARE OPTIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall develop and administer an education program that teaches veterans about their health care options through the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(b) ELEMENTS.—The program under subsection (a) shall—

(1) teach veterans about—

(A) eligibility criteria for care from the Department set forth under sections 1703, as amended by section 101 of this title, and 1710 of title 38, United States Code;

(B) priority groups for enrollment in the system of annual patient enrollment under section 1705(a) of such title;

(C) the copayments and other financial obligations, if any, required of certain individuals for certain services; and

(D) how to utilize the access standards and standards for quality established under sections 1703B and 1703C of such title;

(2) teach veterans about the interaction between health insurance (including private insurance, Medicare, Medicaid, the TRICARE program, the Indian Health Service, tribal health programs, and other forms of insurance) and health care from the Department; and

(3) provide veterans with information on what to do when they have a complaint about health care received from the Department (whether about the provider, the Department, or any other type of complaint).

(c) ACCESSIBILITY.—In developing the education program under this section, the Secretary shall ensure that materials under such program are accessible—

(1) to veterans who may not have access to the internet; and

(2) to veterans in a manner that complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.).

(d) ANNUAL EVALUATION AND REPORT.—

(1) EVALUATION.—The Secretary shall develop a method to evaluate the effectiveness of the education program under this section and evaluate the program using the method not less frequently than once each year.

(2) REPORT.—Not less frequently than once each year, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the findings of the Secretary with respect to the most recent evaluation conducted by the Secretary under paragraph (1).

(e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) MEDICAID.—The term ''Medicaid'' means the Medicaid program under title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.).

(2) MEDICARE.—The term ''Medicare'' means the Medicare program under title XVIII of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1395 et seq.).

(3) TRICARE PROGRAM.—The term ''TRICARE program'' has the meaning given that term in section 1072 of title 10, United States Code.

SEC. 122. TRAINING PROGRAM FOR ADMINISTRATION OF NON-DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTH CARE.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall develop and implement a training program to train employees and contractors of the Department of Veterans Affairs on how to administer non-Department health care programs, including the following:

(1) Reimbursement for non-Department emergency room care.

(2) The Veterans Community Care Program under section 1703 of such title, as amended by section 101.

(3) Management of prescriptions pursuant to improvements under section 131.

(b) ANNUAL EVALUATION AND REPORT.—The Secretary shall—

(1) develop a method to evaluate the effectiveness of the training program developed and implemented under subsection (a);

(2) evaluate such program not less frequently than once each year; and

(3) not less frequently than once each year, submit to Congress the findings of the Secretary with respect to the most recent evaluation carried out under paragraph (2).

SEC. 123. CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION FOR NON-DEPARTMENT MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish a program to provide continuing medical education material to non-Department medical professionals.

(2) EDUCATION PROVIDED.—The program established under paragraph (1) shall include education on the following:

(A) Identifying and treating common mental and physical conditions of veterans and family members of veterans.

(B) The health care system of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(C) Such other matters as the Secretary considers appropriate.

(b) MATERIAL PROVIDED.—The continuing medical education material provided to non-Department medical professionals under the program established under subsection (a) shall be the same material provided to medical professionals of the Department to ensure that all medical professionals treating veterans have access to the same materials, which supports core competencies throughout the community.

(c) ADMINISTRATION OF PROGRAM.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall administer the program established under subsection (a) to participating non-Department medical professionals through an internet website of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(2) CURRICULUM AND CREDIT PROVIDED.—The Secretary shall determine the curriculum of the program and the number of hours of credit to provide to participating non-Department medical professionals for continuing medical education.

(3) ACCREDITATION.—The Secretary shall ensure that the program is accredited in as many States as practicable.

(4) CONSISTENCY WITH EXISTING RULES.—The Secretary shall ensure that the program is consistent with the rules and regulations of the following:

(A) The medical licensing agency of each State in which the program is accredited.

(B) Such medical credentialing organizations as the Secretary considers appropriate.

(5) USER COST.—The Secretary shall carry out the program at no cost to participating non-Department medical professionals.

(6) MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND REPORT.—The Secretary shall monitor the utilization of the program established under subsection (a), evaluate its effectiveness, and report to Congress on utilization and effectiveness not less frequently than once each year.

(d) NON-DEPARTMENT MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''non-Department medical professional'' means any individual who is licensed by an appropriate medical authority in the United States and is in good standing, is not an employee of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and provides care to veterans or family members of veterans under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

CHAPTER 4—OTHER MATTERS RELATING TO NON-DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PROVIDERS

SEC. 131. ESTABLISHMENT OF PROCESSES TO ENSURE SAFE OPIOID PRESCRIBING PRACTICES BY NON-DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS.

(a) RECEIPT AND REVIEW OF GUIDELINES.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall ensure that all covered health care providers are provided a copy of and certify that they have reviewed the evidence-based guidelines for prescribing opioids set forth by the Opioid Safety Initiative of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(b) INCLUSION OF MEDICAL HISTORY AND CURRENT MEDICATIONS.—The Secretary shall implement a process to ensure that, if care of a veteran by a covered health care provider is authorized under the laws administered by the Secretary, the document authorizing such care includes the available and relevant medical history of the veteran and a list of all medications prescribed to the veteran as known by the Department.

(c) SUBMITTAL OF MEDICAL RECORDS AND PRESCRIPTIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall, consistent with section 1703(a)(2)(A), as amended by section 101 of this title, and section 1703A(e)(2)(F), as added by section 102 of this title, require each covered health care provider to submit medical records of any care or services furnished, including records of any prescriptions for opioids, to the Department in the timeframe and format specified by the Secretary.

(2) RESPONSIBILITY OF DEPARTMENT FOR RECORDING AND MONITORING.—In carrying out paragraph (1) and upon the receipt by the Department of the medical records described in paragraph (1), the Secretary shall—

(A) ensure the Department is responsible for the recording of the prescription in the electronic health record of the veteran; and

(B) enable other monitoring of the prescription as outlined in the Opioid Safety Initiative of the Department.

(3) REPORT.—Not less frequently than annually, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report evaluating the compliance of covered health care providers with the requirements under this section.

(d) USE OF OPIOID SAFETY INITIATIVE GUIDELINES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—If the Secretary determines that the opioid prescribing practices of a covered health care provider, when treating covered veterans, satisfy a condition described in paragraph (3), the Secretary shall take such action as the Secretary considers appropriate to ensure the safety of all veterans receiving care from that health care provider, including removing or directing the removal of any such health care provider from provider networks or otherwise refusing to authorize care of veterans by such health care provider in any program authorized under the laws administered by the Secretary.

(2) INCLUSION IN CONTRACTS.—The Secretary shall ensure that any contracts, agreements, or other arrangements entered into by the Secretary with third parties involved in administering programs that provide care in the community to veterans under the laws administered by the Secretary specifically grant the authority set forth in paragraph (1) to such third parties and to the Secretary, as the case may be.

(3) CONDITIONS FOR EXCLUSION OR LIMITATION.—The Secretary shall take such action as is considered appropriate under paragraph (1) when the opioid prescribing practices of a covered health care provider when treating covered veterans—

(A) conflict with or are otherwise inconsistent with the standards of appropriate and safe care;

(B) violate the requirements of a medical license of the health care provider; or

(C) may place at risk the veterans receiving health care from the provider.

(e) COVERED HEALTH CARE PROVIDER DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''covered health care provider'' means a non-Department of Veterans Affairs health care provider who provides health care to veterans under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, but does not include a health care provider employed by another agency of the Federal Government.

SEC. 132. IMPROVING INFORMATION SHARING WITH COMMUNITY PROVIDERS.

Section 7332(b)(2) is amended by striking subparagraph (H) and inserting the following new subparagraphs:

''(H)(i) To a non-Department entity (including private entities and other Federal agencies) for purposes of providing health care, including hospital care, medical services, and extended care services, to patients or performing other health care-related activities or functions.

''(ii) An entity to which a record is disclosed under this subparagraph may not disclose or use such record for a purpose other than that for which the disclosure was made or as permitted by law.

''(I) To a third party in order to recover or collect reasonable charges for care furnished to, or paid on behalf of, a patient in connection with a non-service connected disability as permitted by section 1729 of this title or for a condition for which recovery is authorized or with respect to which the United States is deemed to be a third party beneficiary under the Act entitled 'An Act to provide for the recovery from tortiously liable third persons of the cost of hospital and medical care and treatment furnished by the United States' (Public Law 87–693; 42 U.S.C. 2651 et seq.; commonly known as the 'Federal Medical Care Recovery Act').''.

SEC. 133. COMPETENCY STANDARDS FOR NON-DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT OF STANDARDS AND REQUIREMENTS.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish standards and requirements for the provision of care by non-Department of Veterans Affairs health care providers in clinical areas for which the Department of Veterans Affairs has special expertise, including post-traumatic stress disorder, military sexual trauma-related conditions, and traumatic brain injuries.

(b) CONDITION FOR ELIGIBILITY TO FURNISH CARE.—(1) Each non-Department of Veterans Affairs health care provider shall, to the extent practicable as determined by the Secretary or otherwise provided for in paragraph (2), meet the standards and requirements established pursuant to subsection (a) before furnishing care pursuant to a contract, agreement, or other arrangement with the Department of Veterans Affairs. Non-Department of Veterans Affairs health care providers furnishing care pursuant to a contract, agreement, or other arrangement shall, to the extent practicable as determined by the Secretary, fulfill training requirements established by the Secretary on how to deliver evidence-based treatments in the clinical areas for which the Department of Veterans Affairs has special expertise.

(2) Each non-Department of Veterans Affairs health care provider who enters into a contract, agreement, or other arrangement after the effective date identified in subsection (c) shall, to the extent practicable, meet the standards and requirements established pursuant to subsection (a) within 6 months of the contract, agreement, or other arrangement taking effect.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This section shall take effect on the day that is one year after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 134. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PARTICIPATION IN NATIONAL NETWORK OF STATE-BASED PRESCRIPTION DRUG MONITORING PROGRAMS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 17 is amended by inserting after section 1730A the following new section:

''§ 1730B. Access to State prescription drug monitoring programs

''(a) ACCESS TO PROGRAMS.—(1) Any licensed health care provider or delegate of such a provider shall be considered an authorized recipient or user for the purpose of querying and receiving data from the national network of State-based prescription drug monitoring programs to support the safe and effective prescribing of controlled substances to covered patients.

''(2) Under the authority granted by paragraph (1)—

''(A) licensed health care providers or delegates of such providers shall query such network in accordance with applicable regulations and policies of the Veterans Health Administration; and

''(B) notwithstanding any general or specific provision of law, rule, or regulation of a State, no State may restrict the access of licensed health care providers or delegates of such providers from accessing that State's prescription drug monitoring programs.

''(3) No State shall deny or revoke the license, registration, or certification of a licensed health care provider or delegate who otherwise meets that State's qualifications for holding the license, registration, or certification on the basis that the licensed health care provider or delegate queried or received data, or attempted to query or receive data, from the national network of State-based prescription drug monitoring programs under this section.

''(b) COVERED PATIENTS.—For purposes of this section, a covered patient is a patient who—

''(1) receives a prescription for a controlled substance; and

''(2) is not receiving palliative care or enrolled in hospice care.

''(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

''(1) The term 'controlled substance' has the meaning given such term in section 102(6) of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 802(6)).

''(2) The term 'delegate' means a person or automated system accessing the national network of State-based prescription monitoring programs at the direction or under the supervision of a licensed health care provider.

''(3) The term 'licensed health care provider' means a health care provider employed by the Department who is licensed, certified, or registered within any State to fill or prescribe medications within the scope of his or her practice as a Department employee.

''(4) The term 'national network of State-based prescription monitoring programs' means an interconnected nation-wide system that facilitates the transfer to State prescription drug monitoring program data across State lines.

''(5) The term 'State' means a State, as defined in section 101(20) of this title, or a political subdivision of a State.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 17 of such title is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 1730A the following new item:

''1730B. Access to State prescription drug monitoring programs.''.

CHAPTER 5—OTHER NON-DEPARTMENT HEALTH CARE MATTERS

SEC. 141. PLANS FOR USE OF SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS REQUIRED.

Whenever the Secretary submits to Congress a request for supplemental appropriations or any other appropriation outside the standard budget process to address a budgetary issue affecting the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Secretary shall, not later than 45 days before the date on which such budgetary issue would start

affecting a program or service, submit to Congress a justification for the request, including a plan that details how the Secretary intends to use the requested appropriation and how long the requested appropriation is expected to meet the needs of the Department and certification that the request was made using an updated and sound actuarial analysis.

SEC. 142. VETERANS CHOICE FUND FLEXIBILITY.

Section 802 of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–146; 38 U.S.C. 1701 note) is amended—

(1) in subsection (c)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking ''by paragraph (3)'' and inserting ''in paragraphs (3) and (4)''; and

(B) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(4) PERMANENT AUTHORITY FOR OTHER USES.—Beginning on March 1, 2019, amounts remaining in the Veterans Choice Fund may be used to furnish hospital care, medical services, and extended care services to individuals pursuant to chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code, at non-Department facilities, including pursuant to non-Department provider programs other than the program established by section 101. Such amounts shall be available in addition to amounts available in other appropriations accounts for such purposes.''; and

(2) in subsection (d)(1), by striking ''to subsection (c)(3)'' and inserting ''to paragraphs (3) and (4) of subsection (c)''.

SEC. 143. SUNSET OF VETERANS CHOICE PROGRAM.

Subsection (p) of section 101 of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–146; 38 U.S.C. 1701 note) is amended to read as follows:

''(p) AUTHORITY TO FURNISH CARE AND SERVICES.—The Secretary may not use the authority under this section to furnish care and services after the date that is one year after the date of the enactment of the Caring for Our Veterans Act of 2018.''.

SEC. 144. CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—

(1) TITLE 38.—Title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(A) in section 1712(a)—

(i) in paragraph (3), by striking ''under clause (1), (2), or (5) of section 1703(a) of this title'' and inserting ''or entered an agreement''; and

(ii) in paragraph (4)(A), by striking ''under the provisions of this subsection and section 1703 of this title'';

(B) in section 1712A(e)(1)—

(i) by inserting ''or agreements'' after ''contracts''; and

(ii) by striking ''(under sections 1703(a)(2) and 1710(a)(1)(B) of this title)''; and

(C) in section 2303(a)(2)(B)(i), by striking ''with section 1703'' and inserting ''with sections 1703A, 8111, and 8153''.

(2) SOCIAL SECURITY ACT.—Section 1866(a)(1)(L) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395cc(a)(1)(L)) is amended by striking ''under section 603'' and inserting ''under chapter 17''.

(3) VETERANS' BENEFITS IMPROVEMENTS ACT OF 1994.—Section 104(a)(4)(A) of the Veterans' Benefits Improvements Act of 1994 (Public Law 103–446; 38 U.S.C. 1117 note) is amended by striking ''in section 1703'' and inserting ''in sections 1703A, 8111, and 8153''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall take effect on the date described in section 101(b).

Subtitle B—Improving Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care Delivery

SEC. 151. LICENSURE OF HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PROVIDING TREATMENT VIA TELEMEDICINE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 17 is amended by inserting after section 1730B, as added by section 134, the following new section:

''§ 1730C. Licensure of health care professionals providing treatment via telemedicine

''(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any provision of law regarding the licensure of health care professionals, a covered health care professional may practice the health care profession of the health care professional at any location in any State, regardless of where the covered health care professional or the patient is located, if the covered health care professional is using telemedicine to provide treatment to an individual under this chapter.

''(b) COVERED HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS.—For purposes of this section, a covered health care professional is any health care professional who—

''(1) is an employee of the Department appointed under the authority under section 7306, 7401, 7405, 7406, or 7408 of this title or title 5;

''(2) is authorized by the Secretary to provide health care under this chapter;

''(3) is required to adhere to all standards for quality relating to the provision of medicine in accordance with applicable policies of the Department; and

''(4) has an active, current, full, and unrestricted license, registration, or certification in a State to practice the health care profession of the health care professional.

''(c) PROPERTY OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.—Subsection (a) shall apply to a covered health care professional providing treatment to a patient regardless of whether the covered health care professional or patient is located in a facility owned by the Federal Government during such treatment.

''(d) RELATION TO STATE LAW.—(1) The provisions of this section shall supersede any provisions of the law of any State to the extent that such provision of State law are inconsistent with this section.

''(2) No State shall deny or revoke the license, registration, or certification of a covered health care professional who otherwise meets the qualifications of the State for holding the license, registration, or certification on the basis that the covered health care professional has engaged or intends to engage in activity covered by subsection (a).

''(e) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section may be construed to remove, limit, or otherwise affect any obligation of a covered health care professional under the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 801 et seq.).

''(f) STATE DEFINED.—In this section, the term 'State' means a State, as defined in section 101(20) of this title, or a political subdivision of a State.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 17 of such title is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 1730B, as added by section 134, the following new item:

''1730C. Licensure of health care professionals providing treatment via telemedicine.''.

(c) REPORT ON TELEMEDICINE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the earlier of the date on which services provided under section 1730B of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), first occur or regulations are promulgated to carry out such section, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on the effectiveness of the use of telemedicine by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(2) ELEMENTS.—The report required by paragraph (1) shall include an assessment of the following:

(A) The satisfaction of veterans with telemedicine furnished by the Department.

(B) The satisfaction of health care providers in providing telemedicine furnished by the Department.

(C) The effect of telemedicine furnished by the Department on the following:

(i) The ability of veterans to access health care, whether from the Department or from non-Department health care providers.

(ii) The frequency of use by veterans of telemedicine.

(iii) The productivity of health care providers.

(iv) Wait times for an appointment for the receipt of health care from the Department.

(v) The use by veterans of in-person services at Department facilities and non-Department facilities.

(D) The types of appointments for the receipt of telemedicine furnished by the Department that were provided during the one-year period preceding the submittal of the report.

(E) The number of appointments for the receipt of telemedicine furnished by the Department that were requested during such period, disaggregated by medical facility.

(F) Savings by the Department, if any, including travel costs, from furnishing health care through the use of telemedicine during such period.

SEC. 152. AUTHORITY FOR DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS CENTER FOR INNOVATION FOR CARE AND PAYMENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter I of chapter 17, as amended by this title, is further amended by inserting after section 1703D, as added by section 111, the following new section:

''§ 1703E. Center for Innovation for Care and Payment

''(a) IN GENERAL.—(1) There is established within the Department a Center for Innovation for Care and Payment (in this section referred to as the 'Center').

''(2) The Secretary, acting through the Center, may carry out such pilot programs the Secretary determines to be appropriate to develop innovative approaches to testing payment and service delivery models in order to reduce expenditures while preserving or enhancing the quality of care furnished by the Department.

''(3) The Secretary, acting through the Center, shall test payment and service delivery models to determine whether such models—

''(A) improve access to, and quality, timeliness, and patient satisfaction of care and services; and

''(B) create cost savings for the Department.

''(4)(A) The Secretary shall test a model in a location where the Secretary determines that the model will addresses deficits in care (including poor clinical outcomes or potentially avoidable expenditures) for a defined population.

''(B) The Secretary shall focus on models the Secretary expects to reduce program costs while preserving or enhancing the quality of care received by individuals receiving benefits under this chapter.

''(C) The models selected may include those described in section 1115A(b)(2)(B) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1315a(b)(2)(B)).

''(5) In selecting a model for testing, the Secretary may consider, in addition to other factors identified in this subsection, the following factors:

''(A) Whether the model includes a regular process for monitoring and updating patient care plans in a manner that is consistent with the needs and preferences of individuals receiving benefits under this chapter.

''(B) Whether the model places the individual receiving benefits under this chapter (including family members and other caregivers of such individual) at the center of the care team of such individual.

''(C) Whether the model uses technology or new systems to coordinate care over time and across settings.

''(D) Whether the model demonstrates effective linkage with other public sector payers, private sector payers, or statewide payment models.

''(6)(A) Models tested under this section may not be designed in such a way that would allow

the United States to recover or collect reasonable charges from a Federal health care program for care or services furnished by the Secretary to a veteran under pilot programs carried out under this section.

''(B) In this paragraph, the term 'Federal health care program' means—

''(i) an insurance program described in section 1811 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395c) or established by section 1831 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1395j);

''(ii) a State plan for medical assistance approved under title XIX of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.); or

''(iii) a TRICARE program operated under sections 1075, 1075a, 1076, 1076a, 1076c, 1076d, 1076e, or 1076f of title 10.

''(b) DURATION.—Each pilot program carried out by the Secretary under this section shall terminate no later than five years after the date of the commencement of the pilot program.

''(c) LOCATION.—The Secretary shall ensure that each pilot program carried out under this section occurs in an area or areas appropriate for the intended purposes of the pilot program. To the extent practicable, the Secretary shall ensure that the pilot programs are located in geographically diverse areas of the United States.

''(d) BUDGET.—Funding for each pilot program carried out by the Secretary under this section shall come from appropriations—

''(1) provided in advance in appropriations acts for the Veterans Health Administration; and

''(2) provided for information technology systems.

''(e) NOTICE.—The Secretary shall—

''(1) publish information about each pilot program under this section in the Federal Register; and

''(2) take reasonable actions to provide direct notice to veterans eligible to participate in such pilot programs.

''(f) WAIVER OF AUTHORITIES.—(1) Subject to reporting under paragraph (2) and approval under paragraph (3), in implementing a pilot program under this section, the Secretary may waive such requirements in subchapters I, II, and III of this chapter as the Secretary determines necessary solely for the purposes of carrying out this section with respect to testing models described in subsection (a).

''(2) Before waiving any authority under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall submit to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the minority leader of the House of Representatives, the majority leader of the Senate, the minority leader of the Senate, and each standing committee with jurisdiction under the rules of the Senate and of the House of Representatives to report a bill to amend the provision or provisions of law that would be waived by the Department, a report on a request for waiver that describes in detail the following:

''(A) The specific authorities to be waived under the pilot program.

''(B) The standard or standards to be used in the pilot program in lieu of the waived authorities.

''(C) The reasons for such waiver or waivers.

''(D) A description of the metric or metrics the Secretary will use to determine the effect of the waiver or waivers upon the access to and quality, timeliness, or patient satisfaction of care and services furnished through the pilot program.

''(E) The anticipated cost savings, if any, of the pilot program.

''(F) The schedule for interim reports on the pilot program describing the results of the pilot program so far and the feasibility and advisability of continuing the pilot program.

''(G) The schedule for the termination of the pilot program and the submission of a final report on the pilot program describing the result of the pilot program and the feasibility and advisability of making the pilot program permanent.

''(H) The estimated budget of the pilot program.

''(3)(A) Upon receipt of a report submitted under paragraph (2), each House of Congress shall provide copies of the report to the chairman and ranking member of each standing committee with jurisdiction under the rules of the House of Representatives or the Senate to report a bill to amend the provision or provisions of law that would be waived by the Department under this subsection.

''(B) The waiver requested by the Secretary under paragraph (2) shall be considered approved under this paragraph if there is enacted into law a joint resolution approving such request in its entirety.

''(C) For purposes of this paragraph, the term 'joint resolution' means only a joint resolution which is introduced within the period of five legislative days beginning on the date on which the Secretary transmits the report to the Congress under such paragraph (2), and—

''(i) which does not have a preamble; and

''(ii) the matter after the resolving clause of which is as follows: 'that Congress approves the request for a waiver under section 1703E(f) of title 38, United States Code, as submitted by the Secretary on____', the blank space being filled with the appropriate date.

''(D)(i) Any committee of the House of Representatives to which a joint resolution is referred shall report it to the House without amendment not later than 15 legislative days after the date of introduction thereof. If a committee fails to report the joint resolution within that period, the committee shall be discharged from further consideration of the joint resolution.

''(ii) It shall be in order at any time after the third legislative day after each committee authorized to consider a joint resolution has reported or has been discharged from consideration of a joint resolution, to move to proceed to consider the joint resolution in the House. All points of order against the motion are waived. Such a motion shall not be in order after the House has disposed of a motion to proceed on a joint resolution addressing a particular submission. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the motion to its adoption without intervening motion. The motion shall not be debatable. A motion to reconsider the vote by which the motion is disposed of shall not be in order.

''(iii) The joint resolution shall be considered as read. All points of order against the joint resolution and against its consideration are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the joint resolution to its passage without intervening motion except two hours of debate equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent. A motion to reconsider the vote on passage of the joint resolution shall not be in order.

''(E)(i) A joint resolution introduced in the Senate shall be referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

''(ii) Any committee of the Senate to which a joint resolution is referred shall report it to the Senate without amendment not later than 15 session days after the date of introduction of a joint resolution described in paragraph (C). If a committee fails to report the joint resolution within that period, the committee shall be discharged from further consideration of the joint resolution and the joint resolution shall be placed on the calendar.

''(iii)(I) Notwithstanding Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, it is in order at any time after the third session day on which the Committee on Veterans' Affairs has reported or has been discharged from consideration of a joint resolution described in paragraph (C) (even though a previous motion to the same effect has been disagreed to) to move to proceed to the consideration of the joint resolution, and all points of order against the joint resolution (and against consideration of the joint resolution) are waived. The motion to proceed is not debatable. The motion is not subject to a motion to postpone. A motion to reconsider the vote by which the motion is agreed to or disagreed to shall not be in order. If a motion to proceed to the consideration of the resolution is agreed to, the joint resolution shall remain the unfinished business until disposed of.

''(II) Consideration of the joint resolution, and on all debatable motions and appeals in connection therewith, shall be limited to not more than two hours, which shall be divided equally between the majority and minority leaders or their designees. A motion further to limit debate is in order and not debatable. An amendment to, or a motion to postpone, or a motion to proceed to the consideration of other business, or a motion to recommit the joint resolution is not in order.

''(III) If the Senate has voted to proceed to a joint resolution, the vote on passage of the joint resolution shall occur immediately following the conclusion of consideration of the joint resolution, and a single quorum call at the conclusion of the debate if requested in accordance with the rules of the Senate.

''(IV) Appeals from the decisions of the Chair relating to the application of the rules of the Senate, as the case may be, to the procedure relating to a joint resolution shall be decided without debate.

''(F) A Joint resolution considered pursuant to this paragraph shall not be subject to amendment in either the House of Representatives or the Senate.

''(G)(i) If, before the passage by one House of the joint resolution of that House, that House receives the joint resolution from the other House, then the following procedures shall apply:

''(I) The joint resolution of the other House shall not be referred to a committee.

''(II) With respect to the joint resolution of the House receiving the joint resolution—

''(aa) the procedure in that House shall be the same as if no joint resolution had been received from the other House; but

''(bb) the vote on passage shall be on the joint resolution of the other House.

''(ii) If the Senate fails to introduce or consider a joint resolution under this paragraph, the joint resolution of the House shall be entitled to expedited floor procedures under this subparagraph.

''(iii) If, following passage of the joint resolution in the Senate, the Senate then receives the companion measure from the House of Representatives, the companion measure shall not be debatable.

''(H) This subparagraph is enacted by Congress—

''(i) as an exercise of the rulemaking power of the Senate and the House of Representatives, respectively, and as such it is deemed a part of the rules of each House, respectively, but applicable only with respect to the procedure to be followed in that House in the case of a joint resolution, and it supersedes other rules only to the extent that it is inconsistent with such rules; and

''(ii) with full recognition of the constitutional right of either House to change the rules (so far as relating to the procedures of that House) at any time, in the same manner, and to the same extent as in the case of any other rule of that House.''.

''(g) LIMITATIONS.—(1) The Secretary may not carry out more than 10 pilot programs concurrently.

''(2)(A) Subject to subparagraph (B), the Secretary may not expend more than $50,000,000 in any fiscal year from amounts under subsection (d).

''(B) The Secretary may expend more than the amount in subparagraph (A) if—

''(i) the Secretary determines that the additional expenditure is necessary to carry out pilot programs under this section;

''(ii) the Secretary submits to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the

House of Representatives a report setting forth the amount of the additional expenditure and a justification for the additional expenditure; and

''(iii) the Chairmen of the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives transmit to the Secretary a letter approving of the additional expenditure.

''(3) The waiver provisions in subsection (f) shall not apply unless the Secretary, in accordance with the requirements in subsection (f), submits the first proposal for a pilot program not later than 18 months after the date of the enactment of the Caring for Our Veterans Act of 2018.

''(4) Notwithstanding section 502 of this title, decisions by the Secretary under this section shall, consistent with section 511 of this title, be final and conclusive and may not be reviewed by any other official or by any court, whether by an action in the nature of mandamus or otherwise.

''(5)(A) If the Secretary determines that a pilot program is not improving the quality of care or producing cost savings, the Secretary shall—

''(i) propose a modification to the pilot program in the interim report that shall also be considered a report under subsection (f)(2) and shall be subject to the terms and conditions of subsection (f)(2); or

''(ii) terminate such pilot program not later than 30 days after submitting the interim report to Congress.

''(B) If the Secretary terminates a pilot program under subparagraph (A)(ii), for purposes of subparagraphs (F) and (G) of subsection (f)(2), such interim report will also serve as the final report for that pilot program.

''(h) EVALUATION AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—(1) The Secretary shall conduct an evaluation of each model tested, which shall include, at a minimum, an analysis of—

''(A) the quality of care furnished under the model, including the measurement of patient-level outcomes and patient-centeredness criteria determined appropriate by the Secretary; and

''(B) the changes in spending by reason of that model.

''(2) The Secretary shall make the results of each evaluation under this subsection available to the public in a timely fashion and may establish requirements for other entities participating in the testing of models under this section to collect and report information that the Secretary determines is necessary to monitor and evaluate such models.

''(i) COORDINATION AND ADVICE.—(1) The Secretary shall obtain advice from the Under Secretary for Health and the Special Medical Advisory Group established pursuant to section 7312 of this title in the development and implementation of any pilot program operated under this section.

''(2) In carrying out the duties under this section, the Secretary shall consult representatives of relevant Federal agencies, and clinical and analytical experts with expertise in medicine and health care management. The Secretary shall use appropriate mechanisms to seek input from interested parties.

''(j) EXPANSION OF SUCCESSFUL PILOT PROGRAMS.—Taking into account the evaluation under subsection (f), the Secretary may, through rulemaking, expand (including implementation on a nationwide basis) the duration and the scope of a model that is being tested under subsection (a) to the extent determined appropriate by the Secretary, if—

''(1) the Secretary determines that such expansion is expected to—

''(A) reduce spending without reducing the quality of care; or

''(B) improve the quality of patient care without increasing spending; and

''(2) the Secretary determines that such expansion would not deny or limit the coverage or provision of benefits for individuals receiving benefits under this chapter.''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter, as amended by this title, is further amended by inserting after the item relating to section 1703D the following new item:

''1703E. Center for Innovation for Care and Payment.''.

SEC. 153. AUTHORIZATION TO PROVIDE FOR OPERATIONS ON LIVE DONORS FOR PURPOSES OF CONDUCTING TRANSPLANT PROCEDURES FOR VETERANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter VIII of chapter 17 is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''§ 1788. Transplant procedures with live donors and related services

''(a) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subsections (b) and (c), in a case in which a veteran is eligible for a transplant procedure from the Department, the Secretary may provide for an operation on a live donor to carry out such procedure for such veteran, notwithstanding that the live donor may not be eligible for health care from the Department.

''(b) OTHER SERVICES.—Subject to the availability of appropriations for such purpose, the Secretary shall furnish to a live donor any care or services before and after conducting the transplant procedure under subsection (a) that may be required in connection with such procedure.

''(c) USE OF NON-DEPARTMENT FACILITIES.—In carrying out this section, the Secretary may provide for the operation described in subsection (a) on a live donor and furnish to the live donor the care and services described in subsection (b) at a non-Department facility pursuant to an agreement entered into by the Secretary under this chapter. The live donor shall be deemed to be an individual eligible for hospital care and medical services at a non-Department facility pursuant to such an agreement solely for the purposes of receiving such operation, care, and services at the non-Department facility.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 17 is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 1787 the following new item:

''1788. Transplant procedures with live donors and related services.''.

Subtitle C—Family Caregivers

SEC. 161. EXPANSION OF FAMILY CAREGIVER PROGRAM OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) FAMILY CAREGIVER PROGRAM.—

(1) EXPANSION OF ELIGIBILITY.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Subparagraph (B) of subsection (a)(2) of section 1720G is amended to read as follows:

''(B) for assistance provided under this subsection—

''(i) before the date on which the Secretary submits to Congress a certification that the Department has fully implemented the information technology system required by section 162(a) of the Caring for Our Veterans Act of 2018, has a serious injury (including traumatic brain injury, psychological trauma, or other mental disorder) incurred or aggravated in the line of duty in the active military, naval, or air service on or after September 11, 2001;

''(ii) during the two-year period beginning on the date on which the Secretary submitted to Congress the certification described in clause (i), has a serious injury (including traumatic brain injury, psychological trauma, or other mental disorder) incurred or aggravated in the line of duty in the active military, naval, or air service—

''(I) on or before May 7, 1975; or

''(II) on or after September 11, 2001; or

''(iii) after the date that is two years after the date on which the Secretary submits to Congress the certification described in clause (i), has a serious injury (including traumatic brain injury, psychological trauma, or other mental disorder) incurred or aggravated in the line of duty in the active military, naval, or air service; and''.

(B) PUBLICATION IN FEDERAL REGISTER.—Not later than 30 days after the date on which the Secretary of Veterans Affairs submits to Congress the certification described in subsection (a)(2)(B)(i) of section 1720G of such title, as amended by subparagraph (A) of this paragraph, the Secretary shall publish the date specified in such subsection in the Federal Register.

(2) EXPANSION OF NEEDED SERVICES IN ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA.—Subsection (a)(2)(C) of such section is amended—

(A) in clause (ii), by striking ''; or'' and inserting a semicolon;

(B) by redesignating clause (iii) as clause (iv); and

(C) by inserting after clause (ii) the following new clause (iii):

''(iii) a need for regular or extensive instruction or supervision without which the ability of the veteran to function in daily life would be seriously impaired; or''.

(3) EXPANSION OF SERVICES PROVIDED.—Subsection (a)(3)(A)(ii) of such section is amended—

(A) in subclause (IV), by striking ''; and'' and inserting a semicolon;

(B) in subclause (V), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following new subclause:

''(VI) through the use of contracts with, or the provision of grants to, public or private entities—

''(aa) financial planning services relating to the needs of injured veterans and their caregivers; and

''(bb) legal services, including legal advice and consultation, relating to the needs of injured veterans and their caregivers.''.

(4) MODIFICATION OF STIPEND CALCULATION.—Subsection (a)(3)(C) of such section is amended—

(A) by redesignating clause (iii) as clause (iv); and

(B) by inserting after clause (ii) the following new clause (iii):

''(iii) In determining the amount and degree of personal care services provided under clause (i) with respect to an eligible veteran whose need for personal care services is based in whole or in part on a need for supervision or protection under paragraph (2)(C)(ii) or regular instruction or supervision under paragraph (2)(C)(iii), the Secretary shall take into account the following:

''(I) The assessment by the family caregiver of the needs and limitations of the veteran.

''(II) The extent to which the veteran can function safely and independently in the absence of such supervision, protection, or instruction.

''(III) The amount of time required for the family caregiver to provide such supervision, protection, or instruction to the veteran.''.

(5) PERIODIC EVALUATION OF NEED FOR CERTAIN SERVICES.—Subsection (a)(3) of such section is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(D) In providing instruction, preparation, and training under subparagraph (A)(i)(I) and technical support under subparagraph (A)(i)(II) to each family caregiver who is approved as a provider of personal care services for an eligible veteran under paragraph (6), the Secretary shall periodically evaluate the needs of the eligible veteran and the skills of the family caregiver of such veteran to determine if additional instruction, preparation, training, or technical support under those subparagraphs is necessary.''.

(6) USE OF PRIMARY CARE TEAMS.—Subsection (a)(5) of such section is amended, in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by inserting ''(in collaboration with the primary care team for the eligible veteran to the maximum extent practicable)'' after ''evaluate''.

(7) ASSISTANCE FOR FAMILY CAREGIVERS.—Subsection (a) of such section is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(11)(A) In providing assistance under this subsection to family caregivers of eligible veterans, the Secretary may enter into contracts, provider agreements, and memoranda of understanding with Federal agencies, States, and private, nonprofit, and other entities to provide such assistance to such family caregivers.

''(B) The Secretary may provide assistance under this paragraph only if such assistance is reasonably accessible to the family caregiver and is substantially equivalent or better in quality to similar services provided by the Department.

''(C) The Secretary may provide fair compensation to Federal agencies, States, and other entities that provide assistance under this paragraph.''.

(b) MODIFICATION OF DEFINITION OF PERSONAL CARE SERVICES.—Subsection (d)(4) of such section is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''independent'';

(2) by redesignating subparagraph (B) as subparagraph (D); and

(3) by inserting after subparagraph (A) the following new subparagraphs:

''(B) Supervision or protection based on symptoms or residuals of neurological or other impairment or injury.

''(C) Regular or extensive instruction or supervision without which the ability of the veteran to function in daily life would be seriously impaired.''.

SEC. 162. IMPLEMENTATION OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SYSTEM OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO ASSESS AND IMPROVE THE FAMILY CAREGIVER PROGRAM.

(a) IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW SYSTEM.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than October 1, 2018, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall implement an information technology system that fully supports the Program and allows for data assessment and comprehensive monitoring of the Program.

(2) ELEMENTS OF SYSTEM.—The information technology system required to be implemented under paragraph (1) shall include the following:

(A) The ability to easily retrieve data that will allow all aspects of the Program (at the medical center and aggregate levels) and the workload trends for the Program to be assessed and comprehensively monitored.

(B) The ability to manage data with respect to a number of caregivers that is more than the number of caregivers that the Secretary expects to apply for the Program.

(C) The ability to integrate the system with other relevant information technology systems of the Veterans Health Administration.

(b) ASSESSMENT OF PROGRAM.—Not later than 180 days after implementing the system described in subsection (a), the Secretary shall, through the Under Secretary for Health, use data from the system and other relevant data to conduct an assessment of how key aspects of the Program are structured and carried out.

(c) ONGOING MONITORING OF AND MODIFICATIONS TO PROGRAM.—

(1) MONITORING.—The Secretary shall use the system implemented under subsection (a) to monitor and assess the workload of the Program, including monitoring and assessment of data on—

(A) the status of applications, appeals, and home visits in connection with the Program; and

(B) the use by caregivers participating in the Program of other support services under the Program such as respite care.

(2) MODIFICATIONS.—Based on the monitoring and assessment conducted under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall identify and implement such modifications to the Program as the Secretary considers necessary to ensure the Program is functioning as intended and providing veterans and caregivers participating in the Program with services in a timely manner.

(d) REPORTS.—

(1) INITIAL REPORT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives, and the Comptroller General of the United States a report that includes—

(i) the status of the planning, development, and deployment of the system required to be implemented under subsection (a), including any changes in the timeline for the implementation of the system; and

(ii) an assessment of the needs of family caregivers of veterans described in subparagraph (B), the resources needed for the inclusion of such family caregivers in the Program, and such changes to the Program as the Secretary considers necessary to ensure the successful expansion of the Program to include such family caregivers.

(B) VETERANS DESCRIBED.—Veterans described in this subparagraph are veterans who are eligible for the Program under clause (ii) or (iii) of section 1720G(a)(2)(B) of title 38, United States Code, as amended by section 161(a)(1) of this title, solely due to a serious injury (including traumatic brain injury, psychological trauma, or other mental disorder) incurred or aggravated in the line of duty in the active military, naval, or air service before September 11, 2001.

(2) NOTIFICATION BY COMPTROLLER GENERAL.—The Comptroller General shall review the report submitted under paragraph (1) and notify the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives with respect to the progress of the Secretary in—

(A) fully implementing the system required under subsection (a); and

(B) implementing a process for using such system to monitor and assess the Program under subsection (c)(1) and modify the Program as considered necessary under subsection (c)(2).

(3) FINAL REPORT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than October 1, 2019, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives, and the Comptroller General a report on the implementation of subsections (a) through (c).

(B) ELEMENTS.—The report required by subparagraph (A) shall include the following:

(i) A certification by the Secretary that the information technology system described in subsection (a) has been implemented.

(ii) A description of how the Secretary has implemented such system.

(iii) A description of the modifications to the Program, if any, that were identified and implemented under subsection (c)(2).

(iv) A description of how the Secretary is using such system to monitor the workload of the Program.

(e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) ACTIVE MILITARY, NAVAL, OR AIR SERVICE.—The term ''active military, naval, or air service'' has the meaning given that term in section 101 of title 38, United States Code.

(2) PROGRAM.—The term ''Program'' means the program of comprehensive assistance for family caregivers under section 1720G(a) of title 38, United States Code, as amended by section 161 of this title.

SEC. 163. MODIFICATIONS TO ANNUAL EVALUATION REPORT ON CAREGIVER PROGRAM OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) BARRIERS TO CARE AND SERVICES.—Subparagraph (A)(iv) of section 101(c)(2) of the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010 (Public Law 111–163; 38 U.S.C. 1720G note) is amended by inserting '', including a description of any barriers to accessing and receiving care and services under such programs'' before the semicolon.

(b) SUFFICIENCY OF TRAINING FOR FAMILY CAREGIVER PROGRAM.—Subparagraph (B) of such section is amended—

(1) in clause (i), by striking ''; and'' and inserting a semicolon;

(2) in clause (ii), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new clause:

''(iii) an evaluation of the sufficiency and consistency of the training provided to family caregivers under such program in preparing family caregivers to provide care to veterans under such program.''.

TITLE II—VA ASSET AND INFRASTRUCTURE REVIEW

Subtitle A—Asset and Infrastructure Review

SEC. 201. SHORT TITLE.

This subtitle may be cited as the ''VA Asset and Infrastructure Review Act of 2018''.

SEC. 202. THE COMMISSION.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established an independent commission to be known as the ''Asset and Infrastructure Review Commission'' (in this subtitle referred to as the ''Commission'').

(b) DUTIES.—The Commission shall carry out the duties specified for it in this subtitle.

(c) APPOINTMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—

(A) APPOINTMENT.—The Commission shall be composed of 9 members appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate.

(B) TRANSMISSION OF NOMINATIONS.—The President shall transmit to the Senate the nominations for appointment to the Commission not later than May 31, 2021.

(2) CONSULTATION IN SELECTION PROCESS.—In selecting individuals for nominations for appointments to the Commission, the President shall consult with—

(A) the Speaker of the House of Representatives;

(B) the majority leader of the Senate;

(C) the minority leader of the House of Representatives;

(D) the minority leader of the Senate; and

(E) congressionally chartered, membership based veterans service organizations concerning the appointment of three members.

(3) DESIGNATION OF CHAIR.—At the time the President nominates individuals for appointment to the Commission under paragraph (1)(B), the President shall designate one such individual who shall serve as Chair of the Commission and one such individual who shall serve as Vice Chair of the Commission.

(4) MEMBER REPRESENTATION.—In nominating individuals under this subsection, the President shall ensure that—

(A) veterans, reflecting current demographics of veterans enrolled in the system of annual patient enrollment under section 1705 of title 38, United States Code, are adequately represented in the membership of the Commission;

(B) at least one member of the Commission has experience working for a private integrated health care system that has annual gross revenues of more than $50,000,000;

(C) at least one member has experience as a senior manager for an entity specified in clause (ii), (iii), or (iv) of section 101(a)(1)(B) of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–146; 38 U.S.C. 1701 note);

(D) at least one member—

(i) has experience with capital asset management for the Federal Government; and

(ii) is familiar with trades related to building and real property, including construction, engineering, architecture, leasing, and strategic partnerships; and

(E) at least three members represent congressionally chartered, membership-based, veterans service organizations.

(d) MEETINGS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall meet only during calendar years 2022 and 2023.

(2) PUBLIC NATURE OF MEETINGS AND PROCEEDINGS.—

(A) PUBLIC MEETINGS.—Each meeting of the Commission shall be open to the public.

(B) OPEN PARTICIPATION.—All the proceedings, information, and deliberations of the Commission shall be available for review by the public.

(e) VACANCIES.—A vacancy in the Commission shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment, but the individual appointed to fill the vacancy shall serve only for the unexpired portion of the term for which the individual's predecessor was appointed.

(f) PAY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Members of the Commission shall serve without pay.

(2) OFFICERS OR EMPLOYEES OF THE UNITED STATES.—Each member of the Commission who is an officer or employee of the United States shall serve without compensation in addition to that received for service as an officer or employee of the United States.

(3) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—Members shall receive travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, in accordance with sections 5702 and 5703 of title 5, United States Code.

(g) DIRECTOR OF STAFF.—

(1) APPOINTMENT.—The Commission shall appoint a Director who—

(A) has not served as an employee of the Department of Veterans Affairs during the one-year period preceding the date of such appointment; and

(B) is not otherwise barred or prohibited from serving as Director under Federal ethics laws and regulations, by reason of post-employment conflict of interest.

(2) RATE OF PAY.—The Director shall be paid at the rate of basic pay payable for level IV of the Executive Schedule under section 5315 of title 5, United States Code.

(h) STAFF.—

(1) PAY OF PERSONNEL.—Subject to paragraphs (2) and (3), the Director, with the approval of the Commission, may appoint and fix the pay of additional personnel.

(2) EXEMPTION FROM CERTAIN REQUIREMENTS.—The Director may make such appointments without regard to the provisions of title 5, United States Code, governing appointments in the competitive service, and any personnel so appointed may be paid without regard to the provisions of chapter 51 and subchapter III of chapter 53 of that title relating to classification and General Schedule pay rates, except that an individual so appointed may not receive pay in excess of the annual rate of basic pay payable for GS–15 of the General Schedule.

(3) DETAILEES.—

(A) LIMITATION ON NUMBER.—Not more than two-thirds of the personnel employed by or detailed to the Commission may be on detail from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(B) PROFESSIONAL ANALYSTS.—Not more than half of the professional analysts of the Commission staff may be persons detailed from the Department of Veterans Affairs to the Commission.

(C) PROHIBITION ON DETAIL OF CERTAIN PERSONNEL.—A person may not be detailed from the Department of Veterans Affairs to the Commission if, within 6 months before the detail is to begin, that person participated personally and substantially in any matter within the Department of Veterans Affairs concerning the preparation of recommendations regarding facilities of the Veterans Health Administration.

(4) AUTHORITY TO REQUEST DETAILED PERSONNEL.—Subject to paragraph (3), the head of any Federal department or agency, upon the request of the Director, may detail any of the personnel of that department or agency to the Commission to assist the Commission in carrying out its duties under this subtitle.

(5) INFORMATION FROM FEDERAL AGENCIES.—The Commission may secure directly from any Federal agency such information the Commission considers necessary to carry out this subtitle. Upon request of the Chair, the head of such agency shall furnish such information to the Commission.

(i) OTHER AUTHORITY.—

(1) TEMPORARY AND INTERMITTENT SERVICES.—The Commission may procure by contract, to the extent funds are available, the temporary or intermittent services of experts or consultants pursuant to section 3109 of title 5, United States Code.

(2) LEASING AND ACQUISITION OF PROPERTY.—To the extent funds are available, the Commission may lease real property and acquire personal property either of its own accord or in consultation with the General Services Administration.

(j) TERMINATION.—The Commission shall terminate on December 31, 2023.

(k) PROHIBITION AGAINST RESTRICTING COMMUNICATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), no person may restrict an employee of the Department of Veterans Affairs in communicating with the Commission.

(2) UNLAWFUL COMMUNICATIONS.—Paragraph (1) does not apply to a communication that is unlawful.

SEC. 203. PROCEDURE FOR MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS.

(a) SELECTION CRITERIA.—

(1) PUBLICATION.—The Secretary shall, not later than February 1, 2021, and after consulting with veterans service organizations, publish in the Federal Register and transmit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives the criteria proposed to be used by the Department of Veterans Affairs in assessing and making recommendations regarding the modernization or realignment of facilities of the Veterans Health Administration under this subtitle. Such criteria shall include the preferences of veterans regarding health care furnished by the Department.

(2) PUBLIC COMMENT.—The Secretary shall provide an opportunity for public comment on the proposed criteria under paragraph (1) for a period of at least 90 days and shall include notice of that opportunity in the publication required under such paragraph.

(3) PUBLICATION OF FINAL CRITERIA.—The Secretary shall, not later than May 31, 2021, publish in the Federal Register and transmit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives the final criteria to be used in making recommendations regarding the closure, modernization, or realignment of facilities of the Veterans Health Administration under this subtitle.

(b) RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SECRETARY.—

(1) PUBLICATION IN FEDERAL REGISTER.—The Secretary shall, not later than January 31, 2022, and after consulting with veterans service organizations, publish in the Federal Register and transmit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives and to the Commission a report detailing the recommendations regarding the modernization or realignment of facilities of the Veterans Health Administration on the basis of the final criteria referred to in subsection (a)(2) that are applicable.

(2) FACTORS FOR CONSIDERATION.—In making recommendations under this subsection, the Secretary shall consider each of the following factors:

(A) The degree to which any health care delivery or other site for providing services to veterans reflect the metrics of the Department of Veterans Affairs regarding market area health system planning.

(B) The provision of effective and efficient access to high-quality health care and services for veterans.

(C) The extent to which the real property that no longer meets the needs of the Federal Government could be reconfigured, repurposed, consolidated, realigned, exchanged, outleased, replaced, sold, or disposed.

(D) The need of the Veterans Health Administration to acquire infrastructure or facilities that will be used for the provision of health care and services to veterans.

(E) The extent to which the operating and maintenance costs are reduced through consolidating, colocating, and reconfiguring space, and through realizing other operational efficiencies.

(F) The extent and timing of potential costs and savings, including the number of years such costs or savings will be incurred, beginning with the date of completion of the proposed recommendation.

(G) The extent to which the real property aligns with the mission of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(H) The extent to which any action would impact other missions of the Department (including education, research, or emergency preparedness).

(I) Local stakeholder inputs and any factors identified through public field hearings.

(J) The assessments under paragraph (3).

(K) The extent to which the Veterans Health Administration has appropriately staffed the medical facility, including determinations whether there has been insufficient resource allocation or deliberate understaffing.

(L) Any other such factors the Secretary determines appropriate.

(3) CAPACITY AND COMMERCIAL MARKET ASSESSMENTS.—

(A) ASSESSMENTS.—The Secretary shall assess the capacity of each Veterans Integrated Service Network and medical facility of the Department to furnish hospital care or medical services to veterans under chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code. Each such assessment shall—

(i) identify gaps in furnishing such care or services at such Veterans Integrated Service Network or medical facility;

(ii) identify how such gaps can be filled by—

(I) entering into contracts or agreements with network providers under this section or with entities under other provisions of law;

(II) making changes in the way such care and services are furnished at such Veterans Integrated Service Network or medical facility, including—

(aa) extending hours of operation;

(bb) adding personnel; or

(cc) expanding space through the construction, leasing, or sharing of health care facilities; and

(III) the building or realignment of Department resources or personnel;

(iii) forecast, based on future projections and historical trends, both the short- and long-term demand in furnishing care or services at such Veterans Integrated Service Network or medical facility and assess how such demand affects the needs to use such network providers;

(iv) include a commercial health care market assessment of designated catchment areas in the United States conducted by a non-governmental entity; and

(v) consider the unique ability of the Federal Government to retain a presence in an area otherwise devoid of commercial health care providers or from which such providers are at risk of leaving.

(B) CONSULTATION.—In carrying out the assessments under subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall consult with veterans service organizations and veterans served by each such Veterans Integrated Service Network and medical facility.

(C) SUBMITTAL.—The Secretary shall submit such assessments to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate with the recommendations of the Secretary under this subsection and make the assessments publicly available.

(4) SUMMARY OF SELECTION PROCESS.—The Secretary shall include, with the list of recommendations published and transmitted pursuant to paragraph (1), a summary of the selection process that resulted in the recommendation for each facility of the Veterans Health Administration, including a justification for each recommendation. The Secretary shall transmit the matters referred to in the preceding sentence not

later than 7 days after the date of the transmittal to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives and the Commission of the report referred to in paragraph (1).

(5) TREATMENT OF FACILITIES.—In assessing facilities of the Veterans Health Administration, the Secretary shall consider all such facilities equally without regard to whether the facility has been previously considered or proposed for reuse, closure, modernization, or realignment by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(6) AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION TO CONGRESS.—In addition to making all information used by the Secretary to prepare the recommendations under this subsection available to Congress (including any committee or Member of Congress), the Secretary shall also make such information available to the Commission and the Comptroller General of the United States.

(7) CERTIFICATION OF ACCURACY.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Each person referred to in subparagraph (B), when submitting information to the Secretary or the Commission concerning the modernization or realignment of a facility of the Veterans Health Administration, shall certify that such information is accurate and complete to the best of that person's knowledge and belief.

(B) COVERED PERSONS.—Subparagraph (A) applies to the following persons:

(i) Each Under Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(ii) Each director of a Veterans Integrated Service Network.

(iii) Each director of a medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(iv) Each director of a program office of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(v) Each person who is in a position the duties of which include personal and substantial involvement in the preparation and submission of information and recommendations concerning the modernization or realignment of facilities of the Veterans Health Administration.

(c) REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE COMMISSION.—

(1) PUBLIC HEARINGS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—After receiving the recommendations from the Secretary pursuant to subsection (b), the Commission shall conduct public hearings on the recommendations.

(B) LOCATIONS.—The Commission shall conduct public hearings in regions affected by a recommendation of the Secretary to close a facility of the Veterans Health Administration. To the greatest extent practicable, the Commission shall conduct public hearings in regions affected by a recommendation of the Secretary to modernize or realign such a facility.

(C) REQUIRED WITNESSES.—Witnesses at each public hearing shall include at a minimum—

(i) a veteran—

(I) enrolled under section 1705 of title 38, United States Code; and

(II) identified by a local veterans service organization; and

(ii) a local elected official.

(2) TRANSMITTAL TO PRESIDENT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall, not later than January 31, 2023, transmit to the President a report containing the Commission's findings and conclusions based on a review and analysis of the recommendations made by the Secretary, together with the Commission's recommendations, for modernizations and realignments of facilities of the Veterans Health Administration.

(B) AUTHORITY TO MAKE CHANGES TO RECOMMENDATIONS.—Subject to subparagraph (C), in making its recommendations, the Commission may change any recommendation made by the Secretary if the Commission—

(i) determines that the Secretary deviated substantially from the final criteria referred to in subsection (a)(2) in making such recommendation;

(ii) determines that the change is consistent with the final criteria referred to in subsection (a)(2);

(iii) publishes a notice of the proposed change in the Federal Register not less than 45 days before transmitting its recommendations to the President pursuant to subparagraph (A); and

(iv) conducts public hearings on the proposed change.

(3) JUSTIFICATION FOR CHANGES.—The Commission shall explain and justify in its report submitted to the President pursuant to paragraph (2) any recommendation made by the Commission that is different from the recommendations made by the Secretary pursuant to subsection (b). The Commission shall transmit a copy of such report to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives on the same date on which it transmits its recommendations to the President under paragraph (2).

(4) PROVISION OF INFORMATION TO CONGRESS.—After the Commission transmits its report to the President, the Commission shall promptly provide, upon request, to any Member of Congress, information used by the Commission in making its recommendations.

(d) REVIEW BY THE PRESIDENT.—

(1) REPORT.—The President shall, not later than February 15, 2023, transmit to the Commission and to the Congress a report containing the President's approval or disapproval of the Commission's recommendations.

(2) PRESIDENTIAL APPROVAL.—If the President approves all the recommendations of the Commission, the President shall transmit a copy of such recommendations to the Congress, together with a certification of such approval.

(3) PRESIDENTIAL DISAPPROVAL.—If the President disapproves the recommendations of the Commission, in whole or in part, the President shall transmit to the Commission and the Congress, not later than March 1, 2023, the reasons for that disapproval. The Commission, after consideration of the President's reasons for disapproval, shall then transmit to the President, not later than March 15, 2023, a report containing—

(A) the Commission's findings and conclusions based on a review and analysis of those reasons for disapproval provided by the President; and

(B) recommendations that the Commission determines are appropriate for modernizations and realignments of facilities of the Veterans Health Administration.

(4) TRANSMITTAL OF RECOMMENDATIONS TO CONGRESS.—If the President approves all recommendations of the Commission transmitted to the President under paragraph (3), the President shall transmit a copy of such recommendations to the Congress, together with a certification of such approval.

(5) FAILURE TO TRANSMIT.—If the President does not transmit to the Congress an approval and certification described in paragraph (2) or (4) by March 30, 2023, the process by which facilities of the Veterans Health Administration may be selected for modernization or realignment under this subtitle shall be terminated.

SEC. 204. ACTIONS REGARDING INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES OF THE VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subsection (b), the Secretary shall begin to implement the recommended modernizations and realignments in the report under section 203(d) not later than three years after the date on which the President transmits such report to Congress. In any fiscal year, such implementation includes—

(1) the planning of modernizations and realignments of facilities of the Veterans Health Administration as recommended in such report; and

(2) providing detailed information on the budget for such modernizations or realignments in documents submitted to Congress by the Secretary in support of the President's budget for that fiscal year.

(b) CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may not carry out any modernization or realignment recommended by the Commission in a report transmitted from the President pursuant to section 203(d) if a joint resolution is enacted, in accordance with the provisions of section 207, disapproving such recommendations of the Commission before the earlier of—

(A) the end of the 45-day period beginning on the date on which the President transmits such report; or

(B) the adjournment of Congress sine die for the session during which such report is transmitted.

(2) COMPUTATION OF PERIOD.—For purposes of paragraph (1) and subsections (a) and (c) of section 207, the days on which either House of Congress is not in session because of an adjournment of more than three days to a day certain shall be excluded in the computation of a period.

SEC. 205. IMPLEMENTATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—

(1) MODERNIZING AND REALIGNING FACILITIES.—In modernizing or realigning any facility of the Veterans Health Administration under this subtitle, the Secretary may—

(A) take such actions as may be necessary to modernize or realign any such facility, including the alteration of such facilities, the acquisition of such land, the leasing or construction of such replacement facilities, the disposition of such land or facilities, the performance of such activities, and the conduct of such advance planning and design as may be required to transfer functions from a facility of the Veterans Health Administration to another such facility, and may use for such purpose funds in the Account or funds appropriated to the Department of Veterans Affairs for such purposes;

(B) carry out activities for the purposes of environmental mitigation, abatement, or restoration at any such facility, and shall use for such purposes funds in the Account;

(C) reimburse other Federal agencies for actions performed at the request of the Secretary with respect to any such closure or realignment, and may use for such purpose funds in the Account or funds appropriated to the Department of Veterans Affairs and available for such purpose; and

(D) exercise the authority of the Secretary under subchapter V of chapter 81 of title 38, United States Code.

(2) ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION; HISTORIC PRESERVATION.—In carrying out any closure or realignment under this subtitle, the Secretary, with regards to any property made excess to the needs of the Department of Veterans Affairs as a result of such closure or realignment, shall carry out, as soon as possible with funds available for such purpose, any of the following for which the Secretary is responsible:

(A) Environmental mitigation.

(B) Environmental abatement.

(C) Environmental restoration.

(D) Compliance with historic preservation requirements.

(b) MANAGEMENT AND DISPOSAL OF PROPERTY.—

(1) EXISTING DISPOSAL AUTHORITIES.—To transfer or dispose of surplus real property or infrastructure located at any facility of the Veterans Health Administration that is modernized or realigned under this title, the Secretary may exercise the authorities of the Secretary under subchapters I and II of chapter 81 of title 38, United States Code, or the authorities delegated to the Secretary by the Administrator of General Services under subchapter III of chapter 5 of title 40, United States Code.

(2) EFFECTS ON LOCAL COMMUNITIES.—

(A) CONSULTATION WITH STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT.—Before any action may be taken with respect to the disposal of any surplus real property or infrastructure located at any facility of the Veterans Health Administration to be closed or realigned under this subtitle, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall consult with the

Governor of the State and the heads of the local governments concerned for the purpose of considering any plan for the use of such property by the local community concerned.

(B) TREATMENT OF ROADS.—If infrastructure or a facility of the Veterans Health Administration to be closed or realigned under this subtitle includes a road used for public access through, into, or around the facility, the Secretary—

(i) shall consult with the Government of the State and the heads of the local governments concerned for the purpose of considering the continued availability of the road for public use after the recommended action is complete; and

(ii) may exercise the authority of the Secretary under section 8108 of title 38, United States Code.

(3) LEASES; CERCLA.—

(A) LEASE AUTHORITY.—

(i) TRANSFER TO REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY FOR LEASE.—The Secretary may transfer title to a facility of the Veterans Health Administration approved for closure or realignment under this subtitle (including property at a facility of the Veterans Health Administration approved for realignment which will be retained by the Department of Veterans Affairs or another Federal agency after realignment) to the redevelopment authority for the facility if the redevelopment authority agrees to lease, directly upon transfer, one or more portions of the property transferred under this subparagraph to the Secretary or to the head of another department or agency of the Federal Government.

(ii) TERM OF LEASE.—A lease under clause (i) shall be for a term of not to exceed 50 years, but may provide for options for renewal or extension of the term by the department or agency concerned.

(iii) LIMITATION.—A lease under clause (i) may not require rental payments by the United States.

(iv) TREATMENT OF REMAINDERED LEASE TERMS.—A lease under clause (i) shall include a provision specifying that if the department or agency concerned ceases requiring the use of the leased property before the expiration of the term of the lease, the remainder of the lease term may be satisfied by the same or another department or agency of the Federal Government using the property for a use similar to the use under the lease. Exercise of the authority provided by this clause shall be made in consultation with the redevelopment authority concerned.

(v) FACILITY SERVICES.—Notwithstanding clause (iii), if a lease under clause (i) involves a substantial portion of the facility, the department or agency concerned may obtain facility services for the leased property and common area maintenance from the redevelopment authority or the redevelopment authority's assignee as a provision of the lease. The facility services and common area maintenance shall be provided at a rate no higher than the rate charged to non-Federal tenants of the transferred property. Facility services and common area maintenance covered by the lease shall not include—

(I) municipal services that a State or local government is required by law to provide to all landowners in its jurisdiction without direct charge; or

(II) firefighting or security-guard functions.

(B) APPLICATION OF CERCLA.—The provisions of section 120(h) of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (42 U.S.C. 9620(h)) shall apply to any transfer of real property under this paragraph.

(C) ADDITIONAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS.—The Secretary may require any additional terms and conditions in connection with a transfer under this paragraph as such Secretary considers appropriate to protect the interests of the United States.

(4) APPLICATION OF MCKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS ASSISTANCE ACT.—Nothing in this subtitle shall limit or otherwise affect the application of the provisions of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11301 et seq.) to facilities of the Veterans Health Administration closed under this subtitle.

(c) APPLICABILITY OF NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT OF 1969.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) shall not apply to the actions of the President, the Commission, and, except as provided in paragraph (2), the Department of Veterans Affairs in carrying out this subtitle.

(2) DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.—

(A) COVERED ACTIVITIES.—The provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 shall apply to actions of the Department of Veterans Affairs under this subtitle—

(i) during the process of property disposal; and

(ii) during the process of relocating functions from a facility of the Veterans Health Administration being closed or realigned to another facility after the receiving facility has been selected but before the functions are relocated.

(B) OTHER ACTIVITIES.—In applying the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 to the processes referred to in subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall not have to consider—

(i) the need for closing or realigning the facility of the Veterans Health Administration as recommended by the Commission;

(ii) the need for transferring functions to any facility of the Veterans Health Administration which has been selected as the receiving facility; or

(iii) facilities of the Veterans Health Administration alternative to those recommended or selected.

(d) WAIVER.—

(1) RESTRICTIONS ON USE OF FUNDS.—The Secretary may close or realign facilities of the Veterans Health Administration under this subtitle without regard to any provision of law restricting the use of funds for closing or realigning facilities of the Veterans Health Administration included in any appropriation or authorization Act.

(2) RESTRICTIONS ON AUTHORITIES.—The Secretary may close or realign facilities of the Veterans Health Administration under this subtitle without regard to the restrictions of section 8110 of title 38, United States Code.

(e) TRANSFER AUTHORITY IN CONNECTION WITH PAYMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL REMEDIATION COSTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—

(A) TRANSFER BY DEED.—Subject to paragraph (2) of this subsection and section 120(h) of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (42 U.S.C. 9620(h)), the Secretary may enter into an agreement to transfer by deed a facility of the Veterans Health Administration with any person who agrees to perform all environmental restoration, waste management, and environmental compliance activities that are required for the property or facilities under Federal and State laws, administrative decisions, agreements (including schedules and milestones), and concurrences.

(B) ADDITIONAL TERMS OR CONDITIONS.—The Secretary may require any additional terms and conditions in connection with an agreement authorized by subparagraph (A) as the Secretary considers appropriate to protect the interests of the United States.

(2) LIMITATION.—A transfer of a facility of the Veterans Health Administration may be made under paragraph (1) only if the Secretary certifies to Congress that—

(A) the costs of all environmental restoration, waste management, and environmental compliance activities otherwise to be paid by the Secretary with respect to the facility of the Veterans Health Administration are equal to or greater than the fair market value of the property or facilities to be transferred, as determined by the Secretary; or

(B) if such costs are lower than the fair market value of the facility of the Veterans Health Administration, the recipient of such transfer agrees to pay the difference between the fair market value and such costs.

(3) PAYMENT BY THE SECRETARY FOR CERTAIN TRANSFERS.—In the case of a facility of the Veterans Health Administration covered by a certification under paragraph (2)(A), the Secretary may pay the recipient of such facility an amount equal to the lesser of—

(A) the amount by which the costs incurred by the recipient of the facility of the Veterans Health Administration for all environmental restoration, waste, management, and environmental compliance activities with respect to such facility exceed the fair market value of such property as specified in such certification; or

(B) the amount by which the costs (as determined by the Secretary) that would otherwise have been incurred by the Secretary for such restoration, management, and activities with respect to such facility of the Veterans Health Administration exceed the fair market value of property as so specified.

(4) DISCLOSURE.—As part of an agreement under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall disclose to the person to whom the facility of the Veterans Health Administration will be transferred any information of the Secretary regarding the environmental restoration, waste management, and environmental compliance activities described in paragraph (1) that relate to the facility of the Veterans Health Administration. The Secretary shall provide such information before entering into the agreement.

(5) APPLICABILITY OF CERTAIN ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS.—Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to modify, alter, or amend the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (42 U.S.C. 9601 et seq.) or the Solid Waste Disposal Act (42 U.S.C. 6901 et seq.).

SEC. 206. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS ASSET AND INFRASTRUCTURE REVIEW ACCOUNT.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is hereby established in the ledgers of the Treasury an account to be known as the ''Department of Veterans Affairs Asset and Infrastructure Review Account'' which shall be administered by the Secretary as a single account.

(b) CREDITS TO ACCOUNT.—There shall be credited to the Account the following:

(1) Funds authorized for and appropriated to the Account.

(2) Proceeds received from the lease, transfer, or disposal of any property at a facility of the Veterans Health Administration closed or realigned under this subtitle.

(c) USE OF ACCOUNT.—The Secretary may use the funds in the Account only for the following purposes:

(1) To carry out this subtitle.

(2) To cover property management and disposal costs incurred at facilities of the Veterans Health Administration closed, modernized, or realigned under this subtitle.

(3) To cover costs associated with supervision, inspection, overhead, engineering, and design of construction projects undertaken under this subtitle, and subsequent claims, if any, related to such activities.

(4) Other purposes that the Secretary determines support the mission and operations of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(d) CONSOLIDATED BUDGET JUSTIFICATION DISPLAY FOR ACCOUNT.—

(1) CONSOLIDATED BUDGET INFORMATION REQUIRED.—The Secretary shall establish a consolidated budget justification display in support of the Account that for each fiscal year—

(A) details the amount and nature of credits to, and expenditures from, the Account during the preceding fiscal year;

(B) separately details the environmental remediation costs associated with facility of the Veterans Health Administration for which a budget request is made;

(C) specifies the transfers into the Account and the purposes for which these transferred funds will be further obligated, to include caretaker and environment remediation costs associated with each facility of the Veterans Health Administration; and

(D) details any intra-budget activity transfers within the Account that exceeded $1,000,000 during the preceding fiscal year or that are proposed for the next fiscal year and will exceed $1,000,000.

(2) SUBMISSION.—The Secretary shall include the information required by paragraph (1) in the materials that the Secretary submits to Congress in support of the budget for a fiscal year submitted by the President pursuant to section 1105 of title 31, United States Code.

(e) CLOSURE OF ACCOUNT; TREATMENT OF REMAINING FUNDS.—

(1) CLOSURE.—The Account shall be closed at the time and in the manner provided for appropriation accounts under section 1555 of title 31, United States Code, except that unobligated funds which remain in the Account upon closure shall be held by the Secretary of the Treasury until transferred to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs by law after the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives receive the final report transmitted under paragraph (2).

(2) FINAL REPORT.—No later than 60 days after the closure of the Account under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall transmit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives and the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report containing an accounting of—

(A) all the funds credited to and expended from the Account or otherwise expended under this subtitle; and

(B) any funds remaining in the Account.

SEC. 207. CONGRESSIONAL CONSIDERATION OF COMMISSION REPORT.

(a) DISAPPROVAL RESOLUTION.—For purposes of this subtitle, the term ''joint resolution'' means only a joint resolution which is introduced within the 5-day period beginning on the date on which the President transmits the report to the Congress under section 203(d), and—

(1) which does not have a preamble;

(2) the matter after the resolving clause of which is as follows: ''that Congress disapproves the recommendations of the VHA Asset and Infrastructure Review Commission as submitted by the President on _____'', the blank space being filled with the appropriate date; and

(3) the title of which is as follows: ''Joint resolution disapproving the recommendations of the VHA Asset and Infrastructure Review Commission.''.

(b) CONSIDERATION IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.—

(1) REPORTING AND DISCHARGE.—Any committee of the House of Representatives to which a joint resolution is referred shall report it to the House without amendment not later than 15 legislative days after the date of introduction thereof. If a committee fails to report the joint resolution within that period, the committee shall be discharged from further consideration of the joint resolution.

(2) PROCEEDING TO CONSIDERATION.—It shall be in order at any time after the third legislative day after each committee authorized to consider a joint resolution has reported or has been discharged from consideration of a joint resolution, to move to proceed to consider the joint resolution in the House. All points of order against the motion are waived. Such a motion shall not be in order after the House has disposed of a motion to proceed on a joint resolution addressing a particular submission. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the motion to its adoption without intervening motion. The motion shall not be debatable. A motion to reconsider the vote by which the motion is disposed of shall not be in order.

(3) CONSIDERATION.—The joint resolution shall be considered as read. All points of order against the joint resolution and against its consideration are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the joint resolution to its passage without intervening motion except two hours of debate equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent. A motion to reconsider the vote on passage of the joint resolution shall not be in order.

(c) CONSIDERATION IN THE SENATE.—

(1) REFERRAL.—A joint resolution introduced in the Senate shall be referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

(2) REPORTING AND DISCHARGE.—Any committee of the Senate to which a joint resolution is referred shall report it to the Senate without amendment not later than 15 session days after the date of introduction of a joint resolution described in subsection (a). If a committee fails to report the joint resolution within that period, the committee shall be discharged from further consideration of the joint resolution and the joint resolution shall be placed on the calendar.

(3) FLOOR CONSIDERATION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, it is in order at any time after the third session day on which the Committee on Veterans' Affairs has reported or has been discharged from consideration of a joint resolution described in subsection (a) (even though a previous motion to the same effect has been disagreed to) to move to proceed to the consideration of the joint resolution, and all points of order against the joint resolution (and against consideration of the joint resolution) are waived. The motion to proceed is not debatable. The motion is not subject to a motion to postpone. A motion to reconsider the vote by which the motion is agreed to or disagreed to shall not be in order. If a motion to proceed to the consideration of the resolution is agreed to, the joint resolution shall remain the unfinished business until disposed of.

(B) CONSIDERATION.—Consideration of the joint resolution, and on all debatable motions and appeals in connection therewith, shall be limited to not more than 2 hours, which shall be divided equally between the majority and minority leaders or their designees. A motion further to limit debate is in order and not debatable. An amendment to, or a motion to postpone, or a motion to proceed to the consideration of other business, or a motion to recommit the joint resolution is not in order.

(C) VOTE ON PASSAGE.—If the Senate has voted to proceed to a joint resolution, the vote on passage of the joint resolution shall occur immediately following the conclusion of consideration of the joint resolution, and a single quorum call at the conclusion of the debate if requested in accordance with the rules of the Senate.

(D) RULINGS OF THE CHAIR ON PROCEDURE.—Appeals from the decisions of the Chair relating to the application of the rules of the Senate, as the case may be, to the procedure relating to a joint resolution shall be decided without debate.

(d) AMENDMENT NOT IN ORDER.—A joint resolution of disapproval considered pursuant to this section shall not be subject to amendment in either the House of Representatives or the Senate.

(e) COORDINATION WITH ACTION BY OTHER HOUSE.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—If, before the passage by one House of the joint resolution of that House, that House receives the joint resolution from the other House, then the following procedures shall apply:

''(A) The joint resolution of the other House shall not be referred to a committee.

''(B) With respect to the joint resolution of the House receiving the joint resolution—

''(i) the procedure in that House shall be the same as if no joint resolution had been received from the other House; but

(ii) the vote on passage shall be on the joint resolution of the other House.''.

(2) TREATMENT OF JOINT RESOLUTION OF OTHER HOUSE.—If the Senate fails to introduce or consider a joint resolution under this section, the joint resolution of the House shall be entitled to expedited floor procedures under this section.

(3) TREATMENT OF COMPANION MEASURES.—If, following passage of the joint resolution in the Senate, the Senate then receives the companion measure from the House of Representatives, the companion measure shall not be debatable.

(f) RULES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND SENATE.—This section is enacted by Congress—

(1) as an exercise of the rulemaking power of the Senate and House of Representatives, respectively, and as such it is deemed a part of the rules of each House, respectively, but applicable only with respect to the procedure to be followed in that House in the case of a joint resolution, and it supersedes other rules only to the extent that it is inconsistent with such rules; and

(2) with full recognition of the constitutional right of either House to change the rules (so far as relating to the procedure of that House) at any time, in the same manner, and to the same extent as in the case of any other rule of that House.

SEC. 208. OTHER MATTERS.

(a) ONLINE PUBLICATION OF COMMUNICATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 24 hours after the transmission or receipt of any communication under this subtitle that is transmitted or received by a party specified in paragraph (2), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall publish such communication online.

(2) PARTIES SPECIFIED.—The parties specified under this paragraph are the following:

(A) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

(B) The Commission.

(C) The President.

(b) CONTINUATION OF EXISTING CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS AND PLANNING.—During activities that the Commission, President, or Congress carry out under this subtitle, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may not stop, solely because of such activities—

(1) a construction or leasing project of the Veterans Health Administration;

(2) long term planning regarding infrastructure and assets of the Veterans Health Administration; or

(3) budgetary processes for the Veterans Health Administration.

(c) RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE ASSET REVIEWS.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may, after consulting with veterans service organizations, include in budget submissions the Secretary submits after the termination of the Commission recommendations for future such commissions or other capital asset realignment and management processes.

SEC. 209. DEFINITIONS.

In this subtitle:

(1) The term ''Account'' means the Department of Veterans Affairs Asset and Infrastructure Review Account established by section 206(a).

(2) The term ''Commission'' means the Commission established by section 202.

(3) The term ''date of approval'', with respect to a modernization or realignment of a facility of the Veterans Health Administration, means the date on which the authority of Congress to disapprove a recommendation of modernization or realignment, as the case may be, of such facility under this subtitle expires.

(4) The term ''facility of the Veterans Health Administration''—

(A) means any land, building, structure, or infrastructure (including any medical center,

nursing home, domiciliary facility, outpatient clinic, center that provides readjustment counseling, or leased facility) that is—

(i) under the jurisdiction of the Department of Veterans Affairs;

(ii) under the control of the Veterans Health Administration; and

(iii) not under the control of the General Services Administration; or

(B) with respect to a colocated facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs, includes any land, building, or structure—

(i) under the jurisdiction of the Department of Veterans Affairs;

(ii) under the control of another administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

(iii) not under the control of the General Services Administration.

(5) The term ''infrastructure'' means improvements to land other than buildings or structures.

(6) The term ''modernization'' includes—

(A) any action, including closure, required to align the form and function of a facility of the Veterans Health Administration to the provision of modern day health care, including utilities and environmental control systems;

(B) the construction, purchase, lease, or sharing of a facility of the Veterans Health Administration; and

(C) realignments, disposals, exchanges, collaborations between the Department of Veterans Affairs and other Federal entities, and strategic collaborations between the Department and non-Federal entities, including tribal organizations.

(7) The term ''realignment'', with respect to a facility of the Veterans Health Administration, includes—

(A) any action that changes the numbers of or relocates services, functions, and personnel positions;

(B) disposals or exchanges between the Department of Veterans Affairs and other Federal entities, including the Department of Defense; and

(C) strategic collaborations between the Department of Veterans Affairs and non-Federal entities, including tribal organizations.

(8) The term ''redevelopment authority'', in the case of a facility of the Veterans Health Administration closed or modernized under this subtitle, means any entity (including an entity established by a State or local government) recognized by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs as the entity responsible for developing the redevelopment plan with respect to the facility or for directing the implementation of such plan.

(9) The term ''redevelopment plan'' in the case of a facility of the Veterans Health Administration to be closed or realigned under this subtitle, means a plan that—

(A) is agreed to by the local redevelopment authority with respect to the facility; and

(B) provides for the reuse or redevelopment of the real property and personal property of the facility that is available for such reuse and redevelopment as a result of the closure or realignment of the facility.

(10) The term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

(11) The term ''tribal organization'' has the meaning given such term in section 3765 of title 38, United States Code.

Subtitle B—Other Infrastructure Matters

SEC. 211. IMPROVEMENT TO TRAINING OF CONSTRUCTION PERSONNEL.

Subsection (g) of section 8103 of title 38, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

''(g)(1)(A) Not later than September 30 of the fiscal year following the fiscal year during which the VA Asset and Infrastructure Review Act of 2018 is enacted, the Secretary shall implement the covered training curriculum and the covered certification program.

''(B) In designing and implementing the covered training curriculum and the covered certification program under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall use as models existing training curricula and certification programs that have been established under chapter 87 of title 10, United States Code, as determined relevant by the Secretary.

''(2) The Secretary may develop the training curriculum under paragraph (1)(A) in a manner that provides such training in any combination of—

''(A) training provided in person;

''(B) training provided over an internet website; or

''(C) training provided by another department or agency of the Federal Government.

''(3) The Secretary may develop the certification program under paragraph (1)(A) in a manner that uses—

''(A) one level of certification; or

''(B) more than one level of certification, as determined appropriate by the Secretary with respect to the level of certification for different grades of the General Schedule.

''(4) The Secretary may enter into a contract with an appropriate entity to provide the covered training curriculum and the covered certification program under paragraph (1)(A).

''(5)(A) Not later than September 30 of the second fiscal year following the fiscal year during which the VA Asset and Infrastructure Review Act of 2018 is enacted, the Secretary shall ensure that the majority of employees subject to the covered certification program achieve the certification or the appropriate level of certification pursuant to paragraph (3), as the case may be.

''(B) After carrying out subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall ensure that each employee subject to the covered certification program achieves the certification or the appropriate level of certification pursuant to paragraph (3), as the case may be, as quickly as practicable.

''(6) In this subsection:

''(A) The term 'covered certification program' means, with respect to employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs who are members of occupational series relating to construction or facilities management, or employees of the Department who award or administer contracts for major construction, minor construction, or nonrecurring maintenance, including as contract specialists or contracting officers' representatives, a program to certify knowledge and skills relating to construction or facilities management and to ensure that such employees maintain adequate expertise relating to industry standards and best practices for the acquisition of design and construction services.

''(B) The term 'covered training curriculum' means, with respect to employees specified in subparagraph (A), a training curriculum relating to construction or facilities management.''.

SEC. 212. REVIEW OF ENHANCED USE LEASES.

Section 8162(b)(6) is amended to read as follows:

''(6) The Office of Management and Budget shall review each enhanced-use lease before the lease goes into effect to determine whether the lease is in compliance with paragraph (5).''.

SEC. 213. ASSESSMENT OF HEALTH CARE FURNISHED BY THE DEPARTMENT TO VETERANS WHO LIVE IN THE PACIFIC TERRITORIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives a report regarding health care furnished by the Department of Veterans Affairs to veterans who live in the Pacific territories.

(b) ELEMENTS.—The report under subsection (a) shall include assessments of the following:

(1) The ability of the Department to furnish to veterans who live in the Pacific territories the following:

(A) Hospital care.

(B) Medical services.

(C) Mental health services.

(D) Geriatric services.

(2) The feasibility of establishing a community-based outpatient clinic of the Department in any Pacific territory that does not contain such a facility.

(c) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term ''Pacific territories'' means American Samoa, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands.

TITLE III—IMPROVEMENTS TO RECRUITMENT OF HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

SEC. 301. DESIGNATED SCHOLARSHIPS FOR PHYSICIANS AND DENTISTS UNDER DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTH PROFESSIONAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM.

(a) SCHOLARSHIPS FOR PHYSICIANS AND DENTISTS.—Section 7612(b) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(6)(A) Of the scholarships awarded under this subchapter, the Secretary shall ensure that not less than 50 scholarships are awarded each year to individuals who are accepted for enrollment or enrolled (as described in section 7602 of this title) in a program of education or training leading to employment as a physician or dentist until such date as the Secretary determines that the staffing shortage of physicians and dentists in the Department is less than 500.

''(B) After such date, the Secretary shall ensure that of the scholarships awarded under this subchapter, a number of scholarships is awarded each year to individuals referred to in subparagraph (A) in an amount equal to not less than ten percent of the staffing shortage of physicians and dentists in the Department, as determined by the Secretary.

''(C) Notwithstanding subsection (c)(1), the agreement between the Secretary and a participant in the Scholarship Program who receives a scholarship pursuant to this paragraph shall provide the following:

''(i) The Secretary's agreement to provide the participant with a scholarship under this subchapter for a specified number (from two to four) of school years during which the participant is pursuing a course of education or training leading to employment as a physician or dentist.

''(ii) The participant's agreement to serve as a full-time employee in the Veterans Health Administration for a period of time (hereinafter in this subchapter referred to as the 'period of obligated service') of 18 months for each school year or part thereof for which the participant was provided a scholarship under the Scholarship Program.

''(D) In providing scholarships pursuant to this paragraph, the Secretary may provide a preference for applicants who are veterans.

''(E) On an annual basis, the Secretary shall provide to appropriate educational institutions informational material about the availability of scholarships under this paragraph.''.

(b) BREACH OF AGREEMENT.—Section 7617 of such title is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraphs (4) and (5) as paragraphs (5) and (6), respectively; and

(2) by inserting after paragraph (3) the following new paragraph (4):

''(4) In the case of a participant who is enrolled in a program or education or training leading to employment as a physician, the participant fails to successfully complete post-graduate training leading to eligibility for board certification in a specialty.''.

(c) EXTENSION OF PROGRAM.—Section 7619 of such title is amended by striking ''December 31, 2019'' and inserting ''December 31, 2033''.

SEC. 302. INCREASE IN MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF DEBT THAT MAY BE REDUCED UNDER EDUCATION DEBT REDUCTION PROGRAM OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) INCREASE IN AMOUNT.—Section 7683(d)(1) is amended—

(1) by striking ''$120,000'' and inserting ''$200,000''; and

(2) by striking ''$24,000'' and inserting ''$40,000''.

(b) STUDY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall—

(A) conduct a study on the demand for education debt reduction under subchapter VII of chapter 76 of title 38, United States Code; and

(B) submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on the findings of the Secretary with respect to the study carried out under subparagraph (A).

(2) CONSIDERATIONS.—In carrying out the study required by paragraph (1)(A), the Secretary shall consider the following:

(A) The total number of vacancies within the Veterans Health Administration whose applicants are eligible to participate in the Education Debt Reduction Program pursuant to section 7682(a) of such title.

(B) The types of medical professionals in greatest demand in the United States.

(C) Projections by the Secretary of the numbers and types of medical professions that meet the needs of veterans.

SEC. 303. ESTABLISHING THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS SPECIALTY EDUCATION LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 76 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting after subchapter VII the following new subchapter:

''SUBCHAPTER VIII—SPECIALTY EDUCATION LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM

''§ 7691. Establishment

''As part of the Educational Assistance Program, the Secretary may carry out a student loan repayment program under section 5379 of title 5. The program shall be known as the Department of Veterans Affairs Specialty Education Loan Repayment Program (in this chapter referred to as the 'Specialty Education Loan Repayment Program').

''§ 7692. Purpose

''The purpose of the Specialty Education Loan Repayment Program is to assist, through the establishment of an incentive program for certain individuals employed in the Veterans Health Administration, in meeting the staffing needs of the Veterans Health Administration for physicians in medical specialties for which the Secretary determines recruitment or retention of qualified personnel is difficult.

''§ 7693. Eligibility; preferences; covered costs

''(a) ELIGIBILITY.—An individual is eligible to participate in the Specialty Education Loan Repayment Program if the individual—

''(1) is hired under section 7401 of this title to work in an occupation described in section 7692 of this title;

''(2) owes any amount of principal or interest under a loan, the proceeds of which were used by or on behalf of that individual to pay costs relating to a course of education or training which led to a degree that qualified the individual for the position referred to in paragraph (1); and

''(3) is—

''(A) recently graduated from an accredited medical or osteopathic school and matched to an accredited residency program in a medical specialty described in section 7692 of this title; or

''(B) a physician in training in a medical specialty described in section 7692 of this title with more than two years remaining in such training.

''(b) PREFERENCES.—In selecting individuals for participation in the Specialty Education Loan Repayment Program under this subchapter, the Secretary may give preference to the following:

''(1) Individuals who are, or will be, participating in residency programs in health care facilities—

''(A) located in rural areas;

''(B) operated by Indian tribes, tribal organizations, or the Indian Health Service; or

''(C) affiliated with underserved health care facilities of the Department.

''(2) Veterans.

''(c) COVERED COSTS.—For purposes of subsection (a)(2), costs relating to a course of education or training include—

''(1) tuition expenses;

''(2) all other reasonable educational expenses, including expenses for fees, books, equipment, and laboratory expenses; and

''(3) reasonable living expenses.

''§ 7694. Specialty education loan repayment

''(a) IN GENERAL.—Payments under the Specialty Education Loan Repayment Program shall consist of payments for the principal and interest on loans described in section 7682(a)(2) of this title for individuals selected to participate in the Program to the holders of such loans.

''(b) FREQUENCY OF PAYMENT.—The Secretary shall make payments for any given participant in the Specialty Education Loan Repayment Program on a schedule determined appropriate by the Secretary.

''(c) MAXIMUM AMOUNT; WAIVER.—(1) The amount of payments made for a participant under the Specialty Education Loan Repayment Program may not exceed $160,000 over a total of four years of participation in the Program, of which not more than $40,000 of such payments may be made in each year of participation in the Program.

''(2)(A) The Secretary may waive the limitations under paragraph (1) in the case of a participant described in subparagraph (B). In the case of such a waiver, the total amount of payments payable to or for that participant is the total amount of the principal and the interest on the participant's loans referred to in subsection (a).

''(B) A participant described in this subparagraph is a participant in the Program who the Secretary determines serves in a position for which there is a shortage of qualified employees by reason of either the location or the requirements of the position.

''§ 7695. Choice of location

''Each participant in the Specialty Education Loan Repayment Program who completes residency may select, from a list of medical facilities of the Veterans Health Administration provided by the Secretary, at which such facility the participant will work in a medical specialty described in section 7692 of this title.

''§ 7696. Term of obligated service

''(a) IN GENERAL.—In addition to any requirements under section 5379(c) of title 5, a participant in the Specialty Education Loan Repayment Program must agree, in writing and before the Secretary may make any payment to or for the participant, to—

''(1) obtain a license to practice medicine in a State;

''(2) successfully complete post-graduate training leading to eligibility for board certification in a specialty;

''(3) serve as a full-time clinical practice employee of the Veterans Health Administration for 12 months for every $40,000 in such benefits that the employee receives, but in no case for fewer than 24 months; and

''(4) except as provided in subsection (b), to begin such service as a full-time practice employee by not later than 60 days after completing a residency.

''(b) FELLOWSHIP.—In the case of a participant who receives an accredited fellowship in a medical specialty other than a medical specialty described in section 7692 of this title, the Secretary, on written request of the participant, may delay the term of obligated service under subsection (a) for the participant until after the participant completes the fellowship, but in no case later than 60 days after completion of such fellowship.

''(c) PENALTY.—(1) An employee who does not complete a period of obligated service under this section shall owe the Federal Government an amount determined in accordance with the following formula: $A = B \times ((T - S) \div T))$.

''(2) In the formula in paragraph (1):

''(A) 'A' is the amount the employee owes the Federal Government.

''(B) 'B' is the sum of all payments to or for the participant under the Specialty Education Loan Repayment Program.

''(C) 'T' is the number of months in the period of obligated service of the employee.

''(D) 'S' is the number of whole months of such period of obligated service served by the employee.

''§ 7697. Relationship to Educational Assistance Program

''Assistance under the Specialty Education Loan Repayment Program may be in addition to other assistance available to individuals under the Educational Assistance Program.''.

(b) CONFORMING AND TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS.—

(1) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(A) Section 7601(a) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(i) in paragraph (4), by striking ''and'';

(ii) in paragraph (5), by striking the period and inserting ''; and''; and

(iii) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(6) the specialty education loan repayment program provided for in subchapter VIII of this chapter.''.

(B) Section 7603(a)(1) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking ''or VI'' and inserting ''VI, or VIII''.

(C) Section 7604 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking ''or VI'' each place it appears and inserting ''VI, or VIII''.

(D) Section 7631 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(i) in subsection (a)(1)—

(I) by striking ''and'' after ''scholarship amount,''; and

(II) by inserting '', and the maximum specialty education loan repayment amount'' after ''reduction payments amount''; and

(ii) in subsection (b) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(7) The term 'specialty education loan repayment amount' means the maximum amount of specialty education loan repayment payments payable to or for a participant in the Department of Veterans Affairs Specialty Education Loan Repayment Program under subchapter VIII of this chapter, as specified in section 7694(c)(1) of this title and as previously adjusted (if at all) in accordance with this section.''.

(E) Section 7632 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(i) in paragraph (1), by striking ''and the Education Debt Reduction Program'' and inserting ''the Education Debt Reduction Program, and the Specialty Education Loan Repayment Program''; and

(ii) in paragraph (4), by striking ''and per participant in the Education Debt Reduction Program'' and inserting ''per participant in the Education Debt Reduction Program, and per participant in the Specialty Education Loan Repayment Program''.

(2) TABLE OF SECTIONS.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 76 of such title is amended by inserting after the items relating to subchapter VII the following:

''SUBCHAPTER VIII—SPECIALTY EDUCATION LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM

''7691. Establishment.
''7692. Purpose.
''7693. Eligibility; preferences; covered costs.
''7694. Specialty education loan repayment.
''7695. Choice of location.

''7696. Term of obligated service.
''7697. Relationship to Educational Assistance Program.''.

(c) NEEDS OF THE VHA.—In making determinations each year under section 7692 of title 38, United States Code, as enacted by subsection (a), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall consider the anticipated needs of the Veterans Health Administration during the period two to six years in the future.

(d) PREFERENCE.—In granting preference under section 7693 of title 38, United States Code, as enacted by subsection (a), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall determine whether a facility of the Department is underserved based on the criteria developed under section 401 of this Act.

(e) OFFER DEADLINE.—In the case of an applicant who applies before receiving a residency match and whom the Secretary of Veterans Affairs selects for participation in the Specialty Education Loan Repayment Program established by subsection (a), the Secretary shall offer participation to the applicant not later than 28 days after—

(1) the applicant matches with a residency in a medical specialty described in section 7692 of title 38, United States Code, as enacted by subsection (a); and

(2) such match is published.

(f) PUBLICITY.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall take such steps as the Secretary determines are appropriate to publicize the Specialty Education Loan Repayment Program established under subchapter VIII of chapter 76 of title 38, United States Code, as enacted by subsection (a).

SEC. 304. VETERANS HEALING VETERANS MEDICAL ACCESS AND SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs, acting through the Office of Academic Affiliations of the Department of Veterans Affairs, shall carry out a pilot program under which the Secretary shall provide funding for the medical education of a total of 18 eligible veterans. Such funding shall be provided for two veterans enrolled in each covered medical schools in accordance with this section.

(b) ELIGIBLE VETERANS.—To be eligible to receive funding for medical education under this section, a veteran shall—

(1) have been discharged from the Armed Forces not more than ten years before the date of application for admission to a covered medical school;

(2) not be entitled to educational assistance under chapter 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, or 35 of title 38, United States Code, or chapter 1606 or 1607 of title 10, United States Code;

(3) apply for admission to a covered medical school for the entering class of 2019;

(4) indicate on such application for admission that the veteran would like to be considered for an award of funding under this section;

(5) meet the minimum admissions criteria for the covered medical school to which the veteran applies; and

(6) enter into an agreement described in subsection (e).

(c) AWARD OF FUNDING.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Each covered medical school that opts to participate in the program under this section shall reserve two seats in the entering class of 2019 for eligible veterans who receive funding under such program. Such funding shall be awarded to the two eligible veterans with the highest admissions rankings for such class at such school.

(2) AMOUNT OF FUNDING.—Each eligible veteran who receives funding under this section shall receive an amount equal to the actual cost of—

(A) tuition at the covered medical school at which the veteran enrolls for four years;

(B) books, fees, and technical equipment;

(C) fees associated with the National Residency Match Program;

(D) two away rotations performed during the fourth year at a Department of Veterans Affairs medical facility; and

(E) a monthly stipend for the four-year period during which the veteran is enrolled in medical school in an amount to be determined by the Secretary.

(3) DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDING.—In the event that two or more eligible veterans do not apply for admission at one of the covered medical schools for the entering class of 2019, the Secretary shall distribute the available funding to eligible veterans who applied for admission at other covered medical schools.

(d) AGREEMENT.—

(1) TERMS OF AGREEMENT.—Each eligible veteran who accepts funding for medical education under this section shall enter into an agreement with the Secretary that provides that the veteran agrees—

(A) to maintain enrollment and attendance in the medical school;

(B) while enrolled in such medical school, to maintain an acceptable level of academic standing (as determined by the medical school under regulations prescribed by the Secretary);

(C) to complete post-graduate training leading to eligibility for board certification in a speciality applicable to the Department of Veterans Affairs, as determined by the Secretary;

(D) after completion of medical school, to obtain a license to practice medicine in a State; and

(E) after completion of medical school and post-graduate training, to serve as a full-time clinical practice employee in the Veterans Health Administration for a period of four years.

(2) BREACH OF AGREEMENT.—If an eligible veteran who accepts funding under this section breaches the terms of the agreement described in paragraph (1), the United States shall be entitled to recover damages in an amount equal to the total amount of such funding received by the veteran.

(e) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent any covered medical school from accepting more than two eligible veterans for the entering class of 2019.

(f) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than December 31, 2020, and annually thereafter for the subsequent three years, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the pilot program under this section. Such report shall include the evaluation of the Secretary of the success of the pilot program, including the number of veterans who received funding under the program who matriculated and an evaluation of the academic progress of such veterans.

(g) COVERED MEDICAL SCHOOLS.—In this section, the term ''covered medical school'' means any of the following.

(1) The Teague-Cranston medical schools, consisting of—

(A) Texas A&M College of Medicine;

(B) Quillen College of Medicine at East Tennessee State University;

(C) Boonshoft School of Medicine at Wright State University;

(D) Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine at Marshall University; and

(E) University of South Carolina School of Medicine.

(2) Charles R Drew University of Medicine and Science.

(3) Howard University College of Medicine.

(4) Meharry Medical College.

(5) Morehouse School of Medicine.

SEC. 305. BONUSES FOR RECRUITMENT, RELOCATION, AND RETENTION.

Section 705(a) of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–146; 38 U.S.C. 703 note) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking ''$230,000,000'' and inserting ''$250,000,000, of which not less than $20,000,000 shall be for recruitment, relocation, and retention bonuses''; and

(2) in paragraph (2), by striking ''$225,000,000'' and inserting ''$290,000,000, of which not less than $20,000,000 shall be for recruitment, relocation, and retention bonuses''.

SEC. 306. INCLUSION OF VET CENTER EMPLOYEES IN EDUCATION DEBT REDUCTION PROGRAM OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall ensure that clinical staff working at Vet Centers are eligible to participate in the Education Debt Reduction Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs under subchapter VII of chapter 76 of title 38, United States Code.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on the number of participants in the Education Debt Reduction Program of the Department under such subchapter who work at Vet Centers.

(c) VET CENTER DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''Vet Center'' has the meaning given that term in section 1712A(h) of title 38, United States Code.

TITLE IV—HEALTH CARE IN UNDERSERVED AREAS

SEC. 401. DEVELOPMENT OF CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION OF CERTAIN MEDICAL FACILITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AS UNDERSERVED FACILITIES AND PLAN TO ADDRESS PROBLEM OF UNDERSERVED FACILITIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall develop criteria to designate medical centers, ambulatory care facilities, and community based outpatient clinics of the Department of Veterans Affairs as underserved facilities.

(b) CONSIDERATION.—Criteria developed under subsection (a) shall include consideration of the following with respect to a facility:

(1) The ratio of veterans to health care providers of the Department of Veterans Affairs for a standardized geographic area surrounding the facility, including a separate ratio for general practitioners and specialists.

(2) The range of clinical specialties covered by such providers in such area.

(3) Whether the local community is medically underserved.

(4) The type, number, and age of open consults.

(5) Whether the facility is meeting the wait-time goals of the Department.

(6) Such other criteria as the Secretary considers important in determining which facilities are not adequately serving area veterans.

(c) ANALYSIS OF FACILITIES.—Not less frequently than annually, directors of Veterans Integrated Service Networks of the Department shall perform an analysis to determine which facilities within that Veterans Integrated Service Network qualify as underserved facilities pursuant to criteria developed under subsection (a).

(d) ANNUAL PLAN TO ADDRESS UNDERSERVED FACILITIES.—

(1) PLAN REQUIRED.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act and not less frequently than once each year, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a plan to address the problem of underserved facilities of the Department, as designated pursuant to criteria developed under subsection (a).

(2) CONTENTS.—Each plan submitted under paragraph (1) shall address the following:

(A) Increasing personnel or temporary personnel assistance, including mobile deployment teams furnished under section 407 of this Act.

(B) Providing special hiring incentives, including under the Education Debt Reduction Program under subchapter VII of chapter 76 of title 38, United States Code, and recruitment, relocation, and retention incentives.

(C) Using direct hiring authority.

(D) Improving training opportunities for staff.

(E) Such other actions as the Secretary considers appropriate.

SEC. 402. PILOT PROGRAM TO FURNISH MOBILE DEPLOYMENT TEAMS TO UNDERSERVED FACILITIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall carry out a pilot program to furnish mobile deployment teams of medical personnel to underserved facilities.

(b) ELEMENTS.—In furnishing mobile deployment teams under subsection (a), the Secretary shall consider the following elements:

(1) The medical positions of greatest need at underserved facilities.

(2) The size and composition of teams to be deployed.

(3) Such other elements as the Secretary considers necessary for effective oversight of the program established under subsection (a).

(c) USE OF ANNUAL ANALYSIS.—The Secretary shall use the results of the annual analysis conducted under section 401(c) of this Act to form mobile deployment teams under subsection (a) that are composed of the most needed medical personnel for underserved facilities.

(d) REPORTING.—

(1) PROGRESS REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit a report to Congress on the implementation of the pilot program under this section.

(2) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than the termination of the pilot program under this section, the Secretary shall submit a final report to Congress that contains the recommendations of the Secretary regarding the feasibility and advisability of—

(A) extending or expanding the pilot program; and

(B) making the pilot program (or any aspect thereof) permanent.

(e) DURATION.—The pilot program under this section shall terminate three years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(f) UNDERSERVED FACILITY DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''underserved facility'' means a medical center, ambulatory care facility, or community based outpatient clinic of the Department of Veterans Affairs designated by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs as underserved pursuant to criteria developed under section 401 of this Act.

SEC. 403. PILOT PROGRAM ON GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION AND RESIDENCY.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (5), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish a pilot program to establish medical residency positions authorized under section 301(b)(2) of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–146; 38 U.S.C. 7302 note) at covered facilities.

(2) COVERED FACILITIES.—For purposes of this section, a covered facility is any of the following:

(A) A health care facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(B) A health care facility operated by an Indian tribe or a tribal organization, as those terms are defined in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5304).

(C) A health care facility operated by the Indian Health Service.

(D) A Federally-qualified health center, as defined in section 1905(l)(2)(B) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396d(l)(2)(B)).

(E) A health care facility operated by the Department of Defense.

(F) Such other health care facility as the Secretary considers appropriate for purposes of this section.

(3) AGREEMENTS.—To carry out the pilot program under this section, the Secretary may enter into agreements with entities that operate covered facilities in which the Secretary places residents under paragraph (1).

(4) PARAMETERS FOR LOCATION, AFFILIATE SPONSOR, AND DURATION.—When determining in which covered facilities to place residents under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall consider the extent to which there is a clinical need for providers in an area, as determined by the following:

(A) The ratio of veterans to health care providers of the Department for a standardized geographic area surrounding a facility, including a separate ratio for general practitioners and specialists.

(B) The range of clinical specialties of providers in standardized geographic areas surrounding a facility.

(C) Whether the specialty of a provider is included in the most recent staffing shortage determination of the Department under section 7412 of title 38, United States Code.

(D) Whether the local community is designated by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs as underserved pursuant to criteria developed under section 401 of this Act.

(E) Whether the facility is located in a community that is designated by the Secretary of Health and Human Services as a health professional shortage area under section 332 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 254e).

(F) Whether the facility is located in a rural or remote area.

(G) Such other criteria as the Secretary considers important in determining which facilities are not adequately serving area veterans.

(5) PRIORITY IN PLACEMENTS.—During the pilot program under this section, the Secretary shall place no fewer than 100 residents in covered facilities—

(A) operated by the Indian Health Service;

(B) operated by an Indian tribe;

(C) operated by a tribal organization; or

(D) located in communities designated by the Secretary as underserved pursuant to criteria developed under section 401 of this Act.

(6) STIPENDS AND BENEFITS.—The Secretary may pay stipends and provide benefits for residents in positions under paragraph (1), regardless of whether they have been assigned in a Department facility.

(b) REIMBURSEMENT.—If a covered facility establishes a new residency program in which the Secretary places a resident under the pilot program, the Secretary shall reimburse that covered facility for costs of the following:

(1) Curriculum development.

(2) Recruitment and retention of faculty.

(3) Accreditation of the program by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education.

(4) The portion of faculty salaries attributable to duties under an agreement subsection (a)(3).

(5) Expenses relating to educating a resident under the pilot program.

(c) REPORTING.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act and not less frequently than once each year thereafter until the termination of the pilot program, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the implementation of the pilot program.

(2) ELEMENTS.—Each report submitted under paragraph (1) shall include the following with regard to the immediately preceding year, and in comparison to the year immediately preceding that year:

(A) The number of veterans who received care from residents under the pilot program.

(B) The number of veterans who received care from each resident per position described in subsection (a)(1) under the pilot program.

(C) The number of veterans who received care from residents under the pilot program expressed as a percentage of all individuals who received care from such residents.

(D) The number of clinical appointments for veterans conducted by each resident under the pilot program.

(E) The number of clinical appointments for veterans conducted by residents per position described in subsection (a)(1) under the pilot program.

(F) The number of clinical appointments for veterans expressed as a percentage of all clinical appointments conducted by residents under the pilot program.

(G) The number of positions described in subsection (a)(1) at each covered facility under the pilot program.

(H) For each position described in subsection (a)(1) in a residency program affiliated with a health care facility of the Department, the time a resident under the pilot program spent training at that facility of the Department, expressed as a percentage of the total training time for that resident position.

(I) For each residency program affiliated with a health care facility of the Department, the time all residents under the pilot program spent training at that facility of the Department, expressed as a percentage of the total training time for those residents.

(J) The time that all residents under the pilot program who are assigned to programs affiliated with health care facilities of the Department spent training at facilities of the Department, expressed as a percentage of the total training time for those residents.

(K) The cost to the Department of Veterans Affairs under the pilot program in the year immediately preceding the report and since the beginning of the pilot program.

(L) The cost to the Department of Veterans Affairs per resident placed under the pilot program at each covered facility.

(M) The number of residents under the pilot program hired by the Secretary to work in the Veterans Health Administration after completion of residency in the year immediately preceding the report and since the beginning of the pilot program.

(N) The medical specialties pursued by residents under the pilot program.

(d) DURATION.—The pilot program under this section shall terminate on August 7, 2024.

TITLE V—OTHER MATTERS

SEC. 501. ANNUAL REPORT ON PERFORMANCE AWARDS AND BONUSES AWARDED TO CERTAIN HIGH-LEVEL EMPLOYEES OF THE DEPARTMENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 7 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''§ 726. Annual report on performance awards and bonuses awarded to certain high-level employees

''(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 100 days after the end of each fiscal year, the Secretary shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report that contains, for the most recent fiscal year ending before the submittal of the report, a description of all performance awards or bonuses awarded to each of the following:

''(1) Regional Office Director of the Department.

''(2) Director of a Medical Center of the Department.

''(3) Director of a Veterans Integrated Service Network.

''(4) Senior executive of the Department.

''(b) ELEMENTS.—Each report submitted under subsection (a) shall include the following with respect to each performance award or bonus awarded to an individual described in such subsection:

''(1) The amount of each award or bonus.

''(2) The job title of the individual awarded the award or bonus.

''(3) The location where the individual awarded the award or bonus works.

''(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

''(1) The term 'appropriate committees of Congress' means the Committees on Veterans' Affairs and Appropriations of the Senate and House of Representatives.

''(2) The term 'senior executive' means—

''(A) a career appointee; or

''(B) an individual—

''(i) in an administrative or executive position; and

''(ii) appointed under section 7306(a) or section 7401(1) of this title.

''(3) The term 'career appointee' has the meaning given that term in section 3132(a) of title 5, United States Code.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 725 the following new item:

''726. Annual report on performance awards and bonuses awarded to certain high-level employees.''.

SEC. 502. ROLE OF PODIATRISTS IN DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) INCLUSION AS PHYSICIAN.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter I of chapter 74 is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''§ 7413. Treatment of podiatrists; clinical oversight standards

''(a) PODIATRISTS.—Except as provided by subsection (b), a doctor of podiatric medicine who is appointed as a podiatrist under section 7401(1) of this title is eligible for any supervisory position in the Veterans Health Administration to the same degree that a physician appointed under such section is eligible for the position.

''(b) ESTABLISHMENT OF CLINICAL OVERSIGHT STANDARDS.—The Secretary, in consultation with appropriate stakeholders, shall establish standards to ensure that specialists appointed in the Veterans Health Administration to supervisory positions do not provide direct clinical oversight for purposes of peer review or practice evaluation for providers of other clinical specialties.''.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 74 is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 7412 the following new item:

''7413. Treatment of podiatrists; clinical oversight standards.''.

(b) MODIFICATION AND CLARIFICATION OF PAY GRADE.—

(1) GRADE.—The list in section 7404(b) of such title is amended—

(A) by striking ''PHYSICIAN AND DENTIST SCHEDULE'' and inserting ''PHYSICIAN AND SURGEON (MD/DO), PODIATRIC SURGEON (DPM), AND DENTIST AND ORAL SURGEON (DDS, DMD) SCHEDULE'';

(B) by striking ''Physician grade'' and inserting ''Physician and surgeon grade''; and

(C) by striking ''PODIATRIST, CHIROPRACTOR, AND'' and inserting ''CHIROPRACTOR AND''.

(2) APPLICATION.—The amendments made by paragraph (1) shall apply with respect to a pay period of the Department of Veterans Affairs beginning on or after the date that is 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 503. DEFINITION OF MAJOR MEDICAL FACILITY PROJECT.

(a) MODIFICATION OF DEFINITION OF MEDICAL FACILITY.—Section 8101(3) is amended by striking ''Secretary'' and all that follows through ''nursing home,'' and inserting ''Secretary, or as otherwise authorized by law, for the provision of health-care services (including hospital, outpatient clinic, nursing home,''.

(b) MODIFICATION OF DEFINITION OF MAJOR MEDICAL FACILITY PROJECT.—Paragraph (3) of section 8104(a) is amended to read as follows:

''(3) For purposes of this subsection, the term 'major medical facility project' means a project for the construction, alteration, or acquisition of a medical facility involving a total expenditure of more than $20,000,000, but such term does not include an acquisition by exchange, nonrecurring maintenance projects of the Department, or the construction, alteration, or acquisition of a shared Federal medical facility for which the Department's estimated share of the project costs does not exceed $20,000,000.''.

SEC. 504. AUTHORIZATION OF CERTAIN MAJOR MEDICAL FACILITY PROJECTS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) AUTHORIZATION.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may carry out the following major medical facility project, to be carried out in an amount not to exceed the amount specified for that project: Construction of the new East Bay Community Based Outpatient Clinic and all associated site work, utilities, parking, and landscaping, construction of the Central Valley Engineering and Logistics support facility, and enhanced flood plain mitigation at the Central Valley and East Bay Community Based Outpatient Clinics as part of the realignment of medical facilities in Livermore, California, in an amount not to exceed $117,300,000.

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR CONSTRUCTION.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2018 or the year in which funds are appropriated for the Construction, Major Projects account, $117,300,000 for the project authorized in subsection (a).

(c) SUBMITTAL OF INFORMATION.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, for the project authorized in subsection (a), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives the following information:

(1) A line item accounting of expenditures relating to construction management carried out by the Department of Veterans Affairs for such project.

(2) The future amounts that are budgeted to be obligated for construction management carried out by the Department for such project.

(3) A justification for the expenditures described in paragraph (1) and the future amounts described in paragraph (2).

(4) Any agreement entered into by the Secretary regarding a non-Department of Veterans Affairs Federal entity providing management services relating to such project, including reimbursement agreements and the costs to the Department for such services.

SEC. 505. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PERSONNEL TRANSPARENCY.

(a) PUBLICATION OF STAFFING AND VACANCIES.—

(1) WEBSITE REQUIRED.—Subject to paragraph (2) and not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall make publicly available on an Internet website of the Department of Veterans Affairs the following information, which shall, subject to subparagraph (D), be displayed by departmental component or, in the case of information relating to Veterans Health Administration positions, by medical facility:

(A) The number of personnel encumbering positions.

(B) The number of accessions and separation actions processed during the quarter preceding the date of the publication of the information.

(C) The number of vacancies, by occupation.

(D) The percentage of new hires for the Department who were hired within the time-to-hire target of the Office of Personnel Management, disaggregated by administration.

(2) EXCEPTIONS.—The Secretary may withhold from publication under paragraph (1) information relating to law enforcement, information security, or such positions in the Department that the Secretary determines to be sensitive.

(3) UPDATE OF INFORMATION.—The Secretary shall update the information on the website required under paragraph (1) on a quarterly basis.

(4) TREATMENT OF CONTRACTOR POSITIONS.—Any Department of Veterans Affairs position that is filled with a contractor may not be treated as a Department position for purposes of the information required to be published under paragraph (1).

(5) INSPECTOR GENERAL REVIEW.—On a semiannual basis, the Inspector General of the Department shall review the administration of the website required under paragraph (1) and make recommendations relating to the improvement of such administration.

(b) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to Congress an annual report on the steps the Department is taking to achieve full staffing capacity. Each such report shall include the amount of additional funds necessary to enable the Department to reach full staffing capacity.

SEC. 506. PROGRAM ON ESTABLISHMENT OF PEER SPECIALISTS IN PATIENT ALIGNED CARE TEAM SETTINGS WITHIN MEDICAL CENTERS OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) PROGRAM REQUIRED.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall carry out a program to establish not fewer than two peer specialists in patient aligned care teams at medical centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs to promote the use and integration of services for mental health, substance use disorder, and behavioral health in a primary care setting.

(b) TIMEFRAME FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM.—The Secretary shall carry out the program at medical centers of the Department as follows:

(1) Not later than May 31, 2019, at not fewer than 15 medical centers of the Department.

(2) Not later than May 31, 2020, at not fewer than 30 medical centers of the Department.

(c) SELECTION OF LOCATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall select medical centers for the program as follows:

(A) Not fewer than five shall be medical centers of the Department that are designated by the Secretary as polytrauma centers.

(B) Not fewer than ten shall be medical centers of the Department that are not designated by the Secretary as polytrauma centers.

(2) CONSIDERATIONS.—In selecting medical centers for the program under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall consider the feasibility and advisability of selecting medical centers in the following areas:

(A) Rural areas and other areas that are underserved by the Department.

(B) Areas that are not in close proximity to an active duty military installation.

(C) Areas representing different geographic locations, such as census tracts established by the Bureau of the Census.

(d) GENDER-SPECIFIC SERVICES.—In carrying out the program at each location selected under subsection (c), the Secretary shall ensure that—

(1) the needs of female veterans are specifically considered and addressed; and

(2) female peer specialists are made available to female veterans who are treated at each location.

(e) ENGAGEMENT WITH COMMUNITY PROVIDERS.—At each location selected under subsection (c), the Secretary shall consider ways in which peer specialists can conduct outreach to health care providers in the community who are known to be serving veterans to engage with those providers and veterans served by those providers.

(f) REPORTS.—

(1) PERIODIC REPORTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and not less frequently than once every 180 days thereafter until the Secretary determines that the program is being carried out at the last location to be selected under subsection (c), the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the program.

(B) ELEMENTS.—Each report required by subparagraph (A) shall, with respect to the 180-day period preceding the submittal of the report, include the following:

(i) The findings and conclusions of the Secretary with respect to the program.

(ii) An assessment of the benefits of the program to veterans and family members of veterans.

(iii) An assessment of the effectiveness of peer specialists in engaging under subsection (e) with health care providers in the community and veterans served by those providers.

(2) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the Secretary determines that the program is being carried out at the last location to be selected under subsection (c), the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report detailing the recommendations of the Secretary as to the feasibility and advisability of expanding the program to additional locations.

SEC. 507. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL SCRIBE PILOT PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall carry out a two-year pilot program under which the Secretary shall increase the use of medical scribes at Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers.

(b) LOCATIONS.—The Secretary shall carry out the pilot program at the 10 medical centers of the Department as follows:

(1) At least four such medical centers located in rural areas.

(2) At least four such medical centers located in urban areas.

(3) Two such medical centers located in areas with need for increased access or increased efficiency, as determine by the Secretary.

(c) MEDICAL SCRIBES.—

(1) HIRING.—Under the pilot program the Secretary shall—

(A) hire 20 new Department of Veterans Affairs term employees as medical scribes; and

(B) seek to enter into contracts with appropriate entities for the employment of 20 additional medical scribes.

(2) DISTRIBUTION.—The Secretary shall assign four medical scribes to each of the 10 medical centers of the Department where the Secretary carries out the pilot program as follows:

(A) Two scribes shall be assigned to each of two physicians.

(B) Thirty percent of the scribes shall be employed in the provision of emergency care.

(C) Seventy percent of the scribes shall be employed in the provision of speciality care in specialties with the longest patient wait times or lowest efficiency ratings, as determined by the Secretary.

(d) REPORTS.—

(1) REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 180 days after the commencement of the pilot program required under this section, and every 180 days thereafter for the duration of the pilot program, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to Congress a report on the pilot program. Each such report shall include each of the following:

(A) A separate analysis of each the following with respect to medical scribes employed by the Department of Veterans Affairs and medical scribes performing Department of Veterans Affairs functions under a contract:

(i) Provider efficiency.

(ii) Patient satisfaction.

(iii) Average wait time.

(iv) The number of patients seen per day by each physician or practitioner.

(v) The amount of time required to hire and train an employee to perform medical scribe functions under the pilot program.

(B) Metrics and data for analyzing the effects of the pilot program, including an evaluation of the each of the elements under clauses (i) through (iv) of subparagraph (A) at medical centers who employed scribes under the pilot program for an appropriate period preceding the hiring of such scribes.

(2) COMPTROLLER GENERAL REPORT.—Not later than 90 days after the termination of the pilot program under this section, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to Congress a report on the pilot program. Such report shall include a comparison of the pilot program with similar programs carried out in the private sector.

(e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) The term ''medical scribe'' means an unlicensed individual hired to enter information into the electronic health record or chart at the direction of a physician or licensed independent practitioner whose responsibilities include the following:

(A) Assisting the physician or practitioner in navigating the electronic health record.

(B) Responding to various messages as directed by the physician or practitioner.

(C) Entering information into the electronic health record, as directed by the physician or practitioner.

(2) The terms ''urban'' and ''rural'' have the meanings given such terms under the rural-urban commuting codes developed by the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

(f) FUNDING.—The pilot program under this section shall be carried out using amounts otherwise authorized to be appropriated for the Department of Veterans Affairs. No additional amounts are authorized to be appropriated to carry out such program.

SEC. 508. EXTENSION OF REQUIREMENT TO COLLECT FEES FOR HOUSING LOANS GUARANTEED BY SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

Section 3729(b)(2) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking ''2027'' each place it appears and inserting ''2028''.

SEC. 509. EXTENSION OF REDUCTION IN AMOUNT OF PENSION FURNISHED BY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS FOR CERTAIN VETERANS COVERED BY MEDICAID PLANS FOR SERVICES FURNISHED BY NURSING FACILITIES.

Section 5503(d)(7) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking ''September 30, 2027'' and inserting ''September 30, 2028''.

SEC. 510. APPROPRIATION OF AMOUNTS.

(a) VETERANS CHOICE PROGRAM.—There is authorized to be appropriated, and is appropriated, to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, out of any funds in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, $5,200,000,000 to be deposited in the Veterans Choice Fund under section 802 of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–146; 38 U.S.C. 1701 note).

(b) AVAILABILITY OF AMOUNTS.—The amounts appropriated under subsection (a) shall be available for obligation or expenditure without fiscal year limitation.

SEC. 511. TECHNICAL CORRECTION.

Section 1712I of title 38, United States Code, is redesignated as section 1720I of such title.

SEC. 512. BUDGETARY EFFECTS.

(a) STATUTORY PAY-AS-YOU-GO SCORECARDS.—The budgetary effects of this Act shall not be entered on either PAYGO scorecad maintained pursuant to section 4(d) of the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010.

(b) SENATE PAYGO SCORECARDS.—The budgetary effects of this Act shall not be entered on any PAYGO scorecard maintained for purposes of section 4106 of H. Con. Res. 71 (115th Congress).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The bill, as amended, shall be debatable for 1 hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

The gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material in the RECORD on S. 2372, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my bill, the John S. McCain III; the Daniel K. Akaka; and with great honor, the Samuel R. Johnson Department of Veterans Affairs Maintaining Internal Systems and Strengthening Integrated Outside Networks Act of 2018, or the VA MISSION Act.

This bill exemplifies exactly how Congress should work. It is a bipartisan, bicameral compromise agreement between the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees that was crafted over the last year and a half through regular order and in close coordination with stakeholders and advocates in VA, the White House, the military and veterans service organizations, and the broader health community.

It is also aptly named after Senator MCCAIN, late Senator Akaka, and Congressman SAM JOHNSON, three great Americans whose lives and work exemplify service and statesmanship. The MISSION Act is also aptly named in that it would address and reaffirm Congress' commitment to VA's core and most important mission: caring for, as President Lincoln said, those who have borne the battle.

There are five main components of the MISSION Act. Each of these components on their own would be noteworthy and significant. Together, they are transformational.

The first component of the MISSION Act would consolidate and improve VA's community care programs. VA uses several different methods to refer veterans to community providers today. The most recent and notable method is the Choice Program, which Congress created following the nationwide access and accountability crisis in 2014. All of those methods serve different purposes and employ different business processes, reimbursement rates, and eligibility criteria. That creates a tremendous and increasing amount of confusion and consternation from VA employees, community providers, and VA patients.

The MISSION Act would consolidate all of those methods into a single, streamlined VA community care program that is easier to understand, administer, and deliver to veterans who need it. This would increase access to timely quality care in every community across the country and, in doing so, expand VA's reach and veterans' choice. It would also return all VA community care funding to the discretionary side of the ledger, thereby increasing transparency and accountability for the hard-earned taxpayer dollars that VA receives.

The second component of the MISSION Act would address the pending shortfall in the Choice fund. When Congress created the Choice Program 4 years ago, it also created the Choice fund and stipulated that the program would end when the fund ran dry. Congress has acted time and time again to prevent that from happening in recognition of the millions of veterans who rely on the Choice Program despite its imperfections.

However, Acting VA Secretary Wilkie sent a letter just last week declaring that the remaining funds in the Choice fund will be exhausted as early as May 31, just 2 weeks from today. The consequences of that have the potential to be catastrophic for veterans, with Acting Secretary Wilkie warning that wait times will increase, access to care will decrease, continuity of care will be disrupted, and valuable community partnerships will be damaged.

To prevent that, the MISSION Act would authorize and appropriate $5.2 billion to the Choice fund. This would prevent an access-to-care crisis from occurring in the immediate future and provide sufficient funding to allow the Choice Program to continue serving veteran patients over the next year until the new, consolidated community care program is implemented.

The third component of the MISSION Act would address VA's massive and misaligned physical footprint. VA is one of the largest property-holding entities in the Federal Government with a capital asset portfolio that includes thousands of medical facilities spanning hundreds of millions of square feet.

The average VA medical facility building is more than five times older than the average building in the not-for-profit system in this country, with some VA facilities being much older than that. For example, the VA medical center in my hometown of Johnson City, Tennessee, was built in 1903 to care for Civil War veterans. It is still seeing patients today.

Since being named chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs a year and a half ago, I have made it a priority to travel to VA facilities across the country. While many of them are doing great work, they are operating out of facilities that were designed and built to meet antiquated healthcare needs and delivery models.

Those facilities are increasingly impossible to manage and maintain in accordance with modern standards and the ever-changing shifts in the veteran population, not to mention that demand for care is growing progressively more costly and complex in Tennessee and across the country.

The Asset and Infrastructure Review, or AIR, Act process that the MISSION Act would create is based on a recommendation from the bipartisan Commission on Care that was put together by President Obama. It would create an open, objective, politically insulated process to recommend how VA's massive physical footprint can be realigned and brought up to date. This would transform the VA healthcare system that we know today into one that is stronger, more efficient, and better able to meet the healthcare needs of veterans, now and for generations of veterans to come.

None of us who are lucky enough to have a VA facility in their backyard, as I do, want to contemplate a future where that facility may change or disappear. But without action as bold, brave, and potentially transformative as the AIR Act is, the long-term success and sustainability of the VA healthcare system is in serious question, and veterans will suffer the consequences.

I want to assure those who may still be concerned about AIR that they will have nothing to fear from it. I worked closely with a wide variety of veteran service organizations to ensure that the AIR process takes and includes a high level of veteran, VSO, stakeholder, and community involvement—both locally and nationally—and to make sure no AIR recommendation would occur behind closed doors without an open discussion and a review of all the relevant facts, with every option and opportunity left on the table.

It is my firm belief that AIR will result in a modern, streamlined VA healthcare system but not necessarily a markedly smaller one. VA is going to remain a presence in communities large and small, and no facility that is needed to care for veteran patients or that has a worthy service to provide them will be negatively impacted.

The fourth component of the MISSION Act will be to expand the Family Caregiver Program to the caregivers of pre-9/11 veterans. Congress created the Family Caregiver Program in 2010 to provide services and supports, including a monthly stipend payment and healthcare coverage, if needed, to caregivers of post-9/11 veterans.

Caregivers provide an invaluable service, often at great personal sacrifice, to those veterans who have been seriously injured in the line of duty. Caregivers know no age or era, but for far too long the Family Caregiver Program has been restricted to an inequality based on era of service. The MISSION Act would correct that serious inequity and finally give pre-9/11 caregivers the recognition they deserve.

The fifth and the final component of the MISSION Act would be to enhance the internal capacity of the VA healthcare system to care for veteran patients internally. Opponents of this bill will tell you falsely that it is aimed at eventual privatization of the VA healthcare system. That misconception is based on nothing but fear and rhetoric, I think.

The MISSION Act contains numerous provisions that would make it easier for VA to attract high-quality commissions and other professionals and put them to work in VA medical facilities, just as I have done. It also contains numerous provisions that would make it easier for the providers already working in VA hospitals and clinics to see more veteran patients and to be recognized and rewarded for their great work.

Together, these provisions would fortify the VA healthcare system and make sure it stays strong and able to provide the care that it is meant to provide.

Before closing, I want to take a moment to recognize some people: Chairman JOHNNY ISAKSON and Ranking Member TESTER of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Chairman ISAKSON and Ranking Member TESTER have been steadfast partners over the last year and over the last several weeks, in particular. The MISSION Act would not be a reality without their good-faith efforts to work hand in hand with me and with our veteran service organization partners to overcome our differences and craft a bipartisan, bicameral compromise bill that veterans and their families can be proud of. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank them for their leadership and for their friendship.

I am also grateful for the many members of the committee from both sides of the aisle and both sides of the Capitol, including Ranking Member WALZ, and to our VSO partners in the community, the VA, and in the White House who have worked hard over the last year and a half to craft and consider many of the provisions that make up the MISSION Act.

Finally, I want to thank President Trump for his leadership and steadfast commitment to veterans since taking office. This bill would not have been possible without his vocal leadership. This may well be the most impactful vote that any of us will ever take for our Nation's veterans.

And before I finish, I also want to thank the staffs on both sides of the aisle, both in the Senate and in the House, both Republican and Democrat, for their incredible hard work, the many hours behind the scenes that you never see, that the public never sees, that I certainly appreciate and I believe Ranking Member WALZ does too, the hard work of our staffs.

A ''yes'' vote is a vote for access, for quality, for choice, for the long-term success and sustainability of the VA healthcare system, for caregivers and for veterans. And for that I would recommend a positive ''yes'' vote.

The MISSION Act is supported by every major military and veteran service organization that rightfully recognizes this as a monumental and historic opportunity to support a bill that will positively impact the daily lives and well-being of millions of veterans and their families and fundamentally shape and improve the second largest agency in the Federal Government.

□ 1600

I urge every single one of my colleagues to stand today with me and

these organizations dedicated to the service of veterans, servicemembers, and their families, and, most importantly, our Nation's veterans, and support the VA MISSION Act.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a letter from the VSO in support of the MISSION Act.

MAY 7, 2018.

Hon. PHIL ROE,
Chairman, House Veterans' Affairs Committee, Washington, DC.
Hon. JOHNNY ISAKSON,
Chairman, Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, Washington, DC.
Hon. TIM WALZ,
Ranking Member, House Veterans' Affairs Committee, Washington, DC.
Hon. JON TESTER,
Ranking Member, Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN ROE, RANKING MEMBER WALZ, CHAIRMAN ISAKSON AND RANKING MEMBER TESTER: On behalf of the millions of veterans, service members and family members we represent and advocate for, we offer our strong support for the ''VA Maintaining Internal Systems and Strengthening Integrated Outside Networks Act of 2018,'' also known as the ''VA MISSION Act of 2018.'' This historic veterans legislation would consolidate and reform VA's community care programs; extend funding for the current Veterans Choice Program for one year; strengthen VA's ability to recruit, hire and retain quality medical personnel; review, realign and modernize VA's health care infrastructure; and extend eligibility to VA's comprehensive caregiver assistance program to aging and disabled veterans injured before September 11, 2001.

Our organizations strongly support expanding eligibility for VA's comprehensive caregiver program to all generations of seriously disabled veterans, while maintaining the caregiver benefits that are currently available. Today, this program provides full comprehensive caregiver assistance only to veterans injured on or after September 11, 2001, leaving family caregivers and veterans injured during World War II, the Korean, Vietnam and Gulf Wars ineligible for this critical support. The legislation will help to correct this injustice and we—along with millions of members in our organizations—applaud you for taking this action and look forward to working in the future to ensure that both injured and ill veterans from all eras are eligible for this benefit.

The legislation would consolidate VA's community care programs and develop integrated networks of VA and community providers to supplement, not supplant VA health care, so that all enrolled veterans have timely access to quality medical care. The bill includes funding to continue the current Choice Program for an additional year until the new community care program is implemented as well as important workforce improvement provisions to strengthen VA's internal capacity to delivery care. This carefully crafted compromise represents a balanced approach to ensuring timely access to care while continuing to strengthen the VA health care system that millions of veterans choose and rely on.

The legislation also includes a new Asset and Infrastructure Review (AIR) process intended to design and implement a comprehensive plan to optimize and modernize VA's medical care facilities. The AIR process would provide meaningful stakeholder involvement, transparency and other safeguards during the review process to help ensure the final result leads to a stronger and better aligned VA infrastructure able to deliver care to veterans when and where they need it.

Since the access and waiting list crisis exploded in 2014, Congress, VA and veterans leaders have debated how best to strengthen and reform the delivery of veterans health care to ensure timely and seamless access for enrolled veterans. The legislation before the Committee would take a major step towards that goal by making improvements to and investments in the VA health care system, creating integrated networks so that veterans have access to care when and where they need it, and providing the further recognition and assistance to family caregivers of severely disabled veterans deserve.

As leaders of the nation's veterans and military service organizations, we thank you for your steadfast leadership in crafting this important bipartisan bill and call on all members of Congress to seize this historic opportunity to improve the lives of veterans, their families and caregivers by swiftly passing the ''VA MISSION Act of 2018.'' The men and women who have served, are serving and will serve in the future are counting on Congress' support.

Respectfully,

Garry J. Augustine, Washington Executive Director, DAV (Disabled American Veterans); Verna L Jones, Executive Director, The American Legion; Joseph R. Chenelly, Executive Director, AMVETS; Dana T. Atkins, Lieutenant General, U.S. Air Force (Ret.), President, Military Officers Association of America; Robert E. Wallace, Executive Director, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; Carl Blake, Executive Director, Paralyzed Veterans of America; Rick Weidman, Executive Director of Policy, Vietnam Veterans of America; Rene Bardof, Senior Vice President, Government & Community Relations, Wounded warrior Project; Paul Rieckhoff, Founder and CEO, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America; Joseph C. Bogart MA, Executive Director, Blinded Veterans Association; Thomas J. Snee, National Executive Director, Fleet Reserve Association; Kristina Kaufmann, Executive director, Code of Support Foundation.

Paul K. Hopper, Colonel, USMC (Ret.), National President, Marine Corps Reserve Association; James T. (Jim) Currie, Ph.D., Colonel, USA (Ret.), Executive Director, Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service; Neil Van Ess, National Commander, Military Order of the Purple Heart; Steve Schwab, Executive Director, Elizabeth Dole Foundation; Bonnie Carroll, President and Founder, Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors; Jon Ostrowski, Senior Chief USCGR, Retired, Director, Government Affairs, Non Commissioned Officers Association; Michael Cowan MD, VADM USN (Ret), Executive Director, AMSUS; Randy Reid, Executive Director, U.S. Coast Guard Chief Petty Officers, Association; Deirdre Park Holleman, Esq. Washington Executive Director, The Retired Enlisted Association; John H. Madigan, Jr, Vice President and Chief Public Policy Officer, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention; CW4 (Ret.) Jack Du Teil, Executive Director, United States Army Warrant Officers, Association; Jim Lorraine, President & CEO, America's Warrior Partnership.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say the chairman's description of how this process was done was absolutely 100 percent accurate. The sense of bipartisanship that went into the writing of this bill, the sense of purpose in shared values on caring for our veterans, the sense of dignity and respect that was given to the minority side in dissenting opinions both from the chairman and his staff was exemplary and what we should all expect out of our leadership.

This is a piece of legislation that has components of it that have literally been with me or been on my mind or things that I have tried to effect for literally two-thirds of my life—24 years in that uniform and 12 years here.

Much of this, I am proud to have been part of the original authors with the chairman in writing that, and it brings me to a strange position today. I am rising personally in opposition, and I say that this will be my last opportunity to vote on the Choice Act.

I will be leaving this Congress after this term, and after many positive things—and I have said it time and time again. The leadership that the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) is showing will probably not be parallel in terms of care for veterans in the way that he has approached this. This piece of legislation is critically important—the caregivers piece in it, the piece on dealing with VA assets and how we look at capacity going forward, and, of course, Choice.

And I would like to say—and especially to my friend, SAM JOHNSON—very few words need to be said about SAM JOHNSON. We served on the POW/MIA Commission in dealing with finding the lost remains of our warriors and dealing directly with the Russian Government. And when SAM JOHNSON's name is mentioned anywhere around the world, people stop and listen. So it is appropriate. I thank the chairman for naming that, and, of course, with Senators Akaka and MCCAIN.

My concerns on this. This is not a symptom of the VA Committee. The VA Committee did exactly what it was supposed to do. The chairman did exactly what he was supposed to do. The VSOs did exactly what they were supposed to do. But I think this is my last chance to voice, how do we ever get to the point where we look at long-term stability. How do we ever get to the point—three times we had to do—and the chairman is right. I have no doubt that this body, because of the care for veterans on both sides, will do whatever is necessary when we run short, and we will.

And next May, when we hit the discretionary spending caps and things had to be made, I have no doubt, under the chairman's leadership, we will find a fix, or whoever sits in that chair will try and find that fix. I thought, and still believe to this day, this was our opportunity to look at that long-term care—the issue that was going to be the stability of VA care.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates this bill is going to cost $47 billion over 5 years. There is not an

American taxpayer that would not pay every penny of that to go to care of veterans. This is not about trying to figure that piece of it out. Paying for veterans care in the community is going to cost $22 billion on that.

I agree that reforming Choice Programs, consolidating the VA's seven other community care programs is needed. And I agree transferring this funding of the Choice Program to discretionary funding so the VA can budget for the increased cost and all healthcare is paid by that fund. We must ensure the high cost of community care, though, does not force the VA to cut other critical veterans services.

It is unfortunate that we have chosen to solve this problem on the mandatory side by exempting VA care from statutory PAYGO, but we are not going to do that in the future on the care in the community. It is not a problem that is going to occur years from now. Everybody in here who is coming back—and the voters will tell you if you are or not—is coming. The cost of community care is so expensive, we will not get through fiscal year 2019 without a similar exemption on the discretionary side.

This bill fails to address how VA will fund all of its other programs once this transfer occurs. The Bipartisan Budget Act deal raised VA's caps by $4 billion to improve VA infrastructure. This increased discretionary funding responsibility for community care is going to undermine that deal, forcing VA to cut its own programs and use money designated for VA infrastructure to fund community care.

That is a choice we can make, and it is a choice that has to be made. I am just suggesting today that with the good will, the smart policies, the leadership that was here, maybe we should have gone for the whole one on this.

I will take the critique that looking for the perfect and throwing away the good is a fair critique. I am just not sure, in a Congress with a $21 trillion deficit and a discretionary spending budget that could be eaten up across there, when is that hard decision ever going to be made?

It could mean that care provided in VA hospitals and clinics, construction and maintenance of those facilities, veterans homelessness programs, and VA research will have to see cuts under the way the law is made to make sure community care is funded. It could cause cuts to programs across the Federal Government, including programs that help veterans with job training, employment assistance, or veterans treatment courts. Even the expansion of eligibility for caregiver assistance for all veterans of all generations—a key part of this bill supported by everyone here—could face cuts if VA hits those spending caps.

Now, all of us here, it is the job of this committee to be the authorizing committee, so don't get me wrong. I am not going to put the pressure where the White House was or to the appropriators, but the fact of the matter is, after this vote, the Caregiver Support Program has zero dollars in it. No dollars in it. They are going to have to come from somewhere, and a budget that the chairman has rightfully told us has increased fourfold in the last 10 years, we are going to have to come to grips with that.

I am not suggesting you cut it. I am just suggesting that we budget honestly on this so we don't run into this nightmare scenario that is coming in May of 2019. There are concerns over long-term sustainability without qualified leadership in place to successfully implement the program.

Here is what I am worried about. If this committee and even this Congress were responsible for implementation, but once it leaves here, it goes to the executive branch, I, as the ranking member of the House VA Committee, am not quite sure who to call up there right now in this transition. We have been 40 days without a VA Secretary. We don't have one, that I know of, scheduled to go in front of the Senate for confirmation at this point in time.

So we are willing to capitulate the authority, the ability to give this over there, and decisions that are going to affect generational care in the VA to somebody yet to be placed. That leadership piece scares me. But again, some of it is relieved because I know you have got leadership in this House. I know you have got a chairman who cares, wants to get this right, I trust, to carry that oversight out.

The problem is, administrations come and go; secretaries comes and go; Members of Congress come and go. That is why we do statutory requirements on spending. That is why this is now discretionary spending. That is why there are caps in place that cannot be violated, and decisions will be made where that is going to come from.

Also, a shortage of 33,000 health providers in the VA and a $10 billion backlog to fix needed facilities that have ''D'' or ''F'' life conditions, that we should be doing more to address that internal care. I agree. These reforms are needed. I agree that these programs were debated in a logical, a fair, and open manner. We got much of what needed to be done in this. We got much of what is good.

The chairman took this process—exactly what should be expected of us. My responsibility, as the final time that I will stand here to talk about how we fund Choice and how we get going for long-term sustainability, is to ask us to just put in—and we had a couple of amendments that could do this—ask us with some capacity to be able to fix that cap piece in this and look for that long-term sustainability.

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

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON), one of my personal heroes. One of the greatest privileges I have had in the 9½ years I have served in this U.S. Congress is to serve with SAM JOHNSON.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I first want to thank Chairman ROE for his strong support of our veterans and for the incredible honor he does Senators Akaka, MCCAIN, and myself with the bipartisan bill before us. I am truly humbled by this gesture, and I am sure it also means a lot to my buddy JOHN, his family, and Senator Akaka's family as well. Both of these men served during wartime.

Many folks know that JOHN and I were POWs at Hanoi Hilton, and I will always admire his courage in rejecting the North Vietnamese offer to go home early. They, of course, did this in an effort to break the spirit of other POWs. No one but another POW knows the strength and heartbreak it takes to deny yourself the hope of home when your future and life are uncertain. I say this as a fellow POW who spent nearly 7 years in that hellhole Earth.

Mr. Speaker, I served 29 years in the United States Air Force and fought in both the Korean and Vietnam wars, so I understand the sacrifices our servicemembers make to protect the freedom of every American. It is only right that in return for their faithful service, our veterans get the quality healthcare they need and deserve when they return home. That is why one of my proudest accomplishments is the establishment of a VA community-based outpatient clinic in my hometown of Plano, Texas. This facility was much needed in our community, and I am proud to report it is expanding services for our veterans all the time.

But as important as a VA facility is, they are not always convenient for our veterans to visit. To address the fact that some veterans live far from VA facilities or face longer wait times to see doctors, Congress created the Choice Program.

Today's bill makes the Choice Program even better by bringing it fully into the VA health system. That means all veterans actively enrolled in the VA can go to a doctor in their community. You know that is the right thing to do in the spirit, and I think this bill is something we should all support.

Politics aside, may we all be mindful that our veterans have answered the call to duty. They put their lives on the line on our behalf, and their families serve alongside them as well. At the very at least, they deserve to be treated with respect and appreciation for their service and their sacrifice.

To all our veterans: God bless you and God bless America. I salute you.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas for bringing inspiration to everybody in this body and across the country.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO), the vice ranking member of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I thank Ranking Member WALZ for yielding me

the time and his steadfast leadership on the Veterans' Affairs Committee. He has been tireless in his support of veterans and their families. I am, likewise, inspired by the gentleman from Texas' service to our country. I thank him for his service.

Mr. Speaker, the bill before us today is the culmination of years of ongoing discussion about how to guarantee veterans have timely access to quality care. It streamlines existing programs that allow veterans to get care in the community, creates a process for aligning VA facilities to meet the changing needs of the veteran population, and it expands the Caregiver Support Program to all veterans.

□ 1615

It should come as no surprise that I have serious concerns with this bill. I voted against it when it was reported out of committee to signal that it is not a perfect bill and that there are still improvements to be made.

One of my biggest concerns has to do with funding. In that regard, I share the concern of the ranking member. While previous funding for Choice came from emergency mandatory funding, moving forward, the program will receive discretionary funding and could break the budget caps that trigger sequestration.

That is why I offered an amendment at the Rules Committee last night that guaranteed that moving community care funding to the discretionary side wouldn't count against the bipartisan budget caps we agreed to just a few short months ago. It would help guarantee that we continue to keep our promises to veterans by funding the full range of supports and benefits that they are owed.

Unfortunately, that amendment was not made in order for us to consider on the floor today. Without this critical amendment, I am concerned we will be facing difficult choices, and I fear that veterans will ultimately pay the price, and I mean that in a literal sense.

I have concerns about the process that brought us here today. I think this bill needs a greater emphasis on building the VA's capacity, its internal capacity, to provide veterans the specialized care that many of them need. We need to do more to recruit and retain the best providers to care for our veterans.

I wish that there were more guardrails in place as we begin asset realignment, and I wish that we had a strong VA leadership in place before moving forward with sweeping reforms. But, at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, I realize we can't keep doing emergency patches to fund community care. We can't continue to look veterans in the eye when we don't offer caregiver support services just because they served in an era before 9/11. That is why I will reluctantly vote in favor of this bill today.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MITCHELL). The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentleman from California.

Mr. TAKANO. I will reluctantly vote for this bill today.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, just for clarification, we have been under cap since 2011. The VA budget has grown exponentially since then. We have always done the right thing for our Nation's heroes and will continue to do that.

Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. WENSTRUP), my good friend. He served until he recently moved to a different committee, as chairman of the Health Subcommittee. He has been an active member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee and has been a very valued member.

Mr. WENSTRUP. Mr. Speaker, I am humbled to follow SAM JOHNSON here at this podium. I have been in Congress 6 years, and to think that he spent 7 years incarcerated as a POW.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the VA MISSION Act. This legislation is about keeping our promises to those who safeguard our freedoms.

As a member of the Army Reserve and a doctor in the Army, I am all too familiar with the challenges plaguing the VA today. In 2014, America witnessed the heartbreaking results of hidden VA wait lists, and Congress quickly responded with the Veterans Choice Program to ensure that no veteran was kept from care. Now, with the leadership of Chairman ROE, we are delivering a lasting solution to get our deserving veterans the care that they have earned and enacting real reforms for the VA to succeed in the 21st century.

This bill will improve and streamline the VA's community care programs, those outside the walls of the VA, into one cohesive program and give a patient and their doctor more say in the process. This will create a nonpartisan, transparent process to review the VA's infrastructure assets, in line with the recommendation from the Commission on Care.

This bill will expand the VA's post-9/11 caregiver program to all eras of veterans.

The VA MISSION Act also includes my legislation, the VA Provider Equity Act, which aims to enhance the ability of the VA to recruit and retain in-demand surgical specialists, due, in part, to increased use of IEDs in the last decade of war.

Mr. Speaker, if we don't act by May 31, 2018, the funding for the Veterans Choice Program will run out, and veterans across America will be unable to access healthcare.

Finally, I want to extend my sincere thanks and gratitude for the tireless work of the entire VA Committee staff, and specifically Christine Hill and Samantha Gonzalez, for the countless hours that they have put in to getting this across the finish line.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to sponsor the John McCain, Daniel Akaka, and Samuel Johnson VA MISSION Act, named in honor of three American veteran heroes, and I urge my colleagues to vote ''yes.''

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BROWNLEY), my good friend, the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Health.

Ms. BROWNLEY of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Minnesota for yielding, and I thank him, also, for his leadership on the committee.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the VA MISSION Act because it makes significant improvements to the VA that our Nation's veterans have long been asking for, which will help deliver better care to the 9 million veterans enrolled in the VA.

While I recognize that this bill is not a perfect one, my mission and the Veterans' Affairs Committee's mission has always been to provide better access to high-quality care for our Nation's veterans, and this bill advances that goal in a few very important ways.

First, the VA MISSION Act consolidates the various community care programs, which will make it easier for veterans to use and for providers to participate in.

The bill also expands the caregiver program, which is critical for improving outcomes and quality of life for our veterans. This has been a key priority for our Nation's veterans service organizations for years.

Community nursing homes are five times more expensive than the average cost of the caregiver program. Expanding the caregiver program will save the VA and taxpayers money in the long run, all the while allowing veterans to receive quality care and better care at home from the people they trust the most.

The bill also makes important improvements to community care eligibility, which are more closely aligned with the veterans' needs rather than the arbitrary criteria currently in place.

Finally, I am planning to vote ''yes'' because time is of the essence. As you may know, the acting VA Secretary recently informed Congress that the Choice account will run out of funds by the beginning of June, meaning tens of thousands of veterans could lose access to community care in a few short weeks. The VA MISSION Act will ensure that this does not happen, which is another reason why the legislation is supported by 39 veterans service organizations.

With that said, I fully recognize that the bill's approach to realigning facilities, in my opinion, is flawed.

I also share the ranking member's concerns about the budget caps. Reimposing the sequester would be devastating for the VA and for other Federal discretionary programs. This is a real issue that must be addressed.

Since I have been in Congress, we have raised budget caps three times in

a bipartisan manner. We can and we must do so again in order to avoid devastating cuts to programs our constituents depend on.

As the ranking member noted, during the committee markup, Democrats tried to fix this issue, but his amendment was voted down. Today, our new colleague from Pennsylvania also has offered legislation to address this issue, which I supported, but the House did not adopt it.

While I am disappointed that the budget cap issue has not yet been fully addressed, I plan to vote for the VA MISSION Act today. It is past that time. Congress must take action to consolidate the community care programs and to expand the caregiver program.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to also support the bill.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS), the vice chair of the committee and a tireless worker on the Veterans' Affairs Committee.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, what an honor it is, an honor and a privilege, to serve with Mr. SAM JOHNSON, a true American hero.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of S. 2372, the VA MISSION Act, which will provide significant reforms and improvements to the Veterans Choice Program.

Since its implementation, the Veterans Choice Program has served over 1.7 million unique veterans seeking timely and high-quality healthcare for their physical and invisible wounds. Although progress has been made, there is more work to be done to ensure we balance resources from community care and the VA healthcare system.

The VA MISSION Act will streamline and consolidate the Veterans Choice Program with the other duplicative VA community care programs to create one new cohesive Veterans Community Care Program. This new program allows eligible veterans to seek care from non-VA providers in the community if the VA is not providing the quality care the veterans deserve, and timely care. It also requires access to community providers if the veteran and doctor believe it is in the veteran's best medical interest to seek such care.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman ROE, who did an outstanding job with this bill, for his hard work on this bicameral, bipartisan piece of legislation, which is the result of a long negotiation process, where both sides of the aisle put aside differences and compromised to strike a balance between each stakeholder. This is how Congress should work. I am proud of the work that we have done on this committee.

I want to thank the staff, as well. The committee ensured that we have a great work product for our true American heroes. Again, I want to thank the sponsors of the bill.

Mr. Speaker, let's have a great vote for our true American heroes. Let's pass this VA MISSION Act and get it to the Senate as soon as possible.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, could I inquire how much time I have remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Minnesota has 15½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Tennessee has 10¼ minutes remaining.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from New Hampshire (Ms. KUSTER), my good friend, the ranking member of the Subcommittee of Oversight and Investigations.

Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to speak as a cosponsor of the VA MISSION Act. I appreciate the work of Chairman ROE and Ranking Member WALZ in putting this bill together. This bill is almost unanimously supported by the veterans service organization community.

I am proud to cosponsor this legislation because it will enact needed reforms to the Veterans Choice Program and finally extend benefits to family caregivers for veterans of all eras.

I am pleased that the committee retained provisions that Senator SULLIVAN of Alaska and I fought for that would recognize the unique access issues for States that lack a full-service VA hospital. While I will continue to fight for improved and expanded facilities at our Manchester, New Hampshire, VA Medical Center, it is important to recognize that we have unique challenges in New Hampshire where we do not have a full-service hospital.

I also want to speak to this: the provisions that expand the caregiver benefits provided to post-9/11 veterans to veterans of all eras are necessary and long overdue.

I have heard repeatedly from Granite State veterans of eras prior to the global war on terror that the differences and benefits are simply unfair. The way these benefits are currently structured essentially pits veterans against veterans. That is unacceptable.

I thank Chairman ROE for working with us on finding a way forward for family caregiver benefits. I am sure thousands of Granite State veterans will agree.

While this bill embodies the kind of bipartisanship for which our committee is well known, it is not perfect. As the ranking member of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee, I believe it is important to acknowledge parts of the bill that will need continued oversight. I remain committed to ensuring that the VA follows through in a manner that befits the veterans they serve.

Number one, the asset infrastructure review portion of the bill is promising, but I have concerns that it will be insufficient to accomplish its goals. The VA is in desperate need of improved facilities and a realignment of facilities to better serve veterans' needs.

In my own State of New Hampshire, the veterans of the North Country must rely on the Veterans Choice Program, rather than have ease of access to services they would prefer. I am encouraged by the continued work to improve our existing facilities, but Granite State veterans need more, and I hope this bill will further empower the VA to expand services in Manchester and across our State.

Recent experiences has shown that the VA's ability to accurately assess the needs of the veterans' population is in doubt. I remain committed to ensuring that the VA can paint an accurate picture of veterans' needs, especially veterans living in rural America. Too often, our veterans in rural America have seen promised infrastructure expansion stripped away from them. I urge the veterans service organizations community to continue to work with us to keep the VA honest.

□ 1630

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, it is my great honor to welcome Ms. KUSTER back. She has been out for a little bit due to some work, and I am glad to see her back on the floor.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Maine (Mr. POLIQUIN), my good friend and a very active member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee.

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

Mr. Speaker, this is a great day, a great week for America. Here we are celebrating not only our great veterans, who have given us our freedom and our way of life, but also our great police officers, who stand between ourselves and a more chaotic environment. We are grateful for everybody that steps up, not only our men and women in uniform who have represented us, but also our men and women in blue.

Mr. Speaker, I represent the Second Congressional District of the great State of Maine. This is the largest geographic district east of the Mississippi River. We have an 8-hour drive if you go from Fryeburg to Van Buren over beautiful country roads, all kinds of critters in the roads, including moose, so you have got to be careful when you are driving, but let me tell you, we also have 125,000 veterans in the State of Maine, more than half of which, Mr. Speaker, are in the Second District.

We love our veterans in the State of Maine. We absolutely love our veterans. We honor them, but we only have, Mr. Speaker, one veterans hospital in the State of Maine. It is in Togus, the first VA Hospital in America to take care of our veterans coming back from the Civil War. But, you know, if you live in Frenchville, Maine, or you live in Van Buren, you might have a 3-, 4-, or 5-hour drive to Togus at 2 o'clock in the morning when the snow is blowing sideways in February.

We need to make sure we give folks an opportunity—who served our country—to get healthcare closer to them. It just makes sense.

Now, a lot of people, Mr. Speaker, say, ''Well, we don't want to privatize the VA.'' Neither do I, and nobody wants to, but it makes sense to make sure we augment what they can do so our veterans can get healthcare closer

to home, and that is exactly what this program does.

Now, one thing I have to mention to you, Mr. Speaker, is that some of our rural hospitals who have contracted with the VA and provided great services to our veterans have not been getting paid on time. This is a real problem when you have got a small hospital that might not have bills paid for 1 to 2 years.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 15 seconds to the gentleman.

Mr. POLIQUIN. Mr. Speaker, we need to make sure all of our rural hospitals in the State of Maine and throughout the country get paid, and this bill says if they are not paid within 30 days, then interest starts accruing on that.

This is a great win for our veterans, for our small community hospitals that need to stay open for everybody, and for this country.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. CORREA), my good friend and a member of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, who also served a very long time in the California Senate serving veterans there.

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of S. 2372, the VA MISSION Act.

Mr. Speaker, I support the VA MISSION Act because it will improve access to timely care for all our veterans through consolidation and reform of the various care and community programs and through expansion of the caregiver program.

Like my colleague from Maine said, in California, we are the proud home to the largest number of veterans in the United States, and we want more of them in California.

Let me say that I know there may be some issues with this legislation, but at the end of the day, I have got to ask myself, is this about Wall Street or is this about the beltway? No. This is about Main Street, Main Street Santa Ana, Anaheim, Orange County, California.

This VA MISSION Act is supported by 38 veteran and military service groups, including The American Legion.

One of my constituents, Ken George, the District 29 Commander of the Department of California American Legion, represents more than 8,000 American Legion members in Orange County, he called me and he said: If Congress wants to help veterans and caregivers, there is no better way than to support this legislation.

As Ken said, the bill will help veterans and caregivers through expansion of benefits available to our caregivers of veterans of all eras.

Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of this legislation. Yes, there are some issues there, but at the end of the day, if you listen to our veterans, our friends, and neighbors, the folks we represent, this is an ''aye'' vote.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DUNN), my good friend, a U.S. Army veteran, and an active member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the VA MISSION Act of 2018. This important legislation secures veterans' ability to access quality healthcare and ensures that we are fulfilling our promise to care for them following their service to our Nation.

It builds on the success of the Choice Program by streamlining community care programs so a veteran can access care from a provider outside of the VA when they need to. It also expands caregiver benefits for seriously injured pre-9/11 veterans and for their families.

The VA MISSION Act includes two healthcare initiatives from legislation that I have introduced that protects our veterans receiving organ transplants and also helps with the opioid crisis.

Currently, there are only 13 facilities in the Nation where a veteran may receive a transplant in the VA healthcare system, and none of these facilities performs all types of transplants. Timely organ transplants are often the difference between life and death.

The transplant language from my bill included in the VA MISSION Act eliminates the roadblocks that veterans face and increases the access to care for our veterans, the care that they have earned by their service to our Nation.

We are also fighting the opioid epidemic among veterans. My legislative initiative increases transparency in opioid prescribing at the VA by allowing doctors to identify high users of controlled drugs who are therefore at risk for addiction. My language in the VA MISSION Act instructs the VA to do what most private doctors already do: connect to the prescription drug monitoring databases nationwide so that no one slips through the cracks.

Mr. Speaker, we are standing up and fighting for those who fought for our freedoms. As a surgeon and a veteran, I believe the VA MISSION Act is good medicine and good public policy.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support this important legislation.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. ESTY), my good friend, the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs.

Ms. ESTY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the VA MISSION Act of 2018. I am proud to support the VA MISSION Act of 2018, especially because of its important expansion of support for family caregivers of veterans of all service eras.

Since my first days in Congress, I have heard from veterans and their caregivers about the important support provided through the VA's Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers.

Family caregivers provide loving and essential care at home for our injured veterans, from bathing and dressing, housework and transportation, to administering physical and medical therapies.

Caregivers are true partners in the delivery of healthcare to our veterans, and it is important that we recognize their tremendous service and their worth.

In 2010, Congress wisely stepped up to offer the family caregivers of veterans support in performing these vital tasks, but the program was only made available to the family caregivers of post-9/11 veterans.

Clearly, those who served in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam, and their families are deserving of the same respect and support.

That is why, since being elected to Congress, I have authored legislation in every session to expand this assistance for family caregivers to pre-9/11 veterans.

Today, this Congress has the opportunity to honor and support veterans of all service eras by voting for this excellent bill.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman RYAN COSTELLO for leading with me on these important caregiver issues. I thank the chairman and the ranking member for their hard work on including this vital provision in the VA MISSION Act.

Mr. Speaker, it is time that we treat our injured veterans of all eras equally by expanding the VA caregivers program to all injured veterans.

I do want to note that I share the ranking member's concerns with the long-term sustainability of this program. Congress will have to work closely with the VA as this expanded community care program is implemented to ensure that this program is sustainable without cuts to other veterans or other important domestic programs.

The bill we are considering today will ensure that our veterans are getting the care they need when they need it, but in addition to timely care, we must ensure that veterans have access to quality care. As we send veterans outside the VA system to private medical providers, we need to ensure that these doctors and other healthcare professionals are capable of delivering the quality care that each and every one of our veterans deserves.

So, while I applaud the expansion of care in this bill, I am concerned about the potential for fraud, waste, and abuse as VA begins to send many more veterans outside the VA system to private medical providers. That is why it is vital that Congress remain engaged with the implementation of this program to make sure that our veterans are receiving high-quality healthcare from qualified providers and that we in Congress are being careful stewards of the taxpayer dollars.

Mr. Speaker, I again thank the gentleman for yielding, and I thank the chairman and ranking member for their leadership.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to serve on this committee with such extraordinary public servants who share a commitment to serving those who have been willing to put their lives on the line to defend our freedom. It has been a pleasure and an honor serving with them.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate everyone on their hard work in bringing this bill, admittedly not perfect but very important, forward for our consideration, and I urge my colleagues to adopt it when we have the opportunity to vote later today.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. RUTHERFORD), a very active member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee.

Mr. RUTHERFORD. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for this opportunity, and I thank Ranking Member WALZ for such bipartisan support and work on this bill. I am very proud to serve on this committee because of the kind of work that goes on here under the leadership of Chairman ROE.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to cosponsor this bill. I can tell you, since coming to Congress, I have had the distinct honor of serving with Dr. ROE, our chairman, and colleagues on the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, and during this time, we on the committee have heard from veterans services organizations, from the Veterans Administration, and from veterans themselves about the challenges in the VA healthcare system.

We have learned about the barriers to timely care, the troubling provider shortage, also the lack of prompt payment to our community providers, and so many other issues.

I am proud to say that I believe this is, in the words of 38 VSOs who wrote in strong support of this legislation, truly a ''historic opportunity to improve the lives of veterans, their families, and their caregivers.''

That is one reason I am very proud to be on this committee. I think this is a historic move.

It is our duty as legislators and as Americans to ensure that our veterans receive the best care possible. This bill accomplishes that by streamlining community care programs; improving access to timely care; funding the Choice Program; and, until this new program can be implemented, creating a fair access review process, greatly expanding the VA caregiver program, and improving VA's own in-house capacity.

One item that I would like to thank the leaders in both Chambers for, but especially Dr. ROE and his staff and the White House, is including in this language on provider recruitment and retention within the VA, sections 301, 303, and 304 of this bill, which is language that I had asked to have placed in there.

These provisions expand the tools the VA can use to recruit and retain quality providers by requiring the use of scholarships and improving and expanding the loan repayment system that targets newly graduated medical students.

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

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BERGMAN), a lieutenant general and an incredibly valued member of our committee.

Mr. BERGMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for his tireless effort, along with the committee staff, to highlight that the House Veterans' Affairs Committee is truly how a congressional committee is supposed to operate: together.

□ 1645

The name of the act is the VA MISSION Act. Any member of the military understands that mission accomplishment is always first, and with this VA MISSION Act of 2018, what you are going to see is some extremely important elements in accomplishing that long-term mission of providing results for the veterans.

The community care improvement consolidates seven duplicative community care programs into one cohesive program. It removes arbitrary one-size-fits-all parameters in the Choice Program.

Previously, the Choice Program limited accessing care to convenient and affordable. It wasn't good enough. The VA MISSION Act provides Choice funding shortfalls, ensuring that the 1-year funding bridge is complete so that the veterans have a continuity of care during the implementation of the new program.

It also provides for the Asset and Infrastructure Review. This transforms the VA from relying on outdated inpatient facilities to more modern facilities meant for outpatient care of the future that includes delivery through telehealth, through different and unique circumstances that our veterans expect and deserve today.

The VA is one of the Federal Government's largest property holders and needs to make sure that its resources aren't wasted keeping lights on in unused buildings. Those limited resources need to be focused on the veterans.

And finally, the caregiver expansion, this VA MISSION Act expands caregiver support to both pre- and post-9/11 veterans. That is essential and long overdue.

When you reform the VA and allow for greater veteran choices but do not—and I repeat, do not—privatize, this is making the VA the best it needs to be going forward in support of our veterans.

Mr. Speaker, I again thank the chairman for his efforts.

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

Mr. Speaker, again, to the chairman, I am not writing his eulogy here, but I would say that is a pretty impressive resume of accomplishments, going back to the Forever GI Bill, appeals reform, Clay Hunt Suicide, as just a few, and then this piece of legislation. The gentleman's work and tenacity for veterans, Mr. Speaker, is second to none. His dignity and respect for all Members of this House in the process is legendary.

And for giving this space today for us to talk about and debate on this floor our shared values, compromise disagreements, but always with the goal that we are in this together, that is created by an atmosphere of leadership. It is created by an atmosphere of respecting our democratic process. It is understanding that this is not about gotcha, who is this and who is that. It is about looking at what is possible.

So I congratulate the gentleman for putting together a piece of legislation that serves so many veterans. It has the support of so many folks, and allowing me on this last opportunity to express those long-term concerns to make sure we don't undermine that, I am forever grateful for that.

I appreciate the comments and the gentleman from Michigan talking about the capacity inside the VA, too. We have got incredible providers there serving veterans every day, and many of them veterans themselves. I know his commitment to making sure they have the resources necessary to do their job. It is a priority.

I think the concern that I am showing on the budget gap is just to make sure that we don't pick one over the other or where veterans care is. And, as I said, again, if it were left on the shoulders of the chairman to ensure that would happen, I would sleep well at night. I just worry that when we don't codify these things, when we have the uncertainty in the VA right now, that is where my concern came from, but not from this process, not from an openness, not from a commitment, and not from the gentleman's willingness to get this thing across the finish line.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank everyone who was involved in this process, beginning with the staff, who have been heavily involved in this. Both the Republican side and Democratic side worked for the last, really, almost 18 months.

I want to thank our Senate colleagues on the other side of this Capitol who worked very hard and the hours that went into this. The real winners here are our Nation's heroes, the veterans.

This VA MISSION Act does a community care where veterans can get high-quality care both inside the VA and out when the VA can't do that. We have heard speakers down here from areas that don't have a VA hospital. They absolutely rely on that.

I was in Oregon a few months ago and realized that some veterans had to drive 5 hours to a VA facility. They need the community care bill in their community. We provide the funding for that bill to bridge us over until the new Secretary implements that.

We have a caregiver. I am a Vietnam-era veteran, and I have seen many catastrophically injured Vietnam veterans whose families struggled for decades. 520-plus Vietnam veterans are dying every day. It is time we implement this bill and get these needed benefits to those World War II and veterans up to 9/11.

We need to rightsize the VA. Healthcare is not provided like it used to be. It has become much more sophisticated and streamlined. And outpatient, the VA needs to get to be able to do that also. That is what the AIR Act is about. We are increasing the internal capacity so we can train and get new clinicians and providers in.

The speaker, SAM JOHNSON, who spoke a minute ago, said it all. We should be able to look at that hero, who is a true American hero, and listen to his speech, which brought tears to my eyes, and vote for this bill.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. RUTHERFORD). All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 891, the previous question is ordered on the bill, as amended.

The question is on the third reading of the bill.

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

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

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

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

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

AGRICULTURE AND NUTRITION ACT OF 2018

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 2.

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

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 891 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 2.

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

□ 1653

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 2) to provide for the reform and continuation of agricultural and other programs of the Department of Agriculture through fiscal year 2023, and for other purposes, with Mr. MITCHELL in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

The gentleman from Texas (Mr. CONAWAY) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. PETERSON) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 2, the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018, more commonly known as the farm bill. I do so, proudly, because I still believe that rural America and our farm and ranch familles are the backbone of this country.

Our farmers and ranchers ensure that Americans across this great country pay the lowest grocery bills in the world. They also hand us a rare trade surplus, while creating 21 million American jobs.

In the heartland, agriculture is the lifeblood of the economy. When agriculture does well, Main Street does well; and when agriculture is suffering, so is Main Street.

But beyond the economic contributions, rural America and our Nation's farmers and ranchers are imbued with the values that I cherish deeply: the values of faith, family, God, country, and duty; of neighbor helping neighbor, hard work, and personal responsibility.

In short, Mr. Chairman, rural America and our Nation's farmers and ranchers make America great. I expect that is why the President of the United States strongly supports this farm bill and urges passage.

Times are not good right now in the heartland. Our Nation's farmers and ranchers are struggling in the midst of a 5-year recession, with no end in sight. Net farm income has been cut in half over this period of time. As a result, rural America is not partaking in the economic recovery that urban counterparts are experiencing.

There are many reasons behind the hard times in farm and ranch country. I will briefly discuss two.

In my hometown of Midland, Texas, we have received 1 inch of rain over the last 195 days. Drought is ravaging my State. Last year, we saw record losses due to hurricanes and wildfires. And to the north, in the ranking member's home State, farmers are struggling to get into the fields to plant, although it is the middle of May. The fact is the men and women who clothe and feed us in a manner that is absolutely unrivaled in world history are the ones hit hardest and first by Mother Nature.

A second reason for the current condition is another factor totally beyond the control of our farm and ranch families: the predatory trade practices of foreign countries. For the sake of brevity, I will offer just one example.

In just 1 year, China oversubsidized just three crops by more than $1 billion. To put that in perspective, the entire safety net for all of our farmers and ranchers under this farm bill is expected to cost just 64 percent of the amount China spent on illegal subsidies in just 1 year on just three crops.

Mr. Chairman, the global market is awash with high and rising foreign subsidies, tariffs, and nontariff trade barriers, and these are hurting American farmers and ranchers.

So what do we do about that? We heed the call of the President of the United States and the Secretary of Agriculture to pass this farm bill.

No, this farm bill is not a cure for all that ails rural America and our farmers and ranchers, but this farm bill does provide a safety net to see them through the hard times.

For my colleagues interested in the budgetary impacts of this farm bill, H.R. 2 keeps faith with taxpayers, with CBO now projecting more than $112 billion in savings, nearly five times what was pledged back in 2014.

There are many other aspects of this farm bill, but I will just briefly touch on three.

First, Secretary Perdue has shown great leadership on two particular issues that are extremely important to rural America: the opioid epidemic that is ravaging rural America needs an aggressive, effective response, and the lack of broadband in many parts of rural America puts farmers and ranchers in rural communities at a terrible disadvantage. The Secretary is determined to tackle these problems and has asked for the tools he needs to make it happen. This farm bill provides those tools.

Second, it is no secret that we do not have a bipartisan farm bill process at this moment, and that I deeply regret. Ultimately, Democrats and Republicans chose to agree to disagree on the question of whether work-capable adults should work or get free job training for 20 hours per week in order to be eligible for SNAP.

I respect my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, but I do want to be clear about something: This farm bill in no way, shape, or form disrespects Americans who depend on SNAP. To the contrary, the farm bill keeps faith with SNAP beneficiaries, providing needed benefits and something more—the dignity that comes with work and the promise of a better life that a job brings. I want these Americans to realize the American Dream.

Finally, in closing, I want to note that there is a cottage industry in this town that is determined to defeat this farm bill. They want this House to ignore the realities of Mother Nature and

the predatory trade practices of foreign countries and turn our back on farm and ranch families struggling to hang on in the face of these hard times.

Mr. Chairman, that should not happen on our watch. I urge my colleagues to stand by the hardworking families that put food on our tables and clothes on our backs and still live every day by the values that made this country truly great. Let's stand up for rural America. Let's pass this farm bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,
Washington, DC, April 30, 2018.

Hon. ROB BISHOP,
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN BISHOP: I appreciate your support in bringing this legislation before the House of Representatives, and accordingly, understand that the Committee on Natural Resources will forego action on the bill.

The Committee on Agriculture concurs in the mutual understanding that by foregoing consideration of the bill at this time, the Committee on Natural Resources does not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in this bill or similar legislation in the future. In addition, should a conference on this bill be necessary, I would support your request to have the Committee on Natural Resources represented on the conference committee.

I will insert copies of this exchange in the Congressional Record during Floor consideration. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work the Committee on Natural Resources as this bill moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

K. MICHAEL CONAWAY,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES,
Washington, DC, April 30, 2018.

Hon. K. MICHAEL CONAWAY,
Chairman, Committee on Agriculture, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I have received your letter regarding H.R. 2, the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018, which contains provisions within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Natural Resources.

In the interest of permitting you to proceed expeditiously to floor consideration of this very important bill, I will not seek a referral of H.R. 2. I do so with the understanding that the Natural Resources Committee does not waive any future jurisdictional claim over the subject matter contained in the bill that fall within its Rule X jurisdiction. Further, I appreciate the work between our committees on forest management and look forward to working with you to build upon the important provisions within Title VIII of the bill as it moves through the legislative process. I also appreciate your support to name members of the Natural Resources Committee to any conference committee to consider such provisions and for inserting our exchange of letters on H.R. 2 into the Congressional Record during consideration of the measure on the House floor.

Congratulations on marshalling this monumental achievement through committee, and thank you again for the very cooperative spirit in which you and your staff have worked regarding this matter and many others between our respective committees.

Sincerely,

ROB BISHOP,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY,
Washington, DC, May 1, 2018.

Hon. K. MICHAEL CONAWAY,
Chairman, Committee on Agriculture, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN CONAWAY: I write with respect to H.R. 2, the ''Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018.'' As a result of your having consulted with us on provisions within H.R. 2 that fall within the Rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on the Judiciary, I forego any further consideration of this bill so that it may proceed expeditiously to the House floor for consideration.

The Judiciary Committee takes this action with our mutual understanding that by foregoing consideration of H.R. 2 at this time, we do not waive any jurisdiction over subject matter contained in this or similar legislation and that our committee will be appropriately consulted and involved as this bill or similar legislation moves forward so that we may address any remaining issues in our jurisdiction. Our committee also reserves the right to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving this or similar legislation and asks that you support any such request.

I would appreciate a response to this letter confirming this understanding with respect to H.R. 2 and would ask that a copy of our exchange of letters on this matter be included in the Congressional Record during floor consideration of H.R. 2.

Sincerely,

BOB GOODLATTE,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,
Washington, DC, May 1, 2018.

Hon. BOB GOODLATTE,
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN GOODLATTE: Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 2. I appreciate your support in bringing this legislation before the House of Representatives, and accordingly, understand that the Committee on the Judiciary will forego action on the bill.

The Committee on Agriculture concurs in the mutual understanding that by foregoing consideration of the bill at this time, the Committee on the Judiciary does not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in this bill or similar legislation in the future. In addition, should a conference on this bill be necessary, I would support your request to have the Committee on the Judiciary represented on the conference committee.

I will insert copies of this exchange in the Congressional Record during Floor consideration. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work the Committee on the Judiciary as this bill moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

K. MICHAEL CONAWAY,
Chairman.

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, WASHINGTON DC.
May 2, 2018.

Hon. K. MICHAEL CONAWAY,
Chairman, Committee on Agriculture, Washington, DC.

I write concerning H.R. 2, the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018. This legislation includes matters that fall within the Rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

I recognize and appreciate your desire to bring this legislation before the House of Representatives in an expeditious manner, and accordingly, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure will forego action on the bill. However, this is conditional on our mutual understanding that foregoing consideration of the bill does not prejudice the Committee with respect to the appointment of conferees or to any future jurisdictional claim over the subject matters contained in the bill or similar legislation that fall within the Committee's Rule X jurisdiction. Lastly, should a conference on the bill be necessary, I request your support for the appointment of conferees from the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure during any House-Senate conference convened on this or related legislation.

I would ask that a copy of this letter and your response acknowledging our jurisdictional interest as well as the mutually agreed upon changes to be incorporated into the bill be included in the Congressional Record during consideration of the measure on the House floor, to memorialize our understanding.

I look forward to working with the Committee on Agriculture as the bill moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

BILL SHUSTER,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,
Washington, DC, May 2, 2018.

Hon. BILL SHUSTER,
Chairman, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN SHUSTER: Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 2, Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018. I appreciate your support in bringing this legislation before the House of Representatives, and accordingly, understand that the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure will forego action on the bill.

The Committee on Agriculture concurs in the mutual understanding that by foregoing consideration of the bill at this time, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure does not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in this bill or similar legislation in the future. In addition, should a conference on this bill be necessary, I would support your request to have the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure represented on the conference committee.

I will insert copies of this exchange in the Congressional Record during Floor consideration. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure as this bill moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

K. MICHAEL CONAWAY,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE,
Washington, DC, May 2, 2018.

Hon. K. MICHAEL CONAWAY,
Chairman, Committee on Agriculture, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I write to confirm our mutual understanding with respect to H.R. 2, the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018. Thank you for consulting with the Committee on Education and the Workforce with regard to H.R. 2 on those matters within my committee's jurisdiction, including provisions relating to workplace safety, work requirements, and child nutrition.

The Committee on Education and the Workforce will not delay further consideration of this bill. However, I do so only with

the understanding this procedural route will not be construed to prejudice my committee's jurisdictional interest and prerogatives on this bill or any other similar legislation and will not be considered as precedent for consideration of matters of jurisdictional interest to my committee in the future.

I respectfully request your support for the appointment of outside conferees from the Committee on Education and the Workforce should this bill or a similar bill be considered in a conference with the Senate. I also request you include our exchange of letters on this matter in the Committee Report for H.R. 2. Thank you for your attention to these matters.

Sincerely,

VIRGINIA FOXX,
Chairwoman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,
Washington, DC, May 2, 2018.

Hon. VIRGINIA FOXX,
Chairwoman, Committee on Education and Workforce, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRWOMAN FOXX: Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 2, Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018. I appreciate your support in bringing this legislation before the House of Representatives, and accordingly, understand that the Committee on Education and Workforce will forego action on the bill.

The Committee on Agriculture concurs in the mutual understanding that by foregoing consideration of the bill at this time, the Committee on Education and Workforce does not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in this bill or similar legislation in the future. In addition, should a conference on this bill be necessary, I would support your request to have the Committee on Education and Workforce represented on the conference committee.

I will insert copies of this exchange in the Congressional Record during Floor consideration. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work the Committee on Education and Workforce as this bill moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

K. MICHAEL CONAWAY,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC, May 15, 2018.

Hon. MICHAEL K. CONAWAY,
Chairman, House Agriculture Committee, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I write to confirm our mutual understanding regarding H.R. 2, the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018, which contains substantial matter that falls within the Rule X legislative jurisdiction of the Foreign Affairs Committee. I appreciate the consultation and cooperation between our committees, both before and after your markup of that bill.

Based on that cooperation and our associated understandings, and in order to expedite House consideration, the Foreign Affairs Committee agreed not to seek a sequential referral of H.R. 2, with the understanding that that decision in no way diminishes or alters the jurisdictional interests of the Foreign Affairs Committee in that bill, any subsequent amendments, or similar legislation. I respectfully request your support for the appointment of House Foreign Affairs conferees during any House-Senate conference on this legislation.

Finally, I respectfully request that you include this letter and your response in the Congressional Record during consideration of H.R. 2 on the House floor.

Sincerely,

EDWARD R. ROYCE,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,
Washington, DC, May 15, 2018.

Hon. ED ROYCE,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN ROYCE: Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 2, Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018. I appreciate your support in bringing this legislation before the House of Representatives, and accordingly, understand that the Committee on Foreign Affairs will forego action on the bill.

The Committee on Agriculture concurs in the mutual understanding that by foregoing consideration of the bill at this time, the Committee on Foreign Affairs does not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in this bill or similar legislation in the future. In addition, should a conference on this bill be necessary, I would support your request to have the Committee on Foreign Affairs represented on the conference committee.

I will insert copies of this exchange in the Congressional Record during Floor consideration. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work the Committee on Foreign Affairs as this bill moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

K. MICHAEL CONAWAY,
Chairman.

□ 1700

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

Mr. Chair, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 2, the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018. H.R. 2 is not a work product that I am proud of because it is not one that I or my Democratic colleagues had much of a role in producing.

More than that though, I am opposed to H.R. 2 today because it is simply not good enough for American farmers, consumers, or rural advocates. H.R. 2 fails our farmers. The bill does not improve the safety-net programs farmers need to manage a troubled farm economy. It fails to make needed increases to reference prices under the PLC program to address the 52 percent drop in national farm income.

It neglects repeated requests to increase funding for trade promotion to help strengthen overseas markets in response to this administration's actions on trade and renewable fuels.

H.R. 2 fails our Nation's hungry. While I agree that there are changes that need to be made in the SNAP program, this is so clearly not the way to do it. The bill cuts more than $23 billion in SNAP benefits and will result in an estimated 2 million Americans being unable to get help that they need.

Within the nutrition title, the bill turns around and wastes billions that the majority cut from SNAP benefits to create a massive, untested workforce training bureaucracy.

H.R. 2 fails our conservation goals by reducing the Federal funding for our voluntary conservation programs by almost $800 million. It fails our next generation. It lacks mandatory funding for scholarships at 1890 land grants. It underfunds our programs for beginning farmers, and outreach to socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers.

H.R. 2, also fails our energy independence goals. Aside from eliminating the entire energy title, the bill hobbles renewable energy and energy efficiency efforts in rural communities by eliminating funding for the Rural Energy for America Program.

H.R. 2 fails the farmers, rural advocates, and consumers that we are here to represent on all of these fronts. But what is so incredibly frustrating for me is, the failure of this process.

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

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Chairman, I would simply say for the record that all of the bill was negotiated—except for the SNAP title—in good faith with my colleagues on the other side of the aisle. Not once did they mention anything on many of these issues that were just brought up, but we did have an agreement on those non-SNAP titles. It was a SNAP title, quite frankly, that caused the rift.

Mr. Chair, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON), my colleague, the chairman of the Nutrition Subcommittee.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Chair, I thank the chairman of the Agriculture Committee so much for yielding, and for his tireless work on this important legislation in order to support rural America and our most vulnerable.

Over the past 3 years, the Agriculture Committee has spent countless hours talking with constituents, performing outreach, and holding hearings with stakeholders to see how we can improve upon the 2014 farm bill.

Contrary to the claims of some, this legislation was not created in the dead of night or without input from my friends across the aisle.

Mr. Chairman, I have before me a letter that was sent to Chairman CONAWAY and Ranking Member PETERSON with priorities identified by the Democratic Members that I am proud to serve with on the Agriculture Committee. I am proud to see—under nutrition specifically—all of these, and I believe all of these titles, these priorities were incorporated into the farm bill.

Over this 3-year period, we held 21 hearings and heard from 81 witnesses at the Nutrition Subcommittee alone. Members of the Agriculture Committee traveled to every corner of the country to participate in listening sessions and obtain vital input from our farmers, our ranchers, and our growers.

As the farm bill was in development at the committee, every Member had the opportunity to provide input and that input was considered during this process. Yet, even with an open process, no amendments were offered during the committee markup by my

friends across the aisle. That is an opportunity for refinement, as is being on the House floor an opportunity for refinement.

From voluntary insurance programs, to conservation in rural development programs, to agriculture research, H.R. 2 contains critical supports for our Nation's farmers, ranchers, and rural America.

On the farm side, I am especially pleased with the continued reforms to the Margin Protection Program for Dairy, as well as the forestry provisions in title VIII. Now, while I could go on about all of these good policies contained in H.R. 2, this legislation ultimately is about supporting American food—both on the farm, and on the consumer side.

Food is a national security issue. And whether we realize it or not, every American shakes hands with a farmer at least three times a day. As chairman of the Nutrition Subcommittee, I am proud that we maintain nutrition assistance for our most vulnerable through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Approximately 65 percent of these dollars directly provide food to children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities who rely on benefits of SNAP when times get tough.

H.R. 2 also does make historic changes to SNAP by providing new job opportunities for work-capable adults. This bill does this by reinvesting significant dollars within our budget into education and training programs.

By providing the States the increased resources to do this, every work-capable SNAP recipient will be guaranteed a slot in a job-training program, leading to ultimate food security. By doing this, we can help folks elect a pathway to long-term employment, self-sufficiency, and a way out of poverty.

Mr. Chair, I ask that Members support H.R. 2.

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Chair, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. DAVID SCOTT).

Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, let me make it very clear at the very beginning, that this is a racist farm bill. Make no mistake about it.

The good Lord said: Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. And the truth is that this is, unfortunately, a racist farm bill. Let me tell you why.

After the Civil War when the South was utterly destroyed, they established land-grant colleges, and then 30 years later, because there was so much struggle without adequate freedom for my people—African Americans—they established the 1890 land-grant colleges because they had Plessy v. Ferguson, the separate but equal doctrine. Yeah, they were separated already, but never equal.

These 1890 colleges have never gotten the financial support that they have needed to even come close to the White 1860s that were there. And so we tried to make amends in this farm bill to come up with a very noble idea. With the shortage of younger people not going into agriculture, not going into science and technology and research to feed the future, we established scholarships to go to the 1890s.

But you know what? When they took our bill, put it into the farm bill, they took the money out—just like they did back in the 1890s. Black people in this country have suffered too long, and we need to put a stop to it. I am here. I know that this House will not put the money back in. It was just $1 million a year for each of the 5 years to try to get people in. And these land grants knew.

The CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia. Every Black man does not necessarily want to play football or basketball. They want to feed the future. This is a terrible bill.

The CHAIR. The gentleman is no longer recognized.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia. * * *

The CHAIR. The gentleman is no longer recognized.

Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia. * * *

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Chair, I would like to recognize the fact that this brand-spanking-new program that never had any funding is authorized in the bill for discretionary spending to create the scholarship program that has just been referenced. There was no money taken out of the bill, because there was never any money in the program.

We simply recognized the need and we set that program up in place as a direct result of the gentleman's passionate plea for a scholarship program.

Mr. Chair, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. King).

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the yielding and the work that has been put in to get this farm bill together.

First thing that I am happy about, it has the protect interstate commerce language in it, which passed in committee by simply a voice vote. It is well-established. It protects and preserves the commerce clause. We can't have States regulating interstate commerce. That violates the commerce clause. This restores it. That is item number one.

Item number two, in title I, we have in the bill that we protect the PLC program. We improve and protect the ARC program, and we protect the crop insurance. All of that keeps our families on the farm, and if we don't have that, market fluctuations take them off.

We have also increased funding for the MAP program, Market Access Program, and for the Foreign Market Development Program. We have got another FMD program too, and that is the vaccine bank that is in this bill.

Putting work into the SNAP program is an important component. All work has dignity. All work has honor. It is a good start for what we need to do to get a lot better turnout of what goes on with our welfare programs.

Mr. Chair, I thank the chairman for putting this bill together here on this floor today.

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Chair, I am now pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. FUDGE).

Ms. FUDGE. Mr. Chair, I thank the chairman so very much for the fight he put up during this process.

Mr. Chair, I stand today with my Democratic colleagues fighting for the very soul of America. Inscribed on the Statue of Liberty are these words:

Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door.

We have lost our way, Mr. Chair. There is no longer a lamp, nor a golden door. And if we fail to protect the weak, the frail, the poor, the children, the seniors, and the disabled, we have lost our soul. We no longer live up to the promise of America and the true meaning of our creed.

Mr. Chair, it is just cruel to American families and food producers, those who rely on farm bill programs, to put them at risk, only to carry out a hateful, demeaning, and mean-spirited partisan agenda. It is dishonest to promote the idea that SNAP recipients are undeserving; that we are lazy.

Sixty-five percent of our SNAP recipients cannot work. They are children, seniors, and disabled. And most of the others do work—some of them in the very building in which we stand today.

Mr. Chair, I ask my colleagues: What have poor children ever done to you? What have seniors done to you? What have the disabled ever done to you? Republicans are paying for the $2 trillion debt they created in the tax bill on the backs of the poor. It is just sad, Mr. Chair. Really, really sad.

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Chair, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST).

Mr. BOST. Mr. Chairman, I hear from my constituents in southern Illinois that rural America is hurting. That is why we need the farm bill, to address the concerns facing agriculture all over rural America.

The farm bill does just that. The farm bill protects the farm safety net, including commodity programs and crop insurance, invests in rural broadband, modernizes FSA loan programs for new and beginning farmers and ranchers, and invests in conservation.

President Eisenhower once said: ''Farming looks mighty easy when your plow is a pencil and you're 1,000 miles from a corn field.'' Those words hold true today, and that is why this bill was crafted with those farmers in mind, because farmers are everyone's bread and butter.

The CHAIR. The Committee will rise informally.

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

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Lasky, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed a Joint Resolution of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S.J. Res. 52. Joint Resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Federal Communications Commission relating to ''Restoring Internet Freedom''.

The CHAIR. The Committee will resume its sitting.

AGRICULTURE AND NUTRITION ACT OF 2018

The Committee resumed its sitting.

□ 1715

The CHAIR. The gentleman from Minnesota is recognized.

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM).

Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico. Mr. Chairman, I came to Congress to solve problems and create economic opportunities for New Mexico, which is still struggling with one of the highest unemployment and poverty rates in the Nation.

Now, we had a chance in this farm bill to do just that, and I have worked for years on an array of bipartisan initiatives in this bill, including creating a first-ever broadband grant program to increase internet access in rural communities; expediting the adoption of innovative conservation and water management technologies; and finally banning the heinous practice of lunch shaming.

Unfortunately, the bill the majority brought to the floor today not only jeopardizes all of that bipartisan work, it also includes provisions that will cause so much pain to so many people in my State.

This bill creates new restrictions on SNAP eligibility and a massive unfunded mandate on State bureaucracies which will further destabilize an already broken SNAP system in New Mexico.

I have spent years working to hold my State accountable for their mismanagement of SNAP and for illegally denying thousands of individuals their benefits. Under this bill, those mistakes will become much more common. Millions of Americans will be needlessly kicked off SNAP, and more children and families will go hungry.

Mr. Chairman, it may be politically expedient to bring this partisan bill to the floor that destroys SNAP as we know it, but passing a partisan bill that will undoubtedly die in the Senate does nothing for the Americans who wait for Congress to do their jobs.

This bill is the perfect reflection of what is wrong with Washington: that politics will always take priority over progress. I urge my colleagues to recommit to the bipartisan collaborative work that is desperately needed by farms, ranchers, and vulnerable Americans in every single one of our districts. This is the only way we will pass a farm bill and fulfill our commitment to the constituents we have a duty to serve.

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ROUZER).

Mr. ROUZER. Mr. Chairman, America's farm families have had to weather a 5-year recession with depressed prices resulting in a 52-percent drop in net farm income. Two-thirds of our farming operations today are in economic trouble, and chapter 12 bankruptcies have risen by 33 percent in just 2 years. So it is no secret that our Nation's farmers and ranchers are struggling.

I hear all this talk during the past month about a free market, how everything would be so much better without farm programs. ''We want a complete, total free market,'' they say. From an intellectual and philosophical standpoint, I would love that. We all would. But here is the problem: that isn't the real world.

There is no free market when you have countries all around the world subsidizing their agriculture production to the hilt. For example, Communist China agreed to a subsidy limit as part of their accession to the WTO in 2001. But what do they do? They exceed that subsidy limit by $100 billion on just three crops alone in 1 year. That is no free market.

Farm programs account for 0.24 percent of the total Federal budget, and in return, every individual and family in this country is guaranteed an abundant, affordable food supply, and the very best nutritious food at an exceptionally affordable price. That is, quite frankly, a huge return on a relatively small investment, not to mention what agriculture means to our rural economies and our trade balance with the rest of the world.

American agriculture is more than just being the best producers in the business and feeding the world. It is about food security and national security. Once a farm is gone, it isn't coming back. It is not like your local hardware store that goes out of business; it is not like that space isn't going to be replaced by another business; it will. Farms, on the other hand, are replaced by developments taking some of our very best farmland out of production.

The CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Chairman, I yield the gentleman from North Carolina an additional 15 seconds.

Mr. ROUZER. Mr. Chairman, we have lost 44 million acres of farmland during the past 30 years.

Mr. Chairman, passage of this farm bill is absolutely critical to the livelihood and success of our farm families and food supply. I encourage and hope that every one of us will vote for this bill.

This farm bill strengthens the farm safety net while making other vital improvements to current law that will benefit our farm families, rural communities, and animal agriculture sector—such as the establishment of a new U.S.-only vaccine bank to prevent Foot-and-Mouth disease, authorizing $1.1 billion to provide broadband service to harder-to-serve rural areas, and providing the Secretary of Agriculture with tools necessary to help combat the ongoing opioid crises which is hitting rural America especially hard.

Additionally, this farm bill makes common sense changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program to encourage work and provide for job training.

The vast majority of Americans would agree that if you work you should be better off than if you don't work. Under this bill, we simply ask that those who are of working age and are perfectly capable, work 20 hours a week. And, if one can't find work we will pay for their job training so that everyone can attain the skills necessary to get the job they want.

The unfortunate reality is that we have too many SNAP recipients stuck in the program with no pathway to upward mobility. Why? Because current SNAP requirements are outdated and riddled with loopholes that incentivize the status quo and fail to support those who need it most. In fact, more than 2/3 of work-capable adults on SNAP are not currently employed.

Today unemployment numbers are at 3.9 percent. In the year 2000, the last time unemployment was this low, there were 17 million people on SNAP. Today, we have more than 41 million people on SNAP yet the unemployment is exactly the same. Mr. Speaker, if that doesn't illustrate the problem, I don't know what does.

We must do better.

This farm bill puts this country on the path to do just that. It makes much needed reforms to ensure that recipients of these benefits—those who are perfectly capable of work—have a pathway to upward mobility, can get good jobs, and ultimately use their God-given talents to achieve a rewarding career.

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY), who is the chairman of the House Democratic Caucus.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

We need to talk about what is really happening with this bill. Just months after giving massive tax cuts to corporations and the wealthiest individuals through their tax scam, Republicans are now penalizing the most vulnerable among us by cutting one of the most proven and valuable programs that ensures that kids, seniors, and working Americans don't go hungry.

If my Republican colleagues looked at the facts, they would see that SNAP—or food stamps—actually work. They would see that a worker is more likely to keep a job if they can put food

on the table and at the same time afford to commute to and from work; that a child is likely to do better in school if they have a full stomach to start the school day with; that calling struggling Americans complacent and lazy doesn't help America's poverty crisis, but programs like SNAP do help.

If they could see all that, then we wouldn't be here debating a partisan bill that is bad for families, bad for farmers, and bad for our country.

Mr. Chairman, the problem isn't food stamp recipients. The problem isn't food stamps. The problem is those who claim they want to help American families, and then do everything in their power to hurt them by passing this partisan bill. I will not vote for it.

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOHO), who is a valued member of the committee.

Mr. YOHO. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Only two times each decade do we in Congress have the privilege to effect productive, meaningful change for America's farmers and ranchers—those same citizens who help feed and clothe the entire world.

Let us not forget that America's farmers and ranchers make up only 1 percent of our Nation's population, yet they make sure that dinner tables across the country have food on them. In fact, one farm feeds 165 people in the U.S. and abroad. As such, U.S. farm policy is now a target due to its own success.

Politically driven think tanks and antifarmer groups believe that there is no longer a point to have a farm policy in the United States. They fail to realize that America's farmers and ranchers do business with foreign competitors who do not share the free market values our country adopted at its founding, placing them at a disadvantage; therefore, we have to properly equip our producers to compete with countries that directly subsidize and own the means of production. It is, indeed, an issue of national security.

The CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Chairman, I yield the gentleman from Florida an additional 15 seconds.

Mr. YOHO. Support this farm bill. Defeat all antifarmer amendments that hurt American farm families only to enrich multinational soda and candy makers for more profits. Let us ensure the farmers and ranchers of this great country continue to plant the seeds and raise the herds that secure our national abundance, high quality, and least costly food prices in the world and support the bill.

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. NOLAN).

Mr. NOLAN. Mr. Chairman, I would like to remind my colleagues of the simple truth that process matters. If the process fails, the outcome fails. That is exactly what has happened with this farm bill.

Instead of following regular order, as we have done in the past—and I was there personally to be a part of it and witness it—by taking this kind of legislation up through the subcommittees with open rules, giving all the members an opportunity to offer their amendments and their ideas and consider them and have the opportunity to write this bill through the subcommittees, instead, it has come from behind closed doors for the simple purpose of partisan positioning.

In fact, members of the committee weren't even allowed to see this bill for weeks leading up to the consideration, nor were stakeholders and affected parties given the opportunity to review and express their thoughts. The result is a missed opportunity and an abandonment of a bipartisan, collaborative tradition that has worked so well for the farmers and the consumers in this country. It is a mean-spirited, bad bill—the result of a failed process—and it should be defeated.

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. EMMER).

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Chairman, in my home State of Minnesota, agriculture is one of the primary drivers of our economy. Right now, farmers, ranchers, and agricultural workers across the country are looking to Congress for a strong farm bill that improves the farm safety net and brings certainty to producers in uncertain times because life on the farm isn't what it used to be.

Today, farmers are suffering some of the worst rates of suicide in the country. General social isolation, downturn of the markets, low farm income, regulatory strains, and a lack of treatment options all make it hard for farmers to get the help they need.

That is why I introduced the STRESS Act to boost resources specifically for farmers' mental health. With the support of Chairman CONAWAY and the House Agriculture Committee, I am proud to see it included in this year's farm bill.

Our farmers who feed the world are feeling the weight of the world on their shoulders. It is time we get them the help and care they deserve.

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BUSTOS).

Mrs. BUSTOS. Mr. Chairman, passing a farm bill that delivers a better deal to our growers could have and should have been a bipartisan process. But when Democrats arrived ready to work, the doors were shackled shut. Instead of coming together to help our producers struggling with a downturn in the agricultural economy, this hyperpartisan bill hurts everyone from pasture to plate.

It cuts $23 billion from a program that feeds children, seniors, and veterans in addition to eliminating mandatory funding for rural development programs which are proven job creators in rural America. This bill also strips farmers, who are facing tightening market conditions, of crop insurance options.

This ''harm'' bill is another step in the wrong direction for rural America. At a time when farmers are already feeling the pain of President Trump's impulsive trade war and Secretary Pruitt's attack on ethanol, I urge my colleagues: abandon this ''harm'' bill and work together on a farm bill that will strengthen rural America.

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Chairman, may I inquire as to how much time remains on each side.

The CHAIR. The gentleman from Texas has 14¾ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Minnesota has 18 minutes remaining.

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. ALLEN).

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Chairman, I rise today to urge all of my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 2, the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018.

I have the great honor of representing Georgia's 12th District where agriculture is the number one industry. As a member of the House Agriculture Committee, my colleagues and I have worked diligently to craft a farm bill that works for our farmers and provides them the ability to provide a safe, secure, and economic food supply to this Nation.

H.R. 2 improves the current farm safety net structure and offers farmers the choice between PLC and ARC for each covered commodity under title I to combat the downturn in the farm economy. It also makes strides in getting Americans back to work by helping those on Supplemental Nutrition Assistance.

I am the son of a farmer. I spent 35 years in the business community creating jobs. The greatest joy of my life is to give folks the dignity and respect they deserve to have a good job.

How could we deny folks this opportunity?

This bill gives them that opportunity.

Mr. Chairman, I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to vote ''yes'' for this important bill. Our farmers and our people need us.

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT), who is the ranking member of the Education and Workforce Committee.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Chairman, there is a lot wrong with this bill, but as ranking member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce, I am particularly concerned about its impact on students.

SNAP eligibility is tied to eligibility for other vital Federal programs, so the proposed cuts in SNAP eligibility will also cut access to free school meals for 265,000 children.

□ 1730

Research has consistently shown that students struggling with hunger have

lower grades, are less able to focus, and more likely to miss school. This bill would undermine the ability of hundreds of thousands of students to reach their full potential by cutting SNAP benefits for the family and reducing school benefits for children.

In the wake of a $1.5 trillion tax cut for corporations in the top 1 percent, it is a shameful statement of priorities when you try to pay for these tax cuts by reducing food assistance programs for low-income students.

I urge my colleagues to vote ''no.''

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Alabama (Mrs. ROBY).

Mrs. ROBY. Mr. Chair, I rise today to offer my strongest support for H.R. 2, the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018, commonly known as the farm bill.

I am proud to serve Alabama's Second District, where agriculture is the largest employer, responsible for more than 93,000 jobs and more than $11 billion in economic impact.

So, Mr. Chair, I know how critically important it is that Congress deliver agricultural policy that actually works for the farmers throughout Alabama, and our country, and makes their important work easier, not harder.

That is why I am proud the new farm bill addresses many of the challenges farmers face every day, including streamlining and reducing burdensome Federal pesticide regulations, creating a program to address our Nation's feral hog problem, and strengthening the existing crop insurance program.

In addition to this, the new farm bill makes several needed improvements to our country's nutrition assistance program by implementing strict work requirements and closing loopholes that allow for abuses of the system.

I am proud that the new farm bill maintains vital nutrition for our most vulnerable Americans when they truly need it, while making a commitment to helping these individuals improve their circumstances.

I support the legislation.

Mr. Chair, I have always believed that we should incentivize able-bodied Americans to work instead of encourage them to remain dependent on the government, so I'm proud that the new farm bill reflects our conservative principles.

I am pleased that this legislation provides a commitment to our nation's farmers while taking important steps towards reforming our food stamps program.

I will continue to advocate for policies that give fair treatment to our Alabama commodities like cotton, peanuts, timber, poultry, soybeans, and catfish. I'm eager to cast my vote in favor of the new farm bill, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from New Hampshire (Ms. KUSTER).

Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 2 and to express my profound disappointment in the process that has led us to where we are today.

As the first New Hampshire Representative to serve on the Agriculture Committee in decades, I am humbled by the responsibility to fight for New Hampshire's small family farms.

When we last considered the farm bill in 2014, I supported the legislation because, while not perfect, that bill provided long-term certitude to our Nation's farmers and represented a compromise between Republicans and Democrats.

The farm bill has always been a bipartisan piece of legislation, but the bill we vote on this week represents a complete departure from that bipartisan process. Democrats were pushed away from the negotiating table by an extreme ideological agenda that would increase food insecurity for millions of Americans, slash mandatory spending on critical rural development and conservation programs, and lead to 265,000 children losing access to free and reduced school lunch.

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT), the chairman of the Subcommittee on Commodity Exchanges, Energy, and Credit.

Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I rise today to urge support for H.R. 2, the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018, also known as the farm bill.

Rural America needs our support. Farm income has fallen approximately 50 percent since 2013. That is one of the steepest drops since the Great Depression. The costs of production have steadily declined, while commodity prices have fallen. Unfair trade practices, like the dumping of specialty crops into our markets from Mexico, are hurting our U.S. producers. The digital divide caused by inadequate or a lack of broadband services has held back innovation, job growth, and education in rural America. Crises like the opioid epidemic have stricken rural communities across America, just as it has our cities.

Mr. Chairman, the farm bill addresses all of these challenges while also taking the first major step in this Congress toward the President's vision of meaningful welfare reform. This is our opportunity to provide the needed certainty and support for our farmers and producers, while also providing commonsense reforms that will support the President's agenda of achieving prosperity in our rural communities. Passing a strong farm bill on time is key to this goal.

I ask that my colleagues join me in supporting this important piece of legislation and oppose those amendments that will hamper its ability to aid rural America and keep our producers feeding not only America, but the world. This bill provides certainty to one of America's largest job sectors, while also standing for our conservative principles.

Mr. Chair, I ask that my colleagues join me in support of H.R. 2, the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018, the farm bill.

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA), the ranking member of the Natural Resources Committee.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chair, I oppose the farm bill. It would hurt low- and middle-income families, take breakfast and lunch from children across this country, and fail hardworking farmers.

It also undermines one of the Nation's most successful and popular conservation laws, the Endangered Species Act, by removing the requirement for EPA to consult with expert wildlife agencies on the impact of pesticides to imperiled wildlife.

Pesticides are known to have been the cause of the dramatic decline of many species and a threat to public health. It should not be dispensed with in this legislation.

The provisions in this legislation that are anti-environment, anti-public health, anti-nutrition, and anti-working families are cause for opposition. I urge a ''no'' vote.

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. CRAWFORD), the chairman of the General Farm Commodities and Risk Management Subcommittee.

Mr. CRAWFORD. Mr. Chair, I thank the chairman for his leadership on this issue.

Let me start by saying that it is not very often that we talk about agriculture in the context of national security. I believe it is next week we are going to be taking up the NDAA reauthorization. While that is very important to our national security, I think it is equally important to consider how vital our agriculture producers are to our national security. A country that can't feed itself is a country that is not secure. It is inviting danger and peril. All you have to do is look around the globe and see those nations that are in that situation. Most notably in our hemisphere, Venezuela can't feed themselves. You can see the turmoil that has ensued as a result.

But there are other countries around the world. One of the big ones that we don't talk about very often and, quite frankly, we should, and that is China can't feed themselves. They have 1.4 billion people.

What we should be doing is taking every effort during this debate to thank farmers across the country for what they do and for the security they provide to this Nation, recognizing that, without them, the nutrition programs that we are fighting over couldn't exist.

Let's get a little different perspective, if we can, and recognize that, first and foremost, we have got to have the food produced, not only to provide a level of security in this Nation, but to be able to feed the 300 million-plus that call this country home.

Second, we have to be about trying to secure that food source and making sure that farmers are in a competitive marketplace that gives them equal opportunities to sell their commodities.

Certainly, the nutrition part of this is paramount. But I think most Americans across the country—and I think

there are polls that bear this out—some 75 percent of Americans say, yes, we probably should encourage folks to work and/or get educated as a component of receiving nutrition benefits. That is all we are saying. We are not trying to compromise anyone's nutrition or threaten a single calorie.

One thing I think we need to clarify, too, is the Agriculture Committee has no jurisdiction over school nutrition programs.

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Chairman, I just remind the gentleman that the nutrition program is permanently authorized. It doesn't even need to be in this bill.

Mr. Chairman, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. ADAMS).

Ms. ADAMS. Mr. Chair, I want to thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Chair, I rise today to voice my strong opposition to the 2018 Republican farm bill.

As a member of the House Committee on Agriculture, I have participated in countless hearings about the needs of our Nation's farmers and families that depend on SNAP to fight hunger.

Tragically, this bill doesn't reflect any of that testimony. It is a short-sighted, partisan bill that will have a detrimental impact on communities like mine. I cannot support it.

In my home county of Mecklenburg, North Carolina, more than 55,000 households depend on SNAP to eat every day. This bill would rob them of access to quality nutrition programs. In North Carolina, it is estimated that more than 133,000 people will lose their SNAP benefits if this bill passes, including over 51,000 children. Nationwide, 2 million people would be kicked off the program and an estimated 265,000 children would lose access to free or reduced meals at school. No eating at home. No eating at school.

Adding new work requirements through an unfunded, untested mandate will bankrupt States and force more needy people out of the program. Let's scrap this flawed partisan farm bill and let's work together in regular order to draft a bill that helps America's farmers and families who depend on nutrition assistance.

Mr. Chair, I include in the RECORD a letter from Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, opposing H.R. 2 because of the detrimental effects and impact that it will have on our children and families there.

MECKLENBURG COUNTY,
Charlotte, North Carolina, April 17, 2018.

Congresswoman ALMA ADAMS,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSWOMAN ALMA ADAMS: As you mark-up of the Farm Bill reauthorization, H.R. 2 this week, I write to you in support of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) funding, formerly known as Food Stamps, which has historically made up a significant part of this legislation. This vital program offers nutrition assistance to millions of eligible, low-income individuals and families and provides economic benefits to communities. In total, more than 40 million low-income people depend upon this program to keep their families fed.

The Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018 (H.R. 2) is the legislative vehicle for reauthorizing and reforming the programs of the Department of Agriculture through fiscal year 2023. The last enacted Farm Bill (PL 113–79) is set to expire on September 30. The proposed reauthorization bill is scheduled for markup with the House Agriculture Committee this Wednesday, April 18. It contains several provisions and budget cuts that are troubling and could detrimentally impact our community.

The bill includes provisions that expand work requirements and punish the least fortunate members of our community who are often times unable to find employment. Specifically, the bill makes it mandatory that recipients of SNAP, who are able-bodied adults, ages 18 to 59, are either employed or are participating in state-run employment or job-training programs. Participants could be denied benefits for not meeting the new work requirements. The first suspension of benefits would be for 12 months, while a second suspension of benefits would be up to 36 months. Under current law, the SNAP program already has work requirements for able-bodied adults aged 18 to 49. Additionally, the new Farm Bill would include spending cuts, which would make fewer people eligible for benefits and directly harm working-poor families. Mecklenburg County has real concern that these proposed changes in H.R. 2 would negatively impact some of our poorest citizens and cause serious difficulties for our community's most vulnerable populations.

Mecklenburg has 55,472 households that rely on SNAP to help provide sustenance. The County also has specific concerns with language in H.R. 2 that reduces spending by $5 billion over 10 years through the ending of a broad-based categorical eligibility that allows states to consider working poor beneficiaries with higher incomes that put them above 130 percent of the federal poverty level.

We look forward to working with you on this important effort. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

DENA R. DIORIO,
Mecklenburg County Manager.

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Chairman, how much time is remaining on each side.

The CHAIR. The gentleman from Texas has 9 minutes remaining. The gentleman from Minnesota has 13¼ minutes remaining.

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

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Chair, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. O'HALLERAN), a member of the committee.

Mr. O'HALLERAN. Mr. Chairman, I rise to express my strong opposition to H.R. 2. Some may call this a farm bill, but for my district, this is a ''harm'' bill.

Unfortunately, this year's farm bill is deeply flawed. This bill lacks a significant commitment to the needs of rural communities, with no guaranteed funding for the rural development title.

It is unclear to me how members of the committee say they understand the need of investment in rural America, but decided to cut $517 million from rural development programs.

As we work to help communities build stronger economies, we must ensure that we have a plan in place that lends a helping hand to those who need it. In Arizona, this bill will take food out of the mouths of tens of thousands of children and veterans. It is a sad day in America when we are debating a proposal that would make children go hungry.

I hope for a robust debate on how we could promote rural economic development and how to improve the business climate for rural communities and work to address resource concerns by improving conservation programs like EQIP.

Sadly, this bill was written in a back room and kept secret until the last possible moment. We owe the American people something better.

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Chairman, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE).

Ms. LEE. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding, but also for his tremendous leadership on this bill and so many other issues.

I rise in strong opposition to this disastrous farm bill. This bill cuts the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program by $23 billion, taking food out of the mouths of 2 million Americans. Over 265,000 children will lose benefits.

Why in the world do congressional Republicans want more Americans to go hungry?

This is immoral and it is wrong.

These so-called work requirements won't help anyone work. They punish struggling families who are not getting enough hours at work or decent wages to help feed their families.

Nutrition assistance helps 40 million people put food on the table. More than 80 percent of SNAP households work the year before or after receiving aid. The majority of people receiving SNAP benefits are children, disabled, and seniors.

When I was young, I was a single mom raising two little boys. I relied on food stamps to help my family during a very difficult time in my life. It was a bridge over troubled waters. I want families to have this bridge over troubled waters now.

I urge my colleagues to vote ''no.''

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Chairman, I would like to clarify the RECORD.

Of the 265,000 children that have been mentioned a couple of times, 95 percent of them would in fact maintain access to reduced lunch prices because their families make too much money to qualify for the free lunch, but 5 percent of that 265,000 would in fact maintain the free lunch program as it currently exists.

Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RODNEY DAVIS), chairman of the Subcommittee on Biotechnology, Horticulture, and Research.

□ 1745

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Chairman, I have a district that relies on a strong farm bill. Illinois is a leading producer of soybeans, corn, and swine. Our economy relies on a farm bill that supports agriculture. Although we all eat, I realize there are many districts whose Members may not be as enthusiastic as I am about the farm bill. That is why there is something in this bill for every district.

For those concerned about the deficit, I have good news. The last farm bill was the single largest cut in mandatory spending that we made in the entire 113th Congress. We built on these sound policy reforms in this bill.

If you are a Member who wants to address the cycle of poverty that too many of our constituents are trapped in, this bill is for you. H.R. 2 reforms the system and invests historic amounts in workforce training.

Despite our growing economy, we have 9 million more people on SNAP today than we did at the height of the recession when jobs were scarce and unemployment was in the double digits. This isn't progress. This isn't helping to end the cycle of poverty.

In my home State of Illinois, 67 percent of work-capable adults on SNAP are without work. A long recession left Americans disheartened, people dropping out of the labor force because they lost their job and, after months and months of searching, couldn't find another one. H.R. 2 makes investments to give many of those same people hope in finding a job again.

Four years ago I was a freshman, and the farm bill was my first opportunity to be part of a conference committee and see firsthand our democracy at work, Democrats and Republicans sparring over policy differences. But at least there was a debate. I am incredibly disappointed by my friends on the other side of the aisle who didn't offer any amendments in committee.

Work requirements are not new. They were done in 1996 by a Republican-led Congress and Democratic President during a similar time of economic growth.

When do the politics end and the serious policy discussions begin?

Let's put politics aside, pass this important bill for our farmers, for our taxpayers, and for too many Americans trapped in poverty. Let's show the American people we can govern together.

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI), the leader of the Democratic Caucus.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Chair, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I especially thank him for his exceptional leadership over the years to honor the historic collaboration that has always existed in our country between urban and rural America that is in all of our interests that our farm countries succeed, and that is in all of our interests that the American people are not food insecure. So I thank you, Mr. Ranking Member, for your outstanding leadership on behalf of America's farmers and hungry families.

Mr. Chair, this bill is just a mystery to me because we have tried so hard over the years to work in a bipartisan way, to come together to write a farm bill that does honor that historic collaboration—urban, rural—meeting the nutritional needs of the American people, and encouraging the economic growth in farm country. This legislation does not do that, and I have some questions as to why.

Some of the questions came to mind last week when I was on a farm in Iowa listening to hardworking men and women talk about their challenges with this farm bill: that it does not bolster or preserve the farmer safety net; that the bill reduces investments in agriculture research, conservation, and rural development; and that it cuts nutrition assistance that so many there, even in farm country, and in our country rely upon.

When I was in Iowa, as I said, last week, I had the privilege of meeting a wonderful woman named Julia Slocum. Julia works two jobs. She is a third-generation farmer and a part-time librarian. Over the years, she has relied on the lifeline of SNAP to put food on the table during difficult times, a farmer relying on SNAP to put food on the table.

I challenge House Republicans to explain to Julia why they are abandoning hardworking people like her, abandoning her twice by gutting the farmer safety net and by cutting SNAP.

This bad bill steals food off the tables of children, seniors, students. 1.5 million of our veterans rely on the nutrition provision of this bill.

It is not just our veterans. That would be reason alone to be concerned, 1.5 million. But 23,000 of the families of Active-Duty servicemembers need to have food stamps because they are food insecure—and they are hurt by this legislation—individuals with disabilities, working families, our seniors, students, children. Children.

Democrats have always supported work initiatives for those who can work. Let's be clear: This is not a jobs bill. SNAP returns money to farmers, to our economy, and to the Treasury, creating $1.79 for every $1 in benefits, and supports more than 560,000 jobs across the country, including 50,000 in agriculture.

Republicans are contending that they are investing in jobs. They are not investing in jobs. They are creating a bureaucracy and ignoring initiatives already in place to measure what really works in relating food to jobs. And they are wasting billions on new bureaucracies that would take decades to implement and that would increase hunger and poverty across the country.

It is no wonder that so many faith-based groups across the country view this bill as one that does not reflect the values of America. Again and again, Republicans try to ransack the lifelines of working families to pay for handouts and to enrich the already wealthy. This bill abandons America's farmers when they are in a tough spot.

The farm economy is struggling. As you know, farm prices are plummeting. More and more families are in danger of losing the farm, and that was before the Trump tariffs invited retaliation from China. Yet Republicans are creating a self-inflicted crisis farming communities can't afford and they can't control.

I challenge House Republicans to explain to farmers and ranchers why they propose a bill that weakens the farmer safety net when we should be protecting family farmers—soybean, corn, wheat, pork, and specialty crop growers—from self-inflicted damage of Trump's trade brinkmanship.

Explain why this bill slashes hundreds of millions from rural development initiatives, cuts small business loan guarantees, and adds new layers of bureaucracy to high-speed broadband grants when we should be investing in self-sufficiency for small towns.

Explain, my Republican colleagues, why this bill eliminates funding for on-farm energy initiatives and biofuels when we should be embracing the American farmer's role in making America sustainable and energy independent.

Explain, my colleagues, why this bill creates new loopholes for millionaires, multimillionaires, and billionaires to receive farm subsidies when we should be investing in the next generation of farmers and ranchers.

For the sake of our children, families, and hardworking Americans such as Julia, for our veterans, for our servicemen and -women, Americans with disabilities, we must return to the table and craft a balanced, robust, bipartisan farm bill as we have done in the past and the distinguished chairman of the Committee on Agriculture knows is possible.

We must return to the historic, decades-long bipartisan solution that weds our farmers and our hungry families together. Republicans must put aside politics and honor our responsibilities to 16 million men and women of agriculture and the nearly 41 million Americans who are food insecure. That is why I urge a ''no'' on this dangerous bill.

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

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. PANETTA).

Mr. PANETTA. Mr. Chair, as I have told you, it is an absolute honor to serve on the Committee on Agriculture, under the leadership of the chairman as well as the ranking member. There is no doubt about that. But I mainly say that based on the work that this committee does, the work that this committee does to serve those in agriculture and what that

service can do for the backbone industry of our country.

However, as a Representative on this committee and as a Representative of the salad bowl of the world on the central coast of California, my country and, yes, my community expected more out of this farm bill.

Look, in my area, with its flourishing specialty crop industry, we wanted more funding for the specialty crop research initiative. Because of our specialty crops, we have a labor shortage because of the people who are needed to pick those crops. Therefore, we needed stronger language in the bill for mechanization to help with our labor issues and to bridge that gap from the Salinas Valley into the Silicon Valley.

With our burgeoning organic industry, we needed more funding and less cuts for the Organic Certification Cost Share Program so that we can properly invest in beginning producers.

In addition to this, the majority is trying to implement an untested and unproven change to title IV of the SNAP provision. Such a change threatens to remove over a million people from the program and deeply affects the 74,000 people who are recipients of SNAP living and working in my community.

We can do better by our farmers. We can do better by the families across our country by getting back to our bipartisan roots. That is how we help our agriculture. That is how we help our country.

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Chair, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. YOUNG).

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Chair, I rise today in support of H.R. 2, the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018. Included in this great bill are two bills I introduced: the WATER Act and the STRESS Act, which was introduced with other colleagues as well.

The WATER Act improves water quality by easing access to the Conservation Innovation Grant program and reducing red tape. Iowans expect and deserve clean water, and this bill will help do that.

The STRESS Act will help address the farmer suicide crisis gripping our Nation. By opening the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network, farmers facing tough times can get the help that they need. Our farmers feed, fuel, and sustain the world. It is only right we take steps to help them.

I was also pleased—and I thank the chairman—that in the farm bill there are positive steps to address the food waste that is out there in our country. Our country wastes 40 percent of our food supply. As a cofounder of the Food Waste Caucus, I am committed to reducing food waste to combat hunger, as well as are many of my colleagues.

Mr. Chair, I thank Chairman CONAWAY as well for his leadership by putting in the bill the Food Loss and Waste Reduction Liaison at the USDA so we can take another step to reduce food waste by 50 percent by 2030.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Chair, may I inquire how much time we have on our side.

The CHAIR. The gentleman from Minnesota has 9¼ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Texas has 5½ minutes remaining.

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Chair, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Delaware (Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER).

Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER. Mr. Chairman, it is with deep disappointment that I stand in opposition to the partisan farm bill. I joined the House Committee on Agriculture because of its reputation of being bipartisan. I represent an entire State—urban, rural, and suburban. The farm bill is vital. That is why I was so disappointed to see this breakdown.

The goal of creating a thriving economy and moving people out of poverty is a goal we all share, and throughout my career I have worked to connect people with jobs. As Delaware's former secretary of labor and deputy secretary of health and social services, I have overseen both workforce development and economic safety net programs.

I believe in work. We believe in work. However, the majority's proposal would essentially force individuals off SNAP to pay for an unproven, untested, severely underfunded program.

What happens if your child gets sick or your car breaks down? Should that mean you and your child go hungry for up to a year if you are sanctioned?

What makes this even more troubling is that the 10 pilot programs designed to give us best practices in providing employment and training services to SNAP recipients, one of which is in my home State of Delaware, have not been completed or evaluated and won't be until at least 2019.

Why are we putting the cart before the horse? If the majority is really concerned with getting the policy right, why not wait until we have the evidence and the data to make good use of taxpayer dollars?

To understand the impact on Delaware, I traveled across my State and met with farmers, emergency food providers, supermarket owners, and State agencies. But the conversation that surprised me the most was one I had recently with a father. He shared how, years ago, SNAP and public housing allowed him and his wife to raise three healthy daughters. Because of support, he was the first in his family to graduate from high school and college and, ultimately, to move out of poverty.

He paid that debt back in multiple ways through service. He went on to become a social worker, a school administrator, and, subsequently, was elected city council president.

The value of service was then passed down. One daughter went to work in the White House and is now a professor of social work at Rutgers University. The second daughter became an engineer and worked for the U.S. Army, protecting our troops. And his oldest daughter grew up to be a Congresswoman. That dad is my dad.

Colleagues, we still have a chance to go back to the drawing board. The hopes, the dreams, the aspirations of 42 million people are in our hands. Let's not let them down.

□ 1800

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LUCAS), the former chairman of the committee.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Chairman, it is hard to believe, but almost 5 years ago, COLLIN, MIKE, we were on the floor of this very Chamber when we took up the previous farm bill, a farm bill that was well crafted and well intended. And on that day, if you remember, folks of good principle on both extremes of the perspective together managed to bring the bill down.

Now, why do I bring that up? Because I simply want to remind all my colleagues, no farm bill is ever simple. They are all hard. Circumstances change from cycle to cycle, crop to crop, but it is always hard to do a farm bill.

So why are we here? Why do we keep going through this process? Because, ultimately, we need to pass a comprehensive piece of legislation that will make sure we have the ability to raise the food and fiber that our neighbors need; that we can sell into the world markets to meet their needs; and, yes, that we provide the ability, through this same piece of legislation, so that our neighbors, who, through tough times, through, most often, circumstances beyond their control, have the ability to access enough of that food to meet their needs.

So, yes, we have to have a farm bill. We have to have a farm bill. I would say to all my colleagues, this is a step in the long march to ultimately creating a final document that involves the other body and requires a signature by the Chief Executive of this country.

Let's debate and argue and fight out amendments tonight and tomorrow and the next day. Let's avoid what happened 5 years ago by doing things that would try to kill the process. Let's keep the process moving forward. Let's refine. Let's perfect. Let's pass a comprehensive farm bill so the people who feed and clothe us have the ability to do it, so those who need help in receiving the resources they need have the ability to do it.

We have no less option: Good faith. Do what you need to do, but let's get it done. There are people depending on us everywhere and around the world today.

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Chairman, as I spoke earlier on the drawbacks of H.R. 2, I may not have mentioned, before I reserved, that I am very frustrated by the breakdown in this process that has got us to where we are.

Now, Mr. LUCAS is right, we do have to have a farm bill, but let's understand what we need to do that actually is required. Title 1 needs a farm bill. Title 2 needs a farm bill. Other titles need a farm bill because they are only authorized for 5 years.

SNAP is permanently authorized. If we didn't do anything, SNAP would go on like it is. Crop insurance is permanently authorized. If we didn't do anything, crop insurance would go on just like it is. So the part of the bill that we are worried about are these other parts that will expire on the end of September 30.

Now, what happens if we don't get it done? We go back to permanent law. Some of my constituents think that is a good idea because it goes back to 100 percent of parity. Most people in America probably know what I am talking about when I talk about 100 percent of parity, but a lot of old timers in my district know very much what that is. And, you know, it is $9 corn. They would love to have $9 corn.

So the permanent law is not an option. So we need to get something done. But my point is that we don't need to do some of the things that we are doing in these areas that are not required to do anything because they are permanently authorized.

So, as I speak today, you know, I refused to give legitimacy to what has been, in my view, an illegitimate process. The chairman said we tried to work on a bipartisan basis. You know, we didn't raise any issues at the time because he said he didn't have any money and we were going along with the system. And that is till we got into the situation where this SNAP stuff came forward, you know, and I told you this was not going to fly in our caucus. And you can see over here the feelings that you have engendered with this proposal, you know, and it is breaking apart what we have had here in this country for a long time.

I have been here for four farm bills. I have been here as a member, as a chairman, and as a ranking member. Now, as Frank said, each of these bills has had their share of headaches, and they have all, at the end of the day, though, had more common ground than opposition. And in the end, the Agriculture Committee has always produced a product that we could be proud of because we knew we delivered the best deal possible, given the circumstances that we were dealing with.

We have always been able to work together for the mutual benefit of farmers, rural advocates, and consumers. Prior to my time here, Senator Dole and McGovern carried the medal—Hubert Humphrey from my State, George Aiken before that. These weren't ideologues, but they weren't pushovers either. Each knew where their party stood. Each also knew the value making sure the length between people who grow the food and the people who buy food and make sure that that link was strong.

So let me be as clear as I can be. In my opinion, breaking up that coalition, ruining a partnership that predates all of us is a huge mistake. More than that, the closed- and one-sided nature of this process that we have been through is something that I have to call out. It does not bode well for farm and food legislation to come.

No party can do this alone. It is too big of a job. So, as ranking member on the House Agriculture Committee, I want you to know that I am willing to come back to the table but only when the majority has the ability to sit down and figure this out together.

I was told on this SNAP stuff by the chairman that he could not negotiate it—it was nonnegotiable. That is what got us into this problem. So, when we get to the point where we can actually start talking about negotiation, I am willing to come back to the table and try to get back to a bipartisan situation.

Folks want to do welfare reform. I was there in 1996. I was part of the deal at that time. It should be done as a comprehensive review of all of the programs, not just the farm bill.

I just think it is a huge mistake for us to be trying to tell people that, somehow or another, putting work requirements and these other things into the farm bill is going to overhaul the welfare system. That is just not true. Most people don't get enough money out of the Food Stamp program to make a difference one way or the other. It is not food stamps that are causing people to be on welfare. It is not food stamps that are causing people not to work, you know, and that is my big objection to this.

It is just ideology run amuck, and it is screwing up the process here, and I hope that we don't do so much damage that we can't pull this back together at the end of the day and get this done.

So I am going to vote against H.R. 2, and I urge all my colleagues to do as well, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I, too, am saddened by the loss of the bipartisan work that we have typically done on this committee. I have bragged about being one of the few bipartisan committees in Congress back home a lot, and it is sad.

Just as the ranking member just said, that his side refused to negotiate any changes to SNAP, I simply said: Work requirements—strengthening the work requirements is going to have to be a part of what we do. And that was where we are with respect to that.

What I heard over and over and over again on the other side is that the non-SNAP portions of the farm bill, while maybe less than they would like to have, are nevertheless essential and vital, and I am looking forward to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle working as diligently as they can to defeat all of those poison pill amendments that will have to be offered over the next several days so that we can maintain that safety net for production in agriculture that they need and deserve without the legislative history of a loss on this floor that is totally unnecessary. So I am hopeful that my colleagues over there will be a part of that.

Mr. Chairman, the entire State of California is under a work waiver so that no one in California has to work to be able to stay on food stamps. That doesn't make any sense to me when you have got an unemployment rate of 4 percent across this country. So something has to change in that regard.

What I have heard over and over, not only today but throughout this debate, is folks from the other side, they are full out, full throttle in favor of work requirements, couldn't be more supportive of work requirements—just not these.

Over and over and over, they are full out in favor. We have got a legislative history of all of my colleagues on the other side talking about how important it is for job training, for education, for getting folks the skills and tools they need to be able to have meaningful work—just not these. Got it.

My ranking member had a letter from his folks that said not to negotiate on SNAP. I took him at his word on that in regard. It is disappointing that we have reached this point.

But we are at that point. We now have a bill before us that does make meaningful reforms to the work requirements under food stamps, that does not touch the working poor. Folks who are willing to work 20 hours a week, no matter how long they are in that circumstance, we are going to be shoulder to shoulder with them to try to get the support they need.

We are also trying to create a State-based State-run program in which the Federal taxpayer pays for work that the States can do on job training. There is no better spot to locate that than there because we cannot create a one-size-fits-all training program here in the United States House of Representatives. I trust our States to be able to do that. Those States have the capacity. They have the bandwidth to make that happen. Comments to the contrary are really misplaced.

So, as we move forward through the rest of the debate, I would encourage my colleagues to join me in opposing all of those poison pill amendments that have been presented that would harm the non-SNAP portion of the farm bill and support the work that we have done so that, as my good colleague from Oklahoma just said, we can continue to move this process forward, understand what the Senate gets done, move to conference, and move a bill to the President's desk by September 30 so that farmers and ranchers across this country, who we are the most keen to support, have that certainty of what the next 5-year support system looks like.

Right, wrong, or indifferent, they deserve that kind of assurance, that kind of confidence that they will have the farm program to back them up and their bankers are supported in that regard as well. So I am asking my colleagues to support H.R. 2 and fend off those poison pill amendments.

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

The CHAIR. All time for general debate has expired.

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Chairman, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. COLLINS of Georgia) having assumed the chair, Mr. MITCHELL, Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2) to provide for the reform and continuation of agricultural and other programs of the Department of Agriculture through fiscal year 2023, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on questions previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

Passage of H.R. 5698;

Passage of S. 2372; and

Agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal, if ordered.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Remaining electronic votes will be conducted as 5-minute votes.

PROTECT AND SERVE ACT OF 2018

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on passage of the bill (H.R. 5698) to amend title 18, United States Code, to punish criminal offenses targeting law enforcement officers, and for other purposes, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 382, nays 35, not voting 10, as follows:

[Roll No. 188]

YEAS—382

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

NAYS—35

Amash
Barragán
Bass
Biggs
Blumenauer
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Davidson
DeSaulnier
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Garrett
Gosar
Grothman
Hastings
Jayapal
Johnson, E. B.
Jordan
Lee
Massie
Moore
Pallone
Payne
Perry
Pocan
Polis
Sanford
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Smith (WA)
Tonko
Velázquez
Visclosky
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman

NOT VOTING—10

Beyer
Brown (MD)
DeGette
Gabbard
Gomez
Labrador
Richmond
Rogers (KY)
Webster (FL)
Wilson (FL)

□ 1835

Messrs. GARRETT, JORDAN, PERRY, HASTINGS, and GROTHMAN changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

Messrs. TAKANO and SIRES changed their vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated against:

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, had I been present, I would have voted "nay" on rollcall No. 188.

VETERANS CEMETERY BENEFIT CORRECTION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the demand for a recorded vote on the passage of the bill (S. 2372) to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide outer burial receptacles for remains buried in National Parks, and for other purposes, on which further a recorded vote was ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

RECORDED VOTE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

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

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 347, noes 70, not voting 10, as follows:

[Roll No. 189]

AYES—347

Abraham
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barragán
Barton
Beatty
Bera
Bergman
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Blunt Rochester
Bost

Brady (TX)
Brat
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Bustos
Butterfield
Byrne
Calvert
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Cartwright
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Cheney
Cicilline
Clyburn
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Connolly
Cook
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crist
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Curtis
Davidson
Davis (CA)
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
Delaney
DelBene
Denham
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Donovan
Doyle, Michael F.
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Emmer
Engel
Estes (KS)
Esty (CT)
Faso
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gaetz
Gallagher
Garamendi
Garrett
Gianforte
Gibbs
Gohmert
Gonzalez (TX)
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gottheimer
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Grothman
Guthrie
Hanabusa
Handel
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Heck
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins (LA)
Hill
Himes
Holding
Hollingsworth
Hudson
Huffman
Huizenga
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jackson Lee
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Kaptur
Katko
Keating
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy
Kihuen
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Kustoff (TN)
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamb
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Latta
Lawrence
Lawson (FL)
Lesko
Levin
Lewis (MN)
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lowenthal
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Lynch
MacArthur
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Massie
Mast
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McEachin
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McSally
Meadows
Meeks
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Moulton
Mullin
Murphy (FL)
Napolitano
Neal
Newhouse
Noem
Nolan
Norman
Nunes
O'Halleran
O'Rourke
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Panetta
Pascrell
Paulsen
Pearce
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters
Pingree
Pittenger
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Polis
Posey
Quigley
Raskin
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Rice (NY)
Rice (SC)
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney, Francis
Rooney, Thomas J.
Ros-Lehtinen
Rosen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce (CA)
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Russell
Rutherford
Ryan (OH)
Sanford
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smucker
Speier
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Suozzi
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tipton
Tonko
Torres
Trott
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Waters, Maxine
Weber (TX)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NOES—70

Adams
Bass
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Capuano
Castor (FL)
Chu, Judy
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Cohen
Cummings
DeLauro
Demings
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Ellison
Eshoo
Espaillat
Evans
Frankel (FL)
Gallego
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hastings
Higgins (NY)
Hoyer
Jayapal
Jeffries
Johnson, E. B.
Kelly (IL)
Khanna
Larson (CT)
Lee
Lewis (GA)
Lofgren
Lowey
Maloney, Carolyn B.
McCollum
McGovern
Meng
Moore
Nadler
Norcross
Pallone
Payne
Pelosi
Peterson
Pocan
Price (NC)
Roybal-Allard
Rush
Sánchez
Schakowsky
Scott (VA)
Serrano
Sires
Smith (WA)
Soto
Titus
Velázquez
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—10

Beyer
Brown (MD)
Davis, Danny
DeGette
Gabbard
Gomez
Labrador
Richmond
Rogers (KY)
Webster (FL)

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

□ 1842

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ changed his vote from ''aye'' to ''no.''

Mr. ENGEL changed his vote from ''no'' to ''aye.''

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the question on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal, which the Chair will put de novo.

The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

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

DIRECTING THE SECRETARY OF THE SENATE TO MAKE A CORRECTION IN THE ENROLLMENT OF THE BILL S. 2372

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I send to the desk a concurrent resolution and ask unanimous consent for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

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

There was no objection.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 121

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That in the enrollment of the bill S. 2372, the Secretary of the Senate shall make the following correction: Amend the long title so as to read: ''An Act to establish a permanent community care program for veterans, to establish a commission for the purpose of making recommendations regarding the modernization or realignment of facilities of the Veterans Health Administration, to improve construction of the Department of Veterans Affairs, to make certain improvements in the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs relating to the home loan program of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.''.

The concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

AGRICULTURE AND NUTRITION ACT OF 2018

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 891 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill, H.R. 2.

Will the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. LEWIS) kindly take the chair.

□ 1846

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill (H.R. 2) to provide for the reform and continuation of agricultural and other programs of the Department of Agriculture through fiscal year 2023, and for other purposes, with Mr. LEWIS of Minnesota (Acting Chair) in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The Acting CHAIR. When the Committee of the Whole rose earlier today, all time for general debate pursuant to House Resolution 891 had expired.

Pursuant to the rule, the bill shall be considered for amendment under the 5-minute rule.

It shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the 5-minute rule the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Agriculture printed in the bill. The committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read.

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

H.R. 2

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the ''Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018''.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
Sec. 2. Definition of Secretary of Agriculture.
TITLE I—COMMODITIES
Subtitle A—Commodity Policy
Sec. 1111. Definitions.

Sec. 1112. Base acres.
Sec. 1113. Payment yields.
Sec. 1114. Payment acres.
Sec. 1115. Producer election.
Sec. 1116. Price loss coverage.
Sec. 1117. Agriculture risk coverage.
Sec. 1118. Producer agreements.

Subtitle B—Marketing Loans

Sec. 1201. Availability of nonrecourse marketing assistance loans for loan commodities.
Sec. 1202. Loan rates for nonrecourse marketing assistance loans.
Sec. 1203. Term of loans.
Sec. 1204. Repayment of loans.
Sec. 1205. Loan deficiency payments.
Sec. 1206. Payments in lieu of loan deficiency payments for grazed acreage.
Sec. 1207. Special marketing loan provisions for upland cotton.
Sec. 1208. Special competitive provisions for extra long staple cotton.
Sec. 1209. Availability of recourse loans.
Sec. 1210. Adjustments of loans.

Subtitle C—Sugar

Sec. 1301. Sugar policy.

Subtitle D—Dairy Risk Management Program and Other Dairy Programs

Sec. 1401. Dairy risk management program for dairy producers.
Sec. 1402. Class I skim milk price.
Sec. 1403. Extension of dairy forward pricing program.
Sec. 1404. Extension of dairy indemnity program.
Sec. 1405. Extension of dairy promotion and research program.
Sec. 1406. Repeal of dairy product donation program.

Subtitle E—Supplemental Agricultural Disaster Assistance Programs

Sec. 1501. Modification of supplemental agricultural disaster assistance.

Subtitle F—Administration

Sec. 1601. Administration generally.
Sec. 1602. Suspension of permanent price support authority.
Sec. 1603. Payment limitations.
Sec. 1604. Adjusted gross income limitation.
Sec. 1605. Prevention of deceased individuals receiving payments under farm commodity programs.
Sec. 1606. Assignment of payments.
Sec. 1607. Tracking of benefits.
Sec. 1608. Signature authority.
Sec. 1609. Personal liability of producers for deficiencies.
Sec. 1610. Implementation.
Sec. 1611. Exemption from certain reporting requirements for certain producers.

TITLE II—CONSERVATION

Subtitle A—Wetland Conservation

Sec. 2101. Program ineligibility.
Sec. 2102. Minimal effect regulations.

Subtitle B—Conservation Reserve Program

Sec. 2201. Conservation reserve.
Sec. 2202. Farmable wetland program.
Sec. 2203. Duties of owners and operators.
Sec. 2204. Duties of the Secretary.
Sec. 2205. Payments.
Sec. 2206. Contracts.

Subtitle C—Environmental Quality Incentives Program

Sec. 2301. Definitions.
Sec. 2302. Establishment and administration.
Sec. 2303. Limitation on payments.
Sec. 2304. Conservation innovation grants and payments.

Subtitle D—Other Conservation Programs

Sec. 2401. Conservation of private grazing land.
Sec. 2402. Grassroots source water protection program.
Sec. 2403. Voluntary public access and habitat incentive program.
Sec. 2404. Watershed protection and flood prevention.
Sec. 2405. Feral swine eradication and control pilot program.
Sec. 2406. Emergency conservation program.

Subtitle E—Funding and Administration

Sec. 2501. Commodity Credit Corporation.
Sec. 2502. Delivery of technical assistance.
Sec. 2503. Administrative requirements for conservation programs.
Sec. 2504. Establishment of State technical committees.

Subtitle F—Agricultural Conservation Easement Program

Sec. 2601. Establishment and purposes.
Sec. 2602. Definitions.
Sec. 2603. Agricultural land easements.
Sec. 2604. Wetland reserve easements.
Sec. 2605. Administration.

Subtitle G—Regional Conservation Partnership Program

Sec. 2701. Definitions.
Sec. 2702. Regional conservation partnerships.
Sec. 2703. Assistance to producers.
Sec. 2704. Funding.
Sec. 2705. Administration.
Sec. 2706. Critical conservation areas.

Subtitle H—Repeals and Transitional Provisions; Technical Amendments

Sec. 2801. Repeal of conservation security and conservation stewardship programs.
Sec. 2802. Repeal of terminal lakes assistance.
Sec. 2803. Technical amendments.

TITLE III—TRADE

Subtitle A—Food for Peace Act

Sec. 3001. Findings.
Sec. 3002. Labeling requirements.
Sec. 3003. Food aid quality assurance.
Sec. 3004. Local sale and barter of commodities.
Sec. 3005. Minimum levels of assistance.
Sec. 3006. Extension of termination date of Food Aid Consultative Group.
Sec. 3007. Issuance of regulations.
Sec. 3008. Funding for program oversight, monitoring, and evaluation.
Sec. 3009. Assistance for stockpiling and rapid transportation, delivery, and distribution of shelf-stable prepackaged foods.
Sec. 3010. Consideration of impact of provision of agricultural commodities and other assistance on local farmers and economy.
Sec. 3011. Prepositioning of agricultural commodities.
Sec. 3012. Annual report regarding food aid programs and activities.
Sec. 3013. Deadline for agreements to finance sales or to provide other assistance.
Sec. 3014. Minimum level of nonemergency food assistance.
Sec. 3015. Termination date for micronutrient fortification programs.
Sec. 3016. John Ogonowski and Doug Bereuter Farmer-to-Farmer Program.

Subtitle B—Agricultural Trade Act of 1978

Sec. 3101. Findings.
Sec. 3102. Consolidation of current programs as new International Market Development Program.

Subtitle C—Other Agricultural Trade Laws

Sec. 3201. Local and regional food aid procurement projects.
Sec. 3202. Promotion of agricultural exports to emerging markets.
Sec. 3203. Bill Emerson Humanitarian Trust Act.
Sec. 3204. Food for Progress Act of 1985.
Sec. 3205. McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program.
Sec. 3206. Cochran fellowship program.
Sec. 3207. Borlaug fellowship program.
Sec. 3208. Global Crop Diversity Trust.
Sec. 3209. Growing American Food Exports Act of 2018.

TITLE IV—NUTRITION

Subtitle A—Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

Sec. 4001. Duplicative enrollment database.
Sec. 4002. Retailer-funded incentives pilot.
Sec. 4003. Gus Schumacher food insecurity nutrition incentive program.
Sec. 4004. Re-evaluation of thrifty food plan.
Sec. 4005. Food distribution programs on Indian reservations.
Sec. 4006. Update to categorical eligibility.
Sec. 4007. Basic allowance for housing.
Sec. 4008. Earned income deduction.
Sec. 4009. Simplified homeless housing costs.
Sec. 4010. Availability of standard utility allowances based on receipt of energy assistance.
Sec. 4011. Child support; cooperation with child support agencies.
Sec. 4012. Adjustment to asset limitations.
Sec. 4013. Updated vehicle allowance.
Sec. 4014. Savings excluded from assets.
Sec. 4015. Workforce solutions.
Sec. 4016. Modernization of electronic benefit transfer regulations.
Sec. 4017. Mobile technologies.
Sec. 4018. Processing fees.
Sec. 4019. Replacement of EBT cards.
Sec. 4020. Benefit recovery.
Sec. 4021. Requirements for online acceptance of benefits.
Sec. 4022. National gateway.
Sec. 4023. Access to State systems.
Sec. 4024. Transitional benefits.
Sec. 4025. Incentivizing technology modernization.
Sec. 4026. Supplemental nutrition assistance program benefit transfer transaction data report.
Sec. 4027. Adjustment to percentage of recovered funds retained by States.
Sec. 4028. Tolerance level for payment errors.
Sec. 4029. State performance indicators.
Sec. 4030. Public-private partnerships.
Sec. 4031. Authorization of appropriations.
Sec. 4032. Emergency food assistance.
Sec. 4033. Nutrition education.
Sec. 4034. Retail food store and recipient trafficking.
Sec. 4035. Technical corrections.
Sec. 4036. Implementation funds.

Subtitle B—Commodity Distribution Programs

Sec. 4101. Commodity distribution program.
Sec. 4102. Commodity supplemental food program.
Sec. 4103. Distribution of surplus commodities to special nutrition projects.

Subtitle C—Miscellaneous

Sec. 4201. Purchase of fresh fruits and vegetables for distribution to schools and service institutions.
Sec. 4202. Seniors farmers' market nutrition program.
Sec. 4203. Healthy food financing initiative.
Sec. 4204. Amendments to the fruit and vegetable program.

TITLE V—CREDIT

Subtitle A—Farm Ownership Loans

Sec. 5101. Modification of the 3-year experience eligibility requirement for farm ownership loans.
Sec. 5102. Conservation loan and loan guarantee program.
Sec. 5103. Farm ownership loan limits.

Subtitle B—Operating Loans

Sec. 5201. Limitations on amount of operating loans.
Sec. 5202. Microloans.

Subtitle C—Administrative Provisions

Sec. 5301. Beginning farmer and rancher individual development accounts pilot program.

Sec. 5302. Loan authorization levels.
Sec. 5303. Loan fund set-asides.

Subtitle D—Technical Corrections to the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act

Sec. 5401. Technical corrections to the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act.

Subtitle E—Amendments to the Farm Credit Act of 1971

Sec. 5501. Elimination of obsolete references.
Sec. 5502. Conforming repeals.
Sec. 5503. Facility headquarters.
Sec. 5504. Sharing privileged and confidential information.
Sec. 5505. Scope of jurisdiction.
Sec. 5506. Definition.
Sec. 5507. Expansion of acreage exception to loan amount limitation.
Sec. 5508. Compensation of bank directors.
Sec. 5509. Prohibition on use of funds.

Subtitle F—Miscellaneous

Sec. 5601. State agricultural mediation programs.
Sec. 5602. Study on loan risk.

TITLE VI—RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Subtitle A—Improving Health Outcomes in Rural Communities

Sec. 6001. Prioritizing projects to meet health crises in rural America.
Sec. 6002. Distance learning and telemedicine.
Sec. 6003. Reauthorization of the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network.
Sec. 6004. Supporting agricultural association health plans.

Subtitle B—Connecting Rural Americans to High Speed Broadband

Sec. 6101. Establishing forward-looking broadband standards.
Sec. 6102. Incentives for hard to reach communities.
Sec. 6103. Requiring guaranteed broadband lending.
Sec. 6104. Smart utility authority for broadband.
Sec. 6105. Modifications to the Rural Gigabit Program.
Sec. 6106. Unified broadband reporting requirements.
Sec. 6107. Improving access by providing certainty to broadband borrowers.
Sec. 6108. Simplified application window.
Sec. 6109. Elimination of requirement to give priority to certain applicants.
Sec. 6110. Modification of buildout requirement.
Sec. 6111. Improving borrower refinancing options.
Sec. 6112. Elimination of unnecessary reporting requirements.
Sec. 6113. Access to broadband telecommunications services in rural areas.
Sec. 6114. Middle mile broadband infrastructure.
Sec. 6115. Outdated broadband systems.
Sec. 6116. Effective date.

Subtitle C—Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act

Sec. 6201. Strengthening regional economic development incentives.
Sec. 6202. Expanding access to credit for rural communities.
Sec. 6203. Providing for additional fees for guaranteed loans.
Sec. 6204. Water, waste disposal, and wastewater facility grants.
Sec. 6205. Rural water and wastewater technical assistance and training programs.
Sec. 6206. Rural water and wastewater circuit rider program.
Sec. 6207. Tribal college and university essential community facilities.
Sec. 6208. Emergency and imminent community water assistance grant program.
Sec. 6209. Water systems for rural and native villages in Alaska.
Sec. 6210. Household water well systems.
Sec. 6211. Solid waste management grants.
Sec. 6212. Rural business development grants.
Sec. 6213. Rural cooperative development grants.
Sec. 6214. Locally or regionally produced agricultural food products.
Sec. 6215. Appropriate technology transfer for rural areas program.
Sec. 6216. Rural economic area partnership zones.
Sec. 6217. Intermediary relending program.
Sec. 6218. Exclusion of prison populations from definition of rural area.
Sec. 6219. National Rural Development Partnership.
Sec. 6220. Grants for NOAA weather radio transmitters.
Sec. 6221. Rural microentrepreneur assistance program.
Sec. 6222. Health care services.
Sec. 6223. Delta Regional Authority.
Sec. 6224. Northern Great Plains Regional Authority.
Sec. 6225. Rural business investment program.

Subtitle D—Rural Electrification Act of 1936

Sec. 6301. Guarantees for bonds and notes issued for electrification or telephone purposes.
Sec. 6302. Expansion of 911 access.
Sec. 6303. Improvements to the guaranteed underwriter program.
Sec. 6304. Extension of the rural economic development loan and grant program.

Subtitle E—Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002

Sec. 6401. Rural energy savings program.
Sec. 6402. Biobased markets program.
Sec. 6403. Biorefinery, renewable, chemical, and biobased product manufacturing assistance.
Sec. 6404. Repowering assistance program.
Sec. 6405. Bioenergy program for advanced biofuels.
Sec. 6406. Biodiesel fuel education program.
Sec. 6407. Rural Energy for America Program.
Sec. 6408. Categorical exclusion for grants and financial assistance made under the Rural Energy for America Program.
Sec. 6409. Rural Energy Self-Sufficiency Initiative.
Sec. 6410. Feedstock flexibility.
Sec. 6411. Biomass Crop Assistance Program.

Subtitle F—Miscellaneous

Sec. 6501. Value-added agricultural product market development grants.
Sec. 6502. Agriculture innovation center demonstration program.
Sec. 6503. Regional economic and infrastructure development commissions.
Sec. 6504. Definition of rural area for purposes of the Housing Act of 1949.

Subtitle G—Program Repeals

Sec. 6601. Elimination of unfunded programs.
Sec. 6602. Repeal of Rural Telephone Bank.
Sec. 6603. Amendments to LOCAL TV Act.

Subtitle H—Technical Corrections

Sec. 6701. Corrections relating to the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act.
Sec. 6702. Corrections relating to the Rural Electrification Act of 1936.

TITLE VII—RESEARCH, EXTENSION, AND RELATED MATTERS

Subtitle A—National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977

Sec. 7101. International agriculture research.
Sec. 7102. Matters related to certain school designations and declarations.
Sec. 7103. National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board.
Sec. 7104. Specialty crop committee.
Sec. 7105. Renewable energy committee discontinued.
Sec. 7106. Report on allocations and matching funds for 1890 institutions.
Sec. 7107. Grants and fellowships for food and agriculture sciences education.
Sec. 7108. Agricultural and food policy research centers.
Sec. 7109. Education grants to Alaska Native serving institutions and Native Hawaiian serving institutions.
Sec. 7110. Repeal of nutrition education program.
Sec. 7111. Continuing animal health and disease research programs.
Sec. 7112. Extension carryover at 1890 land-grant colleges, including Tuskegee University.
Sec. 7113. Scholarships for students at 1890 institutions.
Sec. 7114. Grants to upgrade agricultural and food sciences facilities at 1890 land-grant colleges, including Tuskegee University.
Sec. 7115. Grants to upgrade agriculture and food sciences facilities and equipment at insular area land-grant institutions.
Sec. 7116. Hispanic-serving institutions.
Sec. 7117. Land-grant designation.
Sec. 7118. Competitive grants for international agricultural science and education programs.
Sec. 7119. Limitation on indirect costs for agricultural research, education, and extension programs.
Sec. 7120. Research equipment grants.
Sec. 7121. University research.
Sec. 7122. Extension service.
Sec. 7123. Supplemental and alternative crops.
Sec. 7124. Capacity building grants for NLGCA institutions.
Sec. 7125. Aquaculture assistance programs.
Sec. 7126. Rangeland research programs.
Sec. 7127. Special authorization for biosecurity planning and response.
Sec. 7128. Distance education and resident instruction grants program for insular area institutions of higher education.
Sec. 7129. Removal of matching funds requirement for certain grants.

Subtitle B—Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990

Sec. 7201. Best utilization of biological applications.
Sec. 7202. Integrated management systems.
Sec. 7203. Sustainable agriculture technology development and transfer program.
Sec. 7204. National training program.
Sec. 7205. National Genetics Resources Program.
Sec. 7206. National Agricultural Weather Information System.
Sec. 7207. Agricultural genome to phenome initiative.
Sec. 7208. High-priority research and extension initiatives.
Sec. 7209. Organic agriculture research and extension initiative.
Sec. 7210. Farm business management.
Sec. 7211. Clarification of veteran eligibility for assistive technology program for farmers with disabilities.
Sec. 7212. National Rural Information Center Clearinghouse.

Subtitle C—Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998

Sec. 7300. Ending limitation on funding under national food safety training, education, extension, outreach, and technical assistance program.
Sec. 7301. National food safety training, education, extension, outreach, and technical assistance program.

Sec. 7302. Integrated research, education, and extension competitive grants program.
Sec. 7303. Support for research regarding diseases of wheat, triticale, and barley caused by Fusarium graminearum or by Tilletia indica.
Sec. 7304. Grants for youth organizations.
Sec. 7305. Specialty crop research initiative.
Sec. 7306. Food Animal Residue Avoidance Database program.
Sec. 7307. Office of Pest Management Policy.
Sec. 7308. Forestry products advanced utilization research.

Subtitle D—Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008

PART I—AGRICULTURAL SECURITY

Sec. 7401. Agricultural biosecurity communication center.
Sec. 7402. Assistance to build local capacity in agricultural biosecurity planning, preparation, and response.
Sec. 7403. Research and development of agricultural countermeasures.
Sec. 7404. Agricultural biosecurity grant program.

PART II—MISCELLANEOUS

Sec. 7411. Grazinglands research laboratory.
Sec. 7412. Natural products research program.
Sec. 7413. Sun grant program.

Subtitle E—Amendments to Other Laws

Sec. 7501. Critical Agricultural Materials Act.
Sec. 7502. Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994.
Sec. 7503. Research Facilities Act.
Sec. 7504. Competitive, Special, and Facilities Research Grant Act.
Sec. 7505. Renewable Resources Extension Act of 1978.
Sec. 7506. National Aquaculture Act of 1980.
Sec. 7507. Beginning farmer and rancher development program.
Sec. 7508. Federal agriculture research facilities.
Sec. 7509. Biomass research and development.

Subtitle F—Other Matters

Sec. 7601. Enhanced use lease authority program.
Sec. 7602. Functions and Duties of the Under Secretary.
Sec. 7603. Reinstatement of District of Columbia matching requirement for certain land-grant university assistance.
Sec. 7604. Farmland tenure, transition, and entry data initiative.
Sec. 7605. Transfer of administrative jurisdiction, portion of Henry A. Wallace Beltsville Agricultural Research Center, Beltsville, Maryland.
Sec. 7606. Simplified plan of work.
Sec. 7607. Time and effort reporting exemption.
Sec. 7608. Public education on biotechnology in food and agriculture sectors.

TITLE VIII—FORESTRY

Subtitle A—Reauthorization and Modification of Certain Forestry Programs

Sec. 8101. Support for State assessments and strategies for forest resources.
Sec. 8102. Forest legacy program.
Sec. 8103. Community forest and open space conservation program.
Sec. 8104. State and private forest landscape-scale restoration program.
Sec. 8105. Rural revitalization technologies.
Sec. 8106. Community wood energy and wood innovation program.
Sec. 8107. Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 amendments.
Sec. 8108. National Forest Foundation Act authorities.

Subtitle B—Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 Amendments

Sec. 8201. Use of reserved funds for title II projects on Federal land and certain non-Federal land.
Sec. 8202. Resource advisory committees.
Sec. 8203. Program for title II self-sustaining resource advisory committee projects.

Subtitle C—Availability of Categorical Exclusions To Expedite Forest Management Activities

PART I—GENERAL PROVISIONS

Sec. 8301. Definitions.
Sec. 8302. Rule of application for National Forest System lands and public lands.
Sec. 8303. Consultation under the Endangered Species Act.
Sec. 8304. Secretarial discretion in the case of two or more categorical exclusions.

PART II—CATEGORICAL EXCLUSIONS

Sec. 8311. Categorical exclusion to expedite certain critical response actions.
Sec. 8312. Categorical exclusion to expedite salvage operations in response to catastrophic events.
Sec. 8313. Categorical exclusion to meet forest plan goals for early successional forests.
Sec. 8314. Categorical exclusion for hazard trees.
Sec. 8315. Categorical exclusion to improve or restore National Forest System lands or public land or reduce the risk of wildfire.
Sec. 8316. Categorical exclusion for forest restoration.
Sec. 8317. Categorical exclusion for infrastructure forest management activities.
Sec. 8318. Categorical exclusion for developed recreation sites.
Sec. 8319. Categorical exclusion for administrative sites.
Sec. 8320. Categorical exclusion for special use authorizations.
Sec. 8321. Clarification of existing categorical exclusion authority related to insect and disease infestation.

PART III—MISCELLANEOUS FOREST MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Sec. 8331. Good neighbor agreements.
Sec. 8332. Promoting cross-boundary wildfire mitigation.
Sec. 8333. Regulations regarding designation of dead or dying trees of certain tree species on National Forest System lands in California as exempt from prohibition on export of unprocessed timber originating from Federal lands.

Subtitle D—Tribal Forestry Participation and Protection

Sec. 8401. Protection of Tribal forest assets through use of stewardship end result contracting and other authorities.
Sec. 8402. Tribal forest management demonstration project.

Subtitle E—Other Matters

Sec. 8501. Clarification of research and development program for wood building construction.
Sec. 8502. Utility infrastructure rights-of-way vegetation management pilot program.
Sec. 8503. Revision of extraordinary circumstances regulations.
Sec. 8504. No loss of funds for wildfire suppression.
Sec. 8505. Technical corrections.

TITLE IX—HORTICULTURE

Subtitle A—Horticulture Marketing and Information

Sec. 9001. Specialty crops market news allocation.
Sec. 9002. Farmers' Market and Local Food Promotion Program.
Sec. 9003. Food safety education initiatives.
Sec. 9004. Specialty crop block grants.
Sec. 9005. Amendments to the Plant Variety Protection Act.
Sec. 9006. Organic programs.

Subtitle B—Regulatory Reform

PART I—STATE LEAD AGENCIES UNDER FEDERAL INSECTICIDE, FUNGICIDE, AND RODENTICIDE ACT

Sec. 9101. Recognition and role of State lead agencies.

PART II—PESTICIDE REGISTRATION AND USE

Sec. 9111. Registration of pesticides.
Sec. 9112. Experimental use permits.
Sec. 9113. Administrative review; suspension.
Sec. 9114. Unlawful acts.
Sec. 9115. Authority of States.
Sec. 9116. Regulations.
Sec. 9117. Use of authorized pesticides.
Sec. 9118. Discharges of pesticides.
Sec. 9119. Enactment of Pesticide Registration Improvement Enhancement Act of 2017.

PART III—AMENDMENTS TO THE PLANT PROTECTION ACT

Sec. 9121. Methyl bromide.

PART IV—AMENDMENTS TO OTHER LAWS

Sec. 9131. Definition of retail facilities.

Subtitle C—Other Matters

Sec. 9201. Report on regulation of plant biostimulants.
Sec. 9202. Pecan marketing orders.
Sec. 9203. Report on honey and maple syrup.

TITLE X—CROP INSURANCE

Sec. 10001. Treatment of forage and grazing.
Sec. 10002. Administrative basic fee.
Sec. 10003. Prevention of duplicative coverage.
Sec. 10004. Repeal of unused authority.
Sec. 10005. Continued authority.
Sec. 10006. Program administration.
Sec. 10007. Maintenance of policies.
Sec. 10008. Research and development priorities.
Sec. 10009. Extension of funding for research and development.
Sec. 10010. Education and risk management assistance.

TITLE XI—MISCELLANEOUS

Subtitle A—Livestock

Sec. 11101. Animal Disease Preparedness and Response.
Sec. 11102. National Aquatic Animal Health Plan.
Sec. 11103. Veterinary training.
Sec. 11104. Report on FSIS guidance and outreach to small meat processors.

Subtitle B—Beginning, Socially Disadvantaged, and Veteran Producers

Sec. 11201. Outreach and assistance for socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers and veteran farmers and ranchers.
Sec. 11202. Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement.
Sec. 11203. Commission on Farm Transitions—Needs for 2050.
Sec. 11204. Agricultural youth organization coordinator.

Subtitle C—Textiles

Sec. 11301. Repeal of Pima Agriculture Cotton Trust Fund.
Sec. 11302. Repeal of Agriculture Wool Apparel Manufacturers Trust Fund.
Sec. 11303. Repeal of wool research and promotion grants funding.
Sec. 11304. Textile Trust Fund.

Subtitle D—United States Grain Standards Act

Sec. 11401. Restoring certain exceptions to United States Grain Standards Act.

Subtitle E—Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program

Sec. 11501. Eligible crops.
Sec. 11502. Service fee.
Sec. 11503. Payments equivalent to additional coverage.

Subtitle F—Other Matters

Sec. 11601. Under Secretary of Agriculture for Farm Production and Conservation.
Sec. 11602. Authority of Secretary to carry out certain programs under Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994.
Sec. 11603. Conference report requirement threshold.
Sec. 11604. National agriculture imagery program.
Sec. 11605. Report on inclusion of natural stone products in Commodity Promotion, Research, and Information Act of 1996.
Sec. 11606. South Carolina inclusion in Virginia/Carolina peanut producing region.
Sec. 11607. Establishment of Food Loss and Waste Reduction Liaison.
Sec. 11608. Cotton classification services.
Sec. 11609. Century farms program.
Sec. 11610. Report on agricultural innovation.
Sec. 11611. Report on dog importation.
Sec. 11612. Prohibition on slaughter of dogs and cats for human consumption.

Subtitle G—Protecting Interstate Commerce

Sec. 11701. Prohibition against interference by State and local governments with production or manufacture of items in other States.
Sec. 11702. Federal cause of action to challenge State regulation of interstate commerce.

SEC. 2. DEFINITION OF SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE.

In this Act, the term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of Agriculture.

TITLE I—COMMODITIES

Subtitle A—Commodity Policy

SEC. 1111. DEFINITIONS.

In this subtitle and subtitle B:

(1) ACTUAL CROP REVENUE.—The term ''actual crop revenue'', with respect to a covered commodity for a crop year, means the amount determined by the Secretary under section 1117(b).

(2) AGRICULTURE RISK COVERAGE.—The term ''agriculture risk coverage'' means coverage provided under section 1117.

(3) AGRICULTURE RISK COVERAGE GUARANTEE.—The term ''agriculture risk coverage guarantee'', with respect to a covered commodity for a crop year, means the amount determined by the Secretary under section 1117(c).

(4) BASE ACRES.—The term ''base acres'' has the meaning given the term in section 1111(4)(A) of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 9011(4)(A)), subject to any reallocation, adjustment, or reduction under section 1112.

(5) COVERED COMMODITY.—The term ''covered commodity'' means wheat, oats, and barley (including wheat, oats, and barley used for haying and grazing), corn, grain sorghum, long grain rice, medium grain rice, pulse crops, soybeans, other oilseeds, seed cotton, and peanuts.

(6) EFFECTIVE PRICE.—The term ''effective price'', with respect to a covered commodity for a crop year, means the price calculated by the Secretary under section 1116(b) to determine whether price loss coverage payments are required to be provided for that crop year.

(7) EFFECTIVE REFERENCE PRICE.—The term ''effective reference price'', with respect to a covered commodity for a crop year, means the lesser of the following:

(A) An amount equal to 115 percent of the reference price for such covered commodity.

(B) An amount equal to the greater of—

(i) the reference price for such covered commodity; or

(ii) 85 percent of the average of the marketing year average price of the covered commodity for the most recent 5 crop years, excluding each of the crop years with the highest and lowest marketing year average price.

(8) EXTRA LONG STAPLE COTTON.—The term ''extra long staple cotton'' means cotton that—

(A) is produced from pure strain varieties of the barbadense species or any hybrid of the species, or other similar types of extra long staple cotton, designated by the Secretary, having characteristics needed for various end uses for which United States upland cotton is not suitable and grown in irrigated cotton-growing regions of the United States designated by the Secretary or other areas designated by the Secretary as suitable for the production of the varieties or types; and

(B) is ginned on a roller-type gin or, if authorized by the Secretary, ginned on another type gin for experimental purposes.

(9) MARKETING YEAR AVERAGE PRICE.—The term ''marketing year average price'' means the national average market price received by producers during the 12-month marketing year for a covered commodity, as determined by the Secretary.

(10) MEDIUM GRAIN RICE.—The term ''medium grain rice'' includes short grain rice and temperate japonica rice.

(11) OTHER OILSEED.—The term ''other oilseed'' means a crop of sunflower seed, rapeseed, canola, safflower, flaxseed, mustard seed, crambe, sesame seed, or any oilseed designated by the Secretary.

(12) PAYMENT ACRES.—The term ''payment acres'', with respect to the provision of price loss coverage payments and agriculture risk coverage payments, means the number of acres determined for a farm under section 1114.

(13) PAYMENT YIELD.—The term ''payment yield'', for a farm for a covered commodity—

(A) means the yield used to make payments pursuant to section 1116 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 9016); or

(B) means the yield established under section 1113.

(14) PRICE LOSS COVERAGE.—The term ''price loss coverage'' means coverage provided under section 1116.

(15) PRODUCER.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The term ''producer'' means an owner, operator, landlord, tenant, or sharecropper that shares in the risk of producing a crop and is entitled to share in the crop available for marketing from the farm, or would have shared had the crop been produced.

(B) HYBRID SEED.—In determining whether a grower of hybrid seed is a producer, the Secretary shall—

(i) not take into consideration the existence of a hybrid seed contract; and

(ii) ensure that program requirements do not adversely affect the ability of the grower to receive a payment under this title.

(16) PULSE CROP.—The term ''pulse crop'' means dry peas, lentils, small chickpeas, and large chickpeas.

(17) REFERENCE PRICE.—The term ''reference price'', with respect to a covered commodity for a crop year, means the following:

(A) For wheat, $5.50 per bushel.

(B) For corn, $3.70 per bushel.

(C) For grain sorghum, $3.95 per bushel.

(D) For barley, $4.95 per bushel.

(E) For oats, $2.40 per bushel.

(F) For long grain rice, $14.00 per hundredweight.

(G) For medium grain rice, $14.00 per hundredweight.

(H) For soybeans, $8.40 per bushel.

(I) For other oilseeds, $20.15 per hundredweight.

(J) For peanuts, $535.00 per ton.

(K) For dry peas, $11.00 per hundredweight.

(L) For lentils, $19.97 per hundredweight.

(M) For small chickpeas, $19.04 per hundredweight.

(N) For large chickpeas, $21.54 per hundredweight.

(O) For seed cotton, $0.367 per pound.

(18) SECRETARY.—The term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of Agriculture.

(19) SEED COTTON.—The term ''seed cotton'' means unginned upland cotton that includes both lint and seed.

(20) STATE.—The term ''State'' means—

(A) a State;

(B) the District of Columbia;

(C) the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico; and

(D) any other territory or possession of the United States.

(21) TEMPERATE JAPONICA RICE.—The term ''temperate japonica rice'' means rice that is grown in high altitudes or temperate regions of high latitudes with cooler climate conditions, in the Western United States, as determined by the Secretary, for the purpose of—

(A) the establishment of a reference price (as required under section 1116(g)) and an effective price pursuant to section 1116; and

(B) the determination of the actual crop revenue and agriculture risk coverage guarantee pursuant to section 1117.

(22) TRANSITIONAL YIELD.—The term ''transitional yield'' has the meaning given the term in section 502(b) of the Federal Crop Insurance Act (7 U.S.C. 1502(b)).

(23) UNITED STATES.—The term ''United States'', when used in a geographical sense, means all of the States.

(24) UNITED STATES PREMIUM FACTOR.—The term ''United States Premium Factor'' means the percentage by which the difference in the United States loan schedule premiums for Strict Middling (SM) 1⅛-inch upland cotton and for Middling (M) 1 3/32-inch upland cotton exceeds the difference in the applicable premiums for comparable international qualities.

SEC. 1112. BASE ACRES.

(a) ADJUSTMENT OF BASE ACRES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall provide for an adjustment, as appropriate, in the base acres for covered commodities for a farm whenever any of the following circumstances occur:

(A) A conservation reserve contract entered into under section 1231 of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3831) with respect to the farm expires or is voluntarily terminated.

(B) Cropland is released from coverage under a conservation reserve contract by the Secretary.

(C) The producer has eligible oilseed acreage as the result of the Secretary designating additional oilseeds, which shall be determined in the same manner as eligible oilseed acreage under section 1101(a)(1)(D) of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 8711(a)(1)(D)).

(2) SPECIAL CONSERVATION RESERVE ACREAGE PAYMENT RULES.—For the crop year in which a base acres adjustment under subparagraph (A) or (B) of paragraph (1) is first made, the owner of the farm shall elect to receive price loss coverage or agriculture risk coverage with respect to the acreage added to the farm under this subsection or a prorated payment under the conservation reserve contract, but not both.

(b) PREVENTION OF EXCESS BASE ACRES.—

(1) REQUIRED REDUCTION.—If the sum of the base acres for a farm and the acreage described in paragraph (2) exceeds the actual cropland acreage of the farm, the Secretary shall reduce the base acres for 1 or more covered commodities for the farm so that the sum of the base acres and the acreage described in paragraph (2) does not exceed the actual cropland acreage of the farm.

(2) OTHER ACREAGE.—For purposes of paragraph (1), the Secretary shall include the following:

(A) Any acreage on the farm enrolled in the conservation reserve program or wetlands reserve program (or successor programs) under title XII of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3801 et seq.).

(B) Any other acreage on the farm enrolled in a Federal conservation program for which payments are made in exchange for not producing an agricultural commodity on the acreage.

(C) If the Secretary designates additional oilseeds, any eligible oilseed acreage, which shall

be determined in the same manner as eligible oilseed acreage under subsection (a)(1)(C).

(3) SELECTION OF ACRES.—The Secretary shall give the owner of the farm the opportunity to select the base acres for a covered commodity for the farm against which the reduction required by paragraph (1) will be made.

(4) EXCEPTION FOR DOUBLE-CROPPED ACREAGE.—In applying paragraph (1), the Secretary shall make an exception in the case of double cropping, as determined by the Secretary.

(c) REDUCTION IN BASE ACRES.—

(1) REDUCTION AT OPTION OF OWNER.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The owner of a farm may reduce, at any time, the base acres for any covered commodity for the farm.

(B) EFFECT OF REDUCTION.—A reduction under subparagraph (A) shall be permanent and made in a manner prescribed by the Secretary.

(2) REQUIRED ACTION BY SECRETARY.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall proportionately reduce base acres on a farm for land that has been subdivided and developed for multiple residential units or other nonfarming uses if the size of the tracts and the density of the subdivision is such that the land is unlikely to return to the previous agricultural use, unless the producers on the farm demonstrate that the land—

(i) remains devoted to commercial agricultural production; or

(ii) is likely to be returned to the previous agricultural use.

(B) REQUIREMENT.—The Secretary shall establish procedures to identify land described in subparagraph (A).

(3) TREATMENT OF UNPLANTED BASE.—In the case of a farm on which no covered commodities (including seed cotton) were planted or prevented from being planted during the period beginning on January 1, 2009, and ending on December 31, 2017, the Secretary shall allocate all base acres on the farm to unassigned crop base for which no payment shall be made under section 1116 or 1117.

(4) PROHIBITION ON RECONSTITUTION OF FARM.—The Secretary shall ensure that producers on a farm do not reconstitute the farm to void or change the treatment of base acres under this section.

SEC. 1113. PAYMENT YIELDS.

(a) TREATMENT OF DESIGNATED OILSEEDS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—For the purpose of making price loss coverage payments under section 1116, the Secretary shall provide for the establishment of a yield for each farm for any designated oilseed for which a payment yield was not established under section 1113 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 9013) in accordance with this section.

(2) PAYMENT YIELDS FOR DESIGNATED OILSEEDS.—In the case of designated oilseeds, the payment yield shall be equal to 90 percent of the average of the yield per planted acre for the most recent five crop years, as determined by the Secretary, excluding any crop year in which the acreage planted to the covered commodity was zero.

(3) APPLICATION.—This subsection shall apply to oilseeds designated after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(b) EFFECT OF LACK OF PAYMENT YIELD.—

(1) ESTABLISHMENT BY SECRETARY.—In the case of a covered commodity on a farm for which base acres have been established, if no payment yield is otherwise established for the covered commodity on the farm, the Secretary shall establish an appropriate payment yield for the covered commodity on the farm under paragraph (2).

(2) USE OF SIMILARLY SITUATED FARMS.—To establish an appropriate payment yield for a covered commodity on a farm as required by paragraph (1), the Secretary shall take into consideration the farm program payment yields applicable to that covered commodity for similarly situated farms. The use of such data in an appeal, by the Secretary or by the producer, shall not be subject to any other provision of law.

(c) SINGLE OPPORTUNITY TO UPDATE YIELDS IN COUNTIES AFFECTED BY DROUGHT.—

(1) ELECTION TO UPDATE.—In the case of a farm that is physically located in a county in which any area of the county was rated by the U.S. Drought Monitor as having a D4 (exceptional drought) intensity for 20 or more consecutive weeks during the period beginning January 1, 2008 and ending December 31, 2012, at the sole discretion of the owner of such farm, the owner of a farm shall have a 1-time opportunity to update, on a covered commodity-by covered-commodity basis, the payment yield that would otherwise be used in calculating any price loss coverage payment for each covered commodity on the farm for which the election is made.

(2) METHOD OF UPDATING YIELDS FOR COVERED COMMODITIES.—If the owner of a farm elects to update yields under paragraph (1), the payment yield for covered commodities on the farm, for the purpose of calculating price loss coverage payments only, shall be equal to 90 percent of the average of the yield per planted acre for the crop of covered commodities on the farm for the 2013 through 2017 crop years, as determined by the Secretary, excluding any crop year in which the acreage planted to the covered commodity was zero.

(3) USE OF COUNTY AVERAGE YIELD.—For the purposes of determining the average yield under paragraph (2), if the yield per planted acre for a crop of a covered commodity for a farm for any of the crop years specified in paragraph (2) was less than 75 percent of the average of county yields for those same years for that commodity, the Secretary shall assign a yield for that crop year equal to 75 percent of the average of the 2013 though 2017 county yield for the covered commodity.

(4) UPLAND COTTON CONVERSION.—In the case of seed cotton, for purposes of determining the average of the yield per planted acre under paragraph (2), the average yield for seed cotton per planted acre shall be equal to 2.4 times the average yield for upland cotton per planted acre.

(5) TIME FOR ELECTION.—An election under this subsection shall be made at a time and manner so as to be in effect beginning with the 2019 crop year, as determined by the Secretary.

SEC. 1114. PAYMENT ACRES.

(a) DETERMINATION OF PAYMENT ACRES.—Subject to subsection (d), for the purpose of price loss coverage and agriculture risk coverage, the payment acres for each covered commodity on a farm shall be equal to 85 percent of the base acres for the covered commodity on the farm.

(b) EFFECT OF MINIMAL PAYMENT ACRES.—

(1) PROHIBITION ON PAYMENTS.—Notwithstanding any other provision of this title, a producer on a farm may not receive price loss coverage payments or agriculture risk coverage payments if the sum of the base acres on the farm is 10 acres or less, as determined by the Secretary, unless the sum of the base acres on the farm, when combined with the base acres of other farms in which the producer has an interest, is more than 10 acres.

(2) EXCEPTIONS.—Paragraph (1) does not apply to a producer that is—

(A) a socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher (as defined in section 355(e) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 2003(e))); or

(B) a limited resource farmer or rancher, as defined by the Secretary.

(c) EFFECT OF PLANTING FRUITS AND VEGETABLES.—

(1) REDUCTION REQUIRED.—In the manner provided in this subsection, payment acres on a farm shall be reduced in any crop year in which fruits, vegetables (other than mung beans and pulse crops), or wild rice have been planted on base acres on a farm.

(2) PRICE LOSS COVERAGE AND AGRICULTURAL RISK COVERAGE.—In the case of price loss coverage payments and agricultural risk coverage payments, the reduction under paragraph (1) shall be the amount equal to the base acres planted to crops referred to in such paragraph in excess of 15 percent of base acres.

(3) REDUCTION EXCEPTIONS.—No reduction to payment acres shall be made under this subsection if—

(A) cover crops or crops referred to in paragraph (1) are grown solely for conservation purposes and not harvested for use or sale, as determined by the Secretary; or

(B) in any region in which there is a history of double-cropping covered commodities with crops referred to in paragraph (1) and such crops were so double-cropped on the base acres, as determined by the Secretary.

(4) EFFECT OF REDUCTION.—For each crop year for which fruits, vegetables (other than mung beans and pulse crops), or wild rice are planted to base acres on a farm for which a reduction in payment acres is made under this subsection, the Secretary shall consider such base acres to be planted, or prevented from planting, to a covered commodity for purposes of any adjustment or reduction of base acres for the farm under section 1112.

(d) UNASSIGNED CROP BASE.—The Secretary shall maintain information on base acres allocated as unassigned crop base pursuant to—

(1) section 1112(c)(3); or

(2) section 1112(a) of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 9012(a)).

SEC. 1115. PRODUCER ELECTION.

(a) ELECTION REQUIRED.—For the 2019 through 2023 crop years, all of the producers on a farm shall make a 1-time, irrevocable election to obtain on a covered-commodity-by-covered-commodity basis—

(1) price loss coverage under section 1116; or

(2) agriculture risk coverage under section 1117.

(b) EFFECT OF FAILURE TO MAKE UNANIMOUS ELECTION.—If all the producers on a farm fail to make a unanimous election under subsection (a) for the 2019 crop year—

(1) the Secretary shall not make any payments with respect to the farm for the 2019 crop year under section 1116 or 1117; and

(2) the producers on the farm shall be deemed to have elected price loss coverage under section 1116 for all covered commodities on the farm for the 2020 through 2023 crop years.

(c) PROHIBITION ON RECONSTITUTION.—The Secretary shall ensure that producers on a farm do not reconstitute the farm to void or change an election made under this section.

SEC. 1116. PRICE LOSS COVERAGE.

(a) PRICE LOSS COVERAGE PAYMENTS.—If all of the producers on a farm make the election under subsection (a) of section 1115 to obtain price loss coverage or, subject to subsection (b)(1) of such section, are deemed to have made such election under subsection (b)(2) of such section, the Secretary shall make price loss coverage payments to producers on the farm on a covered-commodity-by-covered-commodity basis if the Secretary determines that, for any of the 2019 through 2023 crop years—

(1) the effective price for the covered commodity for the crop year; is less than

(2) the effective reference price for the covered commodity for the crop year.

(b) EFFECTIVE PRICE.—The effective price for a covered commodity for a crop year shall be the higher of—

(1) the marketing year average price; or

(2) the national average loan rate for a marketing assistance loan for the covered commodity in effect for such crop year under subtitle B.

(c) PAYMENT RATE.—The payment rate shall be equal to the difference between—

(1) the effective reference price for the covered commodity; and

(2) the effective price determined under subsection (b) for the covered commodity.

(d) PAYMENT AMOUNT.—If price loss coverage payments are required to be provided under this section for any of the 2019 through 2023 crop years for a covered commodity, the amount of the price loss coverage payment to be paid to the producers on a farm for the crop year shall be equal to the product obtained by multiplying—

(1) the payment rate for the covered commodity under subsection (c);

(2) the payment yield for the covered commodity; and

(3) the payment acres for the covered commodity determined under section 1114.

(e) TIME FOR PAYMENTS.—If the Secretary determines under this section that price loss coverage payments are required to be provided for the covered commodity, the payments shall be made beginning October 1, or as soon as practicable thereafter, after the end of the applicable marketing year for the covered commodity.

(f) EFFECTIVE PRICE FOR BARLEY.—In determining the effective price for barley under subsection (b), the Secretary shall use the all-barley price.

(g) REFERENCE PRICE FOR TEMPERATE JAPONICA RICE.—In order to reflect price premiums, the Secretary shall provide a reference price with respect to temperate japonica rice in an amount equal to the amount established under subparagraph (F) of section 1111(17), as adjusted by paragraph (7) of such section, multiplied by the ratio obtained by dividing—

(1) the simple average of the marketing year average price of medium grain rice from the 2012 through 2016 crop years; by

(2) the simple average of the marketing year average price of all rice from the 2012 through 2016 crop years.

SEC. 1117. AGRICULTURE RISK COVERAGE.

(a) AGRICULTURE RISK COVERAGE PAYMENTS.—If all of the producers on a farm make the election under section 1115(a) to obtain agriculture risk coverage, the Secretary shall make agriculture risk coverage payments to producers on the farm if the Secretary determines that, for any of the 2019 through 2023 crop years—

(1) the actual crop revenue determined under subsection (b) for the crop year; is less than

(2) the agriculture risk coverage guarantee determined under subsection (c) for the crop year.

(b) ACTUAL CROP REVENUE.—The amount of the actual crop revenue for a county for a crop year of a covered commodity shall be equal to the product obtained by multiplying—

(1) the actual average county yield per planted acre for the covered commodity, as determined by the Secretary; and

(2) the higher of—

(A) the marketing year average price; or

(B) the national average loan rate for a marketing assistance loan for the covered commodity in effect for such crop year under subtitle B.

(c) AGRICULTURE RISK COVERAGE GUARANTEE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The agriculture risk coverage guarantee for a crop year for a covered commodity shall equal 86 percent of the benchmark revenue.

(2) BENCHMARK REVENUE.—The benchmark revenue shall be equal to the product obtained by multiplying—

(A) subject to paragraph (3), the average historical county yield as determined by the Secretary for the most recent 5 crop years, excluding each of the crop years with the highest and lowest yields; and

(B) subject to paragraph (4), the marketing year average price for the most recent 5 crop years, excluding each of the crop years with the highest and lowest prices.

(3) YIELD CONDITIONS.—If the yield per planted acre for the covered commodity or historical county yield per planted acre for the covered commodity for any of the 5 most recent crop years, as determined by the Secretary, is less than 70 percent of the transitional yield, as determined by the Secretary, the amounts used for any of those years in paragraph (2)(A) shall be 70 percent of the transitional yield.

(4) REFERENCE PRICE.—If the marketing year average price for any of the 5 most recent crop years is lower than the reference price for the covered commodity, the Secretary shall use the reference price for any of those years for the amounts in paragraph (2)(B).

(d) PAYMENT RATE.—The payment rate for a covered commodity in a county shall be equal to the lesser of—

(1) the amount that—

(A) the agriculture risk coverage guarantee for the crop year applicable under subsection (c); exceeds

(B) the actual crop revenue for the crop year applicable under subsection (b); or

(2) 10 percent of the benchmark revenue for the crop year applicable under subsection (c).

(e) PAYMENT AMOUNT.—If agriculture risk coverage payments are required to be paid for any of the 2019 through 2023 crop years, the amount of the agriculture risk coverage payment for the crop year shall be determined by multiplying—

(1) the payment rate for the covered commodity determined under subsection (d); and

(2) the payment acres for the covered commodity determined under section 1114.

(f) TIME FOR PAYMENTS.—If the Secretary determines that agriculture risk coverage payments are required to be provided for the covered commodity, payments shall be made beginning October 1, or as soon as practicable thereafter, after the end of the applicable marketing year for the covered commodity.

(g) ADDITIONAL DUTIES OF THE SECRETARY.—In providing agriculture risk coverage, the Secretary shall—

(1) to the maximum extent practicable, use all available information and analysis, including data mining, to check for anomalies in the determination of agriculture risk coverage payments;

(2) calculate a separate actual crop revenue and agriculture risk coverage guarantee for irrigated and nonirrigated covered commodities;

(3) assign an actual or benchmark county yield for each planted acre for the crop year for the covered commodity—

(A) for a county for which county data collected by the Risk Management Agency is sufficient for the Secretary to offer a county-wide insurance product using the actual average county yield determined by the Risk Management Agency; or

(B) for a county not described in subparagraph (A) using—

(i) other sources of yield information, as determined by the Secretary; or

(ii) the yield history of representative farms in the State, region, or crop reporting district, as determined by the Secretary; and

(4) make payments, as applicable, to producers using the payment rate of the county of the physical location of the base acres of a farm.

SEC. 1118. PRODUCER AGREEMENTS.

(a) COMPLIANCE WITH CERTAIN REQUIREMENTS.—

(1) REQUIREMENTS.—Before the producers on a farm may receive payments under this subtitle with respect to the farm, the producers shall agree, during the crop year for which the payments are made and in exchange for the payments—

(A) to comply with applicable conservation requirements under subtitle B of title XII of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3811 et seq.);

(B) to comply with applicable wetland protection requirements under subtitle C of title XII of that Act (16 U.S.C. 3821 et seq.);

(C) to effectively control noxious weeds and otherwise maintain the land in accordance with sound agricultural practices, as determined by the Secretary; and

(D) to use the land on the farm, in a quantity equal to the attributable base acres for the farm and any base acres for an agricultural or conserving use, and not for a nonagricultural commercial, industrial, or residential use, as determined by the Secretary.

(2) COMPLIANCE.—The Secretary may issue such rules as the Secretary considers necessary to ensure producer compliance with the requirements of paragraph (1).

(3) MODIFICATION.—At the request of the transferee or owner, the Secretary may modify the requirements of this subsection if the modifications are consistent with the objectives of this subsection, as determined by the Secretary.

(b) TRANSFER OR CHANGE OF INTEREST IN FARM.—

(1) TERMINATION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), a transfer of (or change in) the interest of the producers on a farm for which payments under this subtitle are provided shall result in the termination of the payments, unless the transferee or owner of the acreage agrees to assume all obligations under subsection (a).

(B) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The termination shall take effect on the date determined by the Secretary.

(2) EXCEPTION.—If a producer entitled to a payment under this subtitle dies, becomes incompetent, or is otherwise unable to receive the payment, the Secretary shall make the payment in accordance with rules issued by the Secretary.

(c) ACREAGE REPORTS.—As a condition on the receipt of any benefits under this subtitle or subtitle B, the Secretary shall require producers on a farm to submit to the Secretary annual acreage reports with respect to all cropland on the farm.

(d) EFFECT OF INACCURATE REPORTS.—No penalty with respect to benefits under this subtitle or subtitle B shall be assessed against a producer on a farm for an inaccurate acreage report unless the Secretary determines that the producer on the farm knowingly and willfully falsified the acreage report.

(e) TENANTS AND SHARECROPPERS.—In carrying out this subtitle, the Secretary shall provide adequate safeguards to protect the interests of tenants and sharecroppers.

(f) SHARING OF PAYMENTS.—The Secretary shall provide for the sharing of payments made under this subtitle among the producers on a farm on a fair and equitable basis.

Subtitle B—Marketing Loans

SEC. 1201. AVAILABILITY OF NONRECOURSE MARKETING ASSISTANCE LOANS FOR LOAN COMMODITIES.

(a) DEFINITION OF LOAN COMMODITY.—In this subtitle, the term ''loan commodity'' means wheat, corn, grain sorghum, barley, oats, upland cotton, extra long staple cotton, long grain rice, medium grain rice, peanuts, soybeans, other oilseeds, graded wool, nongraded wool, mohair, honey, dry peas, lentils, small chickpeas, and large chickpeas.

(b) NONRECOURSE LOANS AVAILABLE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—For each of the 2019 through 2023 crops of each loan commodity, the Secretary shall make available to producers on a farm nonrecourse marketing assistance loans for loan commodities produced on the farm.

(2) TERMS AND CONDITIONS.—The marketing assistance loans shall be made under terms and conditions that are prescribed by the Secretary and at the loan rate established under section 1202 for the loan commodity.

(c) ELIGIBLE PRODUCTION.—The producers on a farm shall be eligible for a marketing assistance loan under subsection (b) for any quantity of a loan commodity produced on the farm.

(d) COMPLIANCE WITH CONSERVATION AND WETLANDS REQUIREMENTS.—As a condition of the receipt of a marketing assistance loan under

subsection (b), the producer shall comply with applicable conservation requirements under subtitle B of title XII of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3811 et seq.) and applicable wetland protection requirements under subtitle C of title XII of that Act (16 U.S.C. 3821 et seq.) during the term of the loan.

(e) SPECIAL RULES FOR PEANUTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—This subsection shall apply only to producers of peanuts.

(2) OPTIONS FOR OBTAINING LOAN.—A marketing assistance loan under this section, and loan deficiency payments under section 1205, may be obtained at the option of the producers on a farm through—

(A) a designated marketing association or marketing cooperative of producers that is approved by the Secretary; or

(B) the Farm Service Agency.

(3) STORAGE OF LOAN PEANUTS.—As a condition on the approval by the Secretary of an individual or entity to provide storage for peanuts for which a marketing assistance loan is made under this section, the individual or entity shall agree—

(A) to provide the storage on a nondiscriminatory basis; and

(B) to comply with such additional requirements as the Secretary considers appropriate to accomplish the purposes of this section and promote fairness in the administration of the benefits of this section.

(4) STORAGE, HANDLING, AND ASSOCIATED COSTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—To ensure proper storage of peanuts for which a loan is made under this section, the Secretary shall pay handling and other associated costs (other than storage costs) incurred at the time at which the peanuts are placed under loan, as determined by the Secretary.

(B) REDEMPTION AND FORFEITURE.—The Secretary shall—

(i) require the repayment of handling and other associated costs paid under subparagraph (A) for all peanuts pledged as collateral for a loan that is redeemed under this section; and

(ii) pay storage, handling, and other associated costs for all peanuts pledged as collateral that are forfeited under this section.

(5) MARKETING.—A marketing association or cooperative may market peanuts for which a loan is made under this section in any manner that conforms to consumer needs, including the separation of peanuts by type and quality.

(6) REIMBURSABLE AGREEMENTS AND PAYMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES.—The Secretary may implement any reimbursable agreements or provide for the payment of administrative expenses under this subsection only in a manner that is consistent with those activities in regard to other loan commodities.

SEC. 1202. LOAN RATES FOR NONRECOURSE MARKETING ASSISTANCE LOANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of each of the 2019 through 2023 crop years, the loan rate for a marketing assistance loan under section 1201 for a loan commodity shall be equal to the following:

(1) In the case of wheat, $2.94 per bushel.

(2) In the case of corn, $1.95 per bushel.

(3) In the case of grain sorghum, $1.95 per bushel.

(4) In the case of barley, $1.95 per bushel.

(5) In the case of oats, $1.39 per bushel.

(6)(A) Subject to subparagraphs (B) and (C), in the case of base quality of upland cotton, the simple average of the adjusted prevailing world price for the 2 immediately preceding marketing years, as determined by the Secretary and announced October 1 preceding the next domestic planting.

(B) Except as provided in subparagraph (C), the loan rate determined under subparagraph (A) may not equal less than an amount equal to 98 percent of the loan rate for base quality of upland cotton for the preceding year.

(C) The loan rate determined under subparagraph (A) may not be equal to an amount—

(i) less than $0.45 per pound; or

(ii) more than $0.52 per pound.

(7) In the case of extra long staple cotton, $0.95 per pound.

(8) In the case of long grain rice, $6.50 per hundredweight.

(9) In the case of medium grain rice, $6.50 per hundredweight.

(10) In the case of soybeans, $5.00 per bushel.

(11) In the case of other oilseeds, $10.09 per hundredweight for each of the following kinds of oilseeds:

(A) Sunflower seed.

(B) Rapeseed.

(C) Canola.

(D) Safflower.

(E) Flaxseed.

(F) Mustard seed.

(G) Crambe.

(H) Sesame seed.

(I) Other oilseeds designated by the Secretary.

(12) In the case of dry peas, $5.40 per hundredweight.

(13) In the case of lentils, $11.28 per hundredweight.

(14) In the case of small chickpeas, $7.43 per hundredweight.

(15) In the case of large chickpeas, $11.28 per hundredweight.

(16) In the case of graded wool, $1.15 per pound.

(17) In the case of nongraded wool, $0.40 per pound.

(18) In the case of mohair, $4.20 per pound.

(19) In the case of honey, $0.69 per pound.

(20) In the case of peanuts, $355 per ton.

(b) SINGLE COUNTY LOAN RATE FOR OTHER OILSEEDS.—The Secretary shall establish a single loan rate in each county for each kind of other oilseeds described in subsection (a)(11).

(c) RULE FOR SEED COTTON.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of sections 1116(b)(2) and 1117(b)(2)(B) only, seed cotton shall be deemed to have a loan rate equal to $0.25 per pound.

(2) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to authorize nonrecourse marketing assistance loans under this subtitle for seed cotton.

SEC. 1203. TERM OF LOANS.

(a) TERM OF LOAN.—In the case of each loan commodity, a marketing assistance loan under section 1201 shall have a term of 9 months beginning on the first day of the first month after the month in which the loan is made.

(b) EXTENSIONS PROHIBITED.—The Secretary may not extend the term of a marketing assistance loan for any loan commodity.

SEC. 1204. REPAYMENT OF LOANS.

(a) GENERAL RULE.—The Secretary shall permit the producers on a farm to repay a marketing assistance loan under section 1201 for a loan commodity (other than upland cotton, long grain rice, medium grain rice, extra long staple cotton, peanuts and confectionery and each other kind of sunflower seed (other than oil sunflower seed)) at a rate that is the lesser of—

(1) the loan rate established for the commodity under section 1202, plus interest (determined in accordance with section 163 of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (7 U.S.C. 7283));

(2) a rate (as determined by the Secretary) that—

(A) is calculated based on average market prices for the loan commodity during the preceding 30-day period; and

(B) will minimize discrepancies in marketing loan benefits across State boundaries and across county boundaries; or

(3) a rate that the Secretary may develop using alternative methods for calculating a repayment rate for a loan commodity that the Secretary determines will—

(A) minimize potential loan forfeitures;

(B) minimize the accumulation of stocks of the commodity by the Federal Government;

(C) minimize the cost incurred by the Federal Government in storing the commodity;

(D) allow the commodity produced in the United States to be marketed freely and competitively, both domestically and internationally; and

(E) minimize discrepancies in marketing loan benefits across State boundaries and across county boundaries.

(b) REPAYMENT RATES FOR UPLAND COTTON, LONG GRAIN RICE, AND MEDIUM GRAIN RICE.—The Secretary shall permit producers to repay a marketing assistance loan under section 1201 for upland cotton, long grain rice, and medium grain rice at a rate that is the lesser of—

(1) the loan rate established for the commodity under section 1202, plus interest (determined in accordance with section 163 of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (7 U.S.C. 7283)); or

(2) the prevailing world market price for the commodity, as determined and adjusted by the Secretary in accordance with this section.

(c) REPAYMENT RATES FOR EXTRA LONG STAPLE COTTON.—Repayment of a marketing assistance loan for extra long staple cotton shall be at the loan rate established for the commodity under section 1202, plus interest (determined in accordance with section 163 of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (7 U.S.C. 7283)).

(d) PREVAILING WORLD MARKET PRICE.—For purposes of this section and section 1207, the Secretary shall prescribe by regulation—

(1) a formula to determine the prevailing world market price for each of upland cotton, long grain rice and medium grain rice; and

(2) a mechanism by which the Secretary shall announce periodically those prevailing world market prices.

(e) ADJUSTMENT OF PREVAILING WORLD MARKET PRICE FOR UPLAND COTTON, LONG GRAIN RICE, AND MEDIUM GRAIN RICE.—

(1) RICE.—The prevailing world market price for long grain rice and medium grain rice determined under subsection (d) shall be adjusted to United States quality and location.

(2) COTTON.—The prevailing world market price for upland cotton determined under subsection (d)—

(A) shall be adjusted to United States quality and location, with the adjustment to include—

(i) a reduction equal to any United States Premium Factor for upland cotton of a quality higher than Middling (M) 1 3/32-inch; and

(ii) the average costs to market the commodity, including average transportation costs, as determined by the Secretary; and

(B) may be further adjusted, during the period beginning on the date of enactment of this Act and ending on July 31, 2024, if the Secretary determines the adjustment is necessary—

(i) to minimize potential loan forfeitures;

(ii) to minimize the accumulation of stocks of upland cotton by the Federal Government;

(iii) to ensure that upland cotton produced in the United States can be marketed freely and competitively, both domestically and internationally; and

(iv) to ensure an appropriate transition between current-crop and forward-crop price quotations, except that the Secretary may use forward-crop price quotations prior to July 31 of a marketing year only if—

(I) there are insufficient current-crop price quotations; and

(II) the forward-crop price quotation is the lowest such quotation available.

(3) GUIDELINES FOR ADDITIONAL ADJUSTMENTS.—In making adjustments under this subsection, the Secretary shall establish a mechanism for determining and announcing the adjustments in order to avoid undue disruption in the United States market.

(f) REPAYMENT RATES FOR CONFECTIONERY AND OTHER KINDS OF SUNFLOWER SEEDS.—The Secretary shall permit the producers on a farm to repay a marketing assistance loan under section 1201 for confectionery and each other kind

of sunflower seed (other than oil sunflower seed) at a rate that is the lesser of—

(1) the loan rate established for the commodity under section 1202, plus interest (determined in accordance with section 163 of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (7 U.S.C. 7283)); or

(2) the repayment rate established for oil sunflower seed.

(g) PAYMENT OF COTTON STORAGE COSTS.—Effective for each of the 2019 through 2023 crop years, the Secretary shall make cotton storage payments available in the same manner, and at the same rates as the Secretary provided storage payments for the 2006 crop of cotton, except that the rates shall be reduced by 10 percent.

(h) REPAYMENT RATE FOR PEANUTS.—The Secretary shall permit producers on a farm to repay a marketing assistance loan for peanuts under section 1201 at a rate that is the lesser of—

(1) the loan rate established for peanuts under section 1202(a)(20), plus interest (determined in accordance with section 163 of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (7 U.S.C. 7283)); or

(2) a rate that the Secretary determines will—

(A) minimize potential loan forfeitures;

(B) minimize the accumulation of stocks of peanuts by the Federal Government;

(C) minimize the cost incurred by the Federal Government in storing peanuts; and

(D) allow peanuts produced in the United States to be marketed freely and competitively, both domestically and internationally.

(i) AUTHORITY TO TEMPORARILY ADJUST REPAYMENT RATES.—

(1) ADJUSTMENT AUTHORITY.—In the event of a severe disruption to marketing, transportation, or related infrastructure, the Secretary may modify the repayment rate otherwise applicable under this section for marketing assistance loans under section 1201 for a loan commodity.

(2) DURATION.—Any adjustment made under paragraph (1) in the repayment rate for marketing assistance loans for a loan commodity shall be in effect on a short-term and temporary basis, as determined by the Secretary.

SEC. 1205. LOAN DEFICIENCY PAYMENTS.

(a) AVAILABILITY OF LOAN DEFICIENCY PAYMENTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subsection (d), the Secretary may make loan deficiency payments available to producers on a farm that, although eligible to obtain a marketing assistance loan under section 1201 with respect to a loan commodity, agree to forgo obtaining the loan for the commodity in return for loan deficiency payments under this section.

(2) UNSHORN PELTS, HAY, AND SILAGE.—

(A) MARKETING ASSISTANCE LOANS.—Subject to subparagraph (B), nongraded wool in the form of unshorn pelts and hay and silage derived from a loan commodity are not eligible for a marketing assistance loan under section 1201.

(B) LOAN DEFICIENCY PAYMENT.—Effective for each of the 2019 through 2023 crop years, the Secretary may make loan deficiency payments available under this section to producers on a farm that produce unshorn pelts or hay and silage derived from a loan commodity.

(b) COMPUTATION.—A loan deficiency payment for a loan commodity or commodity referred to in subsection (a)(2) shall be equal to the product obtained by multiplying—

(1) the payment rate determined under subsection (c) for the commodity; by

(2) the quantity of the commodity produced by the eligible producers, excluding any quantity for which the producers obtain a marketing assistance loan under section 1201.

(c) PAYMENT RATE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In the case of a loan commodity, the payment rate shall be the amount by which—

(A) the loan rate established under section 1202 for the loan commodity; exceeds

(B) the rate at which a marketing assistance loan for the loan commodity may be repaid under section 1204.

(2) UNSHORN PELTS.—In the case of unshorn pelts, the payment rate shall be the amount by which—

(A) the loan rate established under section 1202 for ungraded wool; exceeds

(B) the rate at which a marketing assistance loan for ungraded wool may be repaid under section 1204.

(3) HAY AND SILAGE.—In the case of hay or silage derived from a loan commodity, the payment rate shall be the amount by which—

(A) the loan rate established under section 1202 for the loan commodity from which the hay or silage is derived; exceeds

(B) the rate at which a marketing assistance loan for the loan commodity may be repaid under section 1204.

(d) EXCEPTION FOR EXTRA LONG STAPLE COTTON.—This section shall not apply with respect to extra long staple cotton.

(e) EFFECTIVE DATE FOR PAYMENT RATE DETERMINATION.—The Secretary shall determine the amount of the loan deficiency payment to be made under this section to the producers on a farm with respect to a quantity of a loan commodity or commodity referred to in subsection (a)(2) using the payment rate in effect under subsection (c) as of the date the producers request the payment.

SEC. 1206. PAYMENTS IN LIEU OF LOAN DEFICIENCY PAYMENTS FOR GRAZED ACREAGE.

(a) ELIGIBLE PRODUCERS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Effective for each of the 2019 through 2023 crop years, in the case of a producer that would be eligible for a loan deficiency payment under section 1205 for wheat, barley, or oats, but that elects to use acreage planted to the wheat, barley, or oats for the grazing of livestock, the Secretary shall make a payment to the producer under this section if the producer enters into an agreement with the Secretary to forgo any other harvesting of the wheat, barley, or oats on that acreage.

(2) GRAZING OF TRITICALE ACREAGE.—Effective for each of the 2019 through 2023 crop years, with respect to a producer on a farm that uses acreage planted to triticale for the grazing of livestock, the Secretary shall make a payment to the producer under this section if the producer enters into an agreement with the Secretary to forgo any other harvesting of triticale on that acreage.

(b) PAYMENT AMOUNT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The amount of a payment made under this section to a producer on a farm described in subsection (a)(1) shall be equal to the amount determined by multiplying—

(A) the loan deficiency payment rate determined under section 1205(c) in effect, as of the date of the agreement, for the county in which the farm is located; by

(B) the payment quantity determined by multiplying—

(i) the quantity of the grazed acreage on the farm with respect to which the producer elects to forgo harvesting of wheat, barley, or oats; and

(ii)(I) the payment yield in effect for the calculation of price loss coverage under section 1116 with respect to that loan commodity on the farm;

(II) in the case of a farm for which agriculture risk coverage is elected under section 1117, the payment yield that would otherwise be in effect with respect to that loan commodity on the farm in the absence of such election; or

(III) in the case of a farm for which no payment yield is otherwise established for that loan commodity on the farm, an appropriate yield established by the Secretary in a manner consistent with section 1113(b).

(2) GRAZING OF TRITICALE ACREAGE.—The amount of a payment made under this section to a producer on a farm described in subsection (a)(2) shall be equal to the amount determined by multiplying—

(A) the loan deficiency payment rate determined under section 1205(c) in effect for wheat, as of the date of the agreement, for the county in which the farm is located; by

(B) the payment quantity determined by multiplying—

(i) the quantity of the grazed acreage on the farm with respect to which the producer elects to forgo harvesting of triticale; and

(ii)(I) the payment yield in effect for the calculation of price loss coverage under subtitle A with respect to wheat on the farm;

(II) in the case of a farm for which agriculture risk coverage is elected under section 1117, the payment yield that would otherwise be in effect for wheat on the farm in the absence of such election; or

(III) in the case of a farm for which no payment yield is otherwise established for wheat on the farm, an appropriate yield established by the Secretary in a manner consistent with section 1113(b).

(c) TIME, MANNER, AND AVAILABILITY OF PAYMENT.—

(1) TIME AND MANNER.—A payment under this section shall be made at the same time and in the same manner as loan deficiency payments are made under section 1205.

(2) AVAILABILITY.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish an availability period for the payments authorized by this section.

(B) CERTAIN COMMODITIES.—In the case of wheat, barley, and oats, the availability period shall be consistent with the availability period for the commodity established by the Secretary for marketing assistance loans authorized by this subtitle.

(d) PROHIBITION ON CROP INSURANCE INDEMNITY OR NONINSURED CROP ASSISTANCE.—A 2019 through 2023 crop of wheat, barley, oats, or triticale planted on acreage that a producer elects, in the agreement required by subsection (a), to use for the grazing of livestock in lieu of any other harvesting of the crop shall not be eligible for an indemnity under a policy or plan of insurance authorized under the Federal Crop Insurance Act (7 U.S.C. 1501 et seq.) or noninsured crop assistance under section 196 of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (7 U.S.C. 7333).

SEC. 1207. SPECIAL MARKETING LOAN PROVISIONS FOR UPLAND COTTON.

(a) SPECIAL IMPORT QUOTA.—

(1) DEFINITION OF SPECIAL IMPORT QUOTA.—In this subsection, the term ''special import quota'' means a quantity of imports that is not subject to the over-quota tariff rate of a tariff-rate quota.

(2) ESTABLISHMENT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The President shall carry out an import quota program beginning on August 1, 2019, as provided in this subsection.

(B) PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS.—Whenever the Secretary determines and announces that for any consecutive 4-week period, the Friday through Thursday average price quotation for the lowest priced United States growth, as quoted for Middling (M) 1 3/32-inch upland cotton, delivered to a definable and significant international market, as determined by the Secretary, exceeds the prevailing world market price, there shall immediately be in effect a special import quota.

(3) QUANTITY.—The quota shall be equal to the consumption during a 1-week period of cotton by domestic mills at the seasonally adjusted average rate of the most recent 3 months for which official data of the Department of Agriculture are available or, in the absence of sufficient data, as estimated by the Secretary.

(4) APPLICATION.—The quota shall apply to upland cotton purchased not later than 90 days after the date of the Secretary's announcement under paragraph (2) and entered into the United States not later than 180 days after that date.

(5) OVERLAP.—A special quota period may be established that overlaps any existing quota period if required by paragraph (2), except that a

special quota period may not be established under this subsection if a quota period has been established under subsection (b).

(6) PREFERENTIAL TARIFF TREATMENT.—The quantity under a special import quota shall be considered to be an in-quota quantity for purposes of—

(A) section 213(d) of the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act (19 U.S.C. 2703(d));

(B) section 204 of the Andean Trade Preference Act (19 U.S.C. 3203);

(C) section 503(d) of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2463(d)); and

(D) General Note 3(a)(iv) to the Harmonized Tariff Schedule.

(7) LIMITATION.—The quantity of cotton entered into the United States during any marketing year under the special import quota established under this subsection may not exceed the equivalent of 10 weeks' consumption of upland cotton by domestic mills at the seasonally adjusted average rate of the 3 months immediately preceding the first special import quota established in any marketing year.

(b) LIMITED GLOBAL IMPORT QUOTA FOR UPLAND COTTON.—

(1) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

(A) DEMAND.—The term ''demand'' means—

(i) the average seasonally adjusted annual rate of domestic mill consumption of cotton during the most recent 3 months for which official data of the Department of Agriculture are available or, in the absence of sufficient data, as estimated by the Secretary; and

(ii) the larger of—

(I) average exports of upland cotton during the preceding 6 marketing years; or

(II) cumulative exports of upland cotton plus outstanding export sales for the marketing year in which the quota is established.

(B) LIMITED GLOBAL IMPORT QUOTA.—The term ''limited global import quota'' means a quantity of imports that is not subject to the over-quota tariff rate of a tariff-rate quota.

(C) SUPPLY.—The term ''supply'' means, using the latest official data of the Department of Agriculture—

(i) the carry-over of upland cotton at the beginning of the marketing year (adjusted to 480-pound bales) in which the quota is established;

(ii) production of the current crop; and

(iii) imports to the latest date available during the marketing year.

(2) PROGRAM.—The President shall carry out an import quota program that provides that whenever the Secretary determines and announces that the average price of the base quality of upland cotton, as determined by the Secretary, in the designated spot markets for a month exceeded 130 percent of the average price of the quality of cotton in the markets for the preceding 36 months, notwithstanding any other provision of law, there shall immediately be in effect a limited global import quota subject to the following conditions:

(A) QUANTITY.—The quantity of the quota shall be equal to 21 days of domestic mill consumption of upland cotton at the seasonally adjusted average rate of the most recent 3 months for which official data of the Department of Agriculture are available or, in the absence of sufficient data, as estimated by the Secretary.

(B) QUANTITY OF PRIOR QUOTA.—If a quota has been established under this subsection during the preceding 12 months, the quantity of the quota next established under this subsection shall be the smaller of 21 days of domestic mill consumption calculated under subparagraph (A) or the quantity required to increase the supply to 130 percent of the demand.

(C) PREFERENTIAL TARIFF TREATMENT.—The quantity under a limited global import quota shall be considered to be an in-quota quantity for purposes of—

(i) section 213(d) of the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act (19 U.S.C. 2703(d));

(ii) section 204 of the Andean Trade Preference Act (19 U.S.C. 3203);

(iii) section 503(d) of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2463(d)); and

(iv) General Note 3(a)(iv) to the Harmonized Tariff Schedule.

(D) QUOTA ENTRY PERIOD.—When a quota is established under this subsection, cotton may be entered under the quota during the 90-day period beginning on the date the quota is established by the Secretary.

(3) NO OVERLAP.—Notwithstanding paragraph (2), a quota period may not be established that overlaps an existing quota period or a special quota period established under subsection (a).

(c) ECONOMIC ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE FOR TEXTILE MILLS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (2), the Secretary shall, on a monthly basis, make economic adjustment assistance available to domestic users of upland cotton in the form of payments for all documented use of that upland cotton during the previous monthly period regardless of the origin of the upland cotton.

(2) VALUE OF ASSISTANCE.—The value of the assistance provided under paragraph (1) shall be 3.15 cents per pound.

(3) ALLOWABLE PURPOSES.—Economic adjustment assistance under this subsection shall be made available only to domestic users of upland cotton that certify that the assistance shall be used only to acquire, construct, install, modernize, develop, convert, or expand land, plant, buildings, equipment, facilities, or machinery.

(4) REVIEW OR AUDIT.—The Secretary may conduct such review or audit of the records of a domestic user under this subsection as the Secretary determines necessary to carry out this subsection.

(5) IMPROPER USE OF ASSISTANCE.—If the Secretary determines, after a review or audit of the records of the domestic user, that economic adjustment assistance under this subsection was not used for the purposes specified in paragraph (3), the domestic user shall be—

(A) liable for the repayment of the assistance to the Secretary, plus interest, as determined by the Secretary; and

(B) ineligible to receive assistance under this subsection for a period of 1 year following the determination of the Secretary.

SEC. 1208. SPECIAL COMPETITIVE PROVISIONS FOR EXTRA LONG STAPLE COTTON.

(a) COMPETITIVENESS PROGRAM.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, during the period beginning on the date of enactment of this Act through July 31, 2024, the Secretary shall carry out a program—

(1) to maintain and expand the domestic use of extra long staple cotton produced in the United States;

(2) to increase exports of extra long staple cotton produced in the United States; and

(3) to ensure that extra long staple cotton produced in the United States remains competitive in world markets.

(b) PAYMENTS UNDER PROGRAM; TRIGGER.—Under the program, the Secretary shall make payments available under this section whenever—

(1) for a consecutive 4-week period, the world market price for the lowest priced competing growth of extra long staple cotton (adjusted to United States quality and location and for other factors affecting the competitiveness of such cotton), as determined by the Secretary, is below the prevailing United States price for a competing growth of extra long staple cotton; and

(2) the lowest priced competing growth of extra long staple cotton (adjusted to United States quality and location and for other factors affecting the competitiveness of such cotton), as determined by the Secretary, is less than 113 percent of the loan rate for extra long staple cotton.

(c) ELIGIBLE RECIPIENTS.—The Secretary shall make payments available under this section to domestic users of extra long staple cotton produced in the United States and exporters of extra long staple cotton produced in the United States that enter into an agreement with the Commodity Credit Corporation to participate in the program under this section.

(d) PAYMENT AMOUNT.—Payments under this section shall be based on the amount of the difference in the prices referred to in subsection (b)(1) during the fourth week of the consecutive 4-week period multiplied by the amount of documented purchases by domestic users and sales for export by exporters made in the week following such a consecutive 4-week period.

SEC. 1209. AVAILABILITY OF RECOURSE LOANS.

(a) HIGH MOISTURE FEED GRAINS.—

(1) DEFINITION OF HIGH MOISTURE STATE.—In this subsection, the term ''high moisture state'' means corn or grain sorghum having a moisture content in excess of Commodity Credit Corporation standards for marketing assistance loans made by the Secretary under section 1201.

(2) RECOURSE LOANS AVAILABLE.—For each of the 2019 through 2023 crops of corn and grain sorghum, the Secretary shall make available recourse loans, as determined by the Secretary, to producers on a farm that—

(A) normally harvest all or a portion of their crop of corn or grain sorghum in a high moisture state;

(B) present—

(i) certified scale tickets from an inspected, certified commercial scale, including a licensed warehouse, feedlot, feed mill, distillery, or other similar entity approved by the Secretary, pursuant to regulations issued by the Secretary; or

(ii) field or other physical measurements of the standing or stored crop in regions of the United States, as determined by the Secretary, that do not have certified commercial scales from which certified scale tickets may be obtained within reasonable proximity of harvest operation;

(C) certify that the producers on the farm were the owners of the feed grain at the time of delivery to, and that the quantity to be placed under loan under this subsection was in fact harvested on the farm and delivered to, a feedlot, feed mill, or commercial or on-farm high-moisture storage facility, or to a facility maintained by the users of corn and grain sorghum in a high moisture state; and

(D) comply with deadlines established by the Secretary for harvesting the corn or grain sorghum and submit applications for loans under this subsection within deadlines established by the Secretary.

(3) ELIGIBILITY OF ACQUIRED FEED GRAINS.—A loan under this subsection shall be made on a quantity of corn or grain sorghum of the same crop acquired by the producer equivalent to a quantity determined by multiplying—

(A) the acreage of the corn or grain sorghum in a high moisture state harvested on the farm of the producer; by

(B) the lower of—

(i) the payment yield in effect for the calculation of price loss coverage under section 1116, or the payment yield deemed to be in effect or established under subclause (II) or (III) of section 1206(b)(1)(B)(ii), with respect to corn or grain sorghum on a field that is similar to the field from which the corn or grain sorghum referred to in subparagraph (A) was obtained; or

(ii) the actual yield of corn or grain sorghum on a field, as determined by the Secretary, that is similar to the field from which the corn or grain sorghum referred to in subparagraph (A) was obtained.

(b) RECOURSE LOANS AVAILABLE FOR SEED COTTON.—For each of the 2019 through 2023 crops of upland cotton and extra long staple cotton, the Secretary shall make available recourse seed cotton loans, as determined by the Secretary, on any production.

(c) RECOURSE LOANS AVAILABLE FOR CONTAMINATED COMMODITIES.—In the case of a loan commodity that is ineligible for 100 percent of the nonrecourse marketing loan rate in the county due to a determination that the commodity is contaminated yet still merchantable,

for each of the 2019 through 2023 crops of such loan commodity, the Secretary shall make available recourse commodity loans, at the rate provided under section 1202, on any production.

(d) REPAYMENT RATES.—Repayment of a recourse loan made under this section shall be at the loan rate established for the commodity by the Secretary, plus interest (determined in accordance with section 163 of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (7 U.S.C. 7283)).

SEC. 1210. ADJUSTMENTS OF LOANS.

(a) ADJUSTMENT AUTHORITY.—Subject to subsection (e), the Secretary may make appropriate adjustments in the loan rates for any loan commodity (other than cotton) for differences in grade, type, quality, location, and other factors.

(b) MANNER OF ADJUSTMENT.—The adjustments under subsection (a) shall, to the maximum extent practicable, be made in such a manner that the average loan level for the commodity will, on the basis of the anticipated incidence of the factors, be equal to the level of support determined in accordance with this subtitle and subtitle C.

(c) COST SAVING OPTION.—In carrying out this title, the Secretary shall consider methods to enhance the support, loan, or assistance provided under this title in a manner that further minimizes the potential for forfeitures.

(d) ADJUSTMENT ON COUNTY BASIS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may establish loan rates for a crop for producers in individual counties in a manner that results in the lowest loan rate being 95 percent of the national average loan rate, if those loan rates do not result in an increase in outlays.

(2) PROHIBITION.—Adjustments under this subsection shall not result in an increase in the national average loan rate for any year.

(e) ADJUSTMENT IN LOAN RATE FOR COTTON.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may make appropriate adjustments in the loan rate for cotton for differences in quality factors.

(2) TYPES OF ADJUSTMENTS.—Loan rate adjustments under paragraph (1) may include—

(A) the use of non-spot market price data, in addition to spot market price data, that would enhance the accuracy of the price information used in determining quality adjustments under this subsection;

(B) adjustments in the premiums or discounts associated with upland cotton with a staple length of 33 or above due to micronaire with the goal of eliminating any unnecessary artificial splits in the calculations of the premiums or discounts; and

(C) such other adjustments as the Secretary determines appropriate, after consultations conducted in accordance with paragraph (3).

(3) CONSULTATION WITH PRIVATE SECTOR.—

(A) PRIOR TO REVISION.—In making adjustments to the loan rate for cotton (including any review of the adjustments) as provided in this subsection, the Secretary shall consult with representatives of the United States cotton industry.

(B) INAPPLICABILITY OF FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ACT.—The Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.) shall not apply to consultations under this subsection.

(4) REVIEW OF ADJUSTMENTS.—The Secretary may review the operation of the upland cotton quality adjustments implemented pursuant to this subsection and may make further adjustments to the administration of the loan program for upland cotton, by revoking or revising any adjustment taken under paragraph (2).

(f) RICE.—The Secretary shall not make adjustments in the loan rates for long grain rice and medium grain rice, except for differences in grade and quality (including milling yields).

(g) CONTINUATION OF AUTHORITY.—Section 166 of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (7 U.S.C. 7286) is amended by striking ''and Subtitle B of title I of the Agricultural Act of 2014'' each place it appears and inserting ''subtitle B of title I of the Agricultural Act of 2014, and subtitle B of title I of the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018''.

Subtitle C—Sugar

SEC. 1301. SUGAR POLICY.

(a) CONTINUATION OF CURRENT PROGRAM AND LOAN RATES.—

(1) SUGARCANE.—Section 156(a)(4) of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (7 U.S.C. 7272(a)(4)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

(2) SUGAR BEETS.—Section 156(b)(2) of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (7 U.S.C. 7272(b)(2)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

(3) EFFECTIVE PERIOD.—Section 156(i) of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (7 U.S.C. 7272(i)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

(b) FLEXIBLE MARKETING ALLOTMENTS FOR SUGAR.—

(1) SUGAR ESTIMATES.—Section 359b(a)(1) of the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938 (7 U.S.C. 1359bb(a)(1)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

(2) EFFECTIVE PERIOD.—Section 359l(a) of the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938 (7 U.S.C. 1359ll(a)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

Subtitle D—Dairy Risk Management Program and Other Dairy Programs

SEC. 1401. DAIRY RISK MANAGEMENT PROGRAM FOR DAIRY PRODUCERS.

(a) REVIEW OF DATA USED IN CALCULATION OF AVERAGE FEED COST.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture shall submit to the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate a report evaluating the extent to which the average cost of feed used by a dairy operation to produce a hundredweight of milk calculated by the Secretary as required by section 1402(a) of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 9052(a)) is representative of actual dairy feed costs.

(b) CORN SILAGE REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture shall submit to the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate a report detailing the costs incurred by dairy operations in the use of corn silage as feed, and the difference between the feed cost of corn silage and the feed cost of corn.

(c) COLLECTION OF ALFALFA HAY DATA.—Not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the National Agricultural Statistics Service, shall revise monthly price survey reports to include prices for high-quality alfalfa hay in the top five milk producing States, as measured by volume of milk produced during the previous month.

(d) REGISTRATION OF MULTIPRODUCER DAIRY OPERATIONS.—Section 1404(b) of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 9054(b)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (3), by striking ''If'' and inserting ''Subject to paragraph (5), if''; and

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

''(5) CERTAIN MULTIPRODUCER DAIRY OPERATION EXCLUSIONS.—

''(A) EXCLUSION OF LOW-PERCENTAGE OWNERS.—To promote administrative efficiency in the dairy risk management program, a multiproducer dairy operation covered by paragraph (3) may elect, at the option of the multiproducer dairy operation, to exclude information from the registration process regarding any individual owner of the multiproducer dairy operation that—

''(i) holds less than a five percent ownership interest in the multiproducer dairy operation; or

''(ii) is entitled to less than five percent of the income, revenue, profit, gain, loss, expenditure, deduction, or credit of the multiproducer dairy operation for any given year.

''(B) EFFECT OF EXCLUSION ON DAIRY RISK MANAGEMENT PAYMENTS.—To the extent that an individual owner of a multiproducer dairy operation is excluded under subparagraph (A) from the registration of the multiproducer dairy operation, any dairy risk management payment made to the multiproducer dairy operation shall be reduced by an amount equal to the greater of the following:

''(i) The amount determined by multiplying the dairy risk management payment otherwise determined under section 1406 by the total percentage of ownership interests represented by the excluded owners.

''(ii) The amount determined by multiplying the dairy risk management payment otherwise determined under section 1406 by the total percentage of the income, revenue, profit, gain, loss, expenditure, deduction, or credit of the multiproducer dairy operation represented by the excluded owners.''.

(e) RELATION TO LIVESTOCK GROSS MARGIN FOR DAIRY PROGRAM.—Section 1404(d) of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 9054(d)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''but not both'' and inserting ''but not on the same production'';

(2) by striking ''or the'' and inserting ''and the''; and

(3) by striking ''margin protection program'' and inserting ''dairy risk management program''.

(f) PRODUCTION HISTORY OF PARTICIPATING DAIRY OPERATORS.—

(1) CONTINUED USE OF PRIOR DAIRY OPERATION PRODUCTION HISTORY.—Section 1405(a)(1) of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 9055(a)(1)) is amended by adding at the end the following new sentence: ''The production history of a participating dairy operation shall continue to be based on annual milk marketings during the 2011, 2012, or 2013 calendar year notwithstanding the operation of the dairy risk management program through 2023.''.

(2) ADJUSTMENT.—Section 1405(a) of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 9055(a)) is amended—

(A) in paragraph (2), by striking ''In subsequent years'' and inserting ''In the subsequent calendar years ending before January 1, 2019''; and

(B) in paragraph (3), by inserting '', as applicable'' after ''paragraph (2)''.

(3) LIMITATION ON CHANGES TO BUSINESS STRUCTURE.—Section 1405 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 9055) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(d) LIMITATION ON CHANGES TO BUSINESS STRUCTURE.—The Secretary may not make dairy risk management payments to a participating dairy operation if the Secretary determines that the participating dairy operation has reorganized the structure of such operation solely for the purpose of qualifying as a new operation under subsection (b).''.

(g) DAIRY RISK MANAGEMENT PAYMENTS.—

(1) ELECTION OF COVERAGE LEVEL THRESHOLD AND COVERAGE PERCENTAGE.—Section 1406 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 9056) is amended—

(A) in subsection (a), by striking ''annually''; and

(B) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(d) DEADLINE FOR ELECTION; DURATION.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this subsection, each participating dairy operation shall elect a coverage level threshold under subsection (a)(1) and a coverage percentage under subsection (a)(2) to be used to determine dairy risk management payments. This election shall remain in effect for the participating dairy operation for the duration of the dairy risk management program, as specified in section 1409.''.

(2) ADDITIONAL COVERAGE LEVEL THRESHOLDS FOR CERTAIN PRODUCERS.—Section 1406(a)(1) of

the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 9056(a)(1)) is amended by inserting after ''or $8.00'' the following: ''(and in the case of production subject to premiums under section 1407(b), also $8.50 or $9.00)''.

(3) ELECTION OF PRODUCTION HISTORY COVERAGE PERCENTAGE.—Section 1406(a)(2) of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 9056(a)(2)) is amended by striking ''beginning with 25 percent and not exceeding'' and inserting ''but not to exceed''.

(h) PREMIUMS FOR PARTICIPATION IN DAIRY RISK MANAGEMENT PROGRAM.—

(1) PREMIUM PER HUNDREDWEIGHT FOR FIRST 5 MILLION POUNDS OF PRODUCTION.—Section 1407(b) of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 9057(b)) is amended—

(A) by striking paragraph (2) and inserting the following new paragraph:

''(2) PRODUCER PREMIUMS.—The following annual premiums apply:

''Coverage Level	*Premium per Cwt.*
$4.00	*None*
$4.50	*$0.002*
$5.00	*$0.005*
$5.50	*$0.008*
$6.00	*$0.010*
$6.50	*$0.017*
$7.00	*$0.041*
$7.50	*$0.057*
$8.00	*$0.090*
$8.50	*$0.120*
$9.00	*$0.170''; and*

(B) by striking paragraph (3).

(2) TECHNICAL CORRECTION.—Section 1407(d) of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 9057(d)) is amended in the subsection heading by striking ''TIME FOR'' and inserting ''METHOD OF''.

(i) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS RELATED TO PROGRAM NAME.—

(1) HEADING.—The heading of part I of subtitle D of title I of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–79; 128 Stat. 688) is amended to read as follows:

''PART I—DAIRY RISK MANAGEMENT PROGRAM FOR DAIRY PRODUCERS''.

(2) DEFINITIONS.—Section 1401 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 9051) is amended—

(A) by striking paragraphs (5) and (6) and inserting the following new paragraphs:

''(5) DAIRY RISK MANAGEMENT PROGRAM.—The terms 'dairy risk management program' and 'program' mean the dairy risk management program required by section 1403.

''(6) DAIRY RISK MANAGEMENT PAYMENT.—The term 'dairy risk management payment' means a payment made to a participating dairy operation under the program pursuant to section 1406.''; and

(B) in paragraphs (7) and (8), by striking ''margin protection'' both places it appears.

(3) CALCULATION OF ACTUAL DAIRY PRODUCTION MARGIN.—Section 1402(b)(1) of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 9052(b)(1)) is amended by striking ''margin protection'' and inserting ''dairy risk management''.

(4) PROGRAM OPERATION.—Section 1403 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 9053) is amended—

*(A) in the section heading, by striking ''**ESTABLISHMENT OF MARGIN PROTECTION**'' and inserting ''**DAIRY RISK MANAGEMENT**'';*

(B) by striking ''Not later than September 1, 2014, the Secretary shall establish and administer a margin protection program'' and inserting ''The Secretary shall continue to administer a dairy risk management program''; and

(C) by striking ''margin protection payment'' both places it appears and inserting ''dairy risk management payment''.

(5) PARTICIPATION.—Section 1404 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 9054) is amended—

*(A) in the section heading, by striking ''**MARGIN PROTECTION**'';*

(B) in subsection (a), by striking ''margin protection program to receive margin protection payments'' and inserting ''dairy risk management program to receive dairy risk management payments''; and

(C) in subsections (b) and (c), by striking ''margin protection'' each place it appears.

(6) PRODUCTION HISTORY.—Section 1405 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 9055) is amended—

(A) in subsection (a)(1)—

(i) by striking ''margin protection program'' the first place it appears and inserting ''dairy risk management program''; and

(ii) by striking ''margin protection'' the second place it appears; and

(B) in subsection (c), by striking ''margin protection''.

(7) PAYMENTS.—Section 1406 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 9056) is amended—

*(A) in the section heading, by striking ''**MARGIN PROTECTION**'' and inserting ''**DAIRY RISK MANAGEMENT**'';*

(B) by striking ''margin protection'' each place it appears and inserting ''dairy risk management''; and

(C) in the heading of subsection (c), by striking ''MARGIN PROTECTION''.

(8) PREMIUMS.—Section 1407 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 9057) is amended—

*(A) in the section heading, by striking ''**MARGIN PROTECTION**'' and inserting ''**DAIRY RISK MANAGEMENT**'';*

(B) in subsection (a), by striking ''margin protection program'' and inserting ''dairy risk management program''; and

(C) in subsection (e), by striking ''margin protection'' both places it appears.

(9) PENALTIES.—Section 1408 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 9058) is amended by striking ''margin protection'' both places it appears and inserting ''dairy risk management''.

(10) ADMINISTRATION AND ENFORCEMENT.—Section 1410 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 9060) is amended by striking ''margin protection'' each place it appears and inserting ''dairy risk management''.

(j) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(k) DURATION.—Section 1409 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 9059) is amended—

(1) by striking ''margin protection'' and inserting ''dairy risk management''; and

(2) by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 1402. CLASS I SKIM MILK PRICE.

(a) CLASS I SKIM MILK PRICE.—Section 8c(5)(A) of the Agricultural Adjustment Act (7 U.S.C. 608c(5)(A)), reenacted with amendments by the Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937, is amended by striking ''Throughout the 2-year period'' and all that follows through ''such handlers.'' and inserting the following new sentence: ''Throughout the 2-year period beginning on the effective date of this sentence (and subsequent to such 2-year period unless modified by amendment to the order involved), for purposes of determining prices for milk of the highest use classification, the Class I skim milk price per hundredweight specified in section 1000.50(b) of title 7, Code of Federal Regulations (or successor regulation), shall be the sum of the adjusted Class I differential specified in section 1000.52 of such title 7, plus the adjustment to Class I prices specified in sections 1005.51(b), 1006.51(b), and 1007.51(b) of such title 7 (or successor regulation), plus the simple average of the advanced pricing factors computed in sections 1000.50(q)(1) and 1000.50(q)(2) of such title 7 (or successor regulation), plus $0.74.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE AND IMPLEMENTATION.—

(1) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect on the first day of the first month beginning more than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(2) IMPLEMENTATION.—Implementation of the amendment made by subsection (a) is not subject to any of the following:

(A) The notice and comment provisions of section 553 of title 5, United States Code.

(B) The notice and hearing requirements of paragraphs (3) and (4) of section 8c of the Agricultural Adjustment Act (7 U.S.C. 608c), reenacted with amendments by the Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937.

(C) The order amendment requirements of section 8c(17) of such Act (7 U.S.C. 608c(17)).

(D) A referendum under section 8c(19) of such Act (7 U.S.C. 608c(19)).

SEC. 1403. EXTENSION OF DAIRY FORWARD PRICING PROGRAM.

Section 1502(e) of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 8772(e)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''; and

(2) in paragraph (2), by striking ''2021'' and inserting ''2026''.

SEC. 1404. EXTENSION OF DAIRY INDEMNITY PROGRAM.

Section 3 of Public Law 90–484 (7 U.S.C. 450l) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 1405. EXTENSION OF DAIRY PROMOTION AND RESEARCH PROGRAM.

Section 113(e)(2) of the Dairy Production Stabilization Act of 1983 (7 U.S.C. 4504(e)(2)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 1406. REPEAL OF DAIRY PRODUCT DONATION PROGRAM.

Section 1431 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 9071) is repealed.

Subtitle E—Supplemental Agricultural Disaster Assistance Programs

SEC. 1501. MODIFICATION OF SUPPLEMENTAL AGRICULTURAL DISASTER ASSISTANCE.

(a) COVERED LIVESTOCK LOSSES FOR LIVESTOCK INDEMNITY PAYMENTS.—Section 1501(b) of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 9081(b)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) by striking ''or'' at the end of subparagraph (A);

(B) by striking the period at the end of subparagraph (B) and inserting ''; or''; and

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

''(C) disease that, as determined by the Secretary—

''(i) is caused or transmitted by a vector; and

''(ii) is not susceptible to control by vaccination or acceptable management practices.''; and

(2) in paragraph (4), by striking ''A payment'' and inserting ''PAYMENT REDUCTIONS.—A payment''.

(b) PAYMENT LIMITATIONS AND EXCLUSION OF GROSS INCOME LIMITATION.—Section 1501(f) of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 9081(f)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2)—

(A) by striking ''this section (excluding payments received under subsections (b) and (e))'' and inserting ''subsection (c)''; and

(B) by striking ''joint venture or general partnership'' and inserting ''qualified pass through entity (as such term is defined in paragraph (5) of section 1001(a) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (7 U.S.C. 1308(a)))''; and

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

''(4) EXCLUSION OF GROSS INCOME LIMITATION.—For purposes of this section only, subsection (b) of section 1001D of the Food Security Act of 1985 (7 U.S.C. 1308–3a) shall not apply to a person or legal entity if 75 percent or greater of the average adjusted gross income (as such term is defined in subsection (a) of such section) of such person or legal entity derives from farming, ranching, or silviculture activities.''.

(c) APPLICATION OF AMENDMENTS.—Section 1501 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 9081), as amended by this section, shall apply with respect to losses described in such section 1501 incurred on or after January 1, 2017.

Subtitle F—Administration

SEC. 1601. ADMINISTRATION GENERALLY.

(a) USE OF COMMODITY CREDIT CORPORATION.—The Secretary shall use the funds, facilities, and authorities of the Commodity Credit Corporation to carry out this title.

(b) DETERMINATIONS BY SECRETARY.—A determination made by the Secretary under this title shall be final and conclusive.

(c) REGULATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as otherwise provided in this subsection, not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary and the Commodity Credit Corporation, as appropriate, shall promulgate such regulations as are necessary to implement this title and the amendments made by this title.

(2) PROCEDURE.—The promulgation of the regulations and administration of this title and the amendments made by this title shall be made without regard to—

(A) the notice and comment provisions of section 553 of title 5, United States Code; and

(B) chapter 35 of title 44, United States Code (commonly known as the ''Paperwork Reduction Act'').

(3) CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW OF AGENCY RULEMAKING.—In carrying out this subsection, the Secretary shall use the authority provided under section 808 of title 5, United States Code.

(d) ADJUSTMENT AUTHORITY RELATED TO TRADE AGREEMENTS COMPLIANCE.—

(1) REQUIRED DETERMINATION; ADJUSTMENT.—If the Secretary determines that expenditures under this title that are subject to the total allowable domestic support levels under the Uruguay Round Agreements (as defined in section 2 of the Uruguay Round Agreements Act (19 U.S.C. 3501)) will exceed such allowable levels for any applicable reporting period, the Secretary shall, to the maximum extent practicable, make adjustments in the amount of such expenditures during that period to ensure that such expenditures do not exceed the allowable levels.

(2) CONGRESSIONAL NOTIFICATION.—Before making any adjustment under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate a report describing the determination made under that paragraph and the extent of the adjustment to be made.

SEC. 1602. SUSPENSION OF PERMANENT PRICE SUPPORT AUTHORITY.

(a) AGRICULTURAL ADJUSTMENT ACT OF 1938.—The following provisions of the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938 shall not be applicable to the 2019 through 2023 crops of covered commodities (as defined in section 1111), cotton, and sugar and shall not be applicable to milk during the period beginning on the date of enactment of this Act through December 31, 2023:

(1) Parts II through V of subtitle B of title III (7 U.S.C. 1326 et seq.).

(2) In the case of upland cotton, section 377 (7 U.S.C. 1377).

(3) Subtitle D of title III (7 U.S.C. 1379a et seq.).

(4) Title IV (7 U.S.C. 1401 et seq.).

(b) AGRICULTURAL ACT OF 1949.—

(1) APPLICABILITY.—The following provisions of the Agricultural Act of 1949 shall not be applicable to the 2019 through 2023 crops of covered commodities (as defined in section 1111), cotton, and sugar and shall not be applicable to milk during the period beginning on the date of enactment of this Act through December 31, 2023:

(A) Section 101 (7 U.S.C. 1441).

(B) Section 103(a) (7 U.S.C. 1444(a)).

(C) Section 105 (7 U.S.C. 1444b).

(D) Section 107 (7 U.S.C. 1445a).

(E) Section 110 (7 U.S.C. 1445e).

(F) Section 112 (7 U.S.C. 1445g).

(G) Section 115 (7 U.S.C. 1445k).

(H) Section 201 (7 U.S.C. 1446).

(I) Title III (7 U.S.C. 1447 et seq.).

(J) Title IV (7 U.S.C. 1421 et seq.), other than sections 404, 412, and 416 (7 U.S.C. 1424, 1429, and 1431).

(K) Title V (7 U.S.C. 1461 et seq.).

(L) Title VI (7 U.S.C. 1471 et seq.).

(2) CLARIFYING AMENDMENTS.—Section 201(a) of the Agricultural Act of 1949 (7 U.S.C. 1446(a)) is amended—

(A) by inserting '', crambe, cottonseed, sesame seed'' after ''mustard seed'';

(B) by inserting ''dry peas, lentils, small chickpeas, large chickpeas, graded wool, nongraded wool, mohair, peanuts,'' after ''honey,''; and

(C) by striking ''in accordance with this title'' and inserting ''consistent with the percentage levels of support provided under subsection (c), except as otherwise provided for under subsection (b)''.

(c) SUSPENSION OF CERTAIN QUOTA PROVISIONS.—The joint resolution entitled ''A joint resolution relating to corn and wheat marketing quotas under the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938, as amended'', approved May 26, 1941 (7 U.S.C. 1330 and 1340), shall not be applicable to the crops of wheat planted for harvest in the calendar years 2019 through 2023.

SEC. 1603. PAYMENT LIMITATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1001 of the Food Security Act of 1985 (7 U.S.C. 1308) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (1) by striking ''section 1001 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008'' and inserting ''section 1111 of the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018'';

(B) in paragraph (2), by inserting ''first cousin, niece, nephew,'' after ''sibling,'';

(C) by redesignating paragraph (5) as (6); and

(D) by inserting after paragraph (4) the following new paragraph:

''(5) QUALIFIED PASS THROUGH ENTITY.—The term 'qualified pass through entity' means a partnership (within the meaning of subchapter K of chapter 1 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and including a limited liability company that does not affirmatively elect to be treated as a corporation), an S corporation (as defined in section 1361 of such Code), or a joint venture.'';

(2) in subsections (b) and (c) by striking ''entity'' through ''Agricultural Act of 2014'' in each place it appears and inserting ''entity (except a qualified pass through entity) for any crop year under sections 1116 and 1117 of the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018'';

(3) in subsection (d) by striking ''associated'' and all that follows through the end of the sentence and inserting ''associated with subtitle B of title I of the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018.''; and

(4) in subsection (f), by adding the end the following new paragraph:

''(9) ADMINISTRATION OF REDUCTION.—The Secretary shall apply any order described in section 1614(d)(1) of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 9097(d)(1)) to payments under sections 1116 and 1117 of the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018 prior to applying payment limitations under this section.''.

(b) TREATMENT OF QUALIFIED PASS THROUGH ENTITIES.—Section 1001(e)(3)(B)(ii) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (7 U.S.C. 1308(e)(3)(B)(ii)) is amended—

(1) in the heading, by striking ''JOINT VENTURES AND GENERAL PARTNERSHIPS'' and inserting ''QUALIFIED PASS THROUGH ENTITIES'';

(2) by striking ''joint venture or a general partnership'' and inserting ''qualified pass through entity'';

(3) by striking ''joint ventures and general partnerships'' and inserting ''qualified pass through entities''; and

(4) by striking ''joint venture or general partnership'' and inserting ''qualified pass through entity''.

(c) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) TREATMENT OF FEDERAL AGENCIES AND STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS.—Section 1001(f) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (7 U.S.C. 1308(f)) is amended—

(A) in paragraph (5)(A), by striking ''or title XII'' and inserting ''title I of the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018, or title XII''; and

(B) in paragraph (6)(A), by striking ''or title XII'' and inserting ''title I of the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018, or title XII''.

(2) FOREIGN PERSONS INELIGIBLE.—Section 1001C(a) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (7 U.S.C. 1308–3(a)) is amended by inserting ''title I of the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018,'' after ''2014,''.

(d) APPLICATION.—The amendments made by this section shall apply beginning with the 2019 crop year.

SEC. 1604. ADJUSTED GROSS INCOME LIMITATION.

(a) LIMITATIONS.—Section 1001D(b)(2) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (7 U.S.C. 1308–3a(b)(2)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''title I of the Agricultural Act of 2014'' and inserting ''title I of the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018'';

(2) in subparagraph (C)—

(A) by inserting ''title II of the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018,'' after ''under''; and

(B) by striking ''Starting with fiscal year 2015, a'' and inserting ''A'';

(3) by striking subparagraphs (B) and (D); and

(4) by redesignating subparagraphs (C) and (E) as subparagraphs (B) and (C), respectively.

(b) EXCEPTIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 1001D(b) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (7 U.S.C. 1308–3a(b)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(3) EXCEPTIONS.—

''(A) EXCEPTION FOR QUALIFIED PASS THROUGH ENTITIES.—Paragraph (1) shall not apply with respect to a qualified pass through entity (as such term is defined in section 1001(a)(5)).

''(B) WAIVER.—The Secretary may waive the limitation established by paragraph (1) with respect to a payment pursuant to a covered benefit described in paragraph (2)(B), on a case-by-case basis, if the Secretary determines that environmentally sensitive land of special significance would be protected as a result of such waiver.''.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 1001D of the Food Security Act of 1985 (7 U.S.C. 1308–3a) is amended—

(A) in subsection (b)(1), by inserting ''subject to paragraph (3),'' after ''of law,''; and

(B) in subsection (d), by striking '', general partnership, or joint venture'' both places it appears.

(c) TRANSITION.—Section 1001D of the Food Security Act of 1985 (7 U.S.C. 1308–3a), as in effect on the day before the date of the enactment of this Act, shall apply with respect to the 2018 crop, fiscal, or program year, as appropriate, for each program described in subsection (b)(2) of that section (as so in effect on that day).

SEC. 1605. PREVENTION OF DECEASED INDIVIDUALS RECEIVING PAYMENTS UNDER FARM COMMODITY PROGRAMS.

(a) RECONCILIATION.—At least twice each year, the Secretary shall reconcile Social Security numbers of all individuals who receive payments under this title, whether directly or indirectly, with the Commissioner of Social Security to determine if the individuals are alive.

(b) PRECLUSION.—The Secretary shall preclude the issuance of payments to, and on behalf of, deceased individuals that were not eligible for payments.

SEC. 1606. ASSIGNMENT OF PAYMENTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The provisions of section 8(g) of the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act (16 U.S.C. 590h(g)), relating to assignment of payments, shall apply to payments made under this title.

(b) NOTICE.—The producer making the assignment, or the assignee, shall provide the Secretary with notice, in such manner as the Secretary may require, of any assignment made under this section.

SEC. 1607. TRACKING OF BENEFITS.

As soon as practicable after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary may track the benefits provided, directly or indirectly, to individuals and entities under titles I and II and the amendments made by those titles.

SEC. 1608. SIGNATURE AUTHORITY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out this title and title II and amendments made by those titles, if the Secretary approves a document, the Secretary shall not subsequently determine the document is inadequate or invalid because of the lack of authority of any person signing the document on behalf of the applicant or any other individual, entity, or qualified pass through entity (as such term is defined in paragraph (5) of section 1001(a) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (7 U.S.C. 1308(a))) or the documents relied upon were determined inadequate or invalid, unless the person signing the program document knowingly and willfully falsified the evidence of signature authority or a signature.

(b) AFFIRMATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Nothing in this section prohibits the Secretary from asking a proper party to affirm any document that otherwise would be considered approved under subsection (a).

(2) NO RETROACTIVE EFFECT.—A denial of benefits based on a lack of affirmation under paragraph (1) shall not be retroactive with respect to third-party producers who were not the subject of the erroneous representation of authority, if the third-party producers—

(A) relied on the prior approval by the Secretary of the documents in good faith; and

(B) substantively complied with all program requirements.

SEC. 1609. PERSONAL LIABILITY OF PRODUCERS FOR DEFICIENCIES.

Section 164(a) of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (7 U.S.C. 7284(a)) is amended by striking ''this title'' and all that follows through ''unless'' and inserting ''this title, title I of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, title I of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 8702 et seq.), title I of the Agricultural Act of 2014, or Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018''.

SEC. 1610. IMPLEMENTATION.

(a) MAINTENANCE OF BASE ACRES AND PAYMENT YIELDS.—The Secretary shall maintain, for each covered commodity, base acres and payment yields on a farm established under sections 1001 and 1301 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 8702, 8751), as adjusted pursuant to sections 1101, 1102, 1108, and 1302 of such Act (7 U.S.C. 8711, 8712, 8718, 8752), as in effect on September 30, 2013, and as adjusted pursuant to sections 1112 and 1113 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 9012, 9013).

(b) STREAMLINING.—In implementing this title and amendments made by this title, the Secretary shall—

(1) continue to reduce administrative burdens and costs to producers by streamlining and reducing paperwork, forms, and other administrative requirements, including through the continuation of the Acreage Crop Reporting and Streamlining Initiative that, in part, shall ensure that—

(A) a producer (or an agent of a producer) may report information, electronically (including geospatial data) or conventionally, to the Department;

(B) upon the request of the producer (or agent thereof), the Department of Agriculture electronically shares with the producer (or agent) in real time and without cost to the producer (or agent) the common land unit data, related farm level data, and other information of the producer; and

(C) no agent, approved insurance provider, or employee or contractor of an agency or approved insurance provider, bears responsibility or liability under the Acreage Crop Reporting and Streamlining Initiative for the eligibility of a producer for programs administered by the Department of Agriculture that are not policies or plans of insurance offered under the Federal Crop Insurance Act (7 U.S.C. 1501 et. seq.) except in cases of misrepresentation, fraud, or scheme and device;

(2) continue to improve coordination, information sharing, and administrative work with the Farm Service Agency, Risk Management Agency, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service;

(3) continue to take advantage of new technologies to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of program delivery to producers; and

(4) reduce administrative burdens on producers by offering such producers an option to remotely and electronically sign annual contracts for participation in coverage under sections 1116 and 1117.

(c) IMPLEMENTATION.—The Secretary shall make available to the Farm Service Agency to carry out this title and amendments made by this title, $25,000,000.

(d) LOAN IMPLEMENTATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 1614(d)(1) of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 9097(d)(1)) is amended—

(A) by inserting ''or subtitles B and C of the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018'' after ''this title'';

(B) by striking ''made by subtitles B or C'' and inserting ''made by such subtitles''; and

(C) by inserting ''of this title, and sections 1207(c) and 1208 of the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018'' after ''1208''.

(2) REPAYMENT.—Section 1614(d)(2) of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 9097(d)(2)) is amended—

(A) by striking ''of subtitles B or C'' and inserting ''of subtitle B or C of this title, or subtitle B or C of the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018''; and

(B) by striking ''under subtitles B or C'' and inserting ''of subtitle B or C of this title, or subtitle B or C of the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018''.

SEC. 1611. EXEMPTION FROM CERTAIN REPORTING REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTAIN PRODUCERS.

(a) DEFINITION OF EXEMPTED PRODUCER.—In this section, the term ''exempted producer'' means a producer or landowner eligible to participate in any conservation or commodity program administered by the Secretary.

(b) EXEMPTION.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, including the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (Public Law 109–282; 31 U.S.C. 6101 note), the requirements of parts 25 and 170 of title 2, Code of Federal Regulations (and any successor regulations), shall not apply with respect to assistance received by an exempted producer from the Secretary, acting through the Natural Resources Conservation Service or the Farm Service Agency.

TITLE II—CONSERVATION

Subtitle A—Wetland Conservation

SEC. 2101. PROGRAM INELIGIBILITY.

Section 1221(d) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3821(d)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''Except as provided'' and inserting the following:

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(B) DUTY OF THE SECRETARY.—Before determining that a person is ineligible for program benefits under this subsection, the Secretary shall determine that no exemption under section 1222 applies.''.

SEC. 2102. MINIMAL EFFECT REGULATIONS.

(a) IDENTIFICATION OF MINIMAL EFFECT EXEMPTIONS.—Section 1222(d) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3822(d)) is amended by inserting ''not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018,'' before ''the Secretary shall identify''.

(b) MITIGATION BANKING.—Section 1222(k)(1)(B) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3822(k)(1)(B)) is amended to read as follows:

''(B) FUNDING.—

''(i) FUNDS OF COMMODITY CREDIT CORPORATION.—To carry out this paragraph, the Secretary shall use $10,000,000 of the funds of the Commodity Credit Corporation beginning in fiscal year 2019, which funds shall remain available until expended.

''(ii) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—In addition to amounts made available under clause (i), there are authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary to carry out this paragraph $5,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023.''.

Subtitle B—Conservation Reserve Program

SEC. 2201. CONSERVATION RESERVE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1231(a) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3831(a)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

(b) ENROLLMENT.—Section 1231(d) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3831(d)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) in subparagraph (D), by striking ''; and'' and inserting a semicolon;

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

(C) by adding at the end the following:

''(F) fiscal year 2019, no more than 25,000,000 acres;

''(G) fiscal year 2020, no more than 26,000,000 acres;

''(H) fiscal year 2021, no more than 27,000,000 acres;

''(I) fiscal year 2022, no more than 28,000,000 acres; and

''(J) fiscal year 2023, no more than 29,000,000 acres.'';

(2) in paragraph (2)—

(A) by amending subparagraph (A) to read as follows:

''(A) LIMITATION.—For purposes of applying the limitations in paragraph (1)—

''(i) no more than 2,000,000 acres of the land described in subsection (b)(3) may be enrolled in the program at any one time during the 2014 through 2018 fiscal years;

''(ii) the Secretary shall enroll and maintain in the conservation reserve not fewer than 3,000,000 acres of the land described in subsection (b)(3) by September 30, 2023; and

''(iii) in carrying out clause (ii), to the maximum extent practicable, the Secretary shall maintain in the conservation reserve at any one time during—

''(I) fiscal year 2019, 1,000,000 acres;

''(II) fiscal year 2020, 1,500,000 acres;

''(III) fiscal year 2021, 2,000,000 acres;

''(IV) fiscal year 2022, 2,500,000 acres; and

''(V) fiscal year 2023, 3,000,000 acres.''; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

''(D) RESERVATION OF UNENROLLED ACRES.—If the Secretary is unable in a fiscal year to enroll enough acres of land described in subsection (b)(3) to meet the number of acres described in clause (ii) or (iii) of subparagraph (A) for the fiscal year, the Secretary shall reserve the remaining number of acres for that fiscal year for the enrollment of land described in subsection (b)(3), and that number of acres shall not be available for the enrollment of any other type of eligible land.''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(3) STATE ENROLLMENT RATES.—During each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023, to the maximum extent practicable, the Secretary shall carry out this subchapter in such a manner as to enroll and maintain acreage in the conservation reserve in accordance with historical State enrollment rates, considering—

''(A) the average number of acres of all lands enrolled in the conservation reserve in each State during each of fiscal years 2007 through 2016;

''(B) the average number of acres of all lands enrolled in the conservation reserve nationally during each of fiscal years 2007 through 2016; and

''(C) the acres available for enrollment during each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023, excluding acres described in paragraph (2).

''(4) FREQUENCY.—In carrying out this subchapter, for contracts that are not available on a continuous enrollment basis, the Secretary shall hold a signup not less often than once every other year.''.

(c) DURATION OF CONTRACT.—Section 1231(e) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3831(e)) is amended to read as follows:

''(e) DURATION OF CONTRACT.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), for the purpose of carrying out this subchapter, the Secretary shall enter into contracts of not less than 10, nor more than 15, years.

''(2) CERTAIN CONTINUOUS CONTRACTS.—With respect to contracts under this subchapter for the enrollment of land described in paragraph (4) or (5) of subsection (b), the Secretary shall enter into contracts of a period of 15 or 30 years.''.

(d) ELIGIBILITY FOR CONSIDERATION.—Section 1231(h) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3831(h)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''On the expiration'' and inserting the following:

''(1) IN GENERAL.—On the expiration''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(2) REENROLLMENT LIMITATION FOR CERTAIN LAND.—Land subject to a contract entered into under this subchapter shall be eligible for only one reenrollment in the conservation reserve under paragraph (1) if the land is devoted to hardwood trees.''.

SEC. 2202. FARMABLE WETLAND PROGRAM.

(a) PROGRAM REQUIRED.—Section 1231B(a)(1) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3831b(a)(1)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

(b) ELIGIBLE ACREAGE.—Section 1231B(b)(2) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3831b(b)(2)) is amended to read as follows:

''(2) BUFFER ACREAGE.—Subject to subsections (c) and (d), an owner or operator may enroll in the conservation reserve, pursuant to the program established under this section, buffer acreage that, with respect to land described in subparagraph (A), (B), or (C) of paragraph (1)—

''(A) is contiguous to such land;

''(B) is used to protect such land; and

''(C) is of such width as the Secretary determines is necessary to protect such land, taking into consideration and accommodating the farming practices (including the straightening of boundaries to accommodate machinery) used with respect to the cropland that surrounds such land.''.

(c) PROGRAM LIMITATIONS.—Section 1231B(c) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3831b(c)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)(B), by striking ''750,000'' and inserting ''500,000'';

(2) in paragraph (2), by striking ''Subject to paragraph (3), any acreage'' and inserting ''Any acreage''; and

(3) by striking paragraphs (3) and (4).

(d) DUTIES OF OWNERS AND OPERATORS.—Section 1231B(e) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3831b(e)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2), by striking the semicolon and inserting ''; and'';

(2) by striking paragraph (3); and

(3) by redesignating paragraph (4) as paragraph (3).

(e) DUTIES OF THE SECRETARY.—Section 1231B(f) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3831b(f)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking ''paragraphs (2) and (3)'' and inserting ''paragraph (2)'';

(2) in paragraph (2), by striking ''section 1234(d)(2)(A)(ii)'' and inserting ''section 1234(d)(2)(A)''; and

(3) by striking paragraph (3).

SEC. 2203. DUTIES OF OWNERS AND OPERATORS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1232(a) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3832(a)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (5), by inserting '', which may include the use of grazing in accordance with paragraph (8),'' after ''management on the land''; and

(2) by redesignating paragraphs (10) and (11) as paragraphs (11) and (12), respectively, and inserting after paragraph (9) the following:

''(10) on land devoted to hardwood or other trees, excluding windbreaks and shelterbelts, to carry out proper thinning and other practices to improve the condition of resources, promote forest management, and enhance wildlife habitat on the land;''.

(b) CONSERVATION PLANS.—Section 1232(b)(2) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3832(b)(2)) is amended by striking '', if any,''.

SEC. 2204. DUTIES OF THE SECRETARY.

(a) COST-SHARE AND RENTAL PAYMENTS.—Section 1233(a)(2) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3833(a)(2)) is amended by striking ''pay an annual rental payment in an amount necessary to compensate for'' and inserting ''pay an annual rental payment, in accordance with section 1234(d), for''.

(b) SPECIFIED ACTIVITIES PERMITTED.—Section 1233(b) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3833(b)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2)—

(A) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A)—

(i) by striking ''not less than 25 percent'' and inserting ''25 percent''; and

(ii) by inserting ''(except that vegetative cover may not be harvested for seed)'' after ''managed harvesting'';

(B) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''; and'' and inserting a semicolon;

(C) in subparagraph (B), by striking ''is at least every 5 but not more than once every 3 years;'' and inserting ''contributes to the health and vigor of the established cover, and is not more than once every 3 years; and''; and

(D) by adding at the end the following:

''(C) shall ensure that 25 percent of the acres covered by the contract are not harvested, in accordance with an approved plan that provides for wildlife cover and shelter;'';

(2) in paragraph (3)—

(A) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking ''not less than 25 percent'' and inserting ''25 percent''; and

(B) in subparagraph (B)—

(i) in the matter preceding clause (i), by striking ''routine grazing, except that in permitting such routine grazing'' and inserting ''grazing, except that in permitting such grazing'';

(ii) in clause (i), by striking ''continued routine grazing; and'' and inserting ''grazing;'';

(iii) in clause (ii)—

(I) in the matter preceding subclause (I), by striking ''routine grazing may be conducted, such that the frequency is not more than once every 2 years'' and inserting ''grazing may be conducted, such that the frequency contributes to the health and vigor of the established cover'';

(II) in subclause (II), by striking ''the number of years that should be required between routine'' and inserting ''the appropriate frequency and duration of''; and

(III) in subclause (III), by striking ''routine'' each place it appears; and

(iv) by adding at the end the following:

''(iii) shall ensure that the grazing is conducted in accordance with an approved plan that does not restrict grazing during the primary nesting season and will reduce the stocking rate determined under clause (i) by 50 percent; and'';

(3) by redesignating paragraphs (4) and (5) as paragraphs (5) and (6), respectively;

(4) by inserting after paragraph (3) the following:

''(4) grazing during the applicable normal grazing period determined under subclause (I) of section 1501(c)(3)(D)(i) of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 9081(c)(3)(D)(i)), without any restriction on grazing during the primary nesting period, subject to the condition that the grazing shall be at 50 percent of the normal carrying capacity determined under that subclause.'';

(5) in paragraph (5), as so redesignated, by striking ''; and'' and inserting ''and retains suitable vegetative structure for wildlife cover and shelter;'';

(6) in paragraph (6)(C), as so redesignated, by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(7) by adding at the end the following:

''(7) grazing pursuant to section 1232(a)(5), without any reduction in the rental rate, if the grazing is consistent with the conservation of soil, water quality, and wildlife habitat.''.

(c) NATURAL DISASTER OR ADVERSE WEATHER AS MID-CONTRACT MANAGEMENT.—Section 1233 of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3833) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(e) NATURAL DISASTER OR ADVERSE WEATHER AS MID-CONTRACT MANAGEMENT.—In the case of a natural disaster or adverse weather event that has the effect of a management practice consistent with the conservation plan, the Secretary shall not require further management practices pursuant to section 1232(a)(5) that are intended to achieve the same effect.''.

SEC. 2205. PAYMENTS.

(a) COST SHARING PAYMENTS.—Section 1234(b) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3834(b)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking ''50 percent'' and inserting ''not more than 40 percent'';

(2) by amending paragraph (2) to read as follows:

''(2) LIMITATIONS.—

''(A) EXCEPTION FOR SEED COSTS.—In the case of seed costs related to the establishment of cover, cost share shall not exceed 25 percent of the total cost of the seed mixture.

''(B) ADDITIONAL INCENTIVE PAYMENTS.—Except as provided in subsection (c), the Secretary may not make additional incentive payments beyond the actual cost of installing measures and practices described in paragraph (1).

''(C) MID-CONTRACT MANAGEMENT GRAZING.—The Secretary may not make any cost sharing payment to an owner or operator under this subchapter pursuant to section 1232(a)(5).''; and

(3) by striking paragraphs (3) and (4) and redesignating paragraph (5) as paragraph (3).

(b) INCENTIVE PAYMENTS.—Section 1234(c) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3834(c)) is amended—

(1) in the subsection heading, by striking ''INCENTIVE'' and inserting ''FOREST MANAGEMENT PAYMENT'';

(2) in paragraph (1), by striking ''The Secretary'' and inserting ''Using funds made available under section 1241(a)(1)(A), the Secretary''; and

(3) in paragraph (2), by striking ''150 percent'' and inserting ''100 percent''.

(c) ANNUAL RENTAL PAYMENTS.—Section 1234(d) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3834(d)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) by striking ''less intensive use, the Secretary may consider'' and inserting the following: ''less intensive use—

''(A) the Secretary may consider'';

(B) by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

''(B) the Secretary shall consider the impact on the local farmland rental market.'';

(2) in paragraph (2)—

(A) by amending subparagraph (A) to read as follows:

''(A) IN GENERAL.—

''(i) INITIAL ENROLLMENT.—The amounts payable to an owner or operator in the form of annual rental payments under a contract entered

into under this subchapter with respect to land that has not previously been subject to such a contract shall be not more than 80 percent of the applicable estimated average county rental rate published pursuant to paragraph (4) for the year in which the contract is entered into.

''(ii) MULTIPLE ENROLLMENTS.—If land subject to a contract entered into under this subchapter is reenrolled in the conservation reserve under section 1231(h)(1)—

''(I) for the first such reenrollment, the annual rental payment shall be in an amount that is not more than 65 percent of the applicable estimated average county rental rate published pursuant to paragraph (4) for the year in which the reenrollment occurs;

''(II) for the second such reenrollment, the annual rental payment shall be in an amount that is not more than 55 percent of the applicable estimated average county rental rate published pursuant to paragraph (4) for the year in which the reenrollment occurs;

''(III) for the third such reenrollment, the annual rental payment shall be in an amount that is not more than 45 percent of the applicable estimated average county rental rate published pursuant to paragraph (4) for the year in which the reenrollment occurs; and

''(IV) for the fourth such reenrollment, the annual rental payment shall be in an amount that is not more than 35 percent of the applicable estimated average county rental rate published pursuant to paragraph (4) for the year in which the reenrollment occurs.''; and

(B) in subparagraph (B), by striking ''In the case'' and inserting ''Notwithstanding subparagraph (A), in the case'';

(3) by striking paragraph (4) and redesignating paragraph (5) as paragraph (4); and

(4) in paragraph (4), as so redesignated—

(A) by striking ''cash'' each place it appears;

(B) in subparagraph (A)—

(i) by striking '', not less frequently than once every other year,'' and inserting ''annually''; and

(ii) by inserting '', and shall publish the estimates derived from such survey not later than September 15 of each year'' before the period at the end; and

(C) in subparagraph (C)—

(i) by striking ''may'' and inserting ''shall''; and

(ii) by striking ''as a factor in determining'' and inserting ''to determine''.

(d) PAYMENT LIMITATION FOR RENTAL PAYMENTS.—Section 1234(g)(2) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3834(g)(2)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(C) LIMITATION ON PAYMENTS.—Payments under subparagraph (B) shall not exceed 50 percent of the cost of activities carried out under the applicable agreement entered into under such subparagraph.''.

SEC. 2206. CONTRACTS.

(a) EARLY TERMINATION BY OWNER OR OPERATOR.—Section 1235(e)(1)(A) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3835(e)(1)(A)) is amended by striking ''2015'' and inserting ''2019''.

(b) TRANSITION OPTION FOR CERTAIN FARMERS OR RANCHERS.—Section 1235(f) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3835(f)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) by amending subparagraph (A) to read as follows:

''(A) beginning on the date that is 1 year before the date of termination of the contract, allow the covered farmer or rancher, in conjunction with the retired or retiring owner or operator, to make conservation and land improvements, including preparing to plant an agricultural crop;'';

(B) by redesignating subparagraphs (B) through (E) as subparagraphs (C) through (F), respectively, and inserting after subparagraph (A) the following:

''(B) beginning on the date that is 3 years before the date of termination of the contract, allow the covered farmer or rancher to begin the certification process under the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 6501 et seq.);'';

(C) in subparagraph (D), as so redesignated, by inserting '', and provide to such farmer or rancher technical and financial assistance to carry out the requirements of the plan, if any'' before the semicolon at the end; and

(D) in subparagraph (E), as so redesignated, by striking ''the conservation stewardship program or''; and

(2) in paragraph (2)—

(A) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking ''The Secretary'' and inserting ''To the extent the maximum number of acres permitted to be enrolled under the program has not been met, the Secretary''; and

(B) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''eligible for enrollment under the continuous signup option pursuant to section 1234(d)(2)(A)(ii)'' and inserting ''is carried out on land described in paragraph (4) or (5) of section 1231(b)''.

(c) END OF CONTRACT CONSIDERATIONS.—Section 1235(g) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3835(g)) is amended to read as follows:

''(g) END OF CONTRACT CONSIDERATIONS.—The Secretary shall not consider an owner or operator to be in violation of a term or condition of the conservation reserve contract if—

''(1) during the year prior to expiration of the contract, the owner or operator—

''(A) enters into an environmental quality incentives program contract; and

''(B) begins the establishment of an environmental quality incentives practice; or

''(2) during the three years prior to the expiration of the contract, the owner or operator begins the certification process under the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990.''.

Subtitle C—Environmental Quality Incentives Program

SEC. 2301. DEFINITIONS.

(a) PRACTICE.—Section 1240A(4)(B) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3839aa–1(4)(B)) is amended—

(1) in clause (i), by striking ''; and'' and inserting a semicolon; and

(2) by redesignating clause (ii) as clause (iv) and inserting after clause (i) the following:

''(ii) precision conservation management planning;

''(iii) the use of cover crops and resource conserving crop rotations; and''.

(b) PRIORITY RESOURCE CONCERN.—Section 1240A of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3839aa–1) is amended by redesignating paragraph (5) as paragraph (6) and inserting after paragraph (4) the following:

''(5) PRIORITY RESOURCE CONCERN.—The term 'priority resource concern' means a natural resource concern or problem, as determined by the Secretary, that—

''(A) is identified at the national, State, or local level as a priority for a particular area of a State; and

''(B) represents a significant concern in a State or region.''.

(c) STEWARDSHIP PRACTICE.—Section 1240A of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3839aa–1) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(7) STEWARDSHIP PRACTICE.—The term 'stewardship practice' means a practice or set of practices approved by the Secretary that, when implemented and maintained on eligible land, address 1 or more priority resource concerns.''.

SEC. 2302. ESTABLISHMENT AND ADMINISTRATION.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Section 1240B(a) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3839aa–2(a)) is amended by striking ''2019'' and inserting ''2023''.

(b) ALLOCATION OF FUNDING.—Section 1240B(f) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3839aa–2(f)) is amended to read as follows:

''(f) ALLOCATION OF FUNDING.—For each of fiscal years 2014 through 2023, at least 5 percent of the funds made available for payments under the program shall be targeted at practices benefitting wildlife habitat under subsection (g).''.

(c) WATER CONSERVATION OR IRRIGATION EFFICIENCY PRACTICE.—Section 1240B(h) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3839aa–2(h)) is amended—

(1) by amending paragraph (1) to read as follows:

''(1) AVAILABILITY OF PAYMENTS.—The Secretary may provide water conservation and system efficiency payments under this subsection to a producer for—

''(A) a water conservation scheduling technology or water conservation scheduling management;

''(B) irrigation-related structural practices; or

''(C) a transition to water-conserving crops or water-conserving crop rotations.'';

(2) by redesignating paragraph (2) as paragraph (3) and inserting after paragraph (1) the following:

''(2) LIMITED ELIGIBILITY OF IRRIGATION DISTRICTS, IRRIGATION ASSOCIATIONS, AND ACEQUIAS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding section 1001(f)(6), the Secretary may enter into a contract under this subsection with an irrigation district, irrigation association, or acequia to implement water conservation or irrigation practices pursuant to a watershed-wide project that will effectively conserve water, as determined by the Secretary.

''(B) IMPLEMENTATION.—Water conservation or irrigation practices that are the subject of a contract entered into under this paragraph shall be implemented on—

''(i) eligible land of a producer; or

''(ii) land that is under the control of the irrigation district, irrigation association, or acequia, and adjacent to such eligible land, as determined by the Secretary.

''(C) WAIVER AUTHORITY.—The Secretary may waive the applicability of the limitations in section 1001D(b)(2) or section 1240G of this Act for a payment made under a contract entered into under this paragraph if the Secretary determines that such a waiver is necessary to fulfill the objectives of the project.

''(D) CONTRACT LIMITATIONS.—If the Secretary grants a waiver under subparagraph (C), the Secretary may impose a separate payment limitation for the contract with respect to which the waiver applies.''; and

(3) in paragraph (3), as so redesignated—

(A) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking ''to a producer'' and inserting ''under this subsection'';

(B) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''the eligible land of the producer is located, there is a reduction in water use in the operation of the producer'' and inserting ''the land on which the practices will be implemented is located, there is a reduction in water use in the operation on such land''; and

(C) in subparagraph (B), by inserting ''with respect to an application under paragraph (1),'' before ''the producer agrees''.

(d) STEWARDSHIP CONTRACTS.—Section 1240B of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3839aa–2) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(j) STEWARDSHIP CONTRACTS.—

''(1) IDENTIFICATION OF ELIGIBLE PRIORITY RESOURCE CONCERNS FOR STATES.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, in consultation with the State technical committee, shall identify priority resource concerns within a State that are eligible to be the subject of a stewardship contract under this subsection.

''(B) LIMITATION.—The Secretary shall identify not more than 3 eligible priority resource concerns under subparagraph (A) within each area of a State.

''(2) CONTRACTS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall enter into contracts with producers under this subsection that—

''(i) provide incentives, through annual payments, to producers to attain increased conservation stewardship on eligible land;

''(ii) adopt and install a stewardship practice to effectively address a priority resource concern identified as eligible under paragraph (1); and

''(iii) require management and maintenance of such stewardship practice for the term of the contract.

''(B) TERM.—A contract under this subsection shall have a term of not less than 5, nor more than 10, years.

''(C) PRIORITIZATION.—Section 1240C(b) shall not apply to applications for contracts under this subsection.

''(3) STEWARDSHIP PAYMENTS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall provide payments to producers through contracts entered into under paragraph (2) for—

''(i) adopting and installing stewardship practices; and

''(ii) managing, maintaining, and improving the stewardship practices for the duration of the contract, as determined appropriate by the Secretary.

''(B) PAYMENT AMOUNTS.—In determining the amount of payments under subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall consider, to the extent practicable—

''(i) the level and extent of the stewardship practice to be installed, adopted, completed, maintained, managed, or improved;

''(ii) the cost of the installation, adoption, completion, management, maintenance, or improvement of the stewardship practice;

''(iii) income foregone by the producer; and

''(iv) the extent to which compensation would ensure long-term continued maintenance, management, and improvement of the stewardship practice.

''(C) LIMITATION.—The total amount of payments a person or legal entity receives pursuant to subparagraph (A) shall not exceed $50,000 for any fiscal year.

''(4) RESERVATION OF FUNDS.—The Secretary may use not more than 50 percent of the funds made available under section 1241 to carry out this chapter for payments made pursuant to this subsection.''.

SEC. 2303. LIMITATION ON PAYMENTS.

Section 1240G of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3839aa–7) is amended by inserting ''or the period of fiscal years 2019 through 2023,'' after ''2018,''.

SEC. 2304. CONSERVATION INNOVATION GRANTS AND PAYMENTS.

(a) COMPETITIVE GRANTS FOR INNOVATIVE CONSERVATION APPROACHES.—Section 1240H(a) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3839aa–8(a)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by inserting ''use not more than $25,000,000 in each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023 to'' after ''the Secretary may''; and

(2) in paragraph (2)(A), by inserting ''or persons participating in an educational activity through an institution of higher education, including by carrying out demonstration projects on lands of the institution'' before the semicolon at the end.

(b) AIR QUALITY CONCERNS FROM AGRICULTURAL OPERATIONS.—Section 1240H(b)(2) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3839aa–8(b)(2)) is amended by inserting '', and $37,500,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023'' after ''2018''.

(c) ON-FARM CONSERVATION INNOVATION TRIALS; REPORTING AND DATABASE.—Section 1240H of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3839aa–8) is amended by striking subsection (c) and inserting the following:

''(c) ON-FARM CONSERVATION INNOVATION TRIALS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Using not more than $25,000,000 of the funds made available to carry out this chapter in each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023, the Secretary shall carry out on-farm conservation innovation trials, on eligible land of producers, to test new or innovative conservation approaches—

''(A) directly with producers; or

''(B) through eligible entities.

''(2) INCENTIVE PAYMENTS.—

''(A) AGREEMENTS.—In carrying out paragraph (1), the Secretary shall enter into agreements with producers on whose land an on-farm conservation innovation trial is being carried out to provide payments (including payments to compensate for foregone income, as appropriate to address the increased economic risk potentially associated with new or innovative conservation approaches) to the producers to assist with adopting and evaluating new or innovative conservation approaches.

''(B) LENGTH OF INCENTIVES.—An agreement entered into under subparagraph (A) shall be for a period determined by the Secretary that is—

''(i) not less than 3 years; and

''(ii) if appropriate, more than 3 years, including if such a period is appropriate to support—

''(I) adaptive management over multiple crop years; and

''(II) adequate data collection and analysis to report the natural resource and agricultural production benefits of the new or innovative conservation approaches.

''(3) FLEXIBLE ADOPTION.—A producer or eligible entity participating in an on-farm conservation innovation trial under paragraph (1) may determine the scale of adoption of the new or innovative conservation approaches in the on-farm conservation innovation trial, which may include multiple scales on an operation, including whole farm, field-level, or sub-field scales.

''(4) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary shall provide technical assistance—

''(A) to a producer or eligible entity participating in an on-farm conservation innovation trial under paragraph (1), with respect to the design, installation, and management of the new or innovative conservation approaches; and

''(B) to an eligible entity participating in an on-farm conservation innovation trial under paragraph (1), with respect to data analyses of the on-farm conservation innovation trial.

''(5) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

''(A) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term 'eligible entity' means a third-party private entity the primary business of which is related to agriculture.

''(B) NEW OR INNOVATIVE CONSERVATION APPROACHES.—The term 'new or innovative conservation approaches' means—

''(i) new or innovative—

''(I) precision agriculture technologies;

''(II) enhanced nutrient management plans, nutrient recovery systems, and fertilization systems;

''(III) soil health management systems;

''(IV) water management systems;

''(V) resource-conserving crop rotations;

''(VI) cover crops; and

''(VII) irrigation systems; and

''(ii) any other conservation approach approved by the Secretary as new or innovative.

''(d) REPORTING AND DATABASE.—

''(1) REPORT REQUIRED.—Not later than December 31, 2014, and every two years thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate and the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives a report on the status of activities funded under this section, including—

''(A) funding awarded;

''(B) results of the activities; and

''(C) incorporation of findings from the activities, such as new technology and innovative approaches, into the conservation efforts implemented by the Secretary.

''(2) CONSERVATION PRACTICE DATABASE.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall use the data reported under paragraph (1) to establish and maintain a publicly available conservation practice database that provides—

''(i) a compilation and analysis of effective conservation practices for soil health, nutrient management, and source water protection in varying soil compositions, cropping systems, slopes, and landscapes; and

''(ii) a list of recommended new and effective conservation practices.

''(B) PRIVACY.—Information provided under subparagraph (A) shall be transformed into a statistical or aggregate form so as to not include any identifiable or personal information of individual producers.''.

Subtitle D—Other Conservation Programs

SEC. 2401. CONSERVATION OF PRIVATE GRAZING LAND.

Section 1240M(e) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3839bb(e)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 2402. GRASSROOTS SOURCE WATER PROTECTION PROGRAM.

(a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 1240O(b)(1) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3839bb–2(b)(1)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

(b) AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.—Section 1240O(b) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3839bb–2(b)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(3) ADDITIONAL FUNDING.—In addition to any other funds made available under this subsection, of the funds of the Commodity Credit Corporation, the Secretary shall use $5,000,000 beginning in fiscal year 2019, to remain available until expended.''.

SEC. 2403. VOLUNTARY PUBLIC ACCESS AND HABITAT INCENTIVE PROGRAM.

Section 1240R(f)(1) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3839bb–5(f)(1)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''2012 and'' and inserting ''2012,''; and

(2) by inserting '', and $50,000,000 for the period of fiscal years 2019 through 2023'' before the period at the end.

SEC. 2404. WATERSHED PROTECTION AND FLOOD PREVENTION.

(a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 14(h)(2)(E) of the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act (16 U.S.C. 1012(h)(2)(E)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

(b) FUNDS OF COMMODITY CREDIT CORPORATION.—The Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act (16 U.S.C. 1001 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''SEC. 15. FUNDING.

''In addition to any other funds made available by this Act, of the funds of the Commodity Credit Corporation, the Secretary shall make available to carry out this Act $100,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023, to remain available until expended.''.

SEC. 2405. FERAL SWINE ERADICATION AND CONTROL PILOT PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Agriculture shall establish a feral swine eradication and control pilot program to respond to the threat feral swine pose to agriculture, native ecosystems, and human and animal health.

(b) DUTIES OF THE SECRETARY.—In carrying out the pilot program, the Secretary shall—

(1) study and assess the nature and extent of damage to the pilot areas caused by feral swine;

(2) develop methods to eradicate or control feral swine in the pilot areas;

(3) develop methods to restore damage caused by feral swine; and

(4) provide financial assistance to agricultural producers in pilot areas.

(c) ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary may provide financial assistance to agricultural producers under the pilot program to implement methods to—

(1) eradicate or control feral swine in the pilot areas; and

(2) restore damage caused by feral swine.

(d) COORDINATION.—The Secretary shall ensure that the Natural Resources Conservation

Service and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service coordinate for purposes of this section through State technical committees established under section 1261 of the Food Security Act of 1985.

(e) PILOT AREAS.—The Secretary shall carry out the pilot program in areas of States in which feral swine have been identified as a threat to agriculture, native ecosystems, or human or animal health, as determined by the Secretary.

(f) COST SHARING.—

(1) FEDERAL SHARE.—The Federal share of the costs activities under the pilot program may not exceed 75 percent of the total costs of such activities.

(2) IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS.—The non-Federal share of the costs of activities under the pilot program may be provided in the form of in-kind contributions of materials or services.

(g) FUNDING.—

(1) MANDATORY FUNDING.—Of the funds of the Commodity Credit Corporation, the Secretary shall use to carry out this section $100,000,000 for the period of fiscal years 2019 through 2023.

(2) DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS.—Of the funds made available under paragraph (1)—

(A) 50 percent shall be allocated to the Natural Resources Conservation Service to carry out the pilot program, including the provision of financial assistance to producers for on-farm trapping and technology related to capturing and confining feral swine; and

(B) 50 percent shall be allocated to the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service to carry out the pilot program, including the use of established, and testing of innovative, population reduction methods.

(3) LIMITATION ON ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES.—Not more than 10 percent of funds made available under this section may be used for administrative expenses of the pilot program.

SEC. 2406. EMERGENCY CONSERVATION PROGRAM.

(a) REPAIR OR REPLACEMENT OF FENCING.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 401 of the Agricultural Credit Act of 1978 (16 U.S.C. 2201) is amended—

(A) by striking the section designation and all that follows through ''The Secretary of Agriculture'' and inserting the following:

''SEC. 401. PAYMENTS TO PRODUCERS.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Agriculture (referred to in this title as the 'Secretary')'';

(B) in subsection (a), as so designated, by inserting ''wildfires,'' after ''hurricanes,''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

''(b) REPAIR OR REPLACEMENT OF FENCING.—With respect to a payment to an agricultural producer under subsection (a) for the repair or replacement of fencing, the Secretary shall give the agricultural producer the option of receiving the payment, determined based on the applicable percentage of the fair market value of the cost of the repair or replacement, as determined by the Secretary, before the agricultural producer carries out the repair or replacement.''.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(A) Sections 402, 403, 404, and 405 of the Agricultural Credit Act of 1978 (16 U.S.C. 2202, 2203, 2204, 2205) are amended by striking ''Secretary of Agriculture'' each place it appears and inserting ''Secretary''.

(B) Section 407(a) of the Agricultural Credit Act of 1978 (16 U.S.C. 2206(a)) is amended by striking paragraph (4).

(b) COST SHARE PAYMENTS.—Title IV of the Agricultural Credit Act of 1978 (16 U.S.C. 2201 et seq.) is amended by inserting after section 402 the following:

''SEC. 402A. COST SHARE REQUIREMENT.

''(a) COST-SHARE RATE.—The maximum cost-share payment under section 401 and section 402 shall not exceed 75 percent of the total allowable cost, as determined by the Secretary.

''(b) EXCEPTION.—Not withstanding subsection (a), a qualified limited resource, socially disadvantaged, or beginning farmer or rancher payment under section 401 and 402 shall not exceed 90 percent of the total allowable cost, as determined by the Secretary.

''(c) LIMITATION.—In no case shall the total payment under section 401 and 402 for a single event exceed 50 percent of what the Secretary has determined to be the agriculture value of the land.''.

Subtitle E—Funding and Administration

SEC. 2501. COMMODITY CREDIT CORPORATION.

(a) ANNUAL FUNDING.—Section 1241(a) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3841(a)) is amended—

(1) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking ''2018 (and fiscal year 2019 in the case of the program specified in paragraph (5))'' and inserting ''2023'';

(2) in paragraph (1), by striking ''2018'' each place it appears and inserting ''2023'';

(3) in paragraph (2)—

(A) in subparagraph (D), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(B) in subparagraph (E), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

''(F) $500,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023.'';

(4) by striking paragraph (3) and redesignating paragraphs (4) and (5) as paragraphs (3) and (4), respectively;

(5) in paragraph (3) (as so redesignated), by inserting '', as in effect on the day before the date of enactment of the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018, using such sums as are necessary to administer contracts entered into before the earlier of September 30, 2018, or such date of enactment'' before the period at the end; and

(6) in paragraph (4) (as so redesignated)—

(A) in subparagraph (D), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(B) in subparagraph (E), by striking ''each of fiscal years 2018 through 2019.'' and inserting ''fiscal year 2018;''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

''(F) $2,000,000,000 for fiscal year 2019;

''(G) $2,500,000,000 for fiscal year 2020;

''(H) $2,750,000,000 for fiscal year 2021;

''(I) $2,935,000,000 for fiscal year 2022; and

''(J) $3,000,000,000 for fiscal year 2023.''.

(b) AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.—Section 1241(b) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3841(b)) is amended by striking ''2018 (and fiscal year 2019 in the case of the program specified in subsection (a)(5))'' and inserting ''2023''.

(c) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—Section 1241(c) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3841(c)) is amended—

(1) by amending paragraph (2) to read as follows:

''(2) PRIORITY.—In the delivery of technical assistance under the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act (16 U.S.C. 590a et seq.), the Secretary shall give priority to producers who request technical assistance from the Secretary in order to comply for the first time with the requirements of subtitle B and subtitle C of this title as a result of the amendments made by section 2611 of the Agricultural Act of 2014.''; and

(2) by striking paragraph (3) and redesignating paragraph (4) as paragraph (3).

(d) REGIONAL EQUITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 1241 of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3841) is amended by striking subsection (e) and redesignating subsections (f) through (i) as subsections (e) through (h), respectively.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 1221(c) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3821(c)) is amended by striking ''1241(f)'' and inserting ''1241(e)'' each place it appears.

(e) RESERVATION OF FUNDS TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO CERTAIN FARMERS OR RANCHERS FOR CONSERVATION ACCESS.—Section 1241(g) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (as redesignated by subsection (d) of this section) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking ''2018 to carry out the environmental quality incentives program and the acres made available for each of such fiscal years to carry out the conservation stewardship program'' and inserting ''2023 to carry out the environmental quality incentives program''; and

(2) by striking paragraph (3) and redesignating paragraph (4) as paragraph (3).

(f) REPORT ON PROGRAM ENROLLMENTS AND ASSISTANCE.—Section 1241(h) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (as redesignated by subsection (d) of this section) is amended to read as follows:

''(h) REPORT ON PROGRAM ENROLLMENTS AND ASSISTANCE.—Not later than December 15 of each of calendar years 2018 through 2023, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate an annual report containing statistics by State related to enrollments in conservation programs under this subtitle, as follows:

''(1) The annual and current cumulative activity reflecting active agreement and contract enrollment statistics.

''(2) Secretarial exceptions, waivers, and significant payments, including—

''(A) payments made under the agricultural conservation easement program for easements valued at $250,000 or greater;

''(B) payments made under the regional conservation partnership program subject to the waiver of adjusted gross income limitations pursuant to section 1271C(c)(3);

''(C) waivers granted by the Secretary under section 1001D(b)(3) of this Act;

''(D) exceptions and activity associated with section 1240B(h)(2); and

''(E) exceptions provided by the Secretary under section 1265B(b)(2)(C).''.

SEC. 2502. DELIVERY OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—Section 1242(a) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3842(a)) is amended to read as follows:

''(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

''(1) ELIGIBLE PARTICIPANT.—The term 'eligible participant' means a producer, landowner, or entity that is participating in, or seeking to participate in, programs in which the producer, landowner, or entity is otherwise eligible to participate under this title.

''(2) THIRD-PARTY PROVIDER.—The term 'third-party provider' means a commercial entity (including a farmer cooperative, agriculture retailer, or other commercial entity (as defined by the Secretary)), a nonprofit entity, a State or local government (including a conservation district), or a Federal agency, that has expertise in the technical aspect of conservation planning, including nutrient management planning, watershed planning, or environmental engineering.''.

(b) CERTIFICATION OF THIRD-PARTY PROVIDERS.—Section 1242(e) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3842(e)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(4) ALTERNATIVE CERTIFICATION.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out this subsection, the Secretary shall approve any qualified certification that the Secretary determines meets or exceeds the national criteria provided under paragraph (3)(B).

''(B) QUALIFIED CERTIFICATION.—In this paragraph, the term 'qualified certification' means a professional certification that is established by the Secretary, an agriculture retailer, a farmer cooperative, the American Society of Agronomy, or the National Alliance of Independent Crop Consultants, including certification—

''(i) as a Certified Crop Advisor by the American Society of Agronomy;

''(ii) as a Certified Professional Agronomist by the American Society of Agronomy; and

''(iii) as a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan Specialist by the Secretary.''.

SEC. 2503. ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS FOR CONSERVATION PROGRAMS.

Section 1244 of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3844) is amended—

(1) by striking subsection (m);

(2) by redesignating subsections (i) through (l) as subsections (j) through (m), respectively, and inserting after subsection (h) the following:

''(i) SOURCE WATER PROTECTION THROUGH TARGETING OF AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out any conservation program administered by the Secretary, the Secretary shall encourage practices that relate to water quality and water quantity that protect source waters for drinking water (including protecting against public health threats) while also benefitting agricultural producers.

''(2) COLLABORATION WITH WATER SYSTEMS AND INCREASED INCENTIVES.—In encouraging practices under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall—

''(A) work collaboratively with community water systems and State technical committees established under section 1261 to identify, in each State, local priority areas for the protection of source waters for drinking water; and

''(B) offer to producers increased incentives and higher payment rates than are otherwise statutorily authorized through conservation programs administered by the Secretary for practices that result in significant environmental benefits that the Secretary determines—

''(i) relate to water quality or water quantity; and

''(ii) occur primarily outside of the land on which the practices are implemented.

''(3) RESERVATION OF FUNDS.—In each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023, the Secretary shall use, to carry out this subsection, not less than 10 percent of any funds available with respect to each conservation program administered by the Secretary under this title except the conservation reserve program.''; and

(3) in subsection (m), as so redesignated, by striking ''the conservation stewardship program under subchapter B of chapter 2 of subtitle D and''.

SEC. 2504. ESTABLISHMENT OF STATE TECHNICAL COMMITTEES.

Section 1261(c) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3861(c)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(14) The State 1862 Institution (as defined in section 2(1) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998).''.

Subtitle F—Agricultural Conservation Easement Program

SEC. 2601. ESTABLISHMENT AND PURPOSES.

Section 1265(b) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3865(b)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (3), by inserting ''that negatively affect the agricultural uses and conservation values'' after ''that land''; and

(2) in paragraph (4), by striking ''restoring and'' and inserting ''restoring or''.

SEC. 2602. DEFINITIONS.

(a) AGRICULTURAL LAND EASEMENT.—Section 1265A(1)(B) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3865a(1)(B)) is amended by striking ''subject to an agricultural land easement plan, as approved by the Secretary''.

(b) ELIGIBLE LAND.—Section 1265A(3) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3865a(3)) is amended—

(1) by amending subparagraph (A)(iii)(VI) to read as follows:

''(VI) nonindustrial private forest land that contributes to the economic viability of an offered parcel, or serves as a buffer to protect such land from development, which may include up to 100 percent of the parcel if the Secretary determines enrolling the land is important to protect a forest to provide significant conservation benefits;''; and

(2) in subparagraph (B)(i)(II), by striking '', as determined by the Secretary in consultation with the Secretary of the Interior at the local level''.

(c) MONITORING REPORT.—Section 1265A of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3865a) is amended by redesignating paragraphs (4) and (5) as paragraphs (5) and (6), respectively, and inserting after paragraph (3) the following:

''(4) MONITORING REPORT.—The term 'monitoring report' means a report, the contents of which are formulated and prepared by the holder of an agricultural land easement, that documents whether the land subject to the agricultural land easement is in compliance with the terms and conditions of the agricultural land easement.''.

SEC. 2603. AGRICULTURAL LAND EASEMENTS.

(a) AVAILABILITY OF ASSISTANCE.—Section 1265B(a)(2) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3865b(a)(2)) is amended by striking ''provide for the conservation of natural resources pursuant to an agricultural land easement plan'' and inserting ''implement the program''.

(b) COST-SHARE ASSISTANCE.—

(1) SCOPE OF ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE.—Section 1265B(b)(2) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3865b(b)(2)) is amended by striking subparagraphs (B) and (C) and inserting the following:

''(B) NON-FEDERAL SHARE.—An eligible entity may use for any part of its share—

''(i) a cash contribution;

''(ii) a charitable donation or qualified conservation contribution (as defined by section 170(h) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986) from the landowner from which the agricultural land easement will be purchased; or

''(iii) funding from a Federal source other than the Department of Agriculture.

''(C) GRASSLANDS EXCEPTION.—In the case of grassland of special environmental significance, as determined by the Secretary, the Secretary may provide an amount not to exceed 75 percent of the fair market value of the agricultural land easement.''.

(2) EVALUATION AND RANKING OF APPLICATIONS.—Section 1265B(b)(3) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3865b(b)(3)) is amended by redesignating subparagraph (C) as subparagraph (D) and inserting after subparagraph (B) the following:

''(C) ACCOUNTING FOR GEOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES.—The Secretary shall, in coordination with State technical committees, adjust the criteria established under subparagraph (A) to account for geographic differences among States, if such adjustments—

''(i) meet the purposes of the program; and

''(ii) continue to maximize the benefit of the Federal investment under the program.''.

(3) AGREEMENTS WITH ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—Section 1265B(b)(4) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3865b(b)(4)) is amended—

(A) in subparagraph (C)—

(i) in clause (i), by inserting ''and the agricultural use of the land that is subject to the agricultural land easement'' after ''the program''; and

(ii) by striking clauses (iii) and (iv) and inserting the following:

''(iii) include a right of enforcement for the Secretary that—

''(I) may be used only if the terms and conditions of the easement are not enforced by the eligible entity; and

''(II) does not extend to a right of inspection unless the holder of the easement fails to provide monitoring reports in a timely manner;

''(iv) include a conservation plan only for any portion of the land subject to the agricultural land easement that is highly erodible cropland; and'';

(B) in subparagraph (E)(ii), by inserting ''in the case of fraud or gross negligence,'' before ''the Secretary may require''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

''(F) MINERAL DEVELOPMENT.—Upon request by an eligible entity, the Secretary shall allow, under an agreement under this subsection, mineral development on land subject to the agricultural land easement, if the Secretary determines that the mineral development—

''(i) has limited and localized effects;

''(ii) is not irremediably destructive of significant conservation interests; and

''(iii) would not alter or affect the topography or landscape.

''(G) ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES MARKETS.—The Secretary may not prohibit, through an agreement under this subsection, an owner of land subject to the agricultural land easement from participating in, and receiving compensation from, an environmental services market if a purpose of the market is the facilitation of additional conservation benefits that are consistent with the purposes of the program.''.

(4) CERTIFICATION OF ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—Section 1265B(b)(5) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3865b(b)(5)) is amended—

(A) in subparagraph (A)—

(i) in clause (ii), by striking ''; and'' and inserting a semicolon;

(ii) in clause (iii), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(iii) by adding at the end the following:

''(iv) allow a certified eligible entity to use its own terms and conditions, notwithstanding paragraph (4)(C), as long as the terms and conditions are consistent with the purposes of the program.''; and

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

''(B) CERTIFICATION CRITERIA.—In order to be certified, an eligible entity shall demonstrate to the Secretary that the entity—

''(i) is a land trust that has—

''(I) been accredited by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, or by an equivalent accrediting body (as determined by the Secretary); and

''(II) acquired not fewer than five agricultural land easements under the program; or

''(ii) will maintain, at a minimum, for the duration of the agreement—

''(I) a plan for administering easements that is consistent with the purpose of the program;

''(II) the capacity and resources to monitor and enforce agricultural land easements; and

''(III) policies and procedures to ensure—

''(aa) the long-term integrity of agricultural land easements on land subject to such easements;

''(bb) timely completion of acquisitions of such easements; and

''(cc) timely and complete evaluation and reporting to the Secretary on the use of funds provided under the program.''.

(c) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—Section 1265B(d) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3865b(d)) is amended to read as follows:

''(d) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary may provide technical assistance, if requested, to assist in compliance with the terms and conditions of easements.''.

SEC. 2604. WETLAND RESERVE EASEMENTS.

Section 1265C(b)(5)(D)(i)(III) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3865c(b)(5)(D)(i)(III)) is amended by inserting after ''under subsection (f)'' the following: ''or a grazing management plan that is consistent with the wetland reserve easement plan and has been reviewed, and modified as necessary, at least every five years''.

SEC. 2605. ADMINISTRATION.

(a) INELIGIBLE LAND.—Section 1265D(a)(4) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3865d(a)(4)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''or off-site''; and

(2) by striking ''proposed or'' and inserting ''permitted or''.

(b) SUBORDINATION, EXCHANGE, MODIFICATION, AND TERMINATION.—

(1) SUBORDINATION AND EXCHANGE.—Section 1265D(c)(1) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3865d(c)(1)) is amended—

(A) in the paragraph heading, by striking ''IN GENERAL'' and inserting ''SUBORDINATION AND EXCHANGE'';

(B) by striking ''subordinate, exchange, modify, or terminate'' each place it appears and inserting ''subordinate or exchange''; and

(C) by striking ''subordination, exchange, modification, or termination'' each place it appears and inserting ''subordination or exchange''.

(2) MODIFICATION; TERMINATION.—Section 1265D(c) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3865d(c)) is amended—

(A) by redesignating paragraphs (2) and (3) as paragraphs (4) and (5), respectively;

(B) by inserting after paragraph (1) the following:

''(2) MODIFICATION.—

''(A) AUTHORITY.—The Secretary may modify any interest in land, or portion of such interest, administered by the Secretary, either directly or on behalf of the Commodity Credit Corporation under the program if the modification—

''(i) has a neutral effect on, or increases, the conservation values;

''(ii) is consistent with the original intent of the easement; and

''(iii) is consistent with the purposes of the program.

''(B) LIMITATION.—In modifying an interest in land, or portion of such interest, under this paragraph, the Secretary may not increase any payment to an eligible entity.

''(3) TERMINATION.—The Secretary may terminate any interest in land, or portion of such interest, administered by the Secretary, either directly or on behalf of the Commodity Credit Corporation under the program if—

''(A) the current owner of the land that is subject to the easement and the holder of the easement agree to the termination; and

''(B) the Secretary determines that the termination would be in the public interest.''; and

(C) in paragraph (5) (as so redesignated), by striking ''paragraph (1)'' and inserting ''paragraph (3)''.

(c) LANDOWNER ELIGIBILITY.—Section 1265D of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3865d) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(f) LANDOWNER ELIGIBILITY.—The limitation described in paragraph (1) of section 1001D(b) shall not apply to a landowner from which an easement under the program is to be purchased with respect to any benefit described in paragraph (2)(B) of such section related to the purchase of such easement.''.

Subtitle G—Regional Conservation Partnership Program

SEC. 2701. DEFINITIONS.

(a) COVERED PROGRAM.—Section 1271A(1) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3871a(1)) is amended—

(1) by striking subparagraph (C) and redesignating subparagraph (D) as subparagraph (C); and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(D) The conservation reserve program established under subchapter B of chapter 1 of subtitle D.

''(E) Programs provided for in the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act (16 U.S.C. 1001 et seq.), other than section 14 of such Act (16 U.S.C. 1012).''.

(b) ELIGIBLE ACTIVITY.—Section 1271A(2) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3871a(2)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (B), by inserting ''resource-conserving crop rotations,'' before ''or dryland farming''; and

(2) by redesignating subparagraphs (C) through (J) as subparagraphs (D) through (K), respectively, and inserting after subparagraph (B) the following:

''(C) Protection of source waters for drinking water.''.

SEC. 2702. REGIONAL CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIPS.

(a) LENGTH.—Section 1271B(b) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3871b(b)) is amended to read as follows:

''(b) LENGTH.—A partnership agreement, including a renewal of a partnership agreement under subsection (d)(5), shall be—

''(1) for a period not to exceed 5 years, which period the Secretary may extend one time for up to 12 months; or

''(2) for a period that is longer than 5 years, if such longer period is necessary to meet the objectives of the program, as determined by the Secretary.''.

(b) DUTIES OF PARTNERS.—Section 1271B(c)(1)(E) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3871b(c)(1)(E)) is amended by inserting '', including quantification of the project's environmental outcomes'' before the semicolon.

(c) APPLICATIONS.—Section 1271B(d) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3871b(d)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by inserting ''simplified'' before ''competitive process to select''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(5) RENEWALS.—If a project that is the subject of a partnership agreement has met or exceeded the objectives of the project, as determined by the Secretary, the eligible partners may submit, through an expedited program application process, an application to—

''(A) continue to implement the project under a renewal of the partnership agreement; or

''(B) expand the scope of the project under a renewal of the partnership agreement.''.

SEC. 2703. ASSISTANCE TO PRODUCERS.

Section 1271C(c) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3871c(c)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2), in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking ''a period of 5 years'' and inserting ''the applicable period under section 1271B(b)''; and

(2) in paragraph (3), by striking ''the Secretary may waive the applicability of the limitation in section 1001D(b)(2) of this Act for participating producers'' and inserting ''notwithstanding the requirements of paragraph (3) of section 1001D(b), the Secretary may waive the applicability of the limitation in paragraph (2) of such section, and any limitation on the maximum amount of payments related to the covered programs, for participating producers''.

SEC. 2704. FUNDING.

Section 1271D(a) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3871d(a)) is amended to read as follows:

''(a) AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.—Of the funds of the Commodity Credit Corporation, the Secretary shall use, to carry out the program—

''(1) $100,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2014 through 2018; and

''(2) $250,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023.''.

SEC. 2705. ADMINISTRATION.

Section 1271E of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3871e) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsection (b) as subsection (c) and inserting after subsection (a) the following:

''(b) GUIDANCE.—The Secretary shall provide eligible partners and producers participating in the partnership agreements with guidance on how to quantify and report on environmental outcomes associated with the adoption of conservation practices under the program.''; and

(2) in subsection (c), as so redesignated—

(A) in paragraph (3), by striking ''; and'' and inserting a semicolon;

(B) in paragraph (4)(C), by striking the period and inserting ''; and''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

''(5) the progress that eligible partners and producers participating in the partnership agreements are making in quantifying and reporting on environmental outcomes associated with the adoption of conservation practices under the program.''.

SEC. 2706. CRITICAL CONSERVATION AREAS.

Section 1271F(c) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3871f(c)) is amended by striking paragraph (3).

Subtitle H—Repeals and Transitional Provisions; Technical Amendments

SEC. 2801. REPEAL OF CONSERVATION SECURITY AND CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAMS.

(a) REPEAL.—Except as provided in subsection (b), chapter 2 of subtitle D of title XII of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3838d et seq.) is repealed.

(b) TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS FOR CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM.—

(1) EFFECT ON EXISTING CONTRACTS.—The amendment made by this section shall not affect the validity or terms of any contract entered into by the Secretary of Agriculture under subchapter B of chapter 2 of subtitle D of title XII of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3838d et seq.) before the date of enactment of this Act, or any payments required to be made in connection with the contract.

(2) NO RENEWALS.—Notwithstanding paragraph (1), the Secretary may not renew a contract described in such paragraph.

SEC. 2802. REPEAL OF TERMINAL LAKES ASSISTANCE.

Section 2507 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (16 U.S.C. 3839bb–6) is repealed.

SEC. 2803. TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS.

(a) DELINEATION OF WETLANDS; EXEMPTIONS.—Section 1222(j) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3822(j)) is amended by striking ''National Resources Conservation Service'' and inserting ''Natural Resources Conservation Service''.

(b) DELIVERY OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—Section 1242 of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3842) is amended by striking ''third party'' each place it appears and inserting ''third-party''.

(c) ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS FOR CONSERVATION PROGRAMS.—Section 1244(b)(4)(B) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3844(b)(4)(B)) is amended by striking ''General Accounting Office'' and inserting ''General Accountability Office''.

(d) WATERSHED PROTECTION AND FLOOD PREVENTION ACT.—Section 5(4) of the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act (16 U.S.C. 1005(4)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''goodwater'' and inserting ''floodwater''; and

(2) by striking ''Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare'' each place it appears and inserting ''Secretary of Health and Human Services''.

TITLE III—TRADE

Subtitle A—Food for Peace Act

SEC. 3001. FINDINGS.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) The United States has long been the world's largest donor of international food assistance.

(2) American farmers have been instrumental in the success of United States international food assistance programs by providing an affordable, safe, and reliable source of nutritious agricultural commodities.

(3) Through the efforts of the United States maritime industry and private voluntary organizations, agricultural commodities grown in the United States have been delivered to millions of people in need around the globe.

(4) The United States should continue to use its abundant agricultural productivity to promote the foreign policy of the United States by enhancing the food security of the developing world through the timely provision of agricultural commodities.

SEC. 3002. LABELING REQUIREMENTS.

Subsection (g) of section 202 of the Food for Peace Act (7 U.S.C. 1722) is amended to read as follows:

''(g) LABELING OF ASSISTANCE.—Agricultural commodities and other assistance provided under this title shall, to the extent practicable, be clearly identified with appropriate markings on the package or container of such commodities and food procured outside of the United States, or on printed material that accompanies other assistance, in the language of the locality in which such commodities and other assistance are distributed, as being furnished by the people of the United States of America.''.

SEC. 3003. FOOD AID QUALITY ASSURANCE.

Section 202(h)(3) of the Food for Peace Act (7 U.S.C. 1722(h)(3)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 3004. LOCAL SALE AND BARTER OF COMMODITIES.

Section 203 of the Food for Peace Act (7 U.S.C. 1723) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by inserting ''to generate proceeds to be used as provided in this section'' before the period at the end;

(2) by striking subsection (b); and

(3) by redesignating subsections (c) and (d) as subsections (b) and (c), respectively.

SEC. 3005. MINIMUM LEVELS OF ASSISTANCE.

Section 204(a) of the Food for Peace Act (7 U.S.C. 1724(a)) is amended in paragraphs (1) and (2) by striking ''2018'' both places it appears and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 3006. EXTENSION OF TERMINATION DATE OF FOOD AID CONSULTATIVE GROUP.

Section 205(f) of the Food for Peace Act (7 U.S.C. 1725(f)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 3007. ISSUANCE OF REGULATIONS.

Section 207(c)(1) of the Food for Peace Act (7 U.S.C. 1726a(c)(1)) is amended by striking ''the Agricultural Act of 2014''and inserting ''the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018''.

SEC. 3008. FUNDING FOR PROGRAM OVERSIGHT, MONITORING, AND EVALUATION.

Section 207(f)(4) of the Food for Peace Act (7 U.S.C. 1726a(f)(4)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A)—

(A) by striking ''$17,000,000'' and inserting ''1.5 percent''; and

(B) by striking ''2014 through 2018'' the first place it appears and inserting ''2019 through 2023''; and

(C) by striking ''2018'' the second place it appears and inserting ''2023''; and

(2) in subparagraph (B)—

(A) in clause (i), by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''; and

(B) in clause (ii), by striking ''chapter 1 of part I of''.

SEC. 3009. ASSISTANCE FOR STOCKPILING AND RAPID TRANSPORTATION, DELIVERY, AND DISTRIBUTION OF SHELF-STABLE PREPACKAGED FOODS.

Section 208 the Food for Peace Act (7 U.S.C. 1726b) is amended—

(1) by amending the section heading to read as follows: ''**INTERNATIONAL FOOD RELIEF PARTNERSHIP**''; and

(2) in subsection (f), by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 3010. CONSIDERATION OF IMPACT OF PROVISION OF AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES AND OTHER ASSISTANCE ON LOCAL FARMERS AND ECONOMY.

(a) INCLUSION OF ALL MODALITIES.—Section 403(a) of the Food for Peace Act (7 U.S.C. 1733(a)) is amended—

(1) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by inserting '', food procured outside of the United States, food voucher, or cash transfer for food,'' after ''agricultural commodity'';

(2) in paragraph (1), by inserting ''in the case of the provision of an agricultural commodity,'' before ''adequate''; and

(3) in paragraph (2), by striking ''commodity'' and inserting ''agricultural commodity or use of the food procured outside of the United States, food vouchers, or cash transfers for food''.

(b) AVOIDANCE OF DISRUPTIVE IMPACT.—Section 403(b) of the Food for Peace Act (7 U.S.C. 1733(b)) is amended—

(1) in the first sentence, by inserting '', food procured outside of the United States, food vouchers, and cash transfers for food'' after ''agricultural commodities''; and

(2) in the second sentence, by striking ''of sales of agricultural commodities''.

SEC. 3011. PREPOSITIONING OF AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES.

Section 407(c)(4)(A) of the Food for Peace Act (7 U.S.C. 1736a(c)(4)(A)) is amended by striking ''2018'' each place it appears and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 3012. ANNUAL REPORT REGARDING FOOD AID PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 407(f) of the Food for Peace Act (7 U.S.C. 1736a(f)(1)) is amended to read as follows:

''(f) ANNUAL REPORT REGARDING FOOD AID PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than April 1 of each fiscal year, the Administrator and the Secretary shall prepare, either jointly or separately, a report regarding each program and activity carried out under this Act during the prior fiscal year. If the report for a fiscal year will not be submitted to the appropriate committees of Congress by the date specified in this subparagraph, the Administrator and the Secretary shall promptly notify such committees about the delay, including the reasons for the delay, the steps being taken to complete the report, and an estimated submission date.

''(2) CONTENTS.—An annual report described in paragraph (1) shall include, with respect to the prior fiscal year, the following:

''(A) A list that contains a description of each country and organization that receives food and other assistance under this Act (including the quantity of food and assistance provided to each country and organization).

''(B) A general description of each project and activity implemented under this Act (including each activity funded through the use of local currencies) and the total number of beneficiaries of the project.

''(C) A statement describing the quantity of agricultural commodities made available to, and the total number of beneficiaries in, each country pursuant to—

''(i) this Act;

''(ii) section 416(b) of the Agricultural Act of 1949 (7 U.S.C. 1431(b));

''(iii) the Food for Progress Act of 1985 (7 U.S.C. 1736o); and

''(iv) the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program established by section 3107 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (7 U.S.C. 1736o–1).

''(D) An assessment of the progress made through programs under this Act towards reducing food insecurity in the populations receiving food assistance from the United States.

''(E) A description of efforts undertaken by the Food Aid Consultative Group under section 205 to achieve an integrated and effective food assistance program.

''(F) An assessment of—

''(i) each program oversight, monitoring, and evaluation system implemented under section 207(f); and

''(ii) the impact of each program oversight, monitoring, and evaluation system on the effectiveness and efficiency of assistance provided under this title.

''(G) An assessment of the progress made by the Administrator in addressing issues relating to quality with respect to the provision of food assistance.

''(H) A statement of the amount of funds (including funds for administrative costs, indirect cost recovery, internal transportation, storage and handling, and associated distribution costs) provided to each eligible organization that received assistance under this Act, that further describes the following:

''(i) How such funds were used by the eligible organization.

''(ii) The actual rate of return for each commodity made available under this Act, including factors that influenced the rate of return, and, for the commodity, the costs of bagging or further processing, ocean transportation, inland transportation in the recipient country, storage costs, and any other information that the Administrator and the Secretary determine to be necessary.

''(iii) For each instance in which a commodity was made available under this Act at a rate of return less than 70 percent, the reasons for the rate of return realized.

''(I) For funds expended for the purposes of section 202(e), 406(b)(6), and 407(c)(1)(B), a detailed accounting of the expenditures and purposes of such expenditures with respect to each section.

''(3) RATE OF RETURN DESCRIBED.—For purposes of applying subparagraph (H), the rate of return for a commodity shall be equal to the proportion that—

''(A) the proceeds the implementing partners generate through monetization; bears to

''(B) the cost to the Federal Government to procure and ship the commodity to a recipient country for monetization.''.

(b) CONFORMING REPEAL.—Subsection (m) of section 403 of the Food for Peace Act (7 U.S.C. 1733) is repealed.

SEC. 3013. DEADLINE FOR AGREEMENTS TO FINANCE SALES OR TO PROVIDE OTHER ASSISTANCE.

Section 408 of the Food for Peace Act (7 U.S.C. 1736b) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 3014. MINIMUM LEVEL OF NONEMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE.

Subsection (e) of section 412 of the Food for Peace Act (7 U.S.C. 1736f) is amended to read as follows:

''(e) MINIMUM LEVEL OF NONEMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—For each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023, not less than $365,000,000 of the amounts made available to carry out emergency and nonemergency food assistance programs under title II, nor more than 30 percent of such amounts, shall be expended for nonemergency food assistance programs under such title.

''(2) COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FUNDS.—Funds appropriated each year to carry out part I of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2151 et seq.) that are made available through grants or cooperative agreements to strengthen food security in developing countries and that are consistent with section 202(e)(1)(C) may be deemed to be expended on nonemergency food assistance programs for purposes of this section.''.

SEC. 3015. TERMINATION DATE FOR MICRONUTRIENT FORTIFICATION PROGRAMS.

Section 415(c) of the Food for Peace Act (7 U.S.C. 1736g–2(c)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 3016. JOHN OGONOWSKI AND DOUG BEREUTER FARMER-TO-FARMER PROGRAM.

(a) CLARIFICATION OF NATURE OF ASSISTANCE.—Section 501(b)(1) of the Food for Peace Act (7 U.S.C. 1737(b)(1)) is amended by inserting ''technical'' before ''assistance''.

(b) ELIGIBLE PARTICIPANTS.—Section 501(b)(2) of the Food for Peace Act (7 U.S.C. 1737(b)(2)) is amended by inserting ''retired extension staff of the Department of Agriculture,'' after ''private corporations,''.

(c) ADDITIONAL PURPOSE.—Section 501(b) of the Food for Peace Act (7 U.S.C. 1737(b)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''and'' at the end of paragraph (5);

(2) by redesignating paragraph (6) as paragraph (7); and

(3) by inserting after paragraph (5) the following new paragraph:

''(6) foster appropriate investments in institutional capacity-building and allow longer-term and sequenced assignments and partnerships to provide deeper engagement and greater continuity on such projects; and''.

(d) MINIMUM FUNDING.—Subsection (d) of section 501 of the Food for Peace Act (7 U.S.C. 1737) is amended to read as follows:

''(d) MINIMUM FUNDING.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, in addition to any funds that may be specifically appropriated to carry out this section, not less than the greater of $15,000,000 or 0.6 percent of the amounts made available for each of fiscal years 2014 through 2023, to carry out this Act shall be used to carry out programs under this section, of which—

''(A) not less than 0.2 percent to be used for programs in developing countries; and

''(B) not less than 0.1 percent to be used for programs in sub-Saharan African and Caribbean Basin countries.

''(2) TREATMENT OF EXPENDITURES.—Funds used to carry out programs under this section shall be counted towards the minimum level of nonemergency food assistance specified in section 412(e).''.

(e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 501(e)(1) of the Food for Peace Act (7 U.S.C. 1737(e)(1)) is amended in by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

Subtitle B—Agricultural Trade Act of 1978

SEC. 3101. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) United States export development programs significantly increase demand for United States agriculture products within foreign markets, boosting agricultural export volume and overall farm income, and generating a net return of $28 in added export revenue for each invested program dollar.

(2) Our global competitors provide substantially more public support for export promotion than is provided to United States agricultural exporters. The Market Access Program and Foreign Market Development Program receive combined annual funding of approximately $234,500,000. In comparison, the European Union allocates $255,000,000 annually for the international promotion of wine alone.

(3) The preservation and streamlining of United States export market development programs complements the recent reorganization within the Department of Agriculture by ensuring the newly established Under Secretary for Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs has the tools necessary to enhance the competitiveness of the United States agricultural industry on the global stage.

SEC. 3102. CONSOLIDATION OF CURRENT PROGRAMS AS NEW INTERNATIONAL MARKET DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM.

(a) INTERNATIONAL MARKET DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM.—Section 205 of the Agricultural Trade Act of 1978 (7 U.S.C. 5625) is amended to read as follows:

''SEC. 205. INTERNATIONAL MARKET DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM.

''(a) PROGRAM REQUIRED.—The Secretary and the Commodity Credit Corporation shall establish and carry out a program, to be known as the 'International Market Development Program', to encourage the development, maintenance, and expansion of commercial export markets for United States agricultural commodities.

''(b) MARKET ACCESS PROGRAM COMPONENT.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—As one of the components of the International Market Development Program, the Commodity Credit Corporation shall carry out a program to encourage the development, maintenance, and expansion of commercial export markets for United States agricultural commodities through cost-share assistance to eligible trade organizations that implement a foreign market development program.

''(2) TYPES OF ASSISTANCE.—Assistance under this subsection may be provided in the form of funds of, or commodities owned by, the Commodity Credit Corporation, as determined appropriate by the Secretary.

''(3) PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS.—

''(A) MARKETING PLAN AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS.—To be eligible for cost-share assistance under this subsection, an eligible trade organization shall—

''(i) prepare and submit a marketing plan to the Secretary that meets the guidelines governing such a marketing plan specified in this paragraph or otherwise established by the Secretary;

''(ii) meet any other requirements established by the Secretary; and

''(iii) enter into an agreement with the Secretary.

''(B) PURPOSE OF MARKETING PLAN.—A marketing plan submitted under this paragraph shall describe the advertising or other market oriented export promotion activities to be carried out by the eligible trade organization with respect to which assistance under this subsection is being requested.

''(C) SPECIFIC ELEMENTS.—To be approved by the Secretary, a marketing plan submitted under this paragraph shall—

''(i) specifically describe the manner in which assistance received by the eligible trade organization, in conjunction with funds and services provided by the eligible trade organization, will be expended in implementing the marketing plan;

''(ii) establish specific market goals to be achieved under the marketing plan; and

''(iii) contain whatever additional requirements are determined by the Secretary to be necessary.

''(D) BRANDED PROMOTION.—A marketing plan approved by the Secretary may provide for the use of branded advertising to promote the sale of United States agricultural commodities in a foreign country under such terms and conditions as may be established by the Secretary.

''(E) AMENDMENTS.—An approved marketing plan may be amended by the eligible trade organization at any time, subject to the approval by the Secretary of the amendments.

''(4) LEVEL OF ASSISTANCE AND COST-SHARE REQUIREMENTS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall justify in writing the level of assistance to be provided to an eligible trade organization under this subsection and the level of cost sharing required of the organization.

''(B) LIMITATION ON BRANDED PROMOTION.—Assistance provided under this subsection for activities described in paragraph (3)(D) shall not exceed 50 percent of the cost of implementing the marketing plan, except that the Secretary may determine not to apply such limitation in the case of United States agricultural commodities with respect to which there has been a favorable decision by the United States Trade Representative under section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2411). Criteria used by the Secretary for determining that the limitation shall not apply shall be consistent and documented.

''(5) OTHER TERMS AND CONDITIONS.—

''(A) MULTI-YEAR BASIS.—The Secretary may provide assistance under this subsection on a multi-year basis, subject to annual review by the Secretary for compliance with the approved marketing plan.

''(B) TERMINATION OF ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary may terminate any assistance made, or to be made, available under this subsection if the Secretary determines that—

''(i) the eligible trade organization is not adhering to the terms and conditions applicable to the provision of the assistance;

''(ii) the eligible trade organization is not implementing the approved marketing plan or is not adequately meeting the established goals of the plan;

''(iii) the eligible trade organization is not adequately contributing its own resources to the implementation of the plan; or

''(iv) the Secretary determines that termination of assistance in a particular instance is in the best interests of the program.

''(C) EVALUATIONS.—Beginning not later than 15 months after the initial provision of assistance under this subsection to an eligible trade organization, the Secretary shall monitor the expenditures by the eligible trade organization of such assistance, including the following:

''(i) An evaluation of the effectiveness of the marketing plan of the eligible trade organization in developing or maintaining markets for United States agricultural commodities.

''(ii) An evaluation of whether assistance provided under this subsection is necessary to maintain such markets.

''(iii) A thorough accounting of the expenditure by the eligible trade organization of the assistance provided under this subsection.

''(6) RESTRICTIONS ON USE OF FUNDS.—Assistance provided under this subsection to an eligible trade organization shall not be used—

''(A) to provide direct assistance to any foreign for-profit corporation for the corporation's use in promoting foreign-produced products; or

''(B) to provide direct assistance to any for-profit corporation that is not recognized as a small business concern, excluding a cooperative, an association described in the first section of the Act entitled 'An Act To authorize association of producers of agricultural products', approved February 18, 1922 (7 U.S.C. 291), or a nonprofit trade association.

''(7) PERMISSIVE USE OF FUNDS.—Assistance provided under this subsection to a United States agricultural trade association, cooperative, or small business may be used for individual branded promotional activity related to a United States branded product, if the beneficiaries of the activity have provided funds for the activity in an amount that is at least equivalent to the amount of assistance provided under this subsection.

''(8) PROGRAM CONSIDERATIONS AND PRIORITIES.—In providing assistance under this subsection, the Secretary, to the maximum extent practicable, shall—

''(A) give equal consideration to—

''(i) proposals submitted by organizations that were participating organizations in prior fiscal years; and

''(ii) proposals submitted by eligible trade organizations that have not previously participated in the program established under this title;

''(B) give equal consideration to—

''(i) proposals submitted for activities in emerging markets; and

''(ii) proposals submitted for activities in markets other than emerging markets.

''(9) PRIORITY.—In providing assistance for branded promotion, the Secretary should give priority to small-sized entities.

''(10) CONTRIBUTION LEVEL.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary should require a minimum contribution level of 10 percent from an eligible trade organization that receives assistance for nonbranded promotion.

''(B) INCREASES IN CONTRIBUTION LEVEL.—The Secretary may increase the contribution level in any subsequent year that an eligible trade organization receives assistance for nonbranded promotion.

''(11) ADDITIONALITY.—The Secretary should require each participant in the program to certify that any Federal funds received supplement, but do not supplant, private or third party participant funds or other contributions to program activities.

''(12) INDEPENDENT AUDITS.—If as a result of an evaluation or audit of activities of a participant under the program, the Secretary determines that a further review is justified in order to ensure compliance with the requirements of the program, the Secretary should require the participant to contract for an independent audit of the program activities, including activities of any subcontractor.

''(13) TOBACCO.—No funds made available under the market promotion program may be used for activities to develop, maintain, or expand foreign markets for tobacco.

''(c) FOREIGN MARKET DEVELOPMENT COOPERATOR COMPONENT.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—As one of the components of the International Market Development Program, the Secretary shall carry out a foreign market development cooperator program to maintain and develop foreign markets for United States agricultural commodities.

''(2) COOPERATION.—The Secretary shall carry out the foreign market development cooperator program in cooperation with eligible trade organizations.

''(3) ADMINISTRATION.—Funds made available to carry out the foreign market development cooperator program shall be used only to provide—

''(A) cost-share assistance to an eligible trade organization under a contract or agreement with the organization; and

''(B) assistance for other costs that are necessary or appropriate to carry out the foreign market development cooperator program, including contingent liabilities that are not otherwise funded.

''(4) PROGRAM CONSIDERATIONS.—In providing assistance under this subsection, the Secretary, to the maximum extent practicable, shall—

''(A) give equal consideration to—

''(i) proposals submitted by eligible trade organizations that were participating organizations in the foreign market development cooperator program in prior fiscal years; and

''(ii) proposals submitted by eligible trade organizations that have not previously participated in the foreign market development cooperator program; and

''(B) give equal consideration to—

''(i) proposals submitted for activities in emerging markets; and

''(ii) proposals submitted for activities in markets other than emerging markets.

''(d) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR SPECIALTY CROPS COMPONENT.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—As one of the components of the International Market Development Program, the Secretary shall carry out an export assistance program to address existing or potential barriers that prohibit or threaten the export of United States specialty crops.

''(2) PURPOSE.—The export assistance program required by this subsection shall provide direct assistance through public and private sector projects and technical assistance to remove, resolve, or mitigate existing or potential sanitary and phytosanitary and technical barriers to trade.

''(3) PRIORITY.—The export assistance program required by this subsection shall address time sensitive and strategic market access projects based on—

''(A) trade effect on market retention, market access, and market expansion; and

''(B) trade impact.

''(4) ANNUAL REPORT.—The Secretary shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress an annual report that contains, for the period covered by the report, a description of each factor that affects the export of specialty crops, including each factor relating to any significant sanitary or phytosanitary issue or trade barrier.

''(e) E. (KIKA) DE LA GARZA EMERGING MARKETS PROGRAM COMPONENT.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—

''(A) ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM.—The Secretary, in order to develop, maintain, or expand export markets for United States agricultural commodities, is directed—

''(i) to make available to emerging markets the expertise of the United States to make assessments of the food and rural business systems needs of such emerging markets;

''(ii) to make recommendations on measures necessary to enhance the effectiveness of the systems, including potential reductions in trade barriers; and

''(iii) to identify and carry out specific opportunities and projects to enhance the effectiveness of those systems.

''(B) EXTENT OF PROGRAM.—The Secretary shall implement this paragraph with respect to at least 3 emerging markets in each fiscal year.

''(2) IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRAM.—The Secretary may implement the requirements of paragraph (1)—

''(A) by providing assistance to teams consisting primarily of agricultural consultants, farmers, other persons from the private sector and government officials expert in assessing the food and rural business systems of other countries to enable such teams to conduct the assessments, make the recommendations, and identify the opportunities and projects specified in such paragraph in emerging markets; and

''(B) by providing for necessary subsistence and transportation expenses of—

''(i) United States food and rural business system experts, including United States agricultural producers and other United States individuals knowledgeable in agricultural and agribusiness matters, to enable such United States food and rural business system experts to assist in transferring knowledge and expertise to entities in emerging markets; and

''(ii) individuals designated by emerging markets to enable such designated individuals to consult with such United States experts to enhance food and rural business systems of such emerging markets and to transfer knowledge and expertise to such emerging markets.

''(3) COST-SHARING.—The Secretary shall encourage the nongovernmental experts described in paragraph (2) to share the costs of, and otherwise assist in, the participation of such experts in the program under this paragraph.

''(4) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary is authorized to provide, or pay the necessary costs for, technical assistance (including the establishment of extension services) necessary to enhance the effectiveness of food and rural business systems needs of emerging markets, including potential reductions in trade barriers.

''(5) REPORTS TO SECRETARY.—A team that receives assistance under paragraph (2) shall prepare such reports with respect to the use of such assistance as the Secretary may require.

''(f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

''(1) ELIGIBLE TRADE ORGANIZATION.—

''(A) MARKET ACCESS PROGRAM COMPONENT.—In subsection (b), the term 'eligible trade organization' means—

''(i) a United States agricultural trade organization or regional State-related organization that promotes the export and sale of United States agricultural commodities and that does not stand to profit directly from specific sales of United States agricultural commodities;

''(ii) a cooperative organization or State agency that promotes the sale of United States agricultural commodities; or

''(iii) a private organization that promotes the export and sale of United States agricultural commodities if the Secretary determines that such organization would significantly contribute to United States export market development.

''(B) FOREIGN MARKET DEVELOPMENT COOPERATOR COMPONENT.—In subsection (c), the term 'eligible trade organization'' means a United States trade organization that—

''(i) promotes the export of one or more United States agricultural commodities; and

''(ii) does not have a business interest in or receive remuneration from specific sales of United States agricultural commodities.

''(2) EMERGING MARKET.—The term 'emerging market' means any country that the Secretary determines—

''(A) is taking steps toward a market-oriented economy through the food, agriculture, or rural business sectors of the economy of the country; and

''(B) has the potential to provide a viable and significant market for United States agricultural commodities.

''(3) SMALL-BUSINESS CONCERN.—The term 'small-business concern' has the meaning given that term in section 3(a) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 632(a)).

''(4) UNITED STATES AGRICULTURAL COMMODITY.—The term 'United States agricultural commodity' has the meaning given the term in section 102 of the Agriculture Trade Act of 1978 (7 U.S.C. 5602) and includes commodities that are organically produced (as defined in section 2103 of the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 6502)).''.

(b) FUNDING PROVISION.—Subsection (c) of section 211 of the Agricultural Trade Act of 1978 (7 U.S.C. 5641) is amended to read as follows:

''(c) INTERNATIONAL MARKET DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Of the funds of the Commodity Credit Corporation, the Secretary shall make available for the International Market Development Program under section 205 $255,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2019 through 2023. Such amounts shall remain available until expended.

''(2) SET-ASIDES.—

''(A) MARKET ACCESS PROGRAM COMPONENT.—Of the funds made available under paragraph (1) for a fiscal year, not less than $200,000,000 shall be used for the market access program component of the International Market Development Program under subsection (b) of section 205.

''(B) FOREIGN MARKET DEVELOPMENT COOPERATOR COMPONENT.—Of the funds made available under paragraph (1) for a fiscal year, not less than $34,500,000 shall be used for the foreign market development cooperator component of the International Market Development Program under subsection (c) of section 205.

''(C) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR SPECIALTY CROPS COMPONENT.—Of the funds made available under paragraph (1) for a fiscal year, not more than $9,000,000, shall be used for the specialty crops component of the International Market Development Program under subsection (d) of section 205.

''(D) AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS TO EMERGING MARKETS COMPONENT.—Of the funds made available under paragraph (1) for a fiscal year, not more than $10,000,000 shall be used to promote agricultural exports to emerging markets under the International Market Development Program under subsection (e) of section 205.''.

(c) REPEAL OF SUPERSEDED PROGRAMS.—

(1) MARKET ACCESS PROGRAM.—Section 203 of the Agricultural Trade Act of 1978 (7 U.S.C. 5623) is repealed.

(2) PROMOTIONAL ASSISTANCE.—Section 1302 of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993 is repealed.

(3) FOREIGN MARKET DEVELOPMENT COOPERATOR PROGRAM.—Title VII of the Agricultural Trade Act of 1978 (7 U.S.C. 5721–5723) is repealed.

(4) EXPORT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR SPECIALTY CROPS.—Section 3205 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (7 U.S.C. 5680) is repealed.

(5) EMERGING MARKETS PROGRAM.—Section 1542 of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 5622 note; Public Law 101–624) is amended by striking subsection (d) and by redesignating subsection (e) and (f) as subsections (d) and (e), respectively.

(d) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) AGRICULTURAL TRADE ACT OF 1978.—The Agricultural Trade Act of 1978 is amended—

(A) in section 202 (7 U.S.C. 5622), by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(k) COMBINATION OF PROGRAMS.—The Commodity Credit Corporation may carry out a program under which commercial export credit guarantees available under this section are combined with direct credits from the Commodity Credit Corporation under section 201 to reduce the effective rate of interest on export sales of United States agricultural commodities.''; and

(B) in section 402(a)(1) (7 U.S.C. 5662(a)(1)), by striking ''203'' and inserting ''205(b)''.

(2) AGRICULTURAL MARKETING ACT OF 1946.—Section 282(f)(2)(C) of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (7 U.S.C. 1638a(f)(2)(C)) is amended by striking ''section 203 of the Agricultural Trade Act of 1978 (7 U.S.C. 5623)'' and inserting ''section 205 of the Agricultural Trade Act of 1978''.

(3) FOOD, AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION, AND TRADE ACT OF 1990.—Section 1543(b)(5) of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 3293(b)(5)) is amended by striking ''1542(f)'' and inserting ''1542(e)''.

Subtitle C—Other Agricultural Trade Laws

SEC. 3201. LOCAL AND REGIONAL FOOD AID PROCUREMENT PROJECTS.

Section 3206(e)(1) of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 1726c(e)(1)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 3202. PROMOTION OF AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS TO EMERGING MARKETS.

Section 1542(a) of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 5622 note; Public Law 101–624) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 3203. BILL EMERSON HUMANITARIAN TRUST ACT.

Section 302 of the Bill Emerson Humanitarian Trust Act (7 U.S.C. 1736f–1) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)(2)(B)(i), by striking ''2018'' each place it appears and inserting ''2023''; and

(2) in subsection (h), by striking ''2018'' each place it appears and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 3204. FOOD FOR PROGRESS ACT OF 1985.

(a) EXTENSION.—Section 1110 of the Food Security Act of 1985 (also known as the Food for Progress Act of 1985; 7 U.S.C. 1736o) is amended—

(1) in subsection (f)(3), by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023'';

(2) in subsection (g), by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023'';

(3) in subsection (k), by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''; and

(4) in subsection (l)(1), by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

(b) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—Section 1110(b)(5) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (also known as the Food for Progress Act of 1985; 7 U.S.C. 1736o(b)(5)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''and'' at the end of subparagraph (E);

(2) by redesignating subparagraph (F) as subparagraph (G); and

(3) by inserting after subparagraph (E) the following new subparagraph:

''(F) a college or university (as such terms are defined in section 1404(4) of the Food and Agriculture Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3103(4)); and''.

(c) PRIVATE VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS AND OTHER PRIVATE ENTITIES.—Section 1110(o) of the Food Security Act of 1985 is amended in paragraph (1) by striking ''(F)'' and inserting ''(G)''.

SEC. 3205. MCGOVERN-DOLE INTERNATIONAL FOOD FOR EDUCATION AND CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAM.

(a) CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSALS.—Section 3107(f)(1)(B) of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (7 U.S.C. 1736o–1(f)(1)(B)) is amended by inserting before the semicolon the following: ''and, to the extent practicable, that assistance will be provided on a timely basis so as to coincide with the beginning of and when needed during the relevant school year''.

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 3107(l)(2) of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (7 U.S.C. 1736o–1(l)(2)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 3206. COCHRAN FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM.

(a) AUTHORIZED LOCATIONS FOR TRAINING.—Section 1543(a) of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 3293(a)) is amended by striking ''for study in the United States.'' and inserting the following: ''for study—

''(1) in the United States; or

''(2) at a college or university located in an eligible country that the Secretary determines—

''(A) has sufficient scientific and technical facilities;

''(B) has established a partnership with at least one college or university in the United States; and

''(C) has substantial participation by faculty members of the United States college or university in the design of the fellowship curriculum and classroom instruction under the fellowship.''.

(b) FELLOWSHIP PURPOSES.—Section 1543(c)(2) of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 3293(c)(2)) is amended by inserting before the period at the end the following: '', including trade linkages involving regulatory systems governing sanitary and phyto-sanitary standards for agricultural products''.

SEC. 3207. BORLAUG FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM.

Section 1473G of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3319j) is amended to read as follows:

''SEC. 1473G. BORLAUG INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM.

''(a) FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM.—

''(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall establish a fellowship program, to be known as the 'Borlaug International Agricultural Science and Technology Fellowship Program'.

''(2) FELLOWSHIPS TO INDIVIDUALS FROM ELIGIBLE COUNTRIES.—As part of the fellowship program, the Secretary shall provide fellowships to individuals from eligible countries as described in subsection (b) who specialize in agricultural education, research, and extension for scientific training and study designed to assist individual fellowship recipients, including the following 3 programs:

''(A) A graduate studies program in agriculture to assist individuals who participate in graduate agricultural degree training at a United States institution.

''(B) An individual career improvement program to assist agricultural scientists from developing countries in upgrading skills and understanding in agricultural science and technology.

''(C) A Borlaug agricultural policy executive leadership course to assist senior agricultural policy makers from eligible countries, with an initial focus on individuals from sub-Saharan Africa and the independent states of the former Soviet Union.

''(3) FELLOWSHIPS TO UNITED STATES CITIZENS.—As part of the fellowship program, the Secretary shall provide fellowships to citizens of the United States to assist eligible countries in developing school-based agricultural education and youth extension programs.

''(b) ELIGIBLE COUNTRY DESCRIBED.—For purposes of this section, an eligible country is a developing country, as determined by the Secretary using a gross national income per capita test selected by the Secretary.

''(c) PURPOSE OF FELLOWSHIPS.—

''(1) FELLOWSHIPS TO INDIVIDUALS FROM ELIGIBLE COUNTRIES.—A fellowship provided under subsection (a)(2) shall—

''(A) promote food security and economic growth in eligible countries by—

''(i) educating a new generation of agricultural scientists;

''(ii) increasing scientific knowledge and collaborative research to improve agricultural productivity; and

''(iii) extending that knowledge to users and intermediaries in the marketplace; and

''(B) support—

''(i) training and collaborative research opportunities through exchanges for entry level international agricultural research scientists, faculty, and policymakers from eligible countries;

''(ii) collaborative research to improve agricultural productivity;

''(iii) the transfer of new science and agricultural technologies to strengthen agricultural practice; and

''(iv) the reduction of barriers to technology adoption.

''(2) FELLOWSHIPS TO UNITED STATES CITIZENS.—A fellowship provided under subsection (a)(3) shall—

''(A) develop globally minded United States agriculturists with experience living abroad;

''(B) focus on meeting the food and fiber needs of the domestic population of eligible countries; and

''(C) strengthen and enhance trade linkages between eligible countries and the United States agricultural industry.

''(d) FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENTS.—

''(1) FELLOWSHIPS TO INDIVIDUALS FROM ELIGIBLE COUNTRIES.—

''(A) ELIGIBLE CANDIDATES.—The Secretary may provide fellowships under subsection (a)(2) to individuals from eligible countries who specialize or have experience in agricultural education, research, extension, or related fields, including—

''(i) individuals from the public and private sectors; and

''(ii) private agricultural producers.

''(B) CANDIDATE IDENTIFICATION.—For fellowships under subsection (a)(2), the Secretary shall use the expertise of United States land-grant colleges and universities and similar universities, international organizations working in agricultural research and outreach, and national agricultural research organizations to help identify program candidates for fellowships from the public and private sectors of eligible countries.

''(C) LOCATION OF TRAINING.—The scientific training or study of fellowship recipients under subsection (a)(2) shall occur—

''(i) in the United States; or

''(ii) at a college or university located in an eligible country that the Secretary determines—

''(I) has sufficient scientific and technical facilities;

''(II) has established a partnership with at least one college or university in the United States; and

''(III) has substantial participation by faculty members of the United States college or university in the design of the fellowship curriculum and classroom instruction under the fellowship.

''(2) FELLOWSHIPS TO UNITED STATES CITIZENS.—

''(A) ELIGIBLE CANDIDATES.—The Secretary may provide fellowships under subsection (a)(3) to citizens of the United States who—

''(i) hold at least a bachelors degree in an agricultural related field of study; and

''(ii) have an understanding of United States school-based agricultural education and youth extension programs, as determined by the Secretary.

''(B) CANDIDATE IDENTIFICATION.—For fellowships under subsection (a)(3), the Secretary shall consult with the National FFA Organization, the National 4–H Council, and other entities as the Secretary deems appropriate to identify candidates for fellowships.

''(e) PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION.—The Secretary shall provide for the management, coordination, evaluation, and monitoring of the Borlaug International Agricultural Science and Technology Fellowship Program and for the individual programs described in subsection (a), except that—

''(1) the Secretary may contract out to 1 or more collaborating universities the management of 1 or more of the fellowship programs under subsection (a)(2); and

''(2) the Secretary may contract out the management of the fellowship program under subsection (a)(3) to an outside organization with experience in implementing fellowship programs focused on building capacity for school-based

agricultural education and youth extension programs in developing countries.

''(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized to be appropriated $6,000,000 to carry out this section.

''(2) SET-ASIDES.—Of any funds made available pursuant to paragraph (1), not less than $2,800,000 shall be used to carry out the fellowship program for individuals from eligible countries under subsection (a)(2).

''(3) DURATION.—Any funds made available pursuant to paragraph (1) shall remain available until expended.''.

SEC. 3208. GLOBAL CROP DIVERSITY TRUST.

(a) UNITED STATES CONTRIBUTION LIMIT.—Section 3202(b) of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (22 U.S.C. 2220a note; Public Law 110–246(b)) is amended by striking ''25 percent'' and inserting ''33 percent''.

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 3202(c) of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Public Law 110–246; 22 U.S.C. 2220a note) is amended by striking ''for the period of fiscal years 2014 through 2018'' and inserting ''for the period of fiscal years 2019 through 2023''.

SEC. 3209. GROWING AMERICAN FOOD EXPORTS ACT OF 2018.

Section 1543A of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 5679) is amended to read as follows:

''SEC. 1543A. BIOTECHNOLOGY AND AGRICULTURAL TRADE PROGRAM.

''(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established in the Department of Agriculture a program to be known as the 'Biotechnology and Agricultural Trade Program'.

''(b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of the program established under this section shall be to remove, resolve, or mitigate significant regulatory nontariff barriers to the export of United States agricultural commodities into foreign markets through policy advocacy and targeted projects that address—

''(1) issues relating to United States agricultural commodities produced with the use of biotechnology or new agricultural production technologies;

''(2) advocacy for science-based regulation in foreign markets of biotechnology or new agricultural production technologies; or

''(3) quick-response intervention regarding non-tariff barriers to United States exports produced through biotechnology or new agricultural production technologies.

''(c) ELIGIBLE PROGRAMS.—Depending on need, as determined by the Secretary, activities authorized under this section may be carried out through—

''(1) this section;

''(2) the emerging markets program under section 1542; or

''(3) the Cochran Fellowship Program under section 1543.''.

TITLE IV—NUTRITION

Subtitle A—Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

SEC. 4001. DUPLICATIVE ENROLLMENT DATABASE.

(a) EXPANSION OF THE DUPLICATIVE ENROLLMENT DATABASE.—The Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''SEC. 30. DUPLICATIVE ENROLLMENT DATABASE.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish an interstate database, or system of databases, of supplemental nutrition assistance program information to be known as the Duplicative Enrollment Database that shall include the data submitted by each State pursuant to section 11(e)(26) and that shall meet security standards as determined by the Secretary.

''(b) PURPOSE.—Any database, or system of databases, established pursuant to subsection (a) shall be used by States when making eligibility determinations to prevent supplemental nutrition assistance program participants from receiving duplicative benefits in multiple States.

''(c) IMPLEMENTATION.—

''(1) ISSUANCE OF INTERIM FINAL REGULATIONS.—Not later than 18 months after the effective date of this section, the Secretary shall issue interim final regulations to carry out this section that—

''(A) incorporate best practices and lessons learned from the regional pilot project referenced in section 4032(c) of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 2036c(c));

''(B) protect the privacy of supplemental nutrition assistance program participants and applicants consistent with section 11(e)(8); and

''(C) detail the process States will be required to follow for—

''(i) conducting initial and ongoing matches of participant and applicant data;

''(ii) identifying and acting on all apparent instances of duplicative participation by participants or applicants in multiple States;

''(iii) disenrolling an individual who has applied to participate in another State in a manner sufficient to allow the State in which the individual is currently applying to comply with sections 11(e)(3) and (9); and

''(iv) complying with such other rules and standards the Secretary determines appropriate to carry out this section.

''(2) TIMING.—The initial match and corresponding actions required by paragraph (1)(C) shall occur within 3 years after the date of the enactment of the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018.

''(d) REPORTS.—Using the data submitted to the Duplicative Enrollment Database, the Secretary shall publish an annual report analyzing supplemental nutrition assistance program participant characteristics, including participant tenure on the program. The report shall be made available to the public in a manner that prevents identification of participants that receive supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits.''.

(b) STATE DATA COLLECTION AND SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS.—Section 11(e) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2020(e)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (24) by striking ''and'' at the end,

(2) in paragraph (25) by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and'', and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(26) that the State agency shall collect and submit supplemental nutrition assistance program data to the Duplicative Enrollment Database established in section 30, in accordance with guidance or rules issued by the Secretary establishing a uniform method and format for the collection and submission of data, including for each member of a participating household—

''(A) the social security number or the social security number substitute;

''(B) the employment status of such member;

''(C) the amount of income and whether that income is earned or unearned;

''(D) that member's portion of the household monthly allotment, and

''(E) the portion of the aggregate value of household assets attributed to that member.''.

SEC. 4002. RETAILER-FUNDED INCENTIVES PILOT.

The Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.), as amended by section 4001, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''SEC. 31. RETAILER-FUNDED INCENTIVES PILOT.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish a pilot project in accordance with subsection (d) through which participating retail food stores provide bonuses to participating households based on household purchases of fruits, vegetables, and fluid milk.

''(b) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this section—

''(1) The term 'bonus' means a financial incentive provided at the point of sale to a participating household that expends a portion of its allotment for the purchase of fruits, vegetables, or fluid milk.

''(2) The term 'fluid milk' means cow milk without flavoring or sweeteners and packaged in liquid form.

''(3) The term 'fruits' means minimally processed fruits.

''(4) The term 'retail food store' means a retail food store as defined in section 3(o)(1) that is authorized to accept and redeem benefits under the supplemental nutrition assistance program.

''(5) The term 'vegetables' means minimally processed vegetables.

''(c) PROJECT PARTICIPANT PLANS.—To participate in the pilot project established under subsection (a), a retail food store shall submit to the Secretary for approval a plan that includes—

''(1) a method of quantifying the cost of fruits, vegetables, and fluid milk, that will earn households a bonus;

''(2) a method of providing bonuses to participating households and adequately testing such method;

''(3) a method of ensuring bonuses earned by households may be used only to purchase food eligible for purchase under the supplemental nutrition assistance program;

''(4) a method of educating participating households about the availability and use of a bonus;

''(5) a method of providing data and reports, as requested by the Secretary, for purposes of analyzing the impact of the pilot project established under subsection (a) on household access, ease of bonus use, and program integrity; and

''(6) such other criteria, including security criteria, as established by the Secretary.

''(d) PILOT PROJECT REQUIREMENTS.—Retail food stores with plans approved under subsection (c) to participate in the pilot project established under subsection (a) shall—

''(1) provide a bonus in a dollar amount not to exceed 10 percent of the price of the purchased fruits, vegetables, and fluid milk;

''(2) fund the dollar amount of bonuses used by households, and pay for administrative costs, such as fees and system costs, associated with providing such bonuses;

''(3) ensure that bonuses earned by households may be used only to purchase food eligible for purchase under the supplemental nutrition assistance program; and

''(4) provide data and reports as requested by the Secretary for purposes of analyzing the impact of the pilot project established under subsection (a) on household access, ease of bonus use, and program integrity.

''(e) LIMITATION.—A retail food store participating in a project under section 4405 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 7517) shall not be eligible to participate in the pilot project established under subsection (a).

''(f) IMPLEMENTATION.—Not later than 18 months after the date of the enactment of Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018, the Secretary shall solicit and approve plans submitted under subsection (c) that satisfy the requirements of such subsection.

''(g) REIMBURSEMENTS.—

''(1) RATE OF REIMBURSEMENT.—Subject to paragraphs (2) and (3), the Secretary shall reimburse retail food stores with plans approved under subsection (f) in an amount not to exceed 25 percent of the dollar value of bonuses earned by households and used to purchase food eligible for purchase under the supplemental nutrition assistance program.

''(2) AGGREGATE AMOUNT OF REIMBURSEMENTS.—The aggregate amount of reimbursements paid in a fiscal year to all retail food stores that participate in the pilot project established under subsection (a) in such fiscal year shall not exceed $120,000,000.

''(3) REQUIREMENTS.—

''(A) TIMELINE.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of the Agriculture and

Nutrition Act of 2018, the Secretary shall establish requirements to implement this section, including criteria for prioritizing reimbursements to such stores within the limit established in paragraph (2) and subject to subparagraph (B).

''(B) DISTRIBUTION OF REIMBURSEMENTS.—

''(i) MONTHLY PAYMENTS.—Reimbursements payable under this subsection shall be paid on a monthly basis.

''(ii) PRORATED PAYMENTS.—If funds made available under subsection (h) are insufficient to pay in full reimbursements payable for a month because of the operation of paragraph (2), such reimbursements shall be paid on a pro rata basis to the extent funds remain available for payment.

''(h) FUNDING.—From funds made available under section 18(a)(1) for a fiscal year, the Secretary shall allocate not to exceed $120,000,000 for reimbursements payable under this section for such fiscal year.''.

SEC. 4003. GUS SCHUMACHER FOOD INSECURITY NUTRITION INCENTIVE PROGRAM.

(a) AMENDMENTS.—Section 4405 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 7517) is amended—

*(1) by striking the heading and inserting ''**Gus Schumacher Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive Program**'',*

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (2)—

(i) in subparagraph (A)(ii)—

(I) in subclause (II) by inserting ''financial'' after ''providing'',

(II) by amending subclause (III) to read as follows:

''(III) has adequate plans to collect data for reporting and agrees to participate in a program evaluation; and''.

(III) in subclause (IV) by striking ''; and'' at the end and inserting a period, and

(IV) by striking subclause (V), and

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

''(B) PRIORITIES.—In awarding grants under this section—

''(i) the Secretary shall give priority to projects that—

''(I) maximize the share of funds used for direct incentives to participants;

''(II) include coordination with multiple stakeholders, such as farm organizations, nutrition education programs, cooperative extension service programs, public health departments, health providers, private and public health insurance agencies, cooperative grocers, grocery associations, and community-based and nongovernmental organizations;

''(III) have the capacity to generate sufficient data and analysis to demonstrate effectiveness of program incentives; and

''(ii) the Secretary may also give priority to projects that—

''(I) are located in underserved communities;

''(II) use direct-to-consumer sales marketing;

''(III) demonstrate a track record of designing and implementing successful nutrition incentive programs that connect low-income consumers and agricultural producers;

''(IV) provide locally or regionally produced fruits and vegetables;

''(V) offer supplemental services in high-need communities, including online ordering, transportation between home and store, and delivery services;

''(VI) provide year-round access to program incentives; and

''(VII) address other criteria as established by the Secretary.'',

(B) by amending paragraph (4) to read as follows:

''(4) TRAINING, EVALUATION, AND INFORMATION CENTER.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, in consultation with the Director of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, shall establish a Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive Program Training, Evaluation, and Information Center capable of providing services related to grants under subsection (b), including—

''(i) offering incentive program training and technical assistance to applicants and grantees to the extent practicable;

''(ii) collecting, evaluating, and sharing information on best practices on common incentive activities;

''(iii) assisting with collaboration among grantee projects, State agencies, and nutrition education programs;

''(iv) facilitating communication between grantees and the Department of Agriculture; and

''(v) compiling program data from grantees and generating an annual report to Congress on grant outcomes.

''(B) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT.—To carry out subparagraph (A), the Secretary may enter into a cooperative agreement with an organization with expertise in the supplemental nutrition assistance program incentive programs, including—

''(i) nongovernmental organizations;

''(ii) State cooperative extension services;

''(iii) regional food system centers;

''(iv) Federal and State agencies;

''(v) public, private, and land-grant colleges and universities; and

''(vi) other appropriate entities as determined by the Secretary.

''(C) FUNDING LIMITATION.—Of the funds made available under subsection (c), the Secretary may use to carry out this paragraph not more than—

''(i) $2,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2019 and 2020, and

''(ii) $1,000,000 for each fiscal year thereafter.'', and

(3) in subsection (c)—

(A) in paragraph (1) by striking ''2014 through 2018'' and inserting ''2019 through 2023'', and

(B) in paragraph (2)—

(i) in subparagraph (B) by striking ''and'' at the end;

(ii) in subparagraph (C) by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; '', and

(iii) by adding at the end the following:

''(D) $45,000,000 for fiscal year 2019;

''(E) $50,000,000 for fiscal year 2020;

''(F) $55,000,000 for fiscal year 2021;

''(G) $60,000,000 for fiscal year 2022; and

''(H) $65,000,000 for fiscal year 2023 and each fiscal year thereafter.''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The table of contents of Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 is amended by striking the item relating to section 4405 by inserting the following:

''Sec. 4405. Gus Schumacher food insecurity nutrition incentive program.''.

SEC. 4004. RE-EVALUATION OF THRIFTY FOOD PLAN.

Section 3(u) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2012(u)) is amended by inserting after the 1st sentence the following:

''By 2022 and at 5-year intervals thereafter, the Secretary shall re-evaluate and publish the market baskets of the thrifty food plan based on current food prices, food composition data, and consumption patterns.''.

SEC. 4005. FOOD DISTRIBUTION PROGRAMS ON INDIAN RESERVATIONS.

Section 4(b) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2013(b)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (6)—

(A) in the heading by striking ''LOCALLY-GROWN'' and inserting ''LOCALLY- AND REGIONALLY-GROWN'',

(B) in subparagraph (A) by striking ''locally-grown'' and inserting ''locally- and regionally-grown'',

(C) in subparagraph (C)—

(i) by striking ''LOCALLY GROWN'' and inserting ''LOCALLY- AND REGIONALLY-GROWN'', and

(ii) by striking ''locally-grown'' and inserting ''locally- and regionally-grown'',

(D) by amending subparagraph (D) to read as follows:

''(D) PURCHASE OF FOODS.—In carrying out this paragraph, the Secretary shall purchase or offer to purchase those traditional foods that may be procured cost-effectively.'';

(E) by striking subparagraph (E), and

(F) in subparagraph (F)—

(i) by striking ''(F)'' and inserting ''(E)'', and

(ii) by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023'', and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(7) FUNDS AVAILABILITY.—Funds made available for a fiscal year to carry out this subsection shall remain available for obligation for a period of 2 fiscal years.''.

SEC. 4006. UPDATE TO CATEGORICAL ELIGIBILITY.

Section 5 of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2014) is amended—

(1) in the 2d sentence of subsection (a)—

(A) by striking ''receives benefits'' and inserting ''(1) receives cash assistance or ongoing and substantial services'',

(B) by striking ''supplemental security'' and inserting ''with an income eligibility limit of not more than 130 percent of the poverty line as defined in section 5(c)(1), (2) is elderly or disabled and receives cash assistance or ongoing and substantial services under a State program funded under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.) with an income eligibility limit of not more than 200 percent of the poverty line as defined in section 5(c)(1), (3) receives supplemental security'', and

(C) by striking ''or aid'' and inserting ''or (4) receives aid'', and

(2) in subsection (j)—

(A) by striking ''or who receives benefits'' and inserting ''cash assistance or ongoing and substantial services'' and

(B) by striking ''to have'' and inserting ''with an income eligibility limit of not more than 130 percent of the poverty line as defined in section 5(c)(1), or who is elderly or disabled and receives cash assistance or ongoing and substantial services under a State program funded under part A of title IV of the Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.) with an income eligibility limit of not more than 200 percent of the poverty line as defined in section 5(c)(1), to have''.

SEC. 4007. BASIC ALLOWANCE FOR HOUSING.

(a) EXCLUSION OF BASIC ALLOWANCE FOR HOUSING.—Section 5(d) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2014(d)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (18) by striking ''and'' at the end,

(2) in paragraph (19)(B) by striking the period and inserting ''; and'', and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(20) the value of an allowance received under section 403 of title 37 of the United States Code that does not exceed $500 monthly.''.

(b) UPDATE TO EXCESS SHELTER EXPENSE DEDUCTION.—Section 5(e)(6)(A) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2014(e)(6)(A)) is amended by inserting before the period at the end the following:

'', except that for a household that receives the allowance under section 403 of title 37, United States Code, only the expenses in excess of that allowance shall be counted towards a household's expenses for the calculation of the excess shelter deduction''.

SEC. 4008. EARNED INCOME DEDUCTION.

Section 5(e)(2)(B) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2014(e)(2)(B)) is amended by striking ''20'' and inserting ''22''.

SEC. 4009. SIMPLIFIED HOMELESS HOUSING COSTS.

Section 5(e)(6)(D) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2014(e)(6)(D)) is amended—

(1) by redesignating clause (ii) as clause (iii), and

(2) by striking clause (i) and inserting the following:

''(i) ALTERNATIVE DEDUCTION.—The State agency shall allow a deduction of $143 a month for households—

''(I) in which all members are homeless individuals;

''(II) that are not receiving free shelter throughout the month; and

''(III) that do not opt to claim an excess shelter expense deduction under subparagraph (A).

''(ii) ADJUSTMENT.—For fiscal year 2019 and each subsequent fiscal year the amount of the homeless shelter deduction specified in clause (i) shall be adjusted to reflect changes for the 12-month period ending the preceding November 30 in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the Department of Labor.''.

SEC. 4010. AVAILABILITY OF STANDARD UTILITY ALLOWANCES BASED ON RECEIPT OF ENERGY ASSISTANCE.

(a) ALLOWANCE TO RECIPIENTS OF ENERGY ASSISTANCE.—

(1) STANDARD UTILITY ALLOWANCE.—Section 5(e)(6)(C)(iv)(I) of the of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2014(e)(6)(C)(iv)(I)) is amended by inserting ''with an elderly member'' after ''households''.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 2605(f)(2)(A) of the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Act is amended by inserting ''received by a household with an elderly member'' before '', consistent with section 5(e)(6)(C)(iv)(I)''.

(b) THIRD-PARTY ENERGY ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS.—Section 5(k)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2014(k)(4)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A) by inserting ''without an elderly member'' after ''household'' the 1st place it appears; and

(2) in subparagraph (B) by inserting ''with an elderly member'' after ''household'' the 1st place it appears.

SEC. 4011. CHILD SUPPORT; COOPERATION WITH CHILD SUPPORT AGENCIES.

(a) DEDUCTIONS FOR CHILD SUPPORT PAYMENTS.—

(1) AMENDMENTS.—Section 5(e) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2014(e)) is amended—

(A) by striking paragraph (4), and

(B) by redesignating paragraphs (5) and (6) as paragraphs (4) and (5), respectively.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 5 of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2014) is amended—

(A) in subsection (k)(4)(B) by striking ''(e)(6)'' and inserting ''(e)(5)'', and

(B) in subsection (n) by striking ''Regardless of whether a State agency elects to provide a deduction under subsection (e)(4), the'' and inserting ''The''.

(b) COOPERATION WITH CHILD SUPPORT AGENCIES.—

(1) AMENDMENTS.—Section 6 of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015) is amended—

(A) in subsection (l)(1) by striking ''At the option of a State agency, subject'' and inserting ''Subject'',

(B) in subsection (m)(1) by striking ''At the option of a State agency, subject'' and inserting ''Subject'', and

(C) by striking subsection (n).

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 5(a) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2014(a)) is amended by striking ''and (r)'' and inserting ''and (p)''.

SEC. 4012. ADJUSTMENT TO ASSET LIMITATIONS.

Section 5(g)(1) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2014(g)(1)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A)—

(A) by striking ''$2,000'' and inserting ''$7,000'', and

(B) by striking ''$3,000'' and inserting ''$12,000'', and—

(2) in subparagraph (B) by striking ''2008'' and inserting ''2019''.

SEC. 4013. UPDATED VEHICLE ALLOWANCE.

Section 5(g) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2014(g)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)(B)(i)—

(A) by striking ''(i) IN GENERAL.—Beginning'' and inserting the following:

''(i) IN GENERAL.—

''(I) Beginning'', and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

''(II) Beginning on October 1, 2019, and each October 1 thereafter, the amount specified in paragraph (2)(B)(iv) shall be adjusted in the manner described in subclause (I).'', and

(2) in paragraph (2)—

(A) by amending subparagraph (B)(iv) to read as follows:

''(iv) subject to subparagraph (C), with respect to any licensed vehicle that is used for household transportation or to obtain or continue employment—

''(I) 1 vehicle for each licensed driver who is a member of such household to the extent that the fair market value of the vehicle exceeds $12,000; and

''(II) each additional vehicle; and'', and

(B) by striking subparagraph (D).

SEC. 4014. SAVINGS EXCLUDED FROM ASSETS.

Section 5(g) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2014(g)), as amended by section 4013, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)(B)(i) by adding at the end the following:

''(III) Beginning on October 1, 2019, and each October 1 thereafter, the amount specified in paragraph (2)(B)(v) shall be adjusted in the manner described in subclause (I).'', and

(2) in paragraph (2)(B)(v) by inserting ''to the extent that the value exceeds $2,000'' after ''account''.

SEC. 4015. WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS.

(a) CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION.—Section 6(d) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(d)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) in subparagraph (A)—

(i) by striking ''No'' and inserting ''Subject to subparagraph (C), no'',

(ii) by striking ''over the age of 15 and under the age of 60'' and inserting ''at least 18 years of age and less than 60 years of age'',

(iii) by amending clause (i) to read as follows:

''(i) without good cause, fails to work or refuses to participate in either an employment and training program established in paragraph (4), a work program, or any combination of work, an employment and training program, or work program—

''(I) a minimum of 20 hours per week, averaged monthly in fiscal years 2021 through 2025; or

''(II) a minimum of 25 hours per week, averaged monthly in fiscal years 2026 and each fiscal year thereafter;''.

(iv) by striking clauses (ii) and (vi),

(v) in clause (iv) by adding ''or'' at the end,

(vi) in clause (v)(II) by striking ''30 hours per week; or'' and inserting ''the hourly requirements applicable under paragraph (1)(B)(i).'', and

(vii) by redesignating clauses (iii), (iv), and (v) as clauses (ii), (iii), and (iv), respectively,

(B) by striking subparagraph (B),

(C) by amending subparagraph (C) to read as follows:

''(C) LIMITATION.—Subparagraph (B) shall not apply to an individual during the first month that individual would otherwise become subject to subparagraph (B) and be found in noncompliance with such subparagraph.'',

(D) in subparagraph (D)—

(i) in clause (iii)(I) by striking ''(A)'' each place it appears and inserting ''(B)'',

(ii) in clause (iv) by striking ''(A)(v)''and inserting ''(B)(iv)'', and

(iii) by striking clauses (v) and (vi),

(E) by redesignating subparagraphs (A) and (D) as subparagraphs (B) and (I), respectively,

(F) by inserting before subparagraph (B), as so redesignated, the following:

''(A) DEFINITION OF WORK PROGRAM.—In this subsection, the term 'work program' means—

''(i) a program under title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act;

''(ii) a program under section 236 of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2296); and

''(iii) a program of employment and training operated or supervised by a State or political subdivision of a State that meets standards approved by the chief executive officer of the State and the Secretary, other than a program under paragraph (4).'', and

(G) by inserting after subparagraph (C) the following:

''(D) TRANSITION PERIOD.—During each of the fiscal years 2019 and 2020, States shall continue to implement and enforce the work and employment and training program requirements consistent with this subsection, subsection (e), subsection (o) excluding paragraph (6)(F), section 7(i), section 11(e)(19), and section 16 (excluding subparagraphs (A), (B), (D), and (C) of subsection (h)(1)) as those provisions were in effect on the day before the effective date of this subparagraph.

''(E) INELIGIBILITY.—

''(i) NOTIFICATION OF FAILURE TO MEET WORK REQUIREMENTS.—The State agency shall issue a notice of adverse action to an individual not later than 10 days after the State agency determines that the individual has failed to meet the requirements applicable under subparagraph (B).

''(ii) FIRST VIOLATION.—The 1st time an individual receives a notice of adverse action issued under clause (i), the individual shall remain ineligible to participate in the supplemental nutrition assistance program until—

''(I) the date that is 12 months after the date the individual became ineligible;

''(II) the date the individual obtains employment sufficient to meet the hourly requirements applicable under subparagraph (B)(i); or

''(III) the date that the individual is no longer subject to the requirements of subparagraph (B); whichever is earliest.

''(iii) SECOND OR SUBSEQUENT VIOLATION.—The 2d or subsequent time an individual receives a notice of adverse action issued under clause (i), the individual shall remain ineligible to participate in the supplemental nutrition assistance program until—

''(I) the date that is 36 months after the date the individual became ineligible;

''(II) the date the individual obtains employment sufficient to meet the hourly requirements applicable under subparagraph (B)(i); or

''(III) the date the individual is no longer subject to the requirements of subparagraph (B); whichever is earliest.

''(F) WAIVER.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—On the request of a State agency, the Secretary may waive the applicability of subparagraph (B) to individuals in the State if the Secretary makes a determination that the area in which the individuals reside—

''(I) has an unemployment rate of over 10 percent;

''(II) is designated as a Labor Surplus Area by the Employment and Training Administration of the Department of Labor for the current fiscal year based on the criteria for exceptional circumstances as described in section 654.5 of title 20 of the Code of Federal Regulations;

''(III) has a 24-month average unemployment rate 20 percent or higher than the national average for the same 24-month period unless the 24-month average unemployment rate of the area is less than 6 percent, except that the 24-month period shall begin no earlier than the 24-month period the Employment and Training Administration of the Department of Labor uses to designate Labor Surplus Areas for the current fiscal year; or

''(IV) is in a State—

''(aa) that is in an extended benefit period (within the meaning of section 203 of the Federal-State Extended Unemployment Compensation Act of 1970); or

''(bb) in which temporary or emergency unemployment compensation is being provided under any Federal law.

''(ii) JURISDICTIONS WITH LIMITED DATA.—In carrying out clause (i), in the case of a jurisdiction for which Bureau of Labor Statistics unemployment data is limited or unavailable, such as an Indian Reservation or a territory of the United States, a State may support its request based on other economic indicators as determined by the Secretary.

''(iii) LIMIT ON COMBINING JURISDICTIONS.—In carrying out clause (i), the Secretary may waive the applicability of subparagraph (B) only to a State or individual jurisdictions within a State, except in the case of combined jurisdictions that are designated as Labor Market Areas by the Department of Labor.

''(iv) REPORT.—The Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate, and shall make available to the public, an annual report on the basis for granting a waiver under clause (i).

''(G) 15-PERCENT EXEMPTION.—

''(i) DEFINITIONS.—In this subparagraph:

''(I) CASELOAD.—The term 'caseload' means the average monthly number of individuals receiving supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits during the 12-month period ending the preceding June 30.

''(II) COVERED INDIVIDUAL.—The term 'covered individual' means a member of a household that receives supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits, or an individual denied eligibility for supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits solely due to the applicability of subparagraph (B), who—

''(aa) is not eligible for an exception under paragraph (2);

''(bb) does not reside in an area covered by a waiver granted under subparagraph (F); and

''(cc) is not complying with subparagraph (B).

''(ii) GENERAL RULE.—Subject to clauses (iii) through (v), a State agency may provide an exemption from the requirements of subparagraph (B) for covered individuals.

''(iii) FISCAL YEAR 2021 AND THEREAFTER.—Subject to clauses (iv) and (v), for fiscal year 2021 and each subsequent fiscal year, a State agency may provide a number of exemptions such that the average monthly number of the exemptions in effect during the fiscal year does not exceed 15 percent of the number of covered individuals in the State in fiscal year 2019, as estimated by the Secretary, based on the survey conducted to carry out section 16(c) for the most recent fiscal year and such other factors as the Secretary considers appropriate due to the timing and limitations of the survey.

''(iv) CASELOAD ADJUSTMENTS.—The Secretary shall adjust the number of individuals estimated for a State under clause (iii) during a fiscal year if the number of members of households that receive supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits in the State varies from the State's caseload by more than 10 percent, as determined by the Secretary.

''(v) REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—

''(I) REPORTS BY STATE AGENCIES.—A State agency shall submit such reports to the Secretary as the Secretary determines are necessary to ensure compliance with this paragraph.

''(II) ANNUAL REPORT BY THE SECRETARY.—The Secretary shall annually compile and submit to the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate, and shall make available to the public, an annual report that contains the reports submitted under subclause (I) by State agencies.

''(H) OTHER PROGRAM RULES.—Nothing in this subsection shall make an individual eligible for benefits under this Act if the individual is not otherwise eligible for benefits under the other provisions of this Act.'',

(2) in paragraph (2)—

(A) in the 1st sentence—

(i) by striking ''paragraph (1)'' and inserting ''paragraph (1)(B)'', and

(ii) by striking ''(E)'' and all that follows through the period at the end, and inserting the following:

''(E) receiving weekly earnings which equal the minimum hourly rate under section 6(a)(1) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. 206(a)(1)), multiplied by the hourly requirement as specified in subparagraph (B); (F) medically certified as mentally or physically unfit for employment; or (G) a pregnant woman.'', and

(B) by striking the last sentence,

(3) in paragraph (3) by striking ''registration requirements'' and inserting ''requirement'',

(4) in paragraph (4)—

(A) in subparagraph (A)—

(i) by redesignating clause (ii) as clause (iii), and

(ii) by inserting after clause (i) the following:

''(ii) MANDATORY MINIMUM SERVICES.—Each State agency shall offer employment and training program services sufficient for all individuals subject to the requirements of paragraph (1)(B)(i) who are not currently ineligible pursuant to paragraph (1)(E), exempt pursuant to subparagraphs (F) and (G) or paragraph (2) of subsection (d), and for all individuals covered by paragraph (1)(C), to meet the hourly requirements specified in paragraph (1)(B)(i) to the extent that such requirements will not be satisfied by hours of work or participation in a work program.'', and

(B) in subparagraph (B)—

(i) by inserting after ''contains'' the following:

''case management services consisting of comprehensive intake assessments, individualized service plans, progress monitoring, and coordination with service providers, and'',

(ii) by amending clause (i) to read as follows:

''(i) Supervised job search programs that occur at State-approved locations in which the activities of participants shall be directly supervised and the timing and activities of participants tracked in accordance with guidelines set forth by the State.'',

(iii) in clause (ii) by striking ''jobs skills assessments, job finding clubs, training in techniques for'' and inserting ''employability assessments, training in techniques to increase'',

(iv) by striking clause (iii),

(v) in clause (iv) in the 1st sentence by inserting '', including subsidized employment, apprenticeships, and unpaid or volunteer work that is limited to 6 months out of a 12-month period'' before the period at the end,

(vi) in clause (v) by inserting '', including family literacy and financial literacy,'' after ''literacy'',

(vii) in clause (vii) by striking ''not more than'', and

(viii) by redesignating clauses (iv) through (viii) as clauses (iii) through (vii), respectively,

(C) by striking subparagraphs (D), (E), and (F), and inserting the following:

''(D) Each State agency shall establish requirements for participation by non-exempt individuals in the employment and training program components listed in clauses (i) through (vii) of subparagraph (B). Such requirements may vary among participants.'',

(D) in subparagraph (H) by striking ''(B)(v)'' and inserting ''(B)(iv)'', and

(E) by redesignating subparagraphs (G) through (M) as subparagraphs (E) through (K), respectively.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) AMENDMENTS TO THE FOOD AND NUTRITION ACT OF 2008.—Section 5(d)(14) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2014(d)(14)) is amended by striking ''6(d)(4)(I)'' and inserting ''6(d)(4)(G)''.

(2) AMENDMENT TO OTHER LAWS.—

(A) INTERNAL REVENUE CODE OF 1986.—Section 51(d)(8)(A)(ii) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (26 U.S.C. 51(d)(8)(A)(ii)) is amended—

(i) in subclause (I) by striking '', or'' and inserting a period,

(ii) by striking ''family—'' and all that follows through ''(I) receiving'' and inserting ''family receiving'', and

(iii) by striking subclause (II).

(B) WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT.—The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (Public Law 113–128; 128 Stat. 1425) is amended—

(i) in section 103(a)(2) by striking subparagraph (D), and

(ii) in section 121(b)(2)(B) by striking clause (iv).

(c) RELATED REQUIREMENTS.—Section 6 of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015) is amended—

(1) in subsection (e)(5)(A) by inserting ''or of an incapacitated person'' after ''6'', and

(2) by striking subsection (o).

(d) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—The Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.) is amended—

(1) in section 6, as amended by section 4011 and subsection (c), by redesignating subsections (p) through (s) as subparagraphs (n) through (q), respectively, and

(2) in section 7(i)(1) by striking ''6(o)(2)'' and inserting ''6(d)(1)(B)''.

(e) STATE PLAN.—Section 11(e)(19) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2020(e)(19)) is amended by striking ''geographic areas and households to be covered under such program, and the basis, including any cost information,'' and inserting ''extent to which such programs will be carried out in coordination with the activities carried out under title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, the plan for meeting the minimum services requirement under section 6(d)(4)(A)(ii) including any cost information, and the basis''.

(f) FUNDING OF EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAMS.—Section 16(h) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2025(h)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) in subparagraph (A) by striking ''$90,000,000'' and all that follows through the period at the end and inserting the following:

''under section 18(a)(1)—

''(i) $90,000,000 for fiscal year 2019;

''(ii) $250,000,000 for fiscal year 2020; and

''(iii) $1,000,000,000 for each fiscal year thereafter.'',

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

''(ii) takes into account—

''(I) for fiscal years 2019 and 2020, the number of individuals who are not exempt from the work requirement under section 6(o) as that section existed on the day before the date of the enactment of the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018; and

''(II) for fiscal years 2021 and each fiscal year thereafter, the number of individuals who are not exempt from the requirements under section 6(d)(1)(B).'',

(C) in subparagraph (D) by striking ''$50,000'' and inserting ''$100,000'', and

(D) by amending subparagraph (E) to read as follows:

''(E) RESERVATION OF FUNDS.—Of the funds made available under this paragraph for fiscal year 2021 and for each fiscal year thereafter, not more than $150,000,000 shall be reserved for allocation to States to provide training services by eligible providers identified under section 122 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act for participants in the supplemental nutrition assistance program to meet the hourly requirements under section 6(d)(1)(B) of this Act.'', and

(2) in paragraph (5)(C)—

(A) in clause (ii) by adding ''and'' at the end,

(B) in clause (iii) by striking ''; and'' and inserting a period, and

(C) by striking clause (iv).

(g) WORK SUPPLEMENTATION OR WORK SUPPORT PROGRAM.—

(1) REPEALER.—Subsection (b) of section 16 of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2025(b)) is repealed.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 5(e)(2)(A) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008

(7 U.S.C. 2014(e)(2)(A)) is amended to read as follows:

''(A) DEFINITION OF EARNED INCOME.—In this paragraph, the term ''earned income'' does not include income excluded by subsection (d).''.

(h) WORKFARE.—

(1) REPEALER.—Section 20 of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2029) is repealed.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—The Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.) is amended—

(A) in section 16(h)—

(i) in paragraph (1)(F)—

(I) in clause (i)—

(aa) in subclause (I) by inserting ''(as in effect on the day before the date of the enactment of the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018)'' after ''this Act'', and

(bb) in subclause (II)(bb) by inserting ''(as in effect on the day before the date of the enactment of the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018)'' before the period at the end,

(II) in clause (ii)—

(aa) in subclause (II)(cc) by inserting ''(as in effect on the day before the date of the enactment of the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018)'' after ''20'', and

(bb) in subclause (III)(ee)(AA) by inserting ''as in effect on the day before the date of the enactment of the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018'' after ''6(o)'', and

(III) in clause (vi)(I) by inserting ''as in effect on the day before the date of the enactment of the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018'' after ''6(d)'', and

(ii) in paragraph (3) by striking ''under section 6(d)(4)(I)(i)(II)'' and inserting ''for dependent care expenses under section 6(d)(4)'', and

(B) in section 17(b)—

(i) in paragraph (1)(B)(iv)(III)(jj) by inserting ''as in effect on the day before the date of the enactment of the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018'' after ''20'', and

(ii) by striking paragraph (2).

SEC. 4016. MODERNIZATION OF ELECTRONIC BENEFIT TRANSFER REGULATIONS.

Section 7(h)(2) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2016(h)(2)) is amended—

(1) in the 1st sentence by inserting ''and shall periodically review such regulations and modify such regulations to take into account evolving technology and comparable industry standards'' before the period at the end, and

(2) in subparagraph (C)—

(A) by striking ''(C)(i)'' and all that follows through ''abuse; and'', by inserting the following:

''(C)(i) risk-based measures to maximize the security of a system using the most effective technology available that the State agency considers appropriate and cost effective including consideration of recipient access and ease of use and which may include personal identification numbers, photographic identification on electronic benefit transfer cards, alternatives for securing transactions, and other measures to protect against fraud and abuse; and'', and

(B) by moving the left margin of clause (ii) 4 ems to the left.

SEC. 4017. MOBILE TECHNOLOGIES.

Section 7(h)(14) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2016(h)(14) is amended—

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

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subparagraph (B), the Secretary shall authorize the use of mobile technologies for the purpose of accessing supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits.'',

(2) in subparagraph (B)—

(A) by striking the heading and inserting ''DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS ON ACCESS OF BENEFITS THROUGH MOBILE TECHNOLOGIES'',

(B) by amending clause (i) to read as follows:

''(i) DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS.—Before authorizing implementation of subparagraph (A) in all States, the Secretary shall approve not more than 5 demonstration project proposals submitted by State agencies that will pilot the use of mobile technologies for supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits access.'',

(C) in clause (ii)—

(i) in the heading by striking ''DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS'' and inserting ''PROJECT REQUIREMENTS'',

(ii) by striking ''retail food store'' the first place it appears and inserting ''State agency'',

(iii) by striking ''includes'',

(iv) by striking subclauses (I), (II), (III), and (IV), and inserting the following:

''(I) provides recipient protections regarding privacy, ease of use, household access to benefits, and support similar to the protections provided under existing methods;

''(II) ensures that all recipients, including those without access to mobile payment technology and those who shop across State borders, have a means of benefit access;

''(III) requires retail food stores, unless exempt under section 7(f)(2)(B), to bear the costs of acquiring and arranging for the implementation of point-of-sale equipment and supplies for the redemption of benefits that are accessed through mobile technologies, including any fees not described in paragraph (13);

''(IV) requires that foods purchased with benefits issued under this section through mobile technologies are purchased at a price not higher than the price of the same food purchased by other methods used by the retail food store, as determined by the Secretary;

''(V) ensures adequate documentation for each authorized transaction, adequate security measures to deter fraud, and adequate access to retail food stores that accept benefits accessed through mobile technologies, as determined by the Secretary;

''(VI) provides for an evaluation of the demonstration project, including, but not limited to, an evaluation of household access to benefits; and

''(VII) meets other criteria as established by the Secretary.'',

(D) by amending clause (iii) to read as follows:

''(iv) DATE OF PROJECT APPROVAL.—The Secretary shall solicit and approve the qualifying demonstration projects required under subparagraph (B)(i) not later than January 1, 2020.'', and

(E) by inserting after clause (ii) the following:

''(iii) PRIORITY.—The Secretary may prioritize demonstration project proposals that would—

''(I) reduce fraud;

''(II) encourage positive nutritional outcomes; and

''(III) meet such other criteria as determined by the Secretary.'', and

(3) in subparagraph (C)(i)—

(A) by striking ''2017'' and inserting ''2022'', and

(B) by inserting ''requires further study by way of an extended pilot period or'' after ''States'' the 2d place it appears .

SEC. 4018. PROCESSING FEES.

(a) LIMITATION.—Section 7(h)(13) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2016(h)(13)) is amended to read as follows:

''(13) FEES.—No interchange fees shall apply to electronic benefit transfer transactions under this subsection. Neither a State, nor any agent, contractor, or subcontractor of a State who facilitates the provision of supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits in such State may impose a fee for switching or routing such benefits.''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 7(j)(1)(H) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2014) is amended to read as follows:

''(H) SWITCHING.—The term ''switching'' means the routing of an intrastate or interstate transaction that consists of transmitting the details of a transaction electronically recorded through the use of an electronic benefit transfer card in one State to the issuer of the card that may be in the same or different State.''.

SEC. 4019. REPLACEMENT OF EBT CARDS.

Section 7(h)(8)(B)(ii) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2016(h)(8)(B)(ii)) is amended by striking ''an excessive number of lost cards'' and inserting ''2 lost cards in a 12-month period''.

SEC. 4020. BENEFIT RECOVERY.

Section 7(h)(12) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2016(h)(12)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A) by inserting '', or due to the death of all members of the household'' after ''inactivity'',

(2) in subparagraph (B) by striking ''6'' and inserting ''3'', and

(3) in subparagraph (C) by striking ''12 months'' and inserting ''6 months, or upon verification that all members of the household are deceased''.

SEC. 4021. REQUIREMENTS FOR ONLINE ACCEPTANCE OF BENEFITS.

(a) DEFINITION.—Section 3(o)(1) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2012(o)(1)) is amended by striking ''or house-to-house trade route'' and inserting '', house-to-house trade route, or online entity''.

(b) ACCEPTANCE OF BENEFITS.—Section 7(k) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2016(k)) is amended—

(1) by striking the heading and inserting ''ACCEPTANCE OF PROGRAM BENEFITS THROUGH ONLINE TRANSACTIONS'',

(2) in paragraph (4) by striking subparagraph (C), and

(3) by striking paragraph (5).

SEC. 4022. NATIONAL GATEWAY.

(a) ISSUANCE OF BENEFITS.—Section 7 of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2016) is amended—

(1) in subsection (d) by striking ''benefits by benefit issuers'' and inserting ''benefit issuers and other independent sales organizations, third-party processors, and web service providers that provide electronic benefit transfer services or equipment to retail food stores and wholesale food concerns,'', and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(l) REQUIREMENT TO ROUTE ALL SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM BENEFIT TRANSFER TRANSACTIONS THROUGH A NATIONAL GATEWAY.—

''(1) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this section:

''(A) The term 'independent sales organization ' means a person or entity that—

''(i) is not a third-party processor; and

''(ii) engages in sales or service to retail food stores with respect to point-of-sale equipment necessary for electronic benefit transfer transaction processing.

''(B) The term 'third-party processor' means an entity, including a retail food store operating its own point-of-sale terminals, that is capable of routing electronic transfer benefit transactions for authorization.

''(C) The term 'web service provider' means an entity that operates a generic online purchasing website that can be customized for online electronic benefit transfer transactions for authorized retail food stores.

''(2) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (5), the Secretary shall establish a national gateway for the purpose of routing all supplemental nutrition assistance program benefit transfer transactions (in this subsection referred to as 'transactions' unless the context specifies otherwise) to the appropriate benefit issuers for purposes of transaction validation and settlement.

''(3) REQUIREMENTS TO ROUTE TRANSACTIONS.—The Secretary shall—

''(A) ensure that protections regarding privacy, security, ease of use, and access relating to supplemental nutrition assistance benefits are maintained for benefit recipients and retail food stores;

''(B) ensure redundancy for processing of transactions;

''(C) ensure real-time monitoring of transactions;

''(D) ensure that all entities that connect to such gateway, and all others that connect to such entities, meet and follow transaction messaging standards, and other requirements, established by the Secretary;

''(E) ensure the security of transactions by using the most effective technology available that the Secretary considers to be appropriate and cost-effective; and

''(F) ensure that all transactions are routed through such gateway.

''(4) STATE AGENCY ACTION.—Each State agency shall ensure that all of its benefit issuers connect to such gateway. A State agency may opt to require its benefit issuer to route cash transactions through such gateway, subject to terms established by the Secretary.

''(5) ROUTING OF TRANSACTIONS THROUGH A NATIONAL GATEWAY.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Before the Secretary implements in all the States a national gateway established under paragraph (2), the Secretary shall conduct a feasibility study to assess the feasibility of routing transactions through such gateway.

''(B) FEASIBILITY STUDY.—The feasibility study conducted under subparagraph (A) shall provide, at a minimum, all of the following:

''(i) A comprehensive analysis of opportunities and challenges presented by implementation of such gateway.

''(ii) One or more options for carrying forward each of such opportunities and for mitigating each of such challenges.

''(iii) Data for purposes of analyzing the implementation of, and on-going cost of managing, such gateway.

''(iv) One or more models for cost-neutral ongoing operation of a national gateway.

''(v) Other criteria, including security criteria, established by the Secretary.

''(C) DATE OF COMPLETION OF STUDY.—The Secretary shall complete the feasibility study required by subparagraph (B) not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018.

''(D) IMPLEMENTATION OF A NATIONAL GATEWAY.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the completion of such study, the Secretary shall complete the nationwide implementation of a national gateway established under paragraph (2) unless the Secretary determines, based on such study, that more time is needed to implement such gateway nationwide or that nationwide implementation of such gateway is not in the best interest of the operation of the supplemental nutrition assistance program.

''(E) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—If the Secretary makes a determination described in subparagraph (D), the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate a report that includes the basis of such determination.

''(F) NONDISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION.—Any information collected through such gateway about a specific retail food store, wholesale food concern, person, or other entity, and any investigative methodology or criteria used for program integrity purposes that operates at or in conjunction with such gateway, shall be exempt from the disclosure requirements of section 552(a) of title 5 of the United States Code pursuant to section 552(b)(3)(B) of title 5 of the United States Code. The Secretary shall limit the use or disclosure of information obtained under this subsection in a manner consistent with section 9(c).

''(6) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated $10,500,000 for fiscal year 2019, and $9,500,000 for each of the fiscal years 2020 through 2023, to carry out this subsection. Not more than $1,000,000 of the funds appropriated under this paragraph may be used for the feasibility study under paragraph (5)(B).

''(7) GATEWAY SUSTAINABILITY.—Benefit issuers and third-party processors shall pay fees to the gateway operator, in a manner prescribed by the Secretary, to directly access and route transactions through the national gateway.

''(A) PURPOSE.—The Secretary shall ensure that fees are collected and used solely for the operation of the gateway.

''(B) AMOUNT.—Fees shall be established by the Secretary in amounts proportionate to the number of transactions routed through the gateway by each benefit issuer and third-party processor, and based on the cost of operating the gateway in a fiscal year.

''(C) ADJUSTMENT.—The Secretary shall evaluate annually the cost of operating such gateway and shall adjust the fee in effect for a fiscal year to reflect the cost of operating such gateway, except that an adjustment under this subparagraph for any fiscal year may not exceed 10 percent of the fee charged under this paragraph in the preceding fiscal year.''.

(b) APPROVAL OF RETAIL FOOD STORES AND WHOLESALE FOOD CONCERNS.—The 1st sentence of section 9(c) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2018(c)) is amended by inserting ''contracts for electronic benefit transfer services and equipment, records necessary to validate the FNS authorization number to accept and redeem benefits,'' after ''invoices,''.

SEC. 4023. ACCESS TO STATE SYSTEMS.

(a) RECORDS.—Section 11(a)(3)(B) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2020(a)(3)(B)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''Records described'' and inserting ''All records, and the entire information systems in which records are contained, that are covered'', and

(2) by amending clause (i) to read as follows:

''(i) be made available for inspection and audit by the Secretary, subject to data and security protocols agreed to by the State agency and Secretary;''.

(b) REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—Section 16 of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2025) is amended—

(1) in the last sentence of subsection (c)(4) by inserting ''including providing access to applicable State records and the entire information systems in which the records are contained,'' after ''Secretary,'', and

(2) in subsection (g)(1)—

(A) in subparagraph (E) by striking ''and'' at the end,

(B) in subparagraph (F) by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and'', and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

''(G) would be accessible by the Secretary for the purposes of program oversight and would be used by the State agency to make available all records required by the Secretary.''.

SEC. 4024. TRANSITIONAL BENEFITS.

Section 11(s) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2020(s)) is amended—

(1) by striking the heading and inserting ''TRANSITIONAL BENEFITS'',

(2) in paragraph (1)—

(A) by striking ''may'' and inserting ''shall'', and

(B) in subparagraph (B) by striking ''at the option of the State,'', and

(3) in paragraph (2)—

(A) by striking ''may'' and inserting ''shall'', and

(B) by striking ''not more than''.

SEC. 4025. INCENTIVIZING TECHNOLOGY MODERNIZATION.

Section 11(t) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2020(t)) is amended—

(1) by striking the heading and inserting ''GRANTS FOR SIMPLIFIED SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM APPLICATION AND ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION SYSTEMS'',

(2) in paragraph (1) by striking ''implement—'' and all that follows through the period at the end, and inserting ''implement simplified supplemental nutrition assistance program application and eligibility determination systems.'', and

(3) in paragraph (2)—

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

''(B) establishing enhanced technological methods for applying for benefits and determining eligibility that improve the administrative infrastructure used in processing applications and determining eligibility; or'',

(B) by striking subparagraphs (C) and (D), and

(C) by redesignating subparagraph (E) as subparagraph (C).

SEC. 4026. SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM BENEFIT TRANSFER TRANSACTION DATA REPORT.

Section 9 of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2018) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(2)—

(A) in subparagraph (A) by striking ''and'' at the end,

(B) in subparagraph (B) by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and'', and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

''(C) parameters for retail food store cooperation with the Secretary sufficient to carry out subsection (i).''.

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(i) DATA COLLECTION FOR RETAIL FOOD STORE TRANSACTIONS.—

''(1) COLLECTION OF DATA.—To assist in making improvements to supplemental nutrition assistance program design, for each interval not greater than a 2-year period, the Secretary shall—

''(A) collect a statistically significant sample of retail food store transaction data, including the cost and description of items purchased with supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits, to the extent practicable and without affecting retail food store document retention practices; and

''(B) make a summarized report of aggregated data collected under subparagraph (A) available to the public in a manner that prevents identification of individual retail food stores, individual retail food store chains, and individual members of households that use such benefits.

''(2) NONDISCLOSURE.—Any transaction data that contains information specific to a retail food store, a retail food store location, a person, or other entity shall be exempt from the disclosure requirements of Section 552(a) of title 5 of the United States Code pursuant to section 552(b)(3)(B) of title 5 of the United States Code. The Secretary shall limit the use or disclosure of information obtained under this subsection in a manner consistent with sections 9(c) and 11(e)(8).''.

SEC. 4027. ADJUSTMENT TO PERCENTAGE OF RECOVERED FUNDS RETAINED BY STATES.

Section 16(a) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2025(a) is amended—

(1) in the 1st sentence by striking ''35 percent'' and inserting ''50 percent'', and

(2) by inserting after the 1st sentence the following:

''A State agency may use such funds retained only to carry out the supplemental nutrition assistance program, including investments in technology, improvements in administration and distribution, and actions to prevent fraud.''.

SEC. 4028. TOLERANCE LEVEL FOR PAYMENT ERRORS.

Section 16(c)(1) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2025(c)(1)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A)(ii)—

(A) in subclause (I) by striking ''and'' at the end,

(B) in subclause (II)—

(i) by striking ''fiscal year thereafter'' and inserting ''of the fiscal years 2015 through 2017'', and

(ii) by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and'', and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

''(III) for each fiscal year thereafter, $0.'', and

(2) in subparagraph (C) by striking ''fiscal year 2004'' and all that follows through ''second'', and inserting ''any of the fiscal years 2004 through 2018 for which the Secretary determines that for the second or subsequent consecutive fiscal year, and with respect to fiscal year 2019 and any fiscal year thereafter for which the Secretary determines that for the third''.

SEC. 4029. STATE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS.

Section 16(d) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2025(d)) is amended—

(1) by striking the heading and inserting ''STATE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS'',

(2) in paragraph (2)—

(A) in the heading by striking ''AND THEREAFTER'' and inserting ''THROUGH 2017'',

(B) in subparagraph (A) by striking ''and each fiscal year thereafter'' and inserting ''through fiscal year 2017'', and

(C) in subparagraph (B) by striking ''and each fiscal year thereafter'' and inserting ''through fiscal year 2017'', and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(6) FISCAL YEAR 2018 AND FISCAL YEARS THEREAFTER.—With respect to fiscal year 2018 and each fiscal year thereafter, the Secretary shall establish, by regulation, performance criteria relating to—

''(A) actions taken to correct errors, reduce rates of error, and improve eligibility determinations; and

''(B) other indicators of effective administration determined by the Secretary.''.

SEC. 4030. PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS.

Section 17 of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2026) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(m) PILOT PROJECTS TO ENCOURAGE THE USE OF PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS COMMITTED TO ADDRESSING FOOD INSECURITY.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may, on application, permit not more than 10 eligible entities to carry out pilot projects to support public-private partnerships that address food insecurity and poverty.

''(2) DEFINITION.—For purposes of this subsection, an 'eligible entity' means—

''(A) a State;

''(B) a unit of local government;

''(C) a nonprofit organization;

''(D) a community-based organization; and

''(E) an institution of higher education.

''(3) PROJECT REQUIREMENTS.—Projects approved under this subsection shall be limited to 2 years in length and evaluate the impact of the ability of eligible entities to—

''(A) improve the effectiveness and impact of the supplemental nutrition assistance program;

''(B) develop food security solutions that are contextualized to the needs of a community or region; and

''(C) strengthen the capacity of communities to address food insecurity and poverty.

''(4) REPORTING.—Participating entities shall report annually to the Secretary who shall submit a final report to the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate. Such report shall include—

''(A) a summary of the activities conducted under the pilot projects;

''(B) an assessment of the effectiveness of the pilot projects; and

''(C) best practices regarding the use of public-private partnerships to improve the effectiveness of public benefit programs to address food insecurity and poverty.

''(5) AUTHORIZATION AND ADVANCE AVAILABILITY OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

''(A) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this subsection $5,000,000 to remain available until expended.

''(B) APPROPRIATION IN ADVANCE.—Only funds appropriated under subparagraph (A) in advance specifically to carry out this subsection shall be available to carry out this subsection.''.

SEC. 4031. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

The 1st sentence of section 18(a)(1) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2027(a)(1)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 4032. EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE.

Section 27(a) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2036(a)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1) by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023'',

(2) in paragraph (2)—

(A) in subparagraph (C) by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023'',

(B) in subparagraph (D)—

(i) by striking ''2018'' the 1st place it appears and inserting ''2019'',

(ii) in clause (iii) by striking ''and'' at the end, and

(iii) by adding at the end the following:

''(v) for fiscal year 2019, $60,000,000; and'', and

(C) in subparagraph (E)—

(i) by striking ''2019'' and inserting ''2020'',

(ii) by striking ''(D)(iv)'' and inserting ''(D)(v)'', and

(iii) by striking ''2017'' and inserting ''2018'', and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(4) FARM-TO-FOOD-BANK FUND.—From amounts made available under subparagraphs (D) and (E) of paragraph (2), the Secretary shall distribute $20,000,000 in accordance with section 214 of the Emergency Food Assistance Act of 1983 (7 U.S.C. 7515) that States shall use to procure or enter into agreements with a food bank to procure excess fresh fruits and vegetables grown in the State, or surrounding regions in the United States, to be provided to eligible recipient agencies as defined in section 201A(3) of the Emergency Food Assistance Act of 1983 (7 U.S.C. 7501(3)).''.

SEC. 4033. NUTRITION EDUCATION.

(a) NUTRITION EDUCATION AND OBESITY PREVENTION GRANT PROGRAM.—Section 28 of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2036a) is amended—

(1) by amending subsection (a) to read as follows:

''(a) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section:

''(1) ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUAL.—The term 'eligible individual' means an individual who is eligible to receive benefits under a nutrition education and obesity prevention program under this section as a result of being—

''(A) an individual eligible for benefits under—

''(i) this Act;

''(ii) sections 9(b)(1)(A) and 17(c)(4) of the Richard B Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1758(b)(1)(A), 1766(c)(4)); or

''(iii) section 4(e)(1)(A) of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 1773(e)(1)(A));

''(B) an individual who resides in a community with a significant low-income population, as determined by the Secretary; or

''(C) such other low-income individual as is determined to be eligible by the Secretary.

''(2) ELIGIBLE INSTITUTION.—The term 'eligible institution' includes any '1862 Institution' or '1890 Institution', as defined in section 2 of the Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7601).'',

(2) in subsection (b) by striking ''Consistent with the terms and conditions of grants awarded under this section, State agencies may'' and inserting ''The Secretary, acting through the Director of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, in consultation with the Administrator of the Food and Nutrition Service, shall'',

(3) in subsection (c)—

(A) by amending paragraph (1) to read as follows:

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Consistent with the terms and conditions of grants awarded under this section, eligible institutions shall deliver nutrition education and obesity prevention services under a program described in subsection (b) that—

''(A) to the extent practicable, provide for the employment and training of professional and paraprofessional aides from the target population to engage in direct nutrition education; and

''(B) partner with other public and private entities as appropriate to optimize program delivery.'',

(B) in paragraph (2)—

(i) by amending subparagraph (A) to read as follows:

''(A) IN GENERAL.—A State agency, in consultation with eligible institutions that provide nutrition education and obesity prevention services under this subsection, shall submit to the Secretary for approval a nutrition education State plan.'',

(ii) in subparagraph (B) by striking ''Except as provided in subparagraph (C), a'' and inserting ''A'', and

(iii) by striking subparagraph (C),

(C) in paragraph (3)—

(i) in subparagraph (A)—

(I) by striking ''A State agency'' and inserting ''An eligible institution'', and

(II) by inserting ''the Director of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture and'' after ''by'', and

(ii) in subparagraph (B) by inserting ''the Director of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture and'' after ''education,'', and

(D) in paragraph (4) by inserting ''and eligible institutions'' after ''agencies'', and

(E) in paragraph (5) by striking ''State agency'' and inserting ''eligible institutions'',

(4) in subsection (d)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) in the heading by striking ''IN GENERAL'' and inserting ''BASIC FUNDING'',

(ii) by striking ''to State agencies'',

(iii) in subparagraph (E) by striking ''and'' at the end,

(iv) in subparagraph (F)—

(I) by striking ''year 2016 and each subsequent fiscal year'' and inserting ''years 2016 through 2018'', and

(II) by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon, and

(v) by adding at the end the following:

''(G) for fiscal year 2019, $485,000,000; and

''(H) for fiscal year 2020 and each subsequent fiscal year, the applicable amount during the preceding fiscal year, as adjusted to reflect any increases for the 12-month period ending the preceding June 30 in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the Department of Labor.'',

(B) in paragraph (2)—

(i) in subparagraph (A)—

(I) by inserting ''and appropriated under the authority of paragraph (2)'' after ''paragraph (1)'', and

(II) in clause (ii)—

(aa) by inserting ''(as that section existed on the day before the date of the enactment of the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018)'' after ''(B)'' and

(bb) in subclause (V) by striking ''and each fiscal year thereafter'', and

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

''(C) REALLOCATION.—If the Secretary determines that an eligible institution will not expend all of the funds allocated to the eligible institution for a fiscal year under paragraph (1) or in the case of an eligible institution that elects not to receive the entire amount of funds allocated to the eligible institution for a fiscal year, the Secretary shall reallocate the unexpended funds to other eligible institutions during the fiscal year or the subsequent fiscal year (as determined by the Secretary) that have approved State plans under which the eligible institutions may expend the reallocated funds.'', and

(iii) by inserting after subparagraph (A) the following:

''(B) SUBSEQUENT ALLOCATION.—Of the funds set aside under paragraph (1) and appropriated under the authority of paragraph (2) for fiscal year 2019 and each fiscal year thereafter, 100 percent shall be allocated to eligible institutions pro rata based on the respective share of each State of the number of individuals participating in the supplemental nutrition assistance program during the 12-month period ending the preceding January 31, as determined by the Secretary.'',

(C) by redesignating paragraphs (2) and (3) as paragraphs (3) and (4), respectively,

(D) by inserting after paragraph (1) the following:

''(2) AUTHORIZATION AND ADVANCE AVAILABILITY OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

''(A) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section $65,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2019 through 2023.

''(B) APPROPRIATION IN ADVANCE.—Except as provided in subparagraph (C), only funds appropriated under subparagraph (A) in advance specifically to carry out this section shall be available to carry out this section.

''(C) OTHER FUNDS.—Funds appropriated under this paragraph shall be in addition to funds made available under paragraph (1).'', and

(E) by inserting after paragraph (4), as so redesignated, the following:

''(5) ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS.—Not more than 10 percent of the funds allocated to eligible institutions may be used by the eligible institutions for administrative costs.'', and

(5) in subsection (e) by striking ''January 1, 2012'' and inserting ''18 months after the date of the enactment of the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018''.

(b) RELATED AMENDMENT.—Section 18(a)(3)(A)(ii) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2027(a)(3)(A)(ii)) is amended by striking '', such as the expanded food and nutrition education program''.

SEC. 4034. RETAIL FOOD STORE AND RECIPIENT TRAFFICKING.

Section 29(c)(1) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2036b(c)(1)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 4035. TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS.

The Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.) is amended—

(1) in section 3—

(A) in subsections (d) and (i) by striking ''7(i)'' and inserting ''7(h)'', and

(B) in subsection (o)(1)(A) by striking ''(r)(1)'' and inserting ''(q)(1)'',

(2) in section 5(a) by striking ''and section'' each place it appears and all that follows through ''households'' the respective next place it appears, and inserting ''and section 3(m)(4), households'',

(3) in subsections (e)(1) and (f)(1)(A)(i) of section 8 by striking ''3(n)(5)'' and inserting ''3(m)(5)'',

(4) in the 1st sentence of section 10—

(A) by striking ''or the Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corporation'' each place it appears, and

(B) by striking ''3(p)(4)'' and inserting ''3(o)(4)'',

(5) in section 11—

(A) in subsection (a)(2) by striking ''3(t)(1)'' and inserting ''3(s)(1)'', and

(B) in subsection (d)—

(i) by striking ''3(t)(1)'' each place it appears and inserting ''3(s)(1)'', and

(ii) by striking ''3(t)(2)'' each place it appears and inserting ''3(s)(2)'',

(C) in subsection (e)—

(i) in paragraph (17) by striking ''3(t)(1)'' inserting ''3(s)(1)'', and

(ii) in paragraph (23) by striking ''Simplified Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program'' and inserting ''simplified supplemental nutrition assistance program'',

(6) in section 15(e) by striking ''exchange'' and all that follows through ''anything'', and inserting ''exchange for benefits, or anything'',

(7) in section 17(b)(1)(B)(iv)—

(A) in subclause (III)(aa) by striking ''3(n)'' and inserting ''3(m)'', and

(B) in subclause (VII) by striking ''7(i)'' and inserting ''7(h)'',

(8) in section 25(a)(1)(B)(i)(I) by striking the 2d semicolon at the end, and

(9) in section 26(b) by striking ''out'' and all that follows through ''(referred'', and inserting ''out a simplified supplemental nutrition assistance program (referred''.

SEC. 4036. IMPLEMENTATION FUNDS.

Out of any funds made available under section 18(a) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2027(a)) for fiscal year 2019, the Secretary shall use to carry out the amendments made by this subtitle $150,000,000, to remain available until expended.

Subtitle B—Commodity Distribution Programs

SEC. 4101. COMMODITY DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM.

The 1st sentence of section 4(a) of the Agriculture and Consumer Protection Act of 1973 (7 U.S.C. 612c note) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 4102. COMMODITY SUPPLEMENTAL FOOD PROGRAM.

Section 5 of the Agriculture and Consumer Protection Act of 1973 (7 U.S.C. 612c note) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (1) by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023'', and

(B) in paragraph (2) by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023'', and

(2) in subsection (d)(2) by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 4103. DISTRIBUTION OF SURPLUS COMMODITIES TO SPECIAL NUTRITION PROJECTS.

Section 1114(a)(2)(A) of the Agriculture and Food Act of 1981 (7 U.S.C. 1431e(a)(2)(A)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

Subtitle C—Miscellaneous

SEC. 4201. PURCHASE OF FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES FOR DISTRIBUTION TO SCHOOLS AND SERVICE INSTITUTIONS.

Section 10603(b) of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (7 U.S.C. 612c-4(b)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 4202. SENIORS FARMERS' MARKET NUTRITION PROGRAM.

Section 4402(a) of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (7 U.S.C. 3007(a)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 4203. HEALTHY FOOD FINANCING INITIATIVE.

Section 243(d) of the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 6953) is amended by striking ''until expended'' and inserting ''until October 1, 2023''.

SEC. 4204. AMENDMENTS TO THE FRUIT AND VEGETABLE PROGRAM.

Section 19 of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1769a) is amended—

(1) in the section heading, by striking ''**FRESH**'' ;

(2) in subsection (a), by inserting '', canned, dried, frozen, or pureed'' after ''fresh'';

(3) in subsection (b), by inserting '', canned, dried, frozen, or pureed'' after ''fresh''; and

(4) in subsection (e), by inserting '', canned, dried, frozen, or pureed'' after ''fresh''.

TITLE V—CREDIT

Subtitle A—Farm Ownership Loans

SEC. 5101. MODIFICATION OF THE 3-YEAR EXPERIENCE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENT FOR FARM OWNERSHIP LOANS.

Section 302(b) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1922(b)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(4) WAIVER AUTHORITY.—In the case of a qualified beginning farmer or rancher, the Secretary may—

''(A) reduce the 3-year requirement in paragraph (1) to—

''(i) 2 years, if the farmer or rancher has—

''(I) 16 credit hours of post-secondary education in a field related to agriculture;

''(II) at least 1 year of direct substantive management experience in a business;

''(III) been honorably discharged from the armed forces of the United States;

''(IV) successfully repaid a youth loan made under section 311(b); or

''(V) an established relationship with an individual participating as a counselor in a Service Corps of Retired Executives program authorized under section 8(b)(1)(B) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 637(b)(1)(B)), or with a local farm or ranch operator or organization, approved by the Secretary, that is committed to mentoring the farmer or rancher; or

''(ii) 1 year, if the farmer or rancher has military leadership or management experience from having completed an acceptable military leadership course; or

''(B) waive the 3-year requirement in paragraph (1) if the farmer or rancher—

''(i) meets a requirement of subparagraph (A)(i) (other than subclause (V) thereof) and meets the requirement of subparagraph (A)(ii); and

''(ii) meets the requirement of subparagraph (A)(i)(V).''.

SEC. 5102. CONSERVATION LOAN AND LOAN GUARANTEE PROGRAM.

Section 304(h) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1924(h)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''$150,000,000'' and inserting ''$75,000,000''; and

(2) by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 5103. FARM OWNERSHIP LOAN LIMITS.

Section 305(a) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1925(a)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''$700,000'' and inserting ''$1,750,000''; and

(2) by striking ''2000'' and inserting ''2019''.

Subtitle B—Operating Loans

SEC. 5201. LIMITATIONS ON AMOUNT OF OPERATING LOANS.

Section 313(a)(1) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1943(a)(1)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''$700,000'' and inserting ''$1,750,000''; and

(2) by striking ''2000'' and inserting ''2019''.

SEC. 5202. MICROLOANS.

Section 313(c)(2) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1943(c)(2)) is amended by striking ''title'' and inserting ''subsection''.

Subtitle C—Administrative Provisions

SEC. 5301. BEGINNING FARMER AND RANCHER INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT ACCOUNTS PILOT PROGRAM.

Section 333B(h) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1983b(h)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 5302. LOAN AUTHORIZATION LEVELS.

Section 346(b)(1) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1994(b)(1)) is amended in the matter preceding subparagraph (A) by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 5303. LOAN FUND SET-ASIDES.

Section 346(b)(2)(A)(ii)(III) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1994(b)(2)(A)(ii)(III)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

Subtitle D—Technical Corrections to the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act

SEC. 5401. TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS TO THE CONSOLIDATED FARM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT ACT.

(a)(1) Section 310E(d)(3) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C.

1935(d)(3)) is amended by inserting ''and socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers'' after ''ranchers'' the second place it appears.

(2) The amendment made by this subsection shall take effect as if included in the enactment of section 5004(4)(A)(i) of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Public Law 110–246) in lieu of the amendment made by such section.

(b)(1) Section 321(a) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1961(a)) is amended in the second sentence by striking ''and limited liability companies'' and inserting ''limited liability companies, and such other legal entities''.

(2) The amendment made by this subsection shall take effect as if included in the enactment of section 5201 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–79) in lieu of the amendment made by such section.

(c)(1) Section 331D(e) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1981d(e)) is amended by inserting after ''within 60 days after receipt of the notice required in this section'' the following: ''or, in extraordinary circumstances as determined by the applicable State director, after the 60-day period''.

(2) The amendment made by this subsection shall take effect as if included in the enactment of section 10 of the Agricultural Credit Improvement Act of 1992 (Public Law 102–554).

(d)(1) Section 333A(f)(1)(A) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1983a(f)(1)(A)) is amended by striking ''114'' and inserting ''339''.

(2) The amendment made by this subsection shall take effect as if included in the enactment of section 14 of the Agricultural Credit Improvement Act of 1992 (Public Law 102–554).

(e) Section 339(d)(3) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C.1989(d)(3)) is amended by striking ''preferred certified lender'' and inserting ''Preferred Certified Lender''.

(f)(1) Section 343(a)(11)(C) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1991(a)(11)(C)) is amended by striking ''or joint operators'' and inserting ''joint operator, or owners''.

(2) The amendment made by this subsection shall take effect as of the effective date of section 5303(a)(2) of the Agricultural Act of 2014.

(g)(1) Section 343(b) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1991(b)) is amended by striking ''307(e)'' and inserting ''307(d)''.

(2) The amendment made by paragraph (1) shall take effect as if included in the enactment of section 5004 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–79).

(h) Section 346(a) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C.1994(a)) is amended by striking the last comma.

Subtitle E—Amendments to the Farm Credit Act of 1971

SEC. 5501. ELIMINATION OF OBSOLETE REFERENCES.

(a) Section 1.2(a) of the Farm Credit Act of 1971 (12 U.S.C. 2002(a)) is amended to read as follows:

''(a) COMPOSITION.—The Farm Credit System shall include the Farm Credit Banks, banks for cooperatives, Agricultural Credit Banks, the Federal land bank associations, the Federal land credit associations, the production credit associations, the Agricultural Credit Associations, the Federal Farm Credit Banks Funding Corporation, the Federal Agricultural Mortgage Corporation, service corporations established pursuant to section 4.25 of this Act, and such other institutions as may be made a part of the System, all of which shall be chartered by and subject to regulation by the Farm Credit Administration.''.

(b) Section 2.4 of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2075) is amended by striking subsection (d).

(c) Section 3.0 of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2121) is amended—

(1) in the 3rd sentence, by striking ''and a Central Bank for Cooperatives''; and

(2) by striking the 5th sentence.

(d) Section 3.2(a)(1) of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2123(a)(1)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''not merged into the United Bank for Cooperatives or the National Bank for Cooperatives''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following: ''Section 7.12(c) shall apply to the board of directors of a merged bank for cooperatives.''.

(e) Section 3.2(a)(2)(A) of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2123(a)(2)(A)) is amended by striking ''(other than the National Bank for Cooperatives)''.

(f) Section 3.2 of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2123) is amended—

(1) by striking subsection (b);

(2) in subsection (a)(2)(B), by striking ''paragraph'' and inserting ''subsection'';

(3) by striking ''(a)(1)'' and inserting ''(a)'';

(4) by striking ''(2)(A)'' and inserting ''(b)(1)'';

(5) by striking ''(i)'' and inserting ''(A)'';

(6) by striking ''(ii)'' and inserting ''(B)''; and

(7) by striking ''(B)'' and inserting ''(2)''.

(g) Section 3.5 of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2126) is amended by striking ''district''.

(h) Section 3.7(a) of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2128(a)) is amended by striking the second sentence.

(i) Section 3.8(b)(1)(A) of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2129(b)(1)(A)) is amended by inserting ''(or successor agency)'' after ''Rural Electrification Administration''.

(j) Section 3.9(a) of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2130(a)) is amended by striking the 3rd sentence.

(k) Section 3.10(c) of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2131(c)) is amended by striking the second sentence.

(l) Section 3.10(d) of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2131(d)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''district'' each place it appears; and

(2) by inserting ''for cooperatives or successor bank'' before ''on account of such indebtedness''.

(m) Section 3.11 of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2132) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by striking ''subsections (b) and (c)'' and inserting ''subsection (b)'';

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) by striking ''district''; and

(B) by striking ''Except as provided in subsection (c) below, all'' and inserting ''All''; and

(3) by striking subsection (c) and redesignating subsections (d) through (f) as subsections (c) through (e), respectively.

(n) The heading for part B of title III of such Act is amended by striking ''UNITED AND''.

(o) Section 3.20(a) of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2141(a)) is amended by striking ''or the United Bank for Cooperatives, as the case may be''.

(p) Section 3.20(b) of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2141(b)) is amended by striking ''the district banks for cooperatives and the Central Bank for Cooperatives'' and inserting ''all constituent banks referred to in section 413 of the Agricultural Credit Act of 1987''.

(q) Section 3.21 of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2142) is repealed.

(r) Section 3.28 of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2149) is amended by striking ''a district bank for cooperatives and the Central Bank for Cooperatives'' and inserting ''its constituent banks referred to in section 413 of the Agricultural Credit Act of 1987''.

(s) Section 3.29 of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2150) is repealed.

(t)(1) Section 4.0 of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2151) is repealed.

(2) Section 5.60(b) of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2277a-9(b)) is amended to read as follows:

''(b) AMOUNTS IN FUND.—The Corporation shall deposit in the Insurance Fund all premium payments received by the Corporation under this part.''.

(u)(1) Section 4.8 of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2159) is amended—

(A) by striking ''(a)''; and

(B) by striking subsection (b).

(2) Section 1.1(c) of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2001(c)) is amended by striking ''including any costs of defeasance under section 4.8(b),''.

(v) Section 4.9(d)(2) of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2160(d)(2)) is amended to read as follows:

''(2) REPRESENTATION ON BOARD.—The Farm Credit System Insurance Corporation shall have no representation on the board of directors of the Corporation.''.

(w) Section 4.9 of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2160) is amended by striking subsection (e) and redesignating subsection (f) as subsection (e).

(x) Section 4.9A(c) of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2162(c)) is amended to read as follows:

''(c) INABILITY TO RETIRE STOCK AT PAR VALUE.—If an institution is unable to retire eligible borrower stock at par value due to the liquidation of the institution, the Farm Credit System Insurance Corporation, acting as receiver, shall retire such stock at par value as would have been retired in the ordinary course of business of the institution. The Farm Credit System Insurance Corporation shall make use of sufficient funds from the Farm Credit Insurance Fund to carry out this section.''.

(y) Section 4.12A(a)(1) of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2184(a)(1)) is amended to read as follows:

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Every Farm Credit System bank or association shall provide a current list of its stockholders, within 7 calendar days after receipt of a written request by a stockholder, to the requesting stockholder.''.

(z) Section 4.14A(a) of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2202a(a)) is amended by inserting ''and section 4.36'' after ''As used in this part''.

(aa)(1) Section 4.14A of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2202a) is amended—

(A) in subsection (l), by striking ''production credit''; and

(B) by striking subsection (h) and redesignating subsections (i) through (l) as subsections (h) through (k), respectively.

(2)(A) Section 5.31 of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2267) is amended by striking ''4.14A(i)'' and inserting ''4.14A(h)''.

(B) Section 5.32(h) of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2268(h)) is amended by striking ''4.14A(i)'' and inserting ''4.14A(h)''.

(bb)(1) Section 4.14C of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2202c) is repealed.

(2)(A) Section 4.14A(a)(5)(B)(ii)(I) of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2202a(a)(5)(B)(ii)(I)) is amended by striking ''4.14C,''.

(B) Section 8.9 of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2279aa–9) is amended by striking ''4.14C,'' each place it appears.

(cc) Section 4.17 of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2205) is amended by striking ''Federal intermediate credit banks and''.

(dd) Section 4.19(a) of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2207(a)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''district'';

(2) by striking ''Federal land bank association and production credit''; and

(3) by striking ''units'' and inserting ''institutions''.

(ee) Section 4.38 of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2219c) is amended by striking ''The Assistance Board established under section 6.0 and all'' and inserting ''All''.

(ff) Section 5.17(a)(2) of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2252(a)(2)) is amended by striking the second and 3rd sentences.

(gg) Section 5.18 of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2253) is repealed.

(hh) Section 5.19(a) of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2254(a)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''Except for Federal land bank associations, each'' and inserting ''Each''; and

(2) by striking the second sentence.

(ii) Section 5.19(b) of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2254(b)) is amended—

(1) in the second sentence of paragraph (1), by striking ''except with respect to any actions taken by any banks of the System under section 4.8(b),'';

(2) by striking the third sentence of paragraph (1);

(3) by striking ''(b)(1)'' and inserting ''(b)''; and

(4) by striking paragraphs (2) and (3).

(jj) Section 5.35(4) of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2271(4)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (C)—

(A) by striking ''after December 31, 1992,''; and

(B) by striking ''by the Farm Credit System Assistance Board under section 6.6 or''; and

(2) by striking subparagraph (B) and redesignating subparagraph (C) as subparagraph (B).

(kk) Section 5.38 of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2274) is amended by striking ''a farm credit district board, bank board, or bank officer or employee shall not remove any director or officer of any production credit association or Federal land bank association'' and inserting ''a Farm Credit Bank board, officer, or employee shall not remove any director or officer of any association''.

(ll) Section 5.44 of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2275) is repealed.

(mm) Section 5.58(2) of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2277a–7) is amended by striking the second sentence.

(nn) Subtitle A of title VI of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2278a-2278a–11) is repealed.

(oo) Title VI of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2278a-2278b–11) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''SEC. 6.32. TERMINATION OF AUTHORITY.

''The authority provided in this subtitle shall terminate on December 31, 2018.''.

(pp) Section 7.9 of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2279c–2) is amended by striking subsection (c).

(qq) Section 7.10(a)(4) of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2279d(a)(4)) is amended to read as follows:

''(4) the institution pays to the Farm Credit Insurance Fund the amount by which the total capital of the institution exceeds 6 percent of the assets;''.

(rr) Section 8.0(2) of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2279aa(2)) is amended to read as follows:

''(2) BOARD.—The term 'Board' means the board of directors established under section 8.2.''.

(ss)(1) Section 8.0 of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2279aa) is amended by striking paragraphs (6) and (8), and redesignating paragraphs (7), (9), and (10) as paragraphs (6) through (8), respectively.

(2)(A) Section 4.39 of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2219d) is amended by striking ''8.0(7)'' and inserting ''8.0(6)''.

(B) Section 8.6(e)(2) of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2279aa–6(e)(2)) is amended by striking ''8.0(9)'' and inserting ''8.0(7)''.

(C) Section 8.11(e) of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2279aa–11(e)) is amended by striking ''8.0(7)'' and inserting ''8.0(6)''.

(D) Section 8.32(a)(1)(B) of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2279bb–1(a)(1)(B)) is amended by striking ''8.0(9)(C)'' and inserting ''8.0(7)(C)''.

(tt)(1) Section 8.2 of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2279aa-2) is amended—

(A) in subsection (b)—

(i) in the subsection heading, by striking ''PERMANENT BOARD'' and inserting ''BOARD OF DIRECTORS'';

(ii) by striking paragraph (1) and inserting the following:

''(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Corporation shall be under the management of the Board of Directors.'';

(iii) by striking paragraph (3) and redesignating paragraphs (4) through (10) as paragraphs (3) through (9), respectively; and

(iv) by striking ''permanent'' each place it appears in paragraphs (2), and (3) through (9) (as so redesignated); and

(B) by striking subsection (a) and redesignating subsections (b) and (c) as subsections (a) and (b), respectively.

(2) Section 8.4(a)(1) of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2279aa–4) is amended—

(A) by striking the 3rd sentence;

(B) by inserting after the 1st sentence the following: ''Voting common stock shall be offered to banks, other financial entities, insurance companies, and System institutions under such terms and conditions as the Board may adopt. The voting stock shall be fairly and broadly offered to ensure that no institution or institutions acquire a disproportionate amount of the total amount of voting common stock outstanding of a class and that capital contributions and issuances of voting common stock for the contributions are fairly distributed between entities eligible to hold Class A and Class B stock, as provided under this paragraph.'';

(C) by striking ''8.2(b)(2)(A)'' and inserting ''8.2(a)(2)(A)''; and

(D) by striking ''8.2(b)(2)(B)'' and inserting ''8.2(a)(2)(B)''.

(uu)(1) Section 8.6 of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2279aa–6) is amended by striking subsection (d) and redesignating subsection (e) as subsection (d).

(2)(A) Paragraph (7)(B)(i) of section 8.0 of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2279aa), as redesignated by subsection (ss)(1), is amended by striking ''through (d)'' and inserting ''and (c)''.

(B) Section 8.33(b)(2)(A) of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2279bb–2(b)(2)(A)) is amended by striking ''8.6(e)'' and inserting ''8.6(d)''.

(vv) Section 8.32(a) of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2279bb–1(a)) is amended by striking ''Not sooner than the expiration of the 3-year period beginning on the date of enactment of the Farm Credit System Reform Act of 1996, the'' and inserting ''The''.

(ww) Section 8.35 of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2279bb–4) is amended by striking subsection (e).

(xx) Section 8.38 of such Act (12 U.S.C. 2279bb–7) is repealed.

SEC. 5502. CONFORMING REPEALS.

(a) Sections 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 14, and 15 of the Agricultural Marketing Act (12 U.S.C. 1141b, 1141c, 1141d, 1141e, 1141f, 1141i, and 1141j) are repealed.

(b) The Act of June 22, 1939, (Chapter 239; 53 Stat. 853; 12 U.S.C. 1141d–1) is repealed.

(c) Section 201 of the Emergency Relief and Construction Act of 1932 (12 U.S.C. 1148) is repealed.

(d) Section 2 of the Act of July 14, 1953, (Chapter 192; 67 Stat. 150; 12 U.S.C. 1148a–4) is repealed.

(e) Sections 32 through 34 of the Farm Credit Act of 1937 (12 U.S.C. 1148b, 1148c, and 1148d) are repealed.

(f) Sections 1 through 4 of the Act of March 3, 1932, (12 U.S.C. 1401 through 1404) are repealed.

SEC. 5503. FACILITY HEADQUARTERS.

Section 5.16 of the Farm Credit Act of 1971 (12 U.S.C. 2251) is amended by striking all that precedes ''to the rental of quarters'' and inserting the following:

''SEC. 5.16. QUARTERS AND FACILITIES FOR THE FARM CREDIT ADMINISTRATION.

''(a) The Farm Credit Administration shall maintain its principal office within the Washington D.C.-Maryland-Virginia standard metropolitan statistical area, and such other offices within the United States as in its judgment are necessary.

''(b) As an alternate''.

SEC. 5504. SHARING PRIVILEGED AND CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION.

Section 5.19 of the Farm Credit Act of 1971 (12 U.S.C. 2254) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(e) A System institution shall not be considered to have waived the confidentiality of a privileged communication with an attorney or accountant if the institution provides the content of the communication to the Farm Credit Administration pursuant to the supervisory or regulatory authorities of the Farm Credit Administration.''.

SEC. 5505. SCOPE OF JURISDICTION.

Part C of title V of the Farm Credit Act of 1971 (12 U.S.C. 2261–2274) is amended by inserting after section 5.31 the following:

''SEC. 5.31A. SCOPE OF JURISDICTION.

''(a) For purposes of sections 5.25, 5.26, and 5.33, the jurisdiction of the Farm Credit Administration over parties, and the authority of the Farm Credit Administration to initiate actions, shall include enforcement authority over institution-affiliated parties.

''(b) The resignation, termination of employment or participation, or separation of an institution-affiliated party (including a separation caused by the merger, consolidation, conservatorship, or receivership of a System institution) shall not affect the jurisdiction and authority of the Farm Credit Administration to issue any notice or order and proceed under this part against any such party, if the notice or order is served before the end of the 6-year period beginning on the date the party ceased to be such a party with respect to the System institution (whether the date occurs before, on, or after the date of the enactment of this section).''.

SEC. 5506. DEFINITION.

Section 5.35 of the Farm Credit Act of 1971 (12 U.S.C. 2271) is amended—

(1) by striking ''and'' at the end of paragraph (3); and

(2) by redesignating paragraph (4) as paragraph (5) and inserting after paragraph (3) the following:

''(4) the term 'institution-affiliated party' means—

''(A) any director, officer, employee, shareholder, or agent of a System institution;

''(B) any independent contractor (including any attorney, appraiser, or accountant) who knowingly or recklessly participates in—

''(i) any violation of law (including regulations) that is associated with the operations and activities of 1 or more institutions;

''(ii) any breach of fiduciary duty; or

''(iii) any unsafe or unsound practice, which caused or is likely to cause more than a minimal financial loss to, or a significant adverse effect on, a System institution; and

''(C) any other person, as determined by the Farm Credit Administration (by regulation or on a case-by-case basis) who participates in the conduct of the affairs of a System institution; and''.

SEC. 5507. EXPANSION OF ACREAGE EXCEPTION TO LOAN AMOUNT LIMITATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 8.8(c)(2) of the Farm Credit Act of 1971 (12 U.S.C. 2279aa–8(c)(2)) is amended by striking ''1,000'' and inserting ''2,000''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect 1 year after the date a report submitted in accordance with section 5602 of this Act indicates that it is feasible to increase the acreage limitation in section 8.8(c)(2) of the Farm Credit Act of 1971 to 2,000 acres.

SEC. 5508. COMPENSATION OF BANK DIRECTORS.

Section 4.21 of the Farm Credit Act of 1971 (12 U.S.C. 2209) is repealed.

SEC. 5509. PROHIBITION ON USE OF FUNDS.

Section 5.65 of the Farm Credit Act of 1971 (12 U.S.C. 2277a–14) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(e) PROHIBITION ON USES OF FUNDS RELATED TO FEDERAL AGRICULTURAL MORTGAGE CORPORATION.—No funds from administrative accounts or from the Farm Credit System Insurance Fund may be used by the Corporation to provide assistance to the Federal Agricultural Mortgage Corporation or to support any activities related to the Federal Agricultural Mortgage Corporation.''.

Subtitle F—Miscellaneous

SEC. 5601. STATE AGRICULTURAL MEDIATION PROGRAMS.

Section 506 of the Agricultural Credit Act of 1987 (7 U.S.C. 5106) is amended by striking ''2018''and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 5602. STUDY ON LOAN RISK.

(a) STUDY.—The Farm Credit Administration shall conduct a study that—

(1) analyzes and compares the financial risks inherent in loans made, held, securitized, or purchased by Farm Credit banks, associations, and the Federal Agricultural Mortgage Corporation and how such risks are required to be capitalized under statute and regulations in effect as of the date of the enactment of this Act; and

(2) assesses the feasibility of increasing the acreage exception provided in section 8.8(c)(2) of the Farm Credit Act of 1971 to 2,000 acres.

(b) TIMELINE.—The Farm Credit Administration shall provide the results of the study required by subsection (a) to the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate no later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

TITLE VI—RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Subtitle A—Improving Health Outcomes in Rural Communities

SEC. 6001. PRIORITIZING PROJECTS TO MEET HEALTH CRISES IN RURAL AMERICA.

(a) TEMPORARY PRIORITIZATION OF RURAL HEALTH ASSISTANCE.—Title VI of the Rural Development Act of 1972 (7 U.S.C. 2204a–2204b) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"SEC. 608. TEMPORARY PRIORITIZATION OF RURAL HEALTH ASSISTANCE.

''(a) AUTHORITY TO PRIORITIZE CERTAIN RURAL HEALTH APPLICATIONS.—The Secretary, after consultation with such public health officials as may be necessary, may announce a temporary reprioritization for certain rural development loan and grant applications to assist rural communities in responding to a specific health emergency.

''(b) CONTENT OF ANNOUNCEMENT.—In the announcement, the Secretary shall—

''(1) specify the nature of the emergency affecting the heath of rural Americans;

''(2) describe the actual and potential effects of the emergency on the rural United States;

''(3) identify the services and treatments which can be used to reduce those effects; and

''(4) publish the specific temporary changes needed to assist rural communities in responding to the emergency

''(c) NOTICE.—Not later than 48 hours after making or extending an announcement under this section, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate, and transmit to the Secretary of Health and Human Services, a written notice of the declaration or extension.

''(d) EXTENSION.—The Secretary may extend an announcement under subsection (a) if the Secretary determines that the emergency will continue after the declaration would otherwise expire.

''(e) EXPIRATION.—An announcement under subsection (a) shall expire on the earlier of—

''(1) the date the Secretary determines that the emergency has ended; or

''(2) the end of the 360-day period beginning with the later of—

''(A) the date the announcement was made; or

''(B) the date the announcement was most recently extended.''.

(b) DISTANCE LEARNING AND TELEMEDICINE.—Section 2333(c) of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 950aaa–2(c)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(5) PROCEDURE DURING TEMPORARY REPRIORITIZATIONS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—While a temporary reprioritization announced under section 608 of the Rural Development Act of 1972 is in effect, the Secretary shall make available not less than 10 percent of the amounts made available under section 2335A for financial assistance under this chapter, for telemedicine services to identify and treat individuals affected by the emergency, subject to subparagraph (B).

''(B) EXCEPTION.—In the case of a fiscal year for which the Secretary determines that there are not sufficient qualified applicants to receive financial assistance to reach the 10-percent requirement under subparagraph (A), the Secretary may make available less than 10 percent of the amounts made available under section 2335A for those services.''.

(c) COMMUNITY FACILITIES DIRECT LOANS AND GRANTS.—Section 306(a) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1926(a)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(27) PROCEDURE DURING TEMPORARY REPRIORITIZATIONS.—

''(A) SELECTION PRIORITY.—While a temporary reprioritization announced under section 608 of the Rural Development Act of 1972 is in effect, in selecting recipients of loans, loan guarantees, or grants for the development of essential community facilities under this section, the Secretary shall give priority to entities eligible for those loans or grants—

''(i) to develop facilities to provide services related to reducing the effects of the health emergency, including—

''(I) prevention services;

''(II) treatment services;

''(III) recovery services; or

''(IV) any combination of those services; and

''(ii) that employ staff that have appropriate expertise and training in how to identify and treat individuals affected by the emergency.

''(B) USE OF FUNDS.—An eligible entity described in subparagraph (A) that receives a loan or grant described in that subparagraph may use the loan or grant funds for the development of telehealth facilities and systems to provide for treatment directly related to the emergency involved.''.

(d) RURAL HEALTH AND SAFETY EDUCATION PROGRAMS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 502(i) of the Rural Development Act of 1972 (7 U.S.C. 2662(i)) is amended—

(A) by redesignating paragraph (5) as paragraph (6); and

(B) by inserting after paragraph (4) the following:

''(5) PROCEDURE DURING TEMPORARY REPRIORITIZATIONS.—While a temporary reprioritization announced under section 608 of the Rural Development Act of 1972 is in effect, in making grants under this subsection, the Secretary shall give priority to an applicant that will use the grant to address the announced emergency.''.

(2) TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS.—Title V of the Rural Development Act of 1972 (7 U.S.C. 2661 et seq.), as amended by paragraph (1) of this subsection, is amended—

(A) in section 502, in the matter preceding subsection (a), by inserting ''(referred to in this title as the 'Secretary')'' after ''Agriculture''; and

(B) by striking ''Secretary of Agriculture'' each place it appears (other than in section 502 in the matter preceding subsection (a)) and inserting ''Secretary''.

SEC. 6002. DISTANCE LEARNING AND TELEMEDICINE.

(a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 2335A of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 950aaa–5) is amended by striking ''$75,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2014 through 2018'' and inserting ''$82,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 1(b) of Public Law 102–551 (7 U.S.C. 950aaa note) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 6003. REAUTHORIZATION OF THE FARM AND RANCH STRESS ASSISTANCE NETWORK.

Section 7522 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 5936) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by striking ''coordination with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, shall make competitive grants to support cooperative programs between State cooperative extension services and nonprofit organizations'' and inserting ''consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, shall make competitive grants to State cooperative extension services and Indian Tribes to support programs with nonprofit organizations in order'';

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by inserting ''Internet'' before ''websites'';

(B) by striking paragraph (2) and inserting the following:

''(2) training for individuals who may assist farmers in crisis, including programs and workshops;''; and

(C) in paragraph (4), by inserting '', including the dissemination of information and materials'' before the semicolon at the end;

(3) in subsection (c), by striking ''to enable the State cooperative extension services'' and inserting ''or Indian Tribes, as applicable,'';

(4) in subsection (d), by striking ''fiscal years'' and all that follows and inserting ''fiscal years 2018 through 2023''; and

(5) by redesignating subsection (d) as subsection (e) and inserting after subsection (c) the following:

''(d) OVERSIGHT AND EVALUATION.—The Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, shall review and evaluate the stress assistance programs carried out pursuant to this section.

''(1) PROGRAM REVIEW.—Not later than 2 years after the date on which a grant is first provided under this section, and annually thereafter, the Secretary shall—

''(A) review the programs funded under a grant made under this section to evaluate the effectiveness of the services offered through such a program, and suggest alternative services not offered by such a grant recipient that would be appropriate for behavioral health services; and

''(B) submit to the Congress, and make available on the public Internet website of the Department of Agriculture, a report containing the results of the review conducted under subparagraph (A) and a description of the services provided through programs funded under such a grant.

''(2) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—In making the report under paragraph (1) publicly available, the Secretary shall take such steps as may be necessary to ensure that the report does not contain any information that would identify any person who received services under a program funded under a grant made under this section.''.

SEC. 6004. SUPPORTING AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION HEALTH PLANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Agriculture may establish a loan program and a grant program to assist in the establishment of agricultural association health plans, in order to help bring new health options and lower priced health care coverage to rural Americans.

(b) LOANS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—With respect to plan years 2019 through 2022, the Secretary of Agriculture, in consultation with the Secretary of Labor, may make not more than 10 loans under this section, for purposes of establishing agricultural association health plans, to qualified agricultural associations that have not received a loan under this section.

(2) USE OF FUNDS.—The proceeds of a loan made under this section may only be used to finance costs associated with establishing and carrying out an agricultural association health plan.

(3) LOAN TERMS.—A loan made under this section shall—

(A) bear interest at an annual rate equivalent to the cost of borrowing to the Department of the Treasury for obligations of comparable maturities;

(B) have a term of such length, not exceeding 20 years, as the borrower may request;

(C) be in an amount not to exceed $15,000,000;

(D) require that the borrower submit annual audited financial statements to the Secretary; and

(E) include any other requirements or documentation the Secretary deems necessary to carry out this section.

(c) GRANTS.—The Secretary may make grants to agricultural trade associations or industry associations which have been in existence for at least three years prior to applying for such a grant to provide for technical assistance in establishing an agricultural association health plan.

(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section $65,000,000 for the period of fiscal years 2019 through 2022, to be available until expended.

(2) RESERVATION OF FUNDS.—Of the funds made available under paragraph (1), not more than 15 percent of such funds shall be made available to make grants under subsection (c).

(e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION HEALTH PLAN.—The term ''agricultural association health plan'' means a group health plan within the meaning of section 733(a)(1) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 1191b)—

(A) that is sponsored by a qualified agricultural association; and

(B) with respect to which the Secretary has received a letter from the relevant State insurance commissioner certifying that such association may offer such plan in such State.

(2) QUALIFIED AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION.—The term ''qualified agricultural association'' means an association—

(A) composed of members that operate a farm or ranch or operate an agribusiness;

(B) that qualifies as an association health plan within the meaning of guidance or regulation issued by the Department of Labor;

(C) that acts directly or indirectly in the interest of its members in relation to the plan;

(D) that is able to demonstrate an ability to implement and manage a group health plan; and

(E) that meets any other criteria the Secretary deems necessary to meet the intent of this section.

Subtitle B—Connecting Rural Americans to High Speed Broadband

SEC. 6101. ESTABLISHING FORWARD-LOOKING BROADBAND STANDARDS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 601 of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 950bb) is amended—

(1) in subsection (d)(1)(A), by striking clause (i) and inserting the following:

''(i) demonstrate the ability to furnish or improve service in order to meet the broadband service standards established under subsection (e)(1) in all or part of an unserved or underserved rural area;'';

(2) in subsection (e)—

(A) by striking paragraphs (1) and (2) and inserting the following:

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (2), for purposes of this section, the Secretary shall establish broadband service standards for rural areas which provide for—

''(A) a minimum acceptable standard of service that requires the speed to be at least 25 megabits per second downstream transmission capacity and 3 megabits per second upstream transmission capacity; and

''(B) projections of minimum acceptable standards of service for 5, 10, 15, 20, and 30 years into the future.

''(2) ADJUSTMENTS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—At least once every 2 years, the Secretary shall review, and may adjust through notice published in the Federal Register, the broadband service standards in effect under paragraph (1) to encourage the delivery of high quality, cost-effective broadband service in rural areas.

''(B) CONSIDERATIONS.—In establishing and adjusting the broadband service standards in effect under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall consider—

''(i) the broadband service needs of rural families and businesses;

''(ii) broadband service available to urban and suburban areas;

''(iii) future technology needs of rural residents;

''(iv) advances in broadband technology; and

''(v) other relevant factors as determined by the Secretary.''; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

''(4) AGREEMENT.—The Secretary shall not provide a loan or loan guarantee under this section for a project unless the Secretary determines, at the time the agreement to provide the loan or loan guarantee is entered into, that, at any time while the loan or loan guarantee is outstanding, the project will be capable of providing broadband service at not less than the minimum acceptable standard of service established under paragraph (1)(B) for that time.

''(5) SUBSTITUTE SERVICE STANDARDS FOR UNIQUE SERVICE TERRITORIES.—If an applicant shows that it would be cost prohibitive to meet the minimum acceptable level of broadband service established under paragraph (1)(B) for the entirety of a proposed service territory due to the unique characteristics of the proposed service territory, the Secretary and the applicant may agree to utilize substitute standards for any unserved portion of the project. Any substitute service standards should continue to consider the matters described in paragraph (2)(B) and reflect the best technology available to meet the needs of the residents in the unserved area.''; and

(3) in subsection (g)—

(A) in paragraph (2)(A), by striking ''level of broadband service established under subsection (e)'' and inserting ''standard of service established under subsection (e)(1)(A)''; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

''(4) MINIMUM STANDARDS.—To the extent possible, the terms and conditions under which a loan or loan guarantee is provided to an applicant for a project shall require that, at any time while the loan or loan guarantee is outstanding, the broadband network provided by the project will meet the lower of—

''(A) the minimum acceptable standard of service projected under subsection (e)(1)(B) for that time, as agreed to by the applicant at the time the loan or loan guarantee is provided; or

''(B) the minimum acceptable standard of service in effect under subsection (e)(1)(A) for that time.''.

(b) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Within 12 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Rural Utilities Service (in this subsection referred to as the ''RUS'') shall submit to the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate a written report on the effectiveness of RUS loan and loan guarantee programs for the purpose of expanding broadband to rural areas (as defined in RUS regulations), which shall—

(1) identify administrative and legislative options for incentivizing private investment by utilizing RUS loan guarantee programs for the purpose of expanding broadband to rural areas;

(2) evaluate the existing borrower and lending guidelines for RUS loan and loan guarantee applicants to incentivize participation in both programs;

(3) evaluate the loan and loan guarantee application processes for lenders and borrowers by eliminating burdensome and unnecessary steps in the application process and providing a more streamlined process to decrease the complexity of the application and the timeline from application to approval or denial;

(4) identify opportunities to provide technical assistance and pre-development planning activities to assist rural counties and communities to assess current and future broadband needs; and

(5) identify and evaluate emerging technologies, including next-generation satellite technologies, and ways to leverage the technologies to provide high-speed, low-latency internet connectivity to rural areas.

SEC. 6102. INCENTIVES FOR HARD TO REACH COMMUNITIES.

Title VI of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 950bb) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''SEC. 604. INCENTIVES FOR HARD TO REACH COMMUNITIES.

''(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

''(1) ASSOCIATED LOAN.—The term 'associated loan' means a loan or loan guarantee to finance all or part of a project under title I or II or this title for which an application has been submitted under such title and for which an application has also been submitted for a grant under this section.

''(2) DENSITY.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The term 'density' means service points per road mile.

''(B) METHOD OF CALCULATION.—The Secretary shall further define, by rule, a method for calculating service points per road-mile, where appropriate by geography, which—

''(i) divides the total number of service points by the total number of road-miles in a proposed service territory;

''(ii) requires an applicant to count all potential service points in a proposed service territory; and

''(iii) includes any other requirements the Secretary deems necessary to protect the integrity of the program.

''(3) ELIGIBLE PROJECT.—The term 'eligible project' means any project for which the applicant—

''(A) has submitted an application for an associated loan; and

''(B) does not receive any other broadband grant administered by the Rural Utilities Service; and

''(C) proposes to—

''(i) offer retail broadband service to rural households;

''(ii) serve an area with a density of less than 12;

''(iii) provide service that meets the standard that would apply under section 601(e)(4) if the associated loan had been applied for under section 601;

''(iv) provide service in an area where no incumbent provider delivers fixed terrestrial broadband service at or above the minimum broadband speed described in section 601(e)(1); and

''(v) provide service in an area where no eligible borrower, other than the applicant, has outstanding Rural Utilities Service telecommunications debt or is subject to a current Rural Utilities Service telecommunications grant agreement.

''(4) SERVICE POINT.—The term 'service point' means a home, business, or institution in a proposed service area.

''(5) ROAD-MILE.—The term 'road-mile' means a mile of road in a proposed service area.

''(b) ESTABLISHMENT OF GRANT PROGRAM.—The Secretary shall establish a competitive grant program to provide applicants funds to carry out eligible projects for the purposes of construction, improvement, or acquisition of facilities for the provision of broadband service in rural areas.

''(c) APPLICATIONS.—The Secretary shall establish an application process for grants under this section that—

''(1) has 1 application window per year;

''(2) permits a single application for the grant and the associated loan; and

''(3) provides a single decision to award the grant and the associated loan.

''(d) PRIORITY.—In making grants under this section, the Secretary shall prioritize applications in which the applicant proposes to—

''(1) provide the highest quality of service as measured by—

''(A) network speed;

''(B) network latency; and

''(C) data allowances;

''(2) serve the greatest number of service points; and

''(3) use the greatest proportion of non-Federal dollars.

''(e) AMOUNT.—The Secretary shall make each grant under this section in an amount that is—

''(1) not greater than 75 percent of the total project cost with respect to an area with a density of less than 4;

''(2) not greater than 50 percent of the total project cost with respect to an area with a density of 4 or more and not more than 9; and

''(3) not greater than 25 percent of the total project cost with respect to an area with a density of more than 9 and not more than 12.

''(f) TERMS AND CONDITIONS.—With respect to a grant provided under this section, the Secretary shall require that—

''(1) the associated loan is secured by the assets purchased with funding from the grant and from the loan;

''(2) the agreement in which the terms of the grant are established is for a period equal to the duration of the associated loan; and

''(3) at any time at which the associated loan is outstanding, the broadband service provided by the project will meet the lower of the standards that would apply under section 601(g)(4) if the associated loan had been made under section 601.

''(g) PAYMENT ASSISTANCE FOR CERTAIN APPLICANTS UNDER THIS TITLE.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—As part of the grant program under this section, the Secretary, at the sole discretion of the Secretary, may provide to applicants who are eligible borrowers under this title and not eligible borrowers under title I or II all or a portion of the grant funds in the form of payment assistance.

''(2) PAYMENT ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary may provide payment assistance under paragraph (1) by reducing a borrower's interest rate or periodic principal payments or both.

''(3) AGREEMENT ON MILESTONES AND OBJECTIVES.—With respect to payment assistance provided under paragraph (1), before entering into the agreement for the grant and associated loan under which the payment assistance will be provided, the applicant and the Secretary shall agree to milestones and objectives of the project.

''(4) CONDITION.—The Secretary shall condition any payment assistance provided under paragraph (1) on—

''(A) the applicant fulfilling the terms and conditions of the grant agreement under which the payment assistance will be provided; and

''(B) completion of the milestones and objectives agreed to under paragraph (3).

''(5) AMENDMENT OF MILESTONES AND OBJECTIVES.—The Secretary and the applicant may jointly agree to amend the milestones and objectives agreed to under paragraph (3).

''(h) EXISTING PROJECTS.—The Secretary may not provide a grant under this section to an applicant for a project that was commenced before the date of the enactment of this section.

''(i) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section $350,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 to 2023.''.

SEC. 6103. REQUIRING GUARANTEED BROADBAND LENDING.

Section 601(c)(1) of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 950bb(c)(1)) is amended by striking ''shall make or guarantee loans'' and inserting ''shall make loans and shall guarantee loans''.

SEC. 6104. SMART UTILITY AUTHORITY FOR BROADBAND.

(a) Section 331 of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1981) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(e)(1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), the Secretary may allow a recipient of a grant, loan, or loan guarantee provided by the Office of Rural Development under this title to use not more than 10 percent of the amount so provided—

''(A) for any activity for which assistance may be provided under section 601 of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936; or

''(B) to construct other broadband infrastructure.

''(2) Paragraph (1) of this subsection shall not apply to a recipient who is seeking to provide retail broadband service in any area where retail broadband service is available at the minimum broadband speeds, as defined under section 601(e) of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936.''.

(b) Title I of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 901–918a) is amended by inserting after section 7 the following:

''SEC. 8. LIMITATIONS ON USE OF ASSISTANCE.

''(a) Subject to subsections (b) and (c) of this section, the Secretary may allow a recipient of a grant, loan, or loan guarantee under this title to set aside not more than 10 percent of the amount so received to provide retail broadband service.

''(b) A recipient who sets aside funds under subsection (a) of this section may use the funds only in an area that is not being provided with the minimum acceptable level of broadband service established under section 601(e), unless the recipient meets the requirements of section 601(d).

''(c) Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the ability of any borrower to finance or deploy services authorized under this title.''.

SEC. 6105. MODIFICATIONS TO THE RURAL GIGABIT PROGRAM.

Section 603 of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 950bb–2) is amended—

(1) in the section heading, by striking ''**RURAL GIGABIT NETWORK PILOT**'' and inserting ''**INNOVATIVE BROADBAND ADVANCEMENT**'';

(2) in subsection (d), by striking ''2014 through 2018'' and inserting ''2019 through 2023'';

(3) by redesignating subsection (d) as subsection (e); and

(4) by striking subsections (a) through (c) and inserting the following:

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish a program to be known as the 'Innovative Broadband Advancement Program', under which the Secretary may provide a grant, a loan, or both to an eligible entity for the purpose of demonstrating innovative broadband technologies or methods of broadband deployment that significantly decrease the cost of broadband deployment, and provide substantially faster broadband speeds than are available, in a rural area.

''(b) RURAL AREA.—In this section, the term 'rural area' has the meaning provided in section 601(b)(3).

''(c) ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible to obtain assistance under this section for a project, an entity shall—

''(1) submit to the Secretary an application—

''(A) that describes a project designed to decrease the cost of broadband deployment, and substantially increase broadband speed to not less than the 20-year broadband speed established by the Rural Utilities Service under this title, in a rural area to be served by the project; and

''(B) at such time, in such manner, and containing such other information as the Secretary may require;

''(2) demonstrate that the entity is able to carry out the project; and

''(3) agree to complete the project build-out within 5 years after the date the assistance is first provided for the project.

''(d) PRIORITIZATION.—In awarding assistance under this section, the Secretary shall give priority to proposals for projects that—

''(1) involve partnerships between or among multiple entities;

''(2) would provide broadband service to the greatest number of rural residents at or above the minimum broadband speed referred to in subsection (c)(1)(A); and

''(3) the Secretary determines could be replicated in rural areas described in paragraph (2).''.

SEC. 6106. UNIFIED BROADBAND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.

Section 601 of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 950bb) is amended—

(1) in subsection (j)—

(A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking ''Not later than'' and all that follows through ''section'' and inserting ''Each year, the Secretary shall submit to the Congress a report that describes the extent of participation in the broadband loan, loan guarantee, and grant programs administered by the Secretary'';

(B) in paragraph (1), by striking ''loans applied for and provided under this section'' and inserting ''loans, loan guarantees, and grants applied for and provided under the programs'';

(C) in paragraph (2)—

(i) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''loan''; and

(ii) in subparagraph (B), by striking ''loans and loan guarantees provided under this section'' and inserting ''loans, loan guarantees, and grants provided under the programs'';

(D) in paragraph (3), by striking ''loan application under this section'' and inserting ''application under the programs'';

(E) in each of paragraphs (4) and (6), by striking ''this section'' and inserting ''the programs''; and

(F) in paragraph (5)—

(i) by striking ''service'' and inserting ''technology''; and

(ii) by striking ''(b)(1)'' and inserting ''(e)(1)''; and

(2) in subsection (k)(2), in each of subparagraphs (A)(i) and (C), by striking ''loans'' and inserting ''grants, loans,''.

SEC. 6107. IMPROVING ACCESS BY PROVIDING CERTAINTY TO BROADBAND BORROWERS.

(a) TELEPHONE LOAN PROGRAM.—Title II of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 922–928) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''SEC. 208. AUTHORITY TO OBLIGATE, BUT NOT DISBURSE, FUNDS BEFORE THE COMPLETION OF REVIEWS.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may obligate, but shall not disburse, funds under this title for a project before the completion of any otherwise required environmental, historical, or other review of the project.

''(b) AUTHORITY TO DEOBLIGATE FUNDS.—The Secretary may deobligate funds under this title for a project if any such review will not be completed within a reasonable period of time.''.

(b) RURAL BROADBAND PROGRAM.—Section 601(d) of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 950bb(d)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(11) AUTHORITY TO OBLIGATE, BUT NOT DISBURSE, FUNDS BEFORE COMPLETION OF REVIEWS; AUTHORITY TO DEOBLIGATE FUNDS.—The Secretary may obligate, but shall not disburse, funds under this section for a project before the completion of any otherwise required environmental, historical, or other review of the project. The Secretary may deobligate funds under this section for a project if any such review will not be completed within a reasonable period of time.''.

SEC. 6108. SIMPLIFIED APPLICATION WINDOW.

Section 601(c)(2)(A) of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 950bb(c)(2)(A)) is amended by striking ''not less than 2 evaluation periods'' and inserting ''1 evaluation period''.

SEC. 6109. ELIMINATION OF REQUIREMENT TO GIVE PRIORITY TO CERTAIN APPLICANTS.

Section 601(c)(2) of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 950bb(c)(2)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''; and'' at the end of subparagraph (C) and inserting a period; and

(2) by striking subparagraph (D).

SEC. 6110. MODIFICATION OF BUILDOUT REQUIREMENT.

Section 601(d)(1)(A)(iii) of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 950bb(d)(1)(A)(iii)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''service'' and inserting ''infrastructure''; and

(2) by striking ''3'' and inserting ''5''.

SEC. 6111. IMPROVING BORROWER REFINANCING OPTIONS.

(a) REFINANCING OF BROADBAND LOANS.—Section 201 of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 922) is amended by inserting ''including indebtedness on a loan made under section 601'' after ''furnishing telephone service in rural areas''.

(b) REFINANCING OF OTHER LOANS.—Section 601(i) of such Act (7 U.S.C. 950bb(i)) is amended by inserting '', or on any other loan if the purpose for which such other loan was made is a telecommunications purpose for which assistance may be provided under this Act,'' before ''if the use of''.

SEC. 6112. ELIMINATION OF UNNECESSARY REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.

Section 601(d)(8)(A)(ii) of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 950bb(d)(8)(A)(ii)) is amended—

(1) in subclause (I), by striking ''and location''; and

(2) in subclause (IV), by striking ''any changes in broadband service adoption rates, including''.

SEC. 6113. ACCESS TO BROADBAND TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES IN RURAL AREAS.

Section 601 of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 950bb) is amended—

(1) in subsection (k), by striking paragraph (1) and inserting the following:

''(1) LIMITATIONS ON AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—For loans and loan guarantees under this section, there is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary $150,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023, to remain available until expended.''; and

(2) in subsection (l), by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 6114. MIDDLE MILE BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE.

Section 601 of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 950bb) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by inserting ''or middle mile infrastructure'' before ''in rural areas'';

(2) in subsection (b), by redesignating paragraphs (2) and (3) as paragraphs (3) and (4) and inserting after paragraph (1) the following:

''(2) MIDDLE MILE INFRASTRUCTURE.—The term 'middle mile infrastructure' means any broadband infrastructure that does not connect directly to end user locations (including anchor institutions) and may include interoffice transport, backhaul, Internet connectivity, data centers, or special access transport to rural areas.'';

(3) in subsection (c)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by inserting ''and to construct, improve, or acquire middle mile infrastructure'' before ''in rural areas'';

(B) in paragraph (2)(B), by inserting '', or in the case of middle mile infrastructure, offer the future ability to link,'' before ''the greatest proportion''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

''(3) LIMITATION ON MIDDLE MILE INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS.—The Secretary shall limit loans or loan guarantees for middle mile infrastructure projects to no more than 20 percent of the amounts made available to carry out this section.'';

(4) in subsection (d)—

(A) in paragraph (1)(A)—

(i) in clause (i) (as amended by section 6101(1) of this Act), by inserting ''or extend middle mile infrastructure'' before ''in all''; and

(ii) in clause (iii), by inserting ''or middle mile infrastructure'' before ''described'';

(B) in paragraph (2)—

(i) in subparagraph (B), by inserting ''or install middle mile infrastructure'' before ''in the proposed'';

(ii) in subparagraph (C), by striking clause (ii) and inserting the following:

''(ii) EXCEPTION.—Clause (i) shall not apply with respect to a project if the project is eligible for funding under another title of this Act.''; and

(iii) by adding at the end the following:

''(D) EXCEPTION FOR MIDDLE MILE INFRASTRUCTURE.—Portions of a middle mile infrastructure project that ultimately meet the rural service requirements of this section may traverse an area not described in subsection (b)(4) when necessary.'';

(C) in paragraph (4), by inserting '', or construct, improve, or acquire middle mile infrastructure in,'' before ''a rural area'';

(D) in paragraph (5)(A)(v), by inserting ''or, in the case of middle mile infrastructure, connect'' before the semicolon; and

(E) in paragraph (8)(A)(ii)—

(i) in subclause (I), by inserting ''or may'' before ''receive'';

(ii) in subclause (II), by inserting ''or capability of middle mile infrastructure'' before the semicolon; and

(iii) in subclause (III), by inserting '', if applicable'' before the semicolon;

(5) in subsection (i)—

(A) in the subsection heading, by inserting ''OR MIDDLE MILE INFRASTRUCTURE'' after ''SERVICE''; and

(B) by inserting ''or middle mile infrastructure'' before ''in rural areas''; and

(6) in subsection (j)(6), by inserting ''or middle mile infrastructure'' after ''service'' the 1st and 3rd places it appears.

SEC. 6115. OUTDATED BROADBAND SYSTEMS.

Title VI of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 950bb et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''SEC. 605. OUTDATED BROADBAND SYSTEMS.

''Beginning October 1, 2020, the Secretary shall consider any portion of a service territory subject to an outstanding grant agreement between the Secretary and a broadband provider in which broadband service is not provided at at least 10 megabits per second download and at least 1 megabit per second upload as unserved for the purposes of all broadband loan programs under this Act, unless the broadband provider has constructed or begun to construct broadband facilities in the service territory that meet the minimum acceptable standard of service established under section 601(e)(1) for the area in which the service territory is located.''.

SEC. 6116. EFFECTIVE DATE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The amendments made by this subtitle shall not take effect until the Secretary of Agriculture has issued final regulations to implement the amendments.

(b) DEADLINE FOR ISSUING REGULATIONS.—Within 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture shall prescribe final regulations to implement the amendments made by sections 6101 and 6102.

Subtitle C—Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act

SEC. 6201. STRENGTHENING REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES.

Section 379H of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 2008v) is amended to read as follows:

''SEC. 379H. STRATEGIC ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—In the case of any program as determined by the Secretary, the Secretary shall give priority to an application for a project that, as determined and approved by the Secretary—

''(1) meets the applicable eligibility requirements of this title or other applicable authorizing law;

''(2) will be carried out in a rural area; and

''(3) supports the implementation of a strategic community investment plan described in subsection (d) on a multisectoral and multijurisdictional basis.

''(b) RESERVE.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (2), the Secretary shall reserve a portion of the funds made available for a fiscal year for programs as determined by the Secretary, for projects that support the implementation of a strategic community investment plan described in subsection (d) on a multisectoral and multijurisdictional basis.

''(2) PERIOD.—The reservation of funds described in paragraph (1) may only extend through a date of the fiscal year in which the funds were first made available, as determined by the Secretary.

''(c) APPROVED APPLICATIONS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Any applicant who submitted a funding application that was approved before the date of enactment of this section may amend the application to qualify for the funds reserved under subsection (b).

''(2) RURAL UTILITIES.—Any rural development application authorized under section 306(a)(2), 306(a)(14), 306(a)(24), 306A, or 310B(b) and approved by the Secretary before the date of enactment of this section shall be eligible for the funds reserved under subsection (b) on the same basis as the applications submitted under this section, until September 30, 2019.

''(d) STRATEGIC COMMUNITY INVESTMENT PLANS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall provide assistance to rural communities for developing strategic community investment plans.

''(2) PLANS.—A strategic community investment plan described in paragraph (1) shall include—

''(A) a variety of activities designed to facilitate a rural community's vision for its future;

''(B) participation by multiple stakeholders, including local and regional partners;

''(C) leverage of applicable regional resources;

''(D) investment from strategic partners, such as—

''(i) private organizations;

''(ii) cooperatives;

''(iii) other government entities;

''(iv) tribes; and

''(v) philanthropic organizations;

''(E) clear objectives with the ability to establish measurable performance metrics;

''(F) action steps for implementation; and

''(G) any other elements necessary to ensure that the plan results in a comprehensive and strategic approach to rural economic development, as determined by the Secretary.

''(3) COORDINATION.—The Secretary shall coordinate with tribes and local, State, regional, and Federal partners to develop strategic community investment plans under this subsection.

''(4) LIMITATIONS ON AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be appropriated $5,000,000 for fiscal years 2018 through 2023 to carry out this subsection.

''(B) AVAILABILITY.—The amounts made available to carry out this subsection are authorized to remain available until expended.''.

SEC. 6202. EXPANDING ACCESS TO CREDIT FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES.

(a) CERTAIN PROGRAMS UNDER THE CONSOLIDATED FARM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT ACT.—Section 343(a)(13) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1991(a)(13)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (B)—

(A) in the heading, by striking ''AND GUARANTEED''; and

(B) in the text—

(i) by striking ''and guaranteed''; and

(ii) by striking ''(1), (2), and (24)'' and inserting ''(1) and (2)''; and

(2) in subparagraph (C)—

(A) by striking ''and guaranteed''; and

(B) by striking ''(21), and (24)'' and inserting ''and (21)''.

(b) RURAL BROADBAND PROGRAM.—Paragraph (4)(A)(ii) of section 601(b) of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 950bb(b)), as redesignated by section 6114(2), is amended by inserting ''in the case of a direct loan,'' before ''a city''.

SEC. 6203. PROVIDING FOR ADDITIONAL FEES FOR GUARANTEED LOANS.

(a) CERTAIN PROGRAMS UNDER THE CONSOLIDATED FARM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT ACT.—Section 333 of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1983) is amended—

(1) by striking ''and'' at the end of paragraph (5);

(2) by striking the period at the end of paragraph (6) and inserting ''; and''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(7) in the case of an insured or guaranteed loan issued or modified under section 306(a), charge and collect from the recipient of the insured or guaranteed loan fees in such amounts as are necessary so that the sum of the total amount of fees so charged in each fiscal year and the total of the amounts appropriated for all such insured or guaranteed loans for the fiscal year equals the subsidy cost for the insured or guaranteed loans in the fiscal year.''.

(b) RURAL BROADBAND PROGRAM.—Section 601(c) of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 950bb(c)), as amended by section 6114, is further amended by adding at the end the following:

''(4) FEES.—In the case of a loan guarantee issued or modified under this section, the Secretary shall charge and collect from the recipient of the guarantee fees in such amounts as are necessary so that the sum of the total amount of fees so charged in each fiscal year and the total of the amounts appropriated for all such loan guarantees for the fiscal year equals the subsidy cost for the loan guarantees in the fiscal year.''.

SEC. 6204. WATER, WASTE DISPOSAL, AND WASTEWATER FACILITY GRANTS.

Section 306(a)(2)(B) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1926(a)(2)(B)) is amended—

(1) in clause (iii), by striking ''$100,000'' each place it appears and inserting ''$200,000''; and

(2) in clause (vii), by striking ''$30,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2008 through 2018'' and inserting ''$15,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023''.

SEC. 6205. RURAL WATER AND WASTEWATER TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING PROGRAMS.

(a) Section 306(a)(14)(A) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1926(a)(14)(A)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''and'' at the end of clause (ii);

(2) by striking the period at the end of clause (iii) and inserting ''; and''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(iv) identify options to enhance long term sustainability of rural water and waste systems to include operational practices, revenue enhancements, policy revisions, partnerships, consolidation, regionalization, or contract services.''.

(b) Section 306(a)(14)(C) of such Act (7 U.S.C. 1926(a)(14)(C)) is amended by striking ''1 nor more than 3'' and inserting ''3 nor more than 5''.

SEC. 6206. RURAL WATER AND WASTEWATER CIRCUIT RIDER PROGRAM.

Section 306(a)(22)(B) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1926(a)(22)(B)) is amended by striking ''$20,000,000 for fiscal year 2014'' and inserting ''$25,000,000 for fiscal year 2018''.

SEC. 6207. TRIBAL COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY ESSENTIAL COMMUNITY FACILITIES.

Section 306(a)(25)(C) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1926(a)(25)(C)) is amended by striking ''$10,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2008 through 2018'' and inserting ''$5,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023''.

SEC. 6208. EMERGENCY AND IMMINENT COMMUNITY WATER ASSISTANCE GRANT PROGRAM.

Section 306A(i) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1926a(i)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking subparagraph (B) and inserting the following:

''(B) RELEASE.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in clause (ii), funds reserved under subparagraph (A) for a fiscal year shall be reserved only until July 1 of the fiscal year.

''(ii) EXCEPTION.—In response to an eligible community where the drinking water supplies are inadequate due to a natural disaster, as determined by the Secretary, including drought or severe weather, the Secretary may provide potable water under this section for an additional period not to exceed 120 days beyond the established period otherwise provided under this section, in order to protect public health.''; and

(2) in paragraph (2), by striking ''$35,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2008 through 2018'' and inserting ''$27,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023''.

SEC. 6209. WATER SYSTEMS FOR RURAL AND NATIVE VILLAGES IN ALASKA.

Section 306D(d)(1) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1926d(d)(1)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 6210. HOUSEHOLD WATER WELL SYSTEMS.

Section 306E(d) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1926e(d)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 6211. SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT GRANTS.

Section 310B(b)(2) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1932(b)(2)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 6212. RURAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT GRANTS.

Section 310B(c)(4)(A) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1932(c)(4)(A)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 6213. RURAL COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT GRANTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 310B(e)(13) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1932(e)(13)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

(b) TECHNICAL CORRECTION.—Section 310B(e)(11)(B)(i) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1932(e)(11)(B)(i)) is amended by striking ''(12)'' and inserting ''(13)''.

SEC. 6214. LOCALLY OR REGIONALLY PRODUCED AGRICULTURAL FOOD PRODUCTS.

Section 310B(g)(9)(B)(iv)(I) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1932(g)(9)(B)(iv)(I)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 6215. APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER FOR RURAL AREAS PROGRAM.

Section 310B(i)(4) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1932(i)(4)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 6216. RURAL ECONOMIC AREA PARTNERSHIP ZONES.

Section 310B(j) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1932(j)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 6217. INTERMEDIARY RELENDING PROGRAM.

Section 310H(e) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1936b(e)) is amended by striking ''$25,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2014 through 2018'' and inserting ''$10,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023''.

SEC. 6218. EXCLUSION OF PRISON POPULATIONS FROM DEFINITION OF RURAL AREA.

Section 343(a)(13) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1991(a)(13) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''(G)'' and inserting ''(H)''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(H) EXCLUSION OF POPULATIONS INCARCERATED ON A LONG-TERM BASIS.—Populations of individuals incarcerated on a long-term or regional basis shall not be included in determining whether an area is 'rural' or a 'rural area'.''.

SEC. 6219. NATIONAL RURAL DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP.

Section 378 of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 2008m) is amended—

(1) in subsection (g)(1), by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''; and

(2) in subsection (h), by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 6220. GRANTS FOR NOAA WEATHER RADIO TRANSMITTERS.

Section 379B(d) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 2008p(d)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 6221. RURAL MICROENTREPRENEUR ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

Section 379E(d) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 2008s(d)) is amended to read as follows:

''(d) FUNDING.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section $4,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023.''.

SEC. 6222. HEALTH CARE SERVICES.

Section 379G(e) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 2008u(e)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 6223. DELTA REGIONAL AUTHORITY.

(a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 382M(a) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 (U.S.C. 2009aa–12(a)) is amended by striking ''2008 through 2018'' and inserting ''2019 through 2023''.

(b) TERMINATION OF AUTHORITY.—Section 382N of such Act (7 U.S.C. 2009aa–13) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 6224. NORTHERN GREAT PLAINS REGIONAL AUTHORITY.

(a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 383N(a) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 2009bb–12(a)) is amended by striking ''$30,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2008 through 2018'' and inserting ''$2,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023''.

(b) TERMINATION OF AUTHORITY.—Section 383O of such Act (7 U.S.C. 2009bb–13) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 6225. RURAL BUSINESS INVESTMENT PROGRAM.

Section 384S of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 2009cc–18) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

Subtitle D—Rural Electrification Act of 1936

SEC. 6301. GUARANTEES FOR BONDS AND NOTES ISSUED FOR ELECTRIFICATION OR TELEPHONE PURPOSES.

Section 313A(f) of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 940c–1(f)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 6302. EXPANSION OF 911 ACCESS.

Section 315(d) of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 940e(d)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 6303. IMPROVEMENTS TO THE GUARANTEED UNDERWRITER PROGRAM.

(a) Section 313A of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 940c-1) is amended—

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

''(a) GUARANTEES.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subsection (b), the Secretary shall guarantee payments on bonds or notes issued by cooperative or other lenders organized on a not-for-profit basis, if the proceeds of the bonds or notes are used to make utility infrastructure loans, or refinance bonds or notes issued for such purposes, to a borrower that has at any time received, or is eligible to receive, a loan under this Act.

''(2) TERMS.—A bond or note guaranteed under this section shall—

''(A) have a term of 35 years; and

''(B) by agreement between the Secretary and the borrower, be repaid by the borrower by—

''(i) periodic installments of principal and interest;

''(ii) periodic installments of interest and, at the end of the term of the bond or note, by the repayment of the outstanding principal; or

''(iii) a combination of the methods for repayment provided under clauses (i) and (ii).''; and

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking ''for eligible electrification or telephone purposes consistent with this Act'' and inserting ''to borrowers described in subsection (a)''; and

(B) in paragraph (3)—

(i) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''for electrification or telephone purposes'' and inserting ''to borrowers under this Act''; and

(ii) in subparagraph (C), by striking ''for eligible purposes described in subsection (a)'' and inserting ''to borrowers described in subsection (a)''.

(b)(1) The Secretary shall carry out section 313A of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 940c–1), including the amendments made by this section, under a Notice of Solicitation of Applications until all regulations necessary to carry out the amendments made by this section are fully implemented.

(2) Paragraph (1) shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 6304. EXTENSION OF THE RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT LOAN AND GRANT PROGRAM.

(a) Section 12(b)(3)(D) of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 912(b)(3)(D)) is amended by striking ''313(b)(2)(A)'' and inserting ''313(b)(2)''.

(b) Section 313(b)(2) of such Act (7 U.S.C. 940c(b)(2)) is amended—

(1) by striking all that precedes ''shall maintain'' and inserting the following:

''(2) RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUBACCOUNT.—The Secretary''; and

(2) by striking subparagraphs (B) through (E).

(c) Title III of such Act (7 U.S.C. 931–940h) is amended by inserting after section 313A the following:

''SEC. 313B. RURAL DEVELOPMENT LOANS AND GRANTS.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall provide grants or zero interest loans to borrowers under this Act for the purpose of promoting rural economic development and job creation projects, including funding for project feasibility studies, start-up costs, incubator projects, and other reasonable expenses for the purpose of fostering rural development.

''(b) REPAYMENTS.—In the case of zero interest loans, the Secretary shall establish such reasonable repayment terms as will encourage borrower participation.

''(c) PROCEEDS.—All proceeds from the repayment of such loans made under this section shall be returned to the subaccount that the Secretary shall maintain in accordance with sections 313(b)(2) and 313B(f).

''(d) NUMBER OF GRANTS.—Loans and grants required under this section shall be made during each fiscal year to the full extent of the amounts made available under subsection (e).

''(e) FUNDING.—

''(1) DISCRETIONARY FUNDING.—In addition to other funds that are available to carry out this section, there is authorized to be appropriated not more than $10,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023 to carry out this section, to remain available until expended.

''(2) OTHER FUNDS.—In addition to the funds described in paragraph (1), the Secretary shall use to provide grants and loans under this section—

''(A) the interest differential sums credited to the subaccount described in subsection (c); and

''(B) subject to section 313A(e)(2), the fees described in subsection (c)(4) of such section.

''(f) MAINTENANCE OF ACCOUNT.—The Secretary shall maintain the subaccount described in section 313(b)(2), as in effect in fiscal year 2017, for purposes of carrying out this section.''.

(d) Section 313A of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 940c-1) is amended—

(1) in subsection (c)(4)—

(A) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''maintained under section 313(b)(2)(A)'' and inserting ''that shall be maintained as required by sections 313(b)(2) and 313B(f)''; and

(B) in subparagraph (B), by striking ''313(b)(2)(B)'' and inserting ''313(b)(2)''; and

(2) in subsection (e)(2), by striking '' maintained under section 313(b)(2)(A)'' and inserting ''required to be maintained by sections 313(b)(2) and 313B(f)''.

(e)(1) Subject to section 313B(e) of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (as added by this section), the Secretary of Agriculture shall carry out the loan and grant program required under such section in the same manner as the loan and grant program under section 313(b)(2) of such Act is carried out on the day before the date of the enactment of this Act, until such time as any regulations necessary to carry out the amendments made by this section are fully implemented.

(2) Paragraph (1) shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act.

Subtitle E—Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002

SEC. 6401. RURAL ENERGY SAVINGS PROGRAM.

Section 6407 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (7 U.S.C. 8107a) is amended—

(1) in subsection (c)—

(A) by redesignating paragraphs (4) through (7) as paragraphs (5) through (8), respectively;

(B) by inserting after paragraph (3) the following:

''(4) ELIGIBILITY FOR OTHER LOANS.—The Secretary shall not include any debt incurred under this section in the calculation of a borrower's debt-equity ratio for purposes of eligibility for loans made pursuant to the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 901 et. seq.).''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

''(9) ACCOUNTING.—The Secretary shall take appropriate steps to streamline the accounting requirements imposed on borrowers under this section while maintaining adequate assurances of repayment of the loan.'';

(2) in subsection (d)(1)(A), by striking ''3 percent'' and inserting ''5 percent'';

(3) by redesignating subsection (h) as subsection (i);

(4) by inserting after subsection (g) the following:

''(h) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 120 days after the end of each fiscal year, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Agriculture and Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Committees on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry and Appropriations of the Senate a report that describes—

''(1) the number of applications received under this section in such fiscal year;

''(2) the number of loans made to eligible entities under this section in such fiscal year; and

''(3) the recipients of such loans.''; and

(5) in subsection (i), as so redesignated, by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 6402. BIOBASED MARKETS PROGRAM.

Section 9002 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (7 U.S.C. 8102) is amended—

(1) by amending subsection (i) to read as follows:

''(i) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section $2,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2014 through 2023.''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(k) WOOD AND WOOD-BASED PRODUCTS.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a Federal agency may not place limitations on the procurement of wood and wood-based products that are more limiting than those in this section.''.

SEC. 6403. BIOREFINERY, RENEWABLE, CHEMICAL, AND BIOBASED PRODUCT MANUFACTURING ASSISTANCE.

Section 9003 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (7 U.S.C. 8103) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)(3)(A), by striking ''and'' at the end and inserting ''or''; and

(2) by amending subsection (g) to read as follows:

''(g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section $75,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2014 through 2023.''.

SEC. 6404. REPOWERING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

Section 9004(d) of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (7 U.S.C. 8104(d)) is amended to read as follows:

''(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section $10,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2014 through 2023.''.

SEC. 6405. BIOENERGY PROGRAM FOR ADVANCED BIOFUELS.

Section 9005 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (7 U.S.C. 8105) is amended—

(1) in subsection (e)—

(A) by striking ''The Secretary may'' and inserting the following new paragraph:

''(1) AMOUNT.—The Secretary shall''; and

(B) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(2) FEEDSTOCK.—The total amount of payments made in a fiscal year under this section to one or more eligible producers for the production of advanced biofuels derived from a single eligible commodity shall not exceed one-third of the total amount of funds made available under subsection (g).''; and

(2) in subsection (g)—

(A) by striking paragraphs (1) and (2) and inserting the following new paragraph:

''(1) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section $50,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023.''; and

(B) by redesignating paragraph (3) as paragraph (2).

SEC. 6406. BIODIESEL FUEL EDUCATION PROGRAM.

Section 9006(d) of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (7 U.S.C. 8106(d)) is amended to read as follows:

''(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section $2,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023.''.

SEC. 6407. RURAL ENERGY FOR AMERICA PROGRAM.

Section 9007(g) of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (7 U.S.C. 8107(g)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)(E), by striking ''for fiscal year 2014 and each fiscal year thereafter'' and inserting ''for each of the fiscal years 2014 through 2018''; and

(2) in paragraph (3), by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 6408. CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION FOR GRANTS AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE MADE UNDER THE RURAL ENERGY FOR AMERICA PROGRAM.

Section 9007 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (7 U.S.C. 8107) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(h) CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION.—The provision of a grant or financial assistance under this section to any electric generating facility, including one fueled with wind, solar, or biomass, that has a rating of 10 average megawatts or less is a category of actions hereby designated as being categorically excluded from any requirement to prepare an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement under section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332).''.

SEC. 6409. RURAL ENERGY SELF-SUFFICIENCY INITIATIVE.

Section 9009 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (7 U.S.C. 8109) is repealed.

SEC. 6410. FEEDSTOCK FLEXIBILITY.

Section 9010(b) of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (7 U.S.C. 8110(b)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)(A), by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''; and

(2) in paragraph (2)(A), by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 6411. BIOMASS CROP ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

Section 9011(f) of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (7 U.S.C. 8111(f)) is amended by striking paragraph (1) and inserting the following new paragraph:

''(1) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section $25,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023.''.

Subtitle F—Miscellaneous

SEC. 6501. VALUE-ADDED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT MARKET DEVELOPMENT GRANTS.

Section 231(b)(7) of the Agricultural Risk Protection Act of 2000 (7 U.S.C. 1632a(b)(7)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (B), by striking ''$40,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2008 through 2018'' and inserting ''$50,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023''; and

(2) by striking subparagraph (A) and redesignating subparagraphs (B) and (C) as subparagraphs (A) and (B), respectively.

SEC. 6502. AGRICULTURE INNOVATION CENTER DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM.

Section 6402(i) of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (7 U.S.C. 1632b(i)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 6503. REGIONAL ECONOMIC AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT COMMISSIONS.

Section 15751(a) of title 40, United States Code, is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 6504. DEFINITION OF RURAL AREA FOR PURPOSES OF THE HOUSING ACT OF 1949.

The second sentence of section 520 of the Housing Act of 1949 (42 U.S.C. 1490) is amended—

(1) by striking ''or 2010 decennial census'' and inserting ''2010, or 2020 decennial census'';

(2) by striking ''December 31, 2010,'' and inserting ''December 31, 2020,'' ; and

(3) by striking ''year 2020'' and inserting ''year 2030''.

Subtitle G—Program Repeals

SEC. 6601. ELIMINATION OF UNFUNDED PROGRAMS.

(a) CONSOLIDATED FARM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT ACT.—

(1) REPEALERS.—The following provisions of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act are hereby repealed:

(A) Section 306(a)(23) (7 U.S.C. 1926(a)(23)).

(B) Section 310B(f) (7 U.S.C. 1932(f)).

(C) Section 379 (7 U.S.C. 2008n).

(D) Section 379A (7 U.S.C. 2008o).

(E) Section 379C (7 U.S.C. 2008q).

(F) Section 379D (7 U.S.C. 2008r).

(G) Section 379F (7 U.S.C. 2008t).

(H) Subtitle I (7 U.S.C. 2009dd–2009dd-7).

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 333A(h) of such Act (7 U.S.C. 1983a(h)) is amended by striking ''310B(f),''.

(b) RURAL ELECTRIFICATION ACT OF 1936.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The following provisions of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 are hereby repealed:

(A) Section 314 (7 U.S.C. 940d).

(B) Section 602 (7 U.S.C. 950bb-1).

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Sections 604 and 605 of such Act, as added by sections 6102 and 6115 of this Act, are redesignated as sections 602 and 604, respectively, and section 602 (as so redesignated) is transferred to just after section 601 of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936.

SEC. 6602. REPEAL OF RURAL TELEPHONE BANK.

(a) REPEAL.—Title IV of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 941–950b) is repealed.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) Section 18 of such Act (7 U.S.C. 918) is amended in each of subsections (a) and (b) by striking ''and the Governor of the telephone bank''.

(2) Section 204 of such Act (7 U.S.C. 925) is amended by striking ''and the Governor of the telephone bank''.

(3) Section 205(a) of such Act (7 U.S.C. 926) is amended—

(A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking ''and the Governor of the telephone bank''; and

(B) in paragraph (2), by striking ''or the Governor of the telephone bank''.

(4) Section 206(a) of such Act (7 U.S.C. 927(a)) is amended—

(A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking ''and the Governor of the telephone bank''; and

(B) in paragraph (4), by striking ''or 408''.

(5) Section 206(b) of such Act (7 U.S.C. 927(b)) is amended—

(A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking ''and the Governor of the telephone bank'';

(B) in paragraph (1), by striking '', or a Rural Telephone Bank loan,''; and

(C) in paragraph (2), by striking '', the Rural Telephone Bank,''.

(6) Section 207(1) of such Act (7 U.S.C. 928(1)) is amended—

(A) by striking ''305,'' and inserting '' 305 or''; and

(B) by striking '', or a loan under section 408,''.

(7) Section 301 of such Act (7 U.S.C. 931) is amended—

(A) in paragraph (3), by striking ''except for net collection proceeds previously appropriated for the purchase of class A stock in the Rural Telephone Bank,'';

(B) by adding ''or'' at the end of paragraph (4);

(C) by striking ''; and'' at the end of paragraph (5) and inserting a period; and

(D) by striking paragraph (6).

(8) Section 305(d)(2)(B) of such Act (7 U.S.C. 935(d)(2)(B)) is amended—

(A) in clause (i), by striking ''and a loan under section 408''; and

(B) in clause (ii), by striking ''and under section 408'' each place it appears.

(9) Section 305(d)(3)(C) of such Act (7 U.S.C. 935(d)(3)(C)) is amended by striking ''and section 408(b)(4)(C), the Secretary and the Governor of the telephone bank'' and inserting ''the Secretary''.

(10) Section 306 of such Act (7 U.S.C. 936) is amended by striking ''the Rural Telephone Bank, National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation,'' and inserting ''the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation''.

(11) Section 309 of such Act (7 U.S.C. 739) is amended by striking the last sentence.

(12) Section 2352(b) of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 901 note) is amended by striking ''the Rural Telephone Bank and''.

(13) The first section of Public Law 92–12 (7 U.S.C. 921a) is repealed.

(14) The first section of Public Law 92–324 (7 U.S.C. 921b) is repealed.

(15) Section 1414 of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1987 (7 U.S.C. 944a) is repealed.

(16) Section 1411 of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1987 (7 U.S.C. 948 notes) is amended by striking subsections (a) and (b).

(17) Section 3.8(b)(1)(A) of the Farm Credit Act of 1971 (12 U.S.C. 2129(b)(1)(A)) is amended by striking ''or a loan or loan commitment from the Rural Telephone Bank,''.

(18) Section 105(d) of the National Consumer Cooperative Bank Act (12 U.S.C. 3015(d)) is amended by striking ''the Rural Telephone Bank,''.

(19) Section 9101 of title 31, United States Code, is amended—

(A) in paragraph (2), by striking subparagraph (H) and redesignating subparagraphs (I), (J), and (K) as subparagraphs (H), (I), and (J), respectively; and

(B) in paragraph (3), by striking subparagraph (K) and redesignating subparagraphs (L) through (R) as subparagraphs (K) through (P), respectively.

(20) Section 9108(d)(2) of title 31, United States Code, is amended by striking ''the Rural Telephone Bank (when the ownership, control, and operation of the Bank are converted under section 410(a) of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 950(a))),''.

SEC. 6603. AMENDMENTS TO LOCAL TV ACT.

The Launching Our Communities' Access to Local Television Act of 2000 (title X of H.R. 5548 of the 106th Congress, as enacted by section 1(a)(2) of Public Law 106–553; 114 Stat. 2762A–128) is amended—

(1) by striking the title heading and inserting the following:

''TITLE X—SATELLITE CARRIER RETRANSMISSION ELIGIBILITY'';

(2) by striking sections 1001 through 1007 and 1009 through 1012; and

(3) by redesignating section 1008 as section 1001.

Subtitle H—Technical Corrections

SEC. 6701. CORRECTIONS RELATING TO THE CONSOLIDATED FARM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT ACT.

(a)(1) Section 306(a)(19)(A) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1926(a)(19)(A)) is amended by inserting after ''nonprofit corporations'' the following: '', Indian tribes (as defined in section 4(e) of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act)''.

(2) The amendment made by this subsection shall take effect as if included in section 773 of the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2001 (H.R. 5426 of the 106th Congress, as enacted by Public Law 106–387 (114 Stat. 1549A–45)) in lieu of the amendment made by such section.

(b)(1) Section 309A(b) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1929a(b)) is amended by striking ''and section 308''.

(2) The amendment made by this subsection shall take effect as if included in the enactment of section 661(c)(2) of the Federal Agricultural Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (Public Law 104–127).

(c) Section 310B(c)(3)(A)(v) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1932(c)(3)(A)(v)) is amended by striking ''and'' after the semicolon and inserting ''or''.

(d)(1) Section 310B(e)(5)(F) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1932(e)(5)(F)) is amended by inserting '', except that the Secretary shall not require non-Federal financial support in an amount that is

greater than 5 percent in the case of a 1994 institution (as defined in section 532 of the Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 301 note; Public Law 103–382))'' before the period at the end.

(2) The amendment made by this subsection shall take effect as if included in the enactment of section 6015 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Public Law 107–171).

(e)(1) Section 381E(d)(3) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 2009d(d)(3)) is amended by striking subparagraph (A) and redesignating subparagraphs (B) and (C) as subparagraphs (A) and (B), respectively.

(2) The amendment made by paragraph (1) shall take effect as if included in the enactment of section 6012(b) of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–79).

(f)(1) Section 382A of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 2009aa) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(4) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the State of Alabama shall be a full member of the Delta Regional Authority and shall be entitled to all rights and privileges that said membership affords to all other participating States in the Delta Regional Authority.''.

(2) The amendment made by this subsection shall take effect as if included in the enactment of section 153(b) of division B of H.R. 5666, as introduced in the 106th Congress, and as enacted by section 1(4) of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2001 (Appendix D of Public Law 106–554; 114 Stat. 2763A–252).

(g) Section 382E(a)(1)(B) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C.2009aa-4(a)(1)(B)) is amended by moving clause (iv) 2 ems to the right.

(h) Section 383G(c) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 2009bb-5(c)) is amended—

(1) in the subsection heading by striking ''TELECOMMUNICATION RENEWABLE ENERGY,,'' and inserting ''TELECOMMUNICATION, RENEWABLE ENERGY,''; and

(2) in the text, by striking '',,'' and inserting a comma.

SEC. 6702. CORRECTIONS RELATING TO THE RURAL ELECTRIFICATION ACT OF 1936.

(a) Section 201 of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 922) is amended in the 3rd sentence by striking ''wildest'' and inserting ''widest''.

(b)(1) Section 601(d)(8)(A)(ii)(V) of such Act (7 U.S.C. 950bb(d)(8)(A)(ii)(V)) is amended by striking the semicolon and inserting a period.

(2) The amendment made by paragraph (1) shall take effect as if included in the enactment of section 6104(a)(2)(E) of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–79).

TITLE VII—RESEARCH, EXTENSION, AND RELATED MATTERS

Subtitle A—National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977

SEC. 7101. INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURE RESEARCH.

Section 1402 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3101) is amended—

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

(2) in paragraph (8), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(9) support international scientific collaboration that leverages resources and advances the food and agricultural interests of the United States.''.

SEC. 7102. MATTERS RELATED TO CERTAIN SCHOOL DESIGNATIONS AND DECLARATIONS.

(a) STUDY OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES.—

(1) AMENDMENT.—Section 1404(14) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3103(14)) is amended—

(A) by amending subparagraph (A) to read as follows:

''(A) IN GENERAL.—

''(i) DEFINITION.—The terms 'NLGCA Institution' and 'non-land-grant college of agriculture' mean a public college or university offering a baccalaureate or higher degree in the study of agricultural sciences, forestry, or both in any area of study specified in clause (ii).

''(ii) CLARIFICATION.—For purposes of clause (i), an area of study specified in this clause is any of the following:

''(I) Agriculture.

''(II) Agricultural business and management.

''(III) Agricultural economics.

''(IV) Agricultural mechanization.

''(V) Agricultural production operations.

''(VI) Aquaculture.

''(VII) Agricultural and food products processing.

''(VIII) Agricultural and domestic animal services.

''(IX) Equestrian or equine studies.

''(X) Applied horticulture or horticulture operations.

''(XI) Ornamental horticulture.

''(XII) Greenhouse operations and management.

''(XIII) Turf and turfgrass management.

''(XIV) Plant nursery operations and management.

''(XV) Floriculture or floristry operations and management.

''(XVI) International agriculture.

''(XVII) Agricultural public services.

''(XVIII) Agricultural and extension education services.

''(XIX) Agricultural communication or agricultural journalism.

''(XX) Animal sciences.

''(XXI) Food science.

''(XXII) Plant sciences.

''(XXIII) Soil sciences.

''(XXIV) Forestry.

''(XXV) Forest sciences and biology.

''(XXVI) Natural resources or conservation.

''(XXVII) Natural resources management and policy.

''(XXVIII) Natural resource economics.

''(XXIX) Urban forestry.

''(XXX) Wood science and wood products or pulp or paper technology.

''(XXXI) Range science and management.

''(XXXII) Agricultural engineering.''; and

(B) in subparagraph (C)—

(i) in the matter preceding clause (i), by inserting ''any institution designated under'' after ''include'';

(ii) by striking clause (i); and

(iii) in clause (ii)—

(I) by striking ''(ii) any institution designated under—'';

(II) by striking subclause (IV);

(III) in subclause (II), by adding ''or'' at the end;

(IV) in subclause (III), by striking ''; or'' at the end and inserting a period; and

(V) by redesignating subclauses (I), (II), and (III) (as so amended) as clauses (i), (ii), and (iii), respectively, and by moving the margins of such clauses (as so redesignated) two ems to the left.

(2) DESIGNATION REVIEW.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall establish a process to review each designated NLGCA Institution (as defined in section 1404(14)(A) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3103(14)(A))) to ensure compliance with such section, as amended by this subsection.

(B) VIOLATION.—An NLGCA Institution that the Secretary determines under subparagraph (A) to be not in compliance shall have the designation of such institution revoked.

(b) TERMINATION OF CERTAIN DECLARATIONS OF INTENT.—Section 1404 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3103) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (5)(B), by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''; and

(2) in paragraph (10)(C), by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 7103. NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH, EXTENSION, EDUCATION, AND ECONOMICS ADVISORY BOARD.

Section 1408 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3123) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking ''25'' and inserting ''15''; and

(B) by amending paragraph (3) to read as follows:

''(3) MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES.—The Advisory Board shall consist of members from each of the following categories:

''(A) 3 members representing national farm or producer organizations, which may include members—

''(i) representing farm cooperatives;

''(ii) who are producers actively engaged in the production of a food animal commodity and who are recommended by a coalition of national livestock organizations;

''(iii) who are producers actively engaged in the production of a plant commodity and who are recommended by a coalition of national crop organizations; or

''(iv) who are producers actively engaged in aquaculture and who are recommended by a coalition of national aquacultural organizations.

''(B) 2 members representing academic or research societies, which may include members representing—

''(i) a national food animal science society;

''(ii) a national crop, soil, agronomy, horticulture, plant pathology, or weed science society;

''(iii) a national food science organization;

''(iv) a national human health association; or

''(v) a national nutritional science society.

''(C) 5 members representing agricultural research, extension, and education, which shall include each of the following:

''(i) 1 member representing the land-grant colleges and universities eligible to receive funds under the Act of July 2, 1862 (7 U.S.C. 301 et seq.).

''(ii) 1 member representing the land-grant colleges and universities eligible to receive funds under the Act of August 30, 1890 (7 U.S.C. 321 et seq.), including Tuskegee University.

''(iii) 1 member representing the 1994 Institutions (as defined in section 532 of the Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 301 note; Public Law 103–382)).

''(iv) 1 member representing NLGCA Institutions or Hispanic-serving institutions.

''(v) 1 member representing the American Colleges of Veterinary Medicine.

''(D) 5 members representing industry, consumer, or rural interests, including members representing—

''(i) entities engaged in transportation of food and agricultural products to domestic and foreign markets;

''(ii) food retailing and marketing interests;

''(iii) food and fiber processors;

''(iv) rural economic development interests;

''(v) a national consumer interest group;

''(vi) a national forestry group;

''(vii) a national conservation or natural resource group;

''(viii) a national social science association; or

''(ix) private sector organizations involved in international development.'';

(2) in subsection (c)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking ''review and'' and inserting ''make recommendations, review, and'';

(ii) by striking subparagraph (A) and inserting the following new subparagraph:

''(A) long-term and short-term national policies and priorities consistent with the—

''(i) purposes specified in section 1402 for agricultural research, extension, education, and economics; and

''(ii) priority areas of the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative specified in subsection (b)(2) of the Competitive, Special, and Facilities Research Grant Act (7 U.S.C. 3157(b)(2));''; and

(iii) in subparagraph (B), by striking clause (i) and inserting the following new clause:

''(i) are in accordance with the—

''(I) purposes specified in a provision of a covered law (as defined in subsection (d) of section 1492) under which competitive grants (described in subsection (c) of such section) are awarded; and

''(II) priority areas of the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative specified in subsection (b)(2) of the Competitive, Special, and Facilities Research Grant Act (7 U.S.C. 3157(b)(2)); and'';

(B) in paragraph (2), by inserting ''and make recommendations to the Secretary based on such evaluation'' after ''priorities''; and

(C) in paragraph (4), by inserting ''and make recommendations on'' after ''review''; and

(3) in subsection (h), by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 7104. SPECIALTY CROP COMMITTEE.

Section 1408A(a)(2) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3123a(a)(2)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''speciality'' and inserting ''specialty'';

(2) in subparagraph (B)—

(A) in the matter preceding clause (i), by striking ''9'' and inserting ''11''; and

(B) in clause (i), by striking ''Three'' and inserting ''Five''; and

(3) in subparagraph (D), by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 7105. RENEWABLE ENERGY COMMITTEE DISCONTINUED.

Subtitle B of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3121 et seq.) is amended by striking section 1408B.

SEC. 7106. REPORT ON ALLOCATIONS AND MATCHING FUNDS FOR 1890 INSTITUTIONS.

The Secretary of Agriculture shall annually transmit to Congress a report on the allocations made to, and matching funds received by, eligible institutions pursuant to sections 1444 and 1445 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3221, 3222).

SEC. 7107. GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE SCIENCES EDUCATION.

Section 1417(m)(2) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3152(m)(2)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 7108. AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD POLICY RESEARCH CENTERS.

Section 1419A(e) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3155(e)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 7109. EDUCATION GRANTS TO ALASKA NATIVE SERVING INSTITUTIONS AND NATIVE HAWAIIAN SERVING INSTITUTIONS.

Section 1419B of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3156) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(3), by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''; and

(2) in subsection (b)(3), by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 7110. REPEAL OF NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM.

The National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 is amended by striking section 1425 (7 U.S.C. 3175).

SEC. 7111. CONTINUING ANIMAL HEALTH AND DISEASE RESEARCH PROGRAMS.

Section 1433(c)(1) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3195(c)(1)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 7112. EXTENSION CARRYOVER AT 1890 LAND-GRANT COLLEGES, INCLUDING TUSKEGEE UNIVERSITY.

Effective on October 1, 2018, section 1444(a) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3221(a)) is amended by striking paragraph (4).

SEC. 7113. SCHOLARSHIPS FOR STUDENTS AT 1890 INSTITUTIONS.

Subtitle G of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 is amended by inserting after section 1445 (7 U.S.C. 3222) the following new section:

''SEC. 1446. SCHOLARSHIPS FOR STUDENTS AT 1890 INSTITUTIONS.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—

''(1) SCHOLARSHIP GRANT PROGRAM ESTABLISHED.—The Secretary shall establish and carry out a grant program to make grants to each college or university eligible to receive funds under the Act of August 30, 1890 (commonly known as the Second Morrill Act; 7 U.S.C. 322 et seq.), including Tuskegee University, for purposes of awarding scholarships to individuals who—

''(A) have been accepted for admission at such college or university;

''(B) will be enrolled at such college or university not later than one year after the date of such acceptance; and

''(C) intend to pursue a career in the food and agricultural sciences, including a career in—

''(i) agribusiness;

''(ii) energy and renewable fuels; or

''(iii) financial management.

''(2) AMOUNT OF GRANT.—Each grant made under this section shall be in the amount of $1,000,000.

''(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section $19,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023.''.

SEC. 7114. GRANTS TO UPGRADE AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD SCIENCES FACILITIES AT 1890 LAND-GRANT COLLEGES, INCLUDING TUSKEGEE UNIVERSITY.

Section 1447(b) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3222b(b)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 7115. GRANTS TO UPGRADE AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SCIENCES FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT AT INSULAR AREA LAND-GRANT INSTITUTIONS.

Section 1447B(d) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3222b–2(d)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 7116. HISPANIC-SERVING INSTITUTIONS.

Section 1455(c) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3241(c)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 7117. LAND-GRANT DESIGNATION.

Subtitle C of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3151 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''SEC. 1419C. LAND-GRANT DESIGNATION.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, beginning on the date of the enactment of this section, no additional entity may be designated as eligible to receive funds under a covered program.

''(b) STATE FUNDING.—No State shall receive an increase in funding under a covered program as a result of the State's designation of additional entities as eligible to receive such funding.

''(c) COVERED PROGRAM DEFINED.—For purposes of this section, the term 'covered program' means agricultural research, extension, education, and related programs or grants established or available under any of the following:

''(1) Subsections (b), (c), and (d) of section 3 of the Smith-Lever Act (7 U.S.C. 343).

''(2) The Hatch Act of 1887 (7 U.S.C. 361a et seq.).

''(3) Sections 1444, 1445, and 1447 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3221; 3222; 3222b).

''(4) Public Law 87–788 (commonly known as the McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Act; 16 U.S.C. 582a et seq.).

''(d) EXCEPTION.—Nothing in this section shall be construed as limiting eligibility for a capacity and infrastructure program specified in section 251(f)(1)(C) of the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 6971(f)(1)(C)) that is not a covered program. ''.

SEC. 7118. COMPETITIVE GRANTS FOR INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS.

Section 1459A(c)(2) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3292b(c)(2)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 7119. LIMITATION ON INDIRECT COSTS FOR AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND EXTENSION PROGRAMS.

Section 1462 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3310) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by striking ''22 percent'' and inserting ''30 percent'';

(2) in subsection (b), by striking ''Subsection (a)'' and inserting ''Subsections (a) and (c)''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(c) TREATMENT OF SUBGRANTS.—In the case of a grant described in subsection (a), the limitation on indirect costs specified in such subsection shall be applied to both the initial grant award and any subgrant of the Federal funds provided under the initial grant award so that the total of all indirect costs charged against the total of the Federal funds provided under the initial grant award does not exceed such limitation.''.

SEC. 7120. RESEARCH EQUIPMENT GRANTS.

The National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 is amended by inserting after section 1462 (7 U.S.C. 3310) the following new section:

''SEC. 1462A. RESEARCH EQUIPMENT GRANTS.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may make competitive grants for the acquisition of special purpose scientific research equipment for use in the food and agricultural sciences programs of eligible institutions.

''(b) MAXIMUM AMOUNT.—The amount of a grant made to an eligible institution under this section may not exceed $500,000.

''(c) PROHIBITION ON CHARGE OR EQUIPMENT AS INDIRECT COSTS.—The cost of acquisition or depreciation of equipment purchased with a grant under this section shall not be—

''(1) charged as an indirect cost against another Federal grant; or

''(2) included as part of the indirect cost pool for purposes of calculating the indirect cost rate of an eligible institution.

''(d) ELIGIBLE INSTITUTIONS DEFINED.—In this section, the term 'eligible institution' means—

''(1) a college or university; or

''(2) a State cooperative institution.

''(e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section $5,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023.''.

SEC. 7121. UNIVERSITY RESEARCH.

Section 1463 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3311) is amended by striking ''2018'' each place it appears in subsections (a) and (b) and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 7122. EXTENSION SERVICE.

Section 1464 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3312) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 7123. SUPPLEMENTAL AND ALTERNATIVE CROPS.

Section 1473D of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3319d) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''; and

(B) by striking ''crops,'' and inserting ''crops (including canola),'';

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) by inserting ''for agronomic rotational purposes and for use as a habitat for honey bees and other pollinators'' after ''alternative crops''; and

(B) by striking ''commodities whose'' and all that follows through the period at the end and inserting ''commodities.''; and

(3) in subsection (e)(2), by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 7124. CAPACITY BUILDING GRANTS FOR NLGCA INSTITUTIONS.

Section 1473F(b) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3319i(b)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 7125. AQUACULTURE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS.

Section 1477(a)(2) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3324(a)(2)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 7126. RANGELAND RESEARCH PROGRAMS.

Section 1483(a)(2) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3336(a)(2)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 7127. SPECIAL AUTHORIZATION FOR BIOSECURITY PLANNING AND RESPONSE.

Section 1484 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3351) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(B) in paragraph (2), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(3) $30,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023.''; and

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by inserting ''and cooperative agreements'' after ''competitive grants'';

(B) in paragraph (3), by striking ''make competitive grants'' and inserting ''award competitive grants and cooperative agreements''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(5) To coordinate the tactical science activities of the Research, Education, and Economics mission area of the Department that protect the integrity, reliability, sustainability, and profitability of the food and agricultural system of the United States against biosecurity threats from pests, diseases, contaminants, and disasters.''.

SEC. 7128. DISTANCE EDUCATION AND RESIDENT INSTRUCTION GRANTS PROGRAM FOR INSULAR AREA INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

(a) DISTANCE EDUCATION GRANTS FOR INSULAR AREAS.—Section 1490(f)(2) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3362(f)(2)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

(b) RESIDENT INSTRUCTION GRANTS FOR INSULAR AREAS.—Section 1491(c)(2) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3363(c)(2)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 7129. REMOVAL OF MATCHING FUNDS REQUIREMENT FOR CERTAIN GRANTS.

Section 1492(d) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3371(d)) is amended by striking paragraph (5).

Subtitle B—Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990

SEC. 7201. BEST UTILIZATION OF BIOLOGICAL APPLICATIONS.

Section 1624 of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 5814) is amended in the first sentence by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 7202. INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS.

Section 1627(d) of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 5821(d)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 7203. SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSFER PROGRAM.

Section 1628(f)(2) of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 5831(f)(2)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 7204. NATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAM.

Section 1629(i) of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 5832(i)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 7205. NATIONAL GENETICS RESOURCES PROGRAM.

Section 1635(b)(2) of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 5844(b)(2)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 7206. NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL WEATHER INFORMATION SYSTEM.

Section 1641(c) of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 5855(c)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 7207. AGRICULTURAL GENOME TO PHENOME INITIATIVE.

Section 1671 of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 5924) is amended—

*(1) in the section heading, by inserting ''**TO PHENOME**'' after ''**GENOME**'';*

(2) by amending subsection (a) to read as follows:

''(a) GOALS.—The goals of this section are—

''(1) to expand knowledge concerning genomes and phenomes of crops of importance to United States agriculture;

''(2) to understand how variable weather, environments, and production systems impact the growth and productivity of specific varieties of crops, thereby providing greater accuracy in predicting crop performance under variable growing conditions;

''(3) to support research that leverages plant genomic information with phenotypic and environmental data through an interdisciplinary framework, leading to a novel understanding of plant processes that affect crop growth, productivity, and the ability to predict crop performance, resulting in the deployment of superior varieties to growers and improved crop management recommendations for farmers;

''(4) to promote and coordinate research linking genomics and predictive phenomics at different sites nationally to achieve advances in crops that generate societal benefits;

''(5) to combine fields such as genetics, genomics, plant physiology, agronomy, climatology, and crop modeling with computation and informatics, statistics, and engineering;

''(6) to focus on crops that will yield scientifically important results that will enhance the usefulness of many other crops;

''(7) to build on genomic research, such as the Plant Genome Research Project, to understand gene function in production environments that are expected to have considerable payoffs for crops of importance to United States agriculture;

''(8) to develop improved data analytics to enhance understanding of the biological function of crop genes;

''(9) to allow resources developed under this section, including data, software, germplasm, and other biological materials, to be openly accessible to all persons, subject to any confidentiality requirements imposed by law; and

''(10) to encourage international partnerships with each partner country responsible for financing its own research.'';

(3) by amending subsection (b) to read as follows:

''(b) DUTIES OF SECRETARY.—The Secretary of Agriculture shall conduct a research initiative (to be known as the 'Agricultural Genome to Phenome Initiative') for the purpose of—

''(1) studying agriculturally significant crops in production environments to achieve sustainable and secure agricultural production;

''(2) ensuring that current gaps in existing knowledge of agricultural crop genetics and phenomics knowledge are filled;

''(3) identifying and developing a functional understanding of agronomically relevant genes from crops of importance to United States agriculture;

''(4) ensuring future genetic improvement of crops of importance to United States agriculture;

''(5) studying the relevance of diverse germplasm as a source of unique genes that may be of importance to United States agriculture in the future;

''(6) enhancing crop genetics to reduce the economic impact of plant pathogens on crops of importance to United States agriculture; and

''(7) disseminating findings to relevant audiences.'';

(4) in subsection (c)(1), by inserting '', acting through the National Institute of Food and Agriculture,'' after ''The Secretary'';

(5) in subsection (e), by inserting ''to Phenome'' after ''Genome''; and

(6) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section $30,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023.''.

SEC. 7208. HIGH-PRIORITY RESEARCH AND EXTENSION INITIATIVES.

Section 1672 of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 5925) is amended—

(1) in subsection (d)—

(A) in paragraph (8)—

(i) in the heading, by striking ''ALFALFA AND FORAGE'' and inserting ''ALFALFA SEED AND ALFALFA FORAGE SYSTEMS'';

(ii) by striking ''alfalfa and forage'' and inserting ''alfalfa seed and alfalfa forage systems''; and

(iii) by striking ''alfalfa and other forages, and'' and inserting ''alfalfa seed and other alfalfa forage''; and

(B) by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:

''(11) MACADAMIA TREE HEALTH INITIATIVE.—Research and extension grants may be made under this section for the purposes of—

''(A) developing and disseminating science-based tools and treatments to combat the macadamia felted coccid (Eriococcus ironsidei); and

''(B) establishing an areawide integrated pest management program in areas affected by, or areas at risk of being affected by, the macadamia felted coccid.

''(12) NATIONAL TURFGRASS RESEARCH INITIATIVE.—Research and extension grants may be made under this section for the purposes of—

''(A) carrying out or enhancing research related to turfgrass and sod issues;

''(B) enhancing production and uses of turfgrass for the general public;

''(C) identifying new turfgrass varieties with superior drought, heat, cold, and pest tolerance to reduce water, fertilizer, and pesticide use;

''(D) selecting genetically superior turfgrasses and developing improved technologies for managing commercial, residential, and recreational turfgrass areas;

''(E) producing turfgrasses that—

''(i) aid in mitigating soil erosion;

''(ii) protect against pollutant runoff into waterways; or

''(iii) provide other environmental benefits;

''(F) investigating, preserving, and protecting native plant species, including grasses not currently utilized in turfgrass systems;

''(G) creating systems for more economical and viable turfgrass seed and sod production throughout the United States; and

''(H) investigating the turfgrass phytobiome and developing biologic products to enhance soil, enrich plants, and mitigate pests.

''(13) FERTILIZER MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Research and extension grants may be made under this section for the purpose of carrying out research to improve fertilizer use efficiency in crops—

''(i) to maximize crop yield; and

''(ii) to minimize nutrient losses to surface and groundwater and the atmosphere.

''(B) PRIORITY.—In awarding grants under subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall give priority to research examining the impact of the source, rate, timing, and placement of plant nutrients.

''(14) CATTLE FEVER TICK PROGRAM.—Research and extension grants may be made under this section to study cattle fever ticks—

''(A) to facilitate the understanding of the role of wildlife in the persistence and spread of cattle fever ticks;

''(B) to develop advanced methods for eradication of cattle fever ticks, including—

''(i) alternative treatment methods for cattle and other susceptible species;

''(ii) field treatment for premises, including corral pens and pasture loafing areas;

''(iii) methods for treatment and control on infested wildlife;

''(iv) biological control agents; and

''(v) new and improved vaccines;

''(C) to evaluate rangeland vegetation that impacts the survival of cattle fever ticks;

''(D) to improve management of diseases relating to cattle fever ticks that are associated with wildlife, livestock, and human health;

''(E) to improve diagnostic detection of tick-infested or infected animals and pastures; and

''(F) to conduct outreach to impacted ranchers, hunters, and landowners to integrate tactics and document sustainability of best practices.

''(15) LAYING HEN AND TURKEY RESEARCH PROGRAM.—Research grants may be made under this section for the purpose of improving the efficiency and sustainability of laying hen and turkey production through integrated, collaborative research and technology transfer. Emphasis may be placed on laying hen and turkey disease prevention, antimicrobial resistance, nutrition, gut health, and alternative housing systems under extreme seasonal weather conditions.

''(16) ALGAE AGRICULTURE RESEARCH PROGRAM.—Research and extension grants may be made under this section for the development and testing of algae and algae systems (including micro- and macro-algae systems).'';

(2) in subsection (e)(5), by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023'';

(3) in subsection (f)(5), by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023'';

(4) in subsection (g), by striking ''2018'' each place it appears and inserting ''2023''; and

(5) in subsection (h), by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 7209. ORGANIC AGRICULTURE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION INITIATIVE.

Section 1672B of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 5925b) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(7), by inserting '', soil health,'' after ''conservation''; and

(2) in subsection (e)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) in subparagraph (B), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(ii) in subparagraph (C), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

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

''(D) $30,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023.''; and

(B) in paragraph (2)—

(i) in the paragraph heading, by striking ''FOR FISCAL YEARS 2014 THROUGH 2018''; and

(ii) by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 7210. FARM BUSINESS MANAGEMENT.

Section 1672D of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 5925f) is amended—

(1) by amending subsection (a) to read as follows:

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may make competitive research and extension grants for the purpose of improving the farm management knowledge and skills of agricultural producers by maintaining and expanding a national, publicly available farm financial management database to support improved farm management.'';

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (2), by striking ''and producer'' and inserting ''educational programs and''; and

(B) in paragraph (4), by striking ''use and support'' and inserting ''contribute data to''; and

(3) in subsection (d)(2), by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 7211. CLARIFICATION OF VETERAN ELIGIBILITY FOR ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM FOR FARMERS WITH DISABILITIES.

Section 1680 of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 5933) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(7) CLARIFICATION OF APPLICATION OF PROVISIONS TO VETERANS WITH DISABILITIES.—This subsection shall apply with respect to veterans with disabilities, and their families, who—

''(A) are engaged in farming or farm-related occupations; or

''(B) are pursuing new farming opportunities.'';

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) by inserting ''(including veterans)'' after ''individuals''; and

(B) by inserting ''or, in the case of veterans with disabilities, who are pursuing new farming opportunities'' before the period at the end; and

(3) in subsection (c)(1)(B), by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 7212. NATIONAL RURAL INFORMATION CENTER CLEARINGHOUSE.

Section 2381(e) of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 3125b(e)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

Subtitle C—Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998

SEC. 7300. ENDING LIMITATION ON FUNDING UNDER NATIONAL FOOD SAFETY TRAINING, EDUCATION, EXTENSION, OUTREACH, AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

Section 405(e)(3) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, And Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7625(e)(3)) is amended to read as follows:

''(3) TERM OF GRANT.—A grant under this section shall have a term that is not more than 3 years.''.

SEC. 7301. NATIONAL FOOD SAFETY TRAINING, EDUCATION, EXTENSION, OUTREACH, AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

Section 405(j) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7625(j)) is amended by striking ''2011 through 2015'' and inserting ''2019 through 2023''.

SEC. 7302. INTEGRATED RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND EXTENSION COMPETITIVE GRANTS PROGRAM.

Section 406(e) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7626(e)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 7303. SUPPORT FOR RESEARCH REGARDING DISEASES OF WHEAT, TRITICALE, AND BARLEY CAUSED BY FUSARIUM GRAMINEARUM OR BY TILLETIA INDICA.

Section 408(e)(2) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7628(e)(2)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 7304. GRANTS FOR YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS.

Section 410(d)(2) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7630(d)(2)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 7305. SPECIALTY CROP RESEARCH INITIATIVE.

(a) ELEMENTS OF INITIATIVE.—Section 412(b) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7632(b)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) in subparagraph (D), by striking ''; and'' and inserting a semicolon;

(B) in subparagraph (E), by adding ''and'' at the end; and

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

''(F) size-controlling rootstock systems for perennial crops;'';

(2) in paragraph (2)—

(A) by striking ''including threats to specialty crop pollinators;'' and inserting the following: ''including—

''(A) threats to specialty crop pollinators; and''; and

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

''(B) emerging and invasive species;'';

(3) in paragraph (3), by striking ''marketing);'' and inserting the following: ''marketing) and a better understanding of the soil rhizosphere microbiome, including—

''(A) pesticide application systems and certified drift-reduction technologies; and

''(B) systems to improve and extend storage life of specialty crops;'';

(4) by redesignating paragraphs (4) and (5) as paragraphs (5) and (6), respectively;

(5) by inserting after paragraph (3) the following new paragraph:

''(4) efforts to promote a more effective understanding and use of existing natural enemy complexes;''; and

(6) in paragraph (5) (as redesignated by paragraph (4))—

(A) by striking ''including improved mechanization and technologies that delay or inhibit ripening; and'' and inserting the following: ''including—

''(A) technologies that delay or inhibit ripening;''; and

(B) by adding at the end the following new subparagraphs:

''(B) mechanization and automation of labor-intensive tasks on farms and in packing facilities;

''(C) decision support systems driven by phenology and environmental factors;

''(D) improved monitoring systems for agricultural pests; and

''(E) effective systems for pre- and post-harvest management of quarantine pests; and''.

(b) EMERGENCY CITRUS DISEASE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION PROGRAM.—Section 412 of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7632) is amended—

(1) in subsection (j)(5), by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''; and

(2) in subsection (k)(1)(C), by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

(c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 412(k)(2) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7632(k)(2)) is amended—

(1) in the subsection heading, by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''; and

(2) by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 7306. FOOD ANIMAL RESIDUE AVOIDANCE DATABASE PROGRAM.

Section 604(e) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7642(e)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 7307. OFFICE OF PEST MANAGEMENT POLICY.

Section 614(f)(2) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7653(f)(2)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 7308. FORESTRY PRODUCTS ADVANCED UTILIZATION RESEARCH.

Section 617(f)(1) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7655b(f)(1)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

Subtitle D—Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008

PART I—AGRICULTURAL SECURITY

SEC. 7401. AGRICULTURAL BIOSECURITY COMMUNICATION CENTER.

Section 14112(c)(2) of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 8912(c)(2)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 7402. ASSISTANCE TO BUILD LOCAL CAPACITY IN AGRICULTURAL BIOSECURITY PLANNING, PREPARATION, AND RESPONSE.

Section 14113 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 8913) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(2)(B), by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''; and

(2) in subsection (b)(2)(B), by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 7403. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURAL COUNTERMEASURES.

Section 14121(b)(2) of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 8921(b)(2)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 7404. AGRICULTURAL BIOSECURITY GRANT PROGRAM.

Section 14122(e)(2) of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 8922(e)(2)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

PART II—MISCELLANEOUS

SEC. 7411. GRAZINGLANDS RESEARCH LABORATORY.

Section 7502 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Public Law 110–246; 122 Stat. 2019) is amended by striking ''10-year period'' and inserting ''15-year period''.

SEC. 7412. NATURAL PRODUCTS RESEARCH PROGRAM.

Section 7525(e) of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 5937(e)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 7413. SUN GRANT PROGRAM.

Section 7526(g) of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 8114(g)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

Subtitle E—Amendments to Other Laws

SEC. 7501. CRITICAL AGRICULTURAL MATERIALS ACT.

Section 16(a)(2) of the Critical Agricultural Materials Act (7 U.S.C. 178n(a)(2)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 7502. EQUITY IN EDUCATIONAL LAND-GRANT STATUS ACT OF 1994.

(a) 1994 INSTITUTION DEFINED.—Section 532 of the Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 301 note; Public Law 103–382) is amended to read as follows:

''SEC. 532. DEFINITION OF 1994 INSTITUTION.

''In this part, the term '1994 Institution' means any of the following colleges:

''(1) Aaniiih Nakoda College.

''(2) Bay Mills Community College.

''(3) Blackfeet Community College.

''(4) Cankdeska Cikana Community College.

''(5) Chief Dull Knife College.

''(6) College of Menominee Nation.

''(7) College of the Muscogee Nation.

''(8) D–Q University.

''(9) Dine College.

''(10) Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College.

''(11) Fort Peck Community College.

''(12) Haskell Indian Nations University.

''(13) Ilisagvik College.

''(14) Institute of American Indian and Alaska Native Culture and Arts Development.

''(15) Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College.

''(16) Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College.

''(17) Leech Lake Tribal College.

''(18) Little Big Horn College.

''(19) Little Priest Tribal College.

''(20) Navajo Technical University.

''(21) Nebraska Indian Community College.

''(22) Northwest Indian College.

''(23) Nueta Hidatsa Sahnish College.

''(24) Oglala Lakota College.

''(25) Red Lake Nation College.

''(26) Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College.

''(27) Salish Kootenai College.

''(28) Sinte Gleska University.

''(29) Sisseton Wahpeton College.

''(30) Sitting Bull College.

''(31) Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute.

''(32) Stone Child College.

''(33) Tohono O'odham Community College.

''(34) Turtle Mountain Community College.

''(35) United Tribes Technical College.

''(36) White Earth Tribal and Community College.''.

(b) ENDOWMENT FOR 1994 INSTITUTIONS.—Section 533(b) of the Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 301 note; Public Law 103–382) is amended in the first sentence by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

(c) INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING GRANTS.—Section 535 of the Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 301 note; Public Law 103–382) is amended by striking ''2018'' each place it appears in subsections (b)(1) and (c) and inserting ''2023''.

(d) RESEARCH GRANTS.—Section 536(c) of the Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 301 note; Public Law 103–382) is amended in the first sentence by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 7503. RESEARCH FACILITIES ACT.

(a) AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH FACILITY DEFINED.—The Research Facilities Act is amended—

(1) in section 2(1) (7 U.S.C. 390(1)) by striking ''a college, university, or nonprofit institution'' and inserting ''an entity eligible to receive funds under a capacity and infrastructure program (as defined in section 251(f)(1)(C) of the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 6971(f)(1)(C)))''; and

(2) in section 3(c)(2)(D) (7 U.S.C. 390a(c)(2)(D)), by striking ''recipient college, university, or nonprofit institution'' and inserting ''recipient entity''.

(b) LONG-TERM SUPPORT.—Section 3(c)(2)(D) of the Research Facilities Act (7 U.S.C. 390a(c)(2)(D)), as amended by subsection (a), is further amended by striking ''operating costs'' and inserting ''operating and maintenance costs''.

(c) COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM.—The Research Facilities Act is amended by inserting after section 3 (7 U.S.C. 390a) the following new section:

''SEC. 4. COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM.

''The Secretary shall establish a program to make competitive grants to assist in the construction, alteration, acquisition, modernization, renovation, or remodeling of agricultural research facilities.''.

(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS AND FUNDING LIMITATIONS.—Section 6 of the Research Facilities Act (7 U.S.C. 390d) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) by striking ''subsection (b),'' and inserting ''subsections (b), (c), and (d),'';

(B) by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following new sentence: ''Funds appropriated pursuant to the preceding sentence shall be available until expended.''; and

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

''(c) MAXIMUM AMOUNT.—Not more than 25 percent of the funds made available pursuant to subsection (a) for any fiscal year shall be used for any single agricultural research facility project.

''(d) PROJECT LIMITATION.—An entity eligible to receive funds under this Act may receive funds for only one project at a time.''.

SEC. 7504. COMPETITIVE, SPECIAL, AND FACILITIES RESEARCH GRANT ACT.

Subsection (b) of the Competitive, Special, and Facilities Research Grant Act (7 U.S.C. 3157(b)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2)—

(A) in subparagraph (D)—

(i) by redesignating clauses (iii) through (vii) as clauses (iv) through (viii), respectively; and

(ii) by inserting after clause (ii) the following new clause:

''(iii) soil health;'';

(B) in subparagraph (E)—

(i) in clause (iii), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(ii) in clause (iv), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(iii) by adding at the end the following new clause:

''(v) tools that accelerate the use of automation or mechanization for labor-intensive tasks in the production and distribution of crops.''; and

(C) in subparagraph (F)—

(i) in clause (vi), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(ii) in clause (vii), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(iii) by adding at the end the following new clause:

''(viii) barriers and bridges to entry and farm viability for young, beginning, socially disadvantaged, veteran, and immigrant farmers and ranchers, including farm succession, transition, transfer, entry, and profitability issues.'';

(2) in paragraph (5)—

(A) in subparagraph (A)(ii), by striking ''and'' at the end; and

(B) in subparagraph (B), by striking the period at the end and inserting the following: ''that—

''(i) is of national scope; or

''(ii) is commodity-specific, so long as any such funds allocated for commodity-specific research are matched with funds from a non-Federal source at least equal to the amount of such funds so allocated.'';

(3) in paragraph (9)—

(A) in subparagraph (A), by striking clause (iii); and

(B) in subparagraph (B)—

(i) in clause (i), by striking ''clauses (ii) and (iii)'' and inserting ''clause (ii)''; and

(ii) by striking clause (iii); and

(4) in paragraph (11)(A)—

(A) in the matter preceding clause (i), by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''; and

(B) in clause (ii), by striking ''4'' and inserting ''5''.

SEC. 7505. RENEWABLE RESOURCES EXTENSION ACT OF 1978.

(a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 6 of the Renewable Resources Extension Act of 1978 (16 U.S.C. 1675) is amended in the first sentence by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

(b) TERMINATION DATE.—Section 8 of the Renewable Resources Extension Act of 1978 (16 U.S.C. 1671 note; Public Law 95–306) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 7506. NATIONAL AQUACULTURE ACT OF 1980.

Section 10 of the National Aquaculture Act of 1980 (16 U.S.C. 2809) is amended by striking ''2018'' each place it appears and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 7507. BEGINNING FARMER AND RANCHER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM.

Section 7405 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (7 U.S.C. 3319f) is amended—

(1) by striking subsection (b) and redesignating subsection (c) as subsection (b);

(2) in subsection (b), as so redesignated—

(A) in the heading, by striking ''GRANTS'' and inserting ''PROGRAMS'';

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

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish a beginning farmer and rancher development program to provide training, education, outreach, and technical assistance initiatives to increase opportunities for beginning farmers or ranchers.'';

(C) by inserting ''or cooperative agreements'' after ''grants'' each place it appears;

(D) by inserting ''or cooperative agreement'' after ''grant'' each place it appears;

(E) by striking ''subsection'' each place it appears and inserting ''section'';

(F) by amending paragraph (4) to read as follows:

''(4) MATCHING REQUIREMENT.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), to be eligible to receive a grant under this subsection, a recipient shall provide a match in the form of cash or in-kind contributions in an amount equal to 25 percent of the funds provided by the grant.

''(B) EXCEPTION.—The Secretary may waive or reduce the matching requirement in subparagraph (A) if the Secretary determines such a waiver or modification is necessary to effectively reach an underserved area or population.''; and

(G) by striking paragraph (8), and redesignating paragraphs (9), (10), (11), and (12) as paragraphs (8), (9), (10), and (11), respectively;

(3) by inserting after subsection (b), as so redesignated, the following new subsection:

''(c) GRANT REQUIREMENTS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out this section, the Secretary shall make competitive grants to support new and established local and regional training, education, outreach, and technical assistance initiatives to increase opportunities for beginning farmers or ranchers, including programs and services (as appropriate) relating to—

''(A) basic livestock, forest management, and crop farming practices;

''(B) innovative farm, ranch, and private nonindustrial forest land access, and transfer and succession strategies and programs;

''(C) entrepreneurship and business training;

''(D) financial and risk management training (including the acquisition and management of agricultural credit);

''(E) natural resource management and planning;

''(F) diversification and marketing strategies;

''(G) curriculum development;

''(H) mentoring, apprenticeships, and internships;

''(I) resources and referral;

''(J) farm financial benchmarking;

''(K) technical assistance to help beginning farmers or ranchers acquire land from retiring farmers and ranchers;

''(L) agricultural rehabilitation and vocational training for veterans;

''(M) food safety (including good agricultural practices training);

''(N) farm safety and awareness; and

''(O) other similar subject areas of use to beginning farmers or ranchers.

''(2) SET-ASIDE.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Not less than 5 percent of the funds used to carry out this subsection for a fiscal year shall be used to support programs and services that address the needs of—

''(i) limited resource beginning farmers or ranchers (as defined by the Secretary);

''(ii) socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers (as defined in section 355(e) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 2003(e))) who are beginning farmers and ranchers; and

''(iii) farmworkers desiring to become farmers or ranchers.

''(B) VETERAN FARMERS AND RANCHERS.—Not less than 5 percent of the funds used to carry out this subsection for a fiscal year shall be used to support programs and services that address the needs of veteran farmers and ranchers (as defined in section 2501(e) of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 2279(e))).'';

(4) in subsection (d)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by striking ''and conduct'' and inserting '', conduct''; and

(ii) by striking the period at the end and inserting '', or provide training and technical assistance initiatives for beginning farmers or ranchers or for trainers and service providers that work with beginning farmers or ranchers.''; and

(B) in paragraph (2)—

(i) by inserting '', educational programs and workshops, or training and technical assistance initiatives'' after ''curricula''; and

(ii) by striking ''modules'' and inserting ''content'';

(5) in subsection (g)—

(A) by inserting ''(including retiring farmers and nonfarming landowners)'' before ''from participating in programs''; and

(B) by striking ''educating'' and inserting ''increasing opportunities for''; and

(6) in subsection (h)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) in the heading, by striking ''FOR FISCAL YEARS 2009 THROUGH 2018''; and

(ii) in subparagraph (C), by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023'';

(B) in paragraph (2)—

(i) in the paragraph heading, by striking ''FOR FISCAL YEARS 2014 THROUGH 2018''; and

(ii) by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''; and

(C) by striking paragraph (3).

SEC. 7508. FEDERAL AGRICULTURE RESEARCH FACILITIES.

Section 1431 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act Amendments of 1985 (title XIV of Public Law 99–198; 99 Stat. 1556) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 7509. BIOMASS RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT.

Section 9008(h) of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (7 U.S.C. 8108(h)) is amended to read as follows:

''(h) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section $20,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023.''.

Subtitle F—Other Matters

SEC. 7601. ENHANCED USE LEASE AUTHORITY PROGRAM.

(a) TRANSITION TO PERMANENT PROGRAM.—Section 308 of the Federal Crop Insurance Reform and Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 3125a note) is amended—

*(1) in the section heading, by striking ''**PILOT**''; and*

(2) in subsection (a), by striking ''pilot''.

(b) NO ONSITE SALES.—Section 308(b)(1)(C) of the Federal Crop Insurance Reform and Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 is amended by inserting ''onsite'' before ''public''.

(c) TERMINATION OF AUTHORITY EXTENDED.—Section 308(b)(6)(A) of the Federal Crop Insurance Reform and Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 3125a note) is amended by striking ''on the date that is 10 years after the date of enactment of this section'' and inserting ''on June 18, 2023''.

(d) REPORTS.—Section 308(d)(2) of the Federal Crop Insurance Reform and Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 3125a note) is amended by striking ''Not later than 6, 8, and 10 years after the date of enactment of this section'' and inserting ''Not later than June 18, 2019, June 18, 2021, and June 18, 2023''.

SEC. 7602. FUNCTIONS AND DUTIES OF THE UNDER SECRETARY.

Subparagraph (B) of section 251(d)(2) of the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 6971(d)(2)) is amended to read as follows:

''(B) ensure that agricultural research, education, extension, economics, and statistical programs—

''(i) are effectively coordinated and integrated—

''(I) across disciplines, agencies, and institutions; and

''(II) among applicable participants, grantees, and beneficiaries; and

''(ii) address the priority areas of the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative specified in subsection (b)(2) of the Competitive, Special, and Facilities Research Grant Act (7 U.S.C. 3157(b)(2));''.

SEC. 7603. REINSTATEMENT OF DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA MATCHING REQUIREMENT FOR CERTAIN LAND-GRANT UNIVERSITY ASSISTANCE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 209(c) of the District of Columbia Public Postsecondary Education Reorganization Act (Public Law 93–471; sec. 38–1202.09(c), D.C. Official Code) is amended in the first sentence, by striking the period at the end and inserting '', which may be used to pay no more than one-half of the total cost of providing such extension work.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall take effect on October 1, 2018.

SEC. 7604. FARMLAND TENURE, TRANSITION, AND ENTRY DATA INITIATIVE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall collect and report data and analysis on farmland ownership, tenure, transition, and entry of beginning farmers or ranchers.

(b) REQUIREMENTS.—In carrying out subsection (a), the Secretary shall—

(1) collect and distribute comprehensive annual reporting of trends in farmland ownership, tenure, transition, barriers to entry, profitability, and viability of beginning farmers or ranchers; and

(2) develop surveys and report statistical and economic analysis on farmland ownership, tenure, transition, barriers to entry, profitability, and viability of beginning farmers.

(c) FUNDING.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section $2,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023, to remain available until expended.

(d) CONFORMING AMENDMENT REGARDING CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION.—Section 1770(d) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (7 U.S.C. 2276(d)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (11), by striking ''or'' at the end;

(2) in paragraph (12), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; or''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(13) section 7604 of the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018.''.

SEC. 7605. TRANSFER OF ADMINISTRATIVE JURISDICTION, PORTION OF HENRY A. WALLACE BELTSVILLE AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH CENTER, BELTSVILLE, MARYLAND.

(a) TRANSFER AUTHORIZED.—The Secretary of Agriculture may transfer to the administrative

jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Treasury a parcel of real property at the Henry A. Wallace Beltsville Agricultural Research Center consisting of approximately 100 acres, which was originally acquired by the United States through land acquisitions in 1910 and 1925 and is generally located off of Poultry Road lying between Powder Mill Road and Odell Road in Beltsville, Maryland, for the purpose of facilitating the establishment of Bureau of Engraving and Printing facilities on the parcel.

(b) LEGAL DESCRIPTION AND MAP.—

(1) PREPARATION.—The Secretary of Agriculture shall prepare a legal description and map of the parcel of real property to be transferred under subsection (a).

(2) FORCE OF LAW.—The legal description and map prepared under paragraph (1) shall have the same force and effect as if included in this Act, except that the Secretary of Agriculture may correct errors in the legal description and map.

(c) RETENTION OF INTERESTS.—The transfer of administrative jurisdiction under subsection (a) shall be subject to easements and rights of record and such other reservations, terms, and conditions as the Secretary of Agriculture considers to be necessary.

(d) WAIVER.—The parcel of real property to be transferred under subsection (a) is exempt from Federal screening for other possible use as there is an identified Federal need for the parcel as the site for Bureau of Engraving and Printing facilities.

(e) CONDITION ON TRANSFER.—As a condition of the transfer of administrative jurisdiction under subsection (a), the Secretary of the Treasury shall agree to pay the Secretary of Agriculture the following costs:

(1) The appraisal required under subsection (f).

(2) Any environmental or administrative analysis required by Federal law with respect to the real property so transferred.

(3) Any necessary survey of such real property.

(4) Any hazardous substances assessment of such real property.

(f) APPRAISAL.—To determine the fair market value of the parcel of real property to be transferred under subsection (a), the Secretary of the Treasury shall have the parcel appraised for its highest and best use in conformity with the Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisitions developed by the Interagency Land Acquisition Conference. The appraisal shall be subject to the review and approval by the Secretary of Agriculture.

(g) HAZARDOUS MATERIALS.—For the parcel of real property to be transferred under subsection (a), the Secretary of Agriculture shall meet disclosure requirements for hazardous substances, but shall otherwise not be required to remediate or abate those substances or any other hazardous pollutants, contaminants, or waste that might be present on the parcel at the time of transfer of administrative jurisdiction.

SEC. 7606. SIMPLIFIED PLAN OF WORK.

(a) SMITH-LEVER ACT.—The Smith-Lever Act is amended—

(1) in section 3(h)(2) (7 U.S.C. 343(h)(2)), by striking subparagraph (D); and

(2) in section 4 (7 U.S.C. 344)—

(A) in subsection (c), by striking paragraphs (1) through (5) and inserting the following new paragraphs:

''(1) A summary of planned projects or programs in the State using formula funds.

''(2) A description of the manner in which the State will meet the requirements of section 3(h).

''(3) A description of the manner in which the State will meet the requirements of section 3(i)(2) of the Hatch Act of 1887.

''(4) A description of matching funds provided by the State with respect to the previous fiscal year.''; and

(B) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(f) RELATIONSHIP TO AUDITS.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the procedures established pursuant to subsection (c) shall not be subject to audit to determine the sufficiency of such procedures.''.

(b) HATCH ACT.—The Hatch Act of 1887 is amended—

(1) in section 3 (7 U.S.C. 361c)—

(A) by amending subsection (h) to read as follows:

''(h) PEER REVIEW.—Research carried out under subsection (c)(3) shall be subject to scientific peer review. The review of a project conducted under this subsection shall be considered to satisfy the merit review requirements of section 103(e) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998.''; and

(B) in subsection (i)(2), by striking subparagraph (D); and

(2) in section 7 (7 U.S.C. 361g)—

(A) in subsection (e), by striking paragraphs (1) through (4) and inserting the following new paragraphs:

''(1) A summary of planned projects or programs in the State using formula funds.

''(2) A description of the manner in which the State will meet the requirements of subsections (c)(3) and (i)(2) of section 3.

''(3) A description of matching funds provided by the State with respect to the previous fiscal year.''; and

(B) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(h) RELATIONSHIP TO AUDITS.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the procedures established pursuant to subsection (e) shall not be subject to audit to determine the sufficiency of such procedures.''.

(c) EXTENSION AND RESEARCH AT 1890 INSTITUTIONS.—

(1) EXTENSION.—Section 1444(d) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3221(d)) is amended—

(A) in paragraph (3), by striking subparagraphs (A) through (E) and inserting the following new subparagraphs:

''(A) A summary of planned projects or programs in the State using formula funds.

''(B) A description of matching funds provided by the State with respect to the previous fiscal year.''; and

(B) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(6) RELATIONSHIP TO AUDITS.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the procedures established pursuant to paragraph (3) shall not be subject to audit to determine the sufficiency of such procedures.''.

(2) RESEARCH.—Section 1445(c) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3222(c)) is amended—

(A) in paragraph (3), by striking subparagraphs (A) through (E) and inserting the following new subparagraphs:

''(A) A summary of planned projects or programs in the State using formula funds.

''(B) A description of matching funds provided by the State with respect to the previous fiscal year.''; and

(B) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(6) RELATIONSHIP TO AUDITS.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the procedures established pursuant to paragraph (3) shall not be subject to audit to determine the sufficiency of such procedures.''.

SEC. 7607. TIME AND EFFORT REPORTING EXEMPTION.

Any entity receiving funds under a program referred to in clause (iii), (iv), (vii), (viii), or (xii) of section 251(f)(1)(C) of the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 6971(f)(1)(C)) shall be exempt from the time and effort reporting requirements under part 200 of title 2, Code of Federal Regulations (or successor regulations), with respect to the use of such funds.

SEC. 7608. PUBLIC EDUCATION ON BIOTECHNOLOGY IN FOOD AND AGRICULTURE SECTORS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Secretary of Education, and such other persons and organizations as the Secretary determines to be appropriate, shall develop and carry out a national science-based education campaign to increase public awareness regarding the use of technology in food and agriculture production, including—

(1) the science of biotechnology as applied to the development of products in the food and agricultural sectors, including information about which products of biotechnology in the food and agricultural sectors have been approved for use in the United States;

(2) the Federal science-based regulatory review process for products made using biotechnology in the food and agricultural sectors conducted under the Coordinated Framework for Regulation of Biotechnology published by the Office of Science and Technology Policy in the Federal Register on June 26, 1986 (51 Fed. Reg. 23302), including the studies performed and analyses conducted to ensure that such products are as safe to produce and as safe to eat as products that are not produced using biotechnology;

(3) developments in the science of plant and animal breeding over time and the impacts of such developments on farmers, consumers, the environment, and the rural economy; and

(4) the effects of the use of biotechnology on food security, nutrition, and the environment.

(b) CONSUMER FRIENDLY INFORMATIONAL WEBSITE.—The Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Office of Science and Technology Policy, and such other persons and organizations as the Secretary determines to be appropriate, shall develop, establish, and update as necessary, a single Federal government-sponsored public Internet website through which the public may obtain, in an easy to understand and user-friendly format, information about biotechnology used in the food and agricultural sectors, including—

(1) scientific findings and other data on biotechnology used in the food and agricultural sectors;

(2) Federal agencies' decisions regarding specific products made using biotechnology in the food and agricultural sectors;

(3) a list of frequently asked questions pertaining to the use of biotechnology in the food and agricultural sectors;

(4) an easy-to-understand description of the role of Federal agencies in overseeing the use of biotechnology in the food and agricultural sectors;

(5) information about novel, emerging technologies within the broader field of biotechnology; and

(6) a glossary of terms with respect to biotechnology used in the food and agricultural sectors.

(c) SOCIAL MEDIA RESOURCES.—The Secretary may, as appropriate, utilize publicly-available social media platforms to supplement the campaign established under subsection (a), and as an extension of the website established under subsection (b).

TITLE VIII—FORESTRY

Subtitle A—Reauthorization and Modification of Certain Forestry Programs

SEC. 8101. SUPPORT FOR STATE ASSESSMENTS AND STRATEGIES FOR FOREST RESOURCES.

Section 2A(f)(1) of the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978 (16 U.S.C. 2101a(f)(1)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 8102. FOREST LEGACY PROGRAM.

Subsection (m) of section 7 of the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978 (16 U.S.C. 2103c) is amended to read as follows:

''(m) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section $35,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023.''.

SEC. 8103. COMMUNITY FOREST AND OPEN SPACE CONSERVATION PROGRAM.

Subsection (g) of section 7A of the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978 (16 U.S.C. 2103d) is amended to read as follows:

''(g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section $5,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023.''.

SEC. 8104. STATE AND PRIVATE FOREST LANDSCAPE-SCALE RESTORATION PROGRAM.

Section 13A of the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978 (16 U.S.C. 2109a) is amended to read as follows:

''SEC. 13A. STATE AND PRIVATE FOREST LANDSCAPE-SCALE RESTORATION PROGRAM.

''(a) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this section is to establish a landscape-scale restoration program to support landscape-scale restoration and management that results in measurable improvements to public benefits derived from State and private forest land, as identified in—

''(1) a State-wide assessment described in section 2A(a)(1); and

''(2) a long-term State-wide forest resource strategy described in section 2A(a)(2).

''(b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

''(1) PRIVATE FOREST LAND.—The term 'private forest land' means land that—

''(A)(i) has existing tree cover; or

''(ii) is suitable for growing trees; and

''(B) is owned by—

''(i) an Indian Tribe (as defined in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5304)); or

''(ii) any private individual or entity.

''(2) REGIONAL.—The term 'regional' means of any region of the National Association of State Foresters.

''(3) SECRETARY.—The term 'Secretary' means the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service.

''(4) STATE FOREST LAND.—The term 'State forest land' means land that is owned by a State or unit of local government.

''(5) STATE FORESTER.—The term 'State Forester' means a State Forester or equivalent State official.

''(c) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary, in consultation with State Foresters or other appropriate State agencies, shall establish a landscape-scale restoration program—

''(1) to provide financial and technical assistance for landscape-scale restoration projects on State forest land or private forest land; and

''(2) that maintains or improves benefits from trees and forests on such land.

''(d) REQUIREMENTS.—The landscape-scale restoration program established under subsection (c) shall—

''(1) measurably address the national private forest conservation priorities described in section 2(c);

''(2) enhance public benefits from trees and forests, as identified in—

''(A) a State-wide assessment described in section 2A(a)(1); and

''(B) a long-term State-wide forest resource strategy described in section 2A(a)(2); and

''(3) in accordance with the purposes described in section 2(b), include one or more of the following objectives—

''(A) protecting or improving water quality or quantity;

''(B) reducing wildfire risk, including through hazardous fuels treatment;

''(C) protecting or enhancing wildlife habitat, consistent with wildlife objectives established by the applicable State fish and wildlife agency;

''(D) improving forest health and forest ecosystems, including addressing native, nonnative, and invasive pests; or

''(E) enhancing opportunities for new and existing markets in which the production and use of wood products strengthens local and regional economies.

''(e) MEASUREMENT.—The Secretary, in consultation with State Foresters, shall establish a measurement system (including measurement tools) that—

''(1) consistently measures the results of landscape-scale restoration projects described in subsection (c); and

''(2) is consistent with the measurement systems of other Federal programs delivered by State Foresters.

''(f) USE OF AMOUNTS.—

''(1) ALLOCATION.—Of the amounts made available for the landscape-scale restoration program established under subsection (c), the Secretary shall allocate to State Foresters—

''(A) 50 percent for the competitive process in accordance with subsection (g); and

''(B) 50 percent proportionally to States, in consultation with State Foresters—

''(i) to maximize the achievement of the objectives described in subsection (d)(3); and

''(ii) to address the highest national priorities, as identified in—

''(I) State-wide assessments described in section 2A(a)(1); and

''(II) long-term State-wide forest resource strategies described in section 2A(a)(2).

''(2) MULTIYEAR PROJECTS.—The Secretary may provide amounts under this section for multiyear projects.

''(g) COMPETITIVE PROCESS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall distribute amounts described in subsection (f)(1)(A) through a competitive process for landscape-scale restoration projects described in subsection (c) to maximize the achievement of the objectives described in subsection (d)(3).

''(2) ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible for funding through the competitive process under paragraph (1), a State Forester, or another entity on approval of the State Forester, shall submit to the Secretary one or more landscape-scale restoration proposals that—

''(A) in accordance with paragraph (3)(A), include priorities identified in—

''(i) State-wide assessments described in section 2A(a)(1); and

''(ii) long-term State-wide forest resource strategies described in section 2A(a)(2);

''(B) identify one or more measurable results to be achieved through the project;

''(C) to the maximum extent practicable, include activities on all land necessary to accomplish the measurable results in the applicable landscape;

''(D) to the maximum extent practicable, are developed in collaboration with other public and private sector organizations and local communities; and

''(E) derive not less than 50 percent of the funding for the project from non-Federal sources, unless the Secretary determines—

''(i) the applicant is unable to derive not less than 50 percent of the funding for the project from non-Federal sources; and

''(ii) the benefits of the project justify pursuing the project.

''(3) PRIORITIZATION.—In carrying out the competitive process under paragraph (1), the Secretary—

''(A) shall give priority to projects that, as determined by the Secretary, best carry out priorities identified in State-wide assessments described in section 2A(a)(1) and long-term State-wide forest resource strategies described in section 2A(a)(2), including—

''(i) involvement of public and private partnerships;

''(ii) inclusion of cross-boundary activities on—

''(I) Federal forest land;

''(II) State forest land; or

''(III) private forest land;

''(iii) involvement of areas also identified for cost-share funding by the Natural Resources Conservation Service or any other relevant Federal agency;

''(iv) protection or improvement of water quality or quantity;

''(v) reduction of wildfire risk; and

''(vi) otherwise addressing the national private forest conservation priorities described in section 2(c); and

''(B) may give priority to projects in proximity to other landscape-scale projects on other land under the jurisdiction of the Secretary, the Secretary of the Interior, or a Governor of a State, including—

''(i) ecological restoration treatments under the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program established under section 4003 of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (16 U.S.C. 7303);

''(ii) projects on landscape-scale areas designated for insect and disease treatment under section 602 of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6591a);

''(iii) authorized restoration services under section 8206 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (16 U.S.C. 2113a);

''(iv) watershed restoration and protection services under section 331 of the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2001 (Public Law 106–291; 16 U.S.C. 1011 note);

''(v) stewardship end result contracting projects under section 604 of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6591c); or

''(vi) projects under other relevant programs, as determined by the Secretary.

''(4) PROPOSAL REVIEW.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish a process for the review of proposals submitted under paragraph (2) that ranks each proposal based on—

''(i) the extent to which the proposal would achieve the requirements described in subsection (d); and

''(ii) the priorities described in paragraph (3)(A).

''(B) REGIONAL REVIEW.—The Secretary may carry out the process described in subparagraph (A) at a regional level.

''(5) COMPLIANCE WITH NEPA.—Financial and technical assistance carried out under this section for landscape restoration projects on State forest land or private forest land shall not constitute a major Federal action for the purposes of section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(C)).

''(h) REPORT.—Not later than 3 years after the date of the enactment of the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate a report that includes—

''(1) a description of the status of the development, execution, and administration of landscape-scale projects selected under the program under this section;

''(2) an accounting of expenditures under such program; and

''(3) specific accomplishments that have resulted from landscape-scale projects under such program.

''(i) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary for the landscape-scale restoration program established under subsection (c) $10,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023, to remain available until expended.''.

SEC. 8105. RURAL REVITALIZATION TECHNOLOGIES.

Section 2371(d)(2) of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 6601(d)(2)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 8106. COMMUNITY WOOD ENERGY AND WOOD INNOVATION PROGRAM.

Section 9013 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (7 U.S.C. 8113) is amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 9013. COMMUNITY WOOD ENERGY AND WOOD INNOVATION PROGRAM.

''(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

''(1) COMMUNITY WOOD ENERGY SYSTEM.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The term 'community wood energy system' means an energy system that—

''(i) produces thermal energy or combined thermal energy and electricity where thermal is the primary energy output;

''(ii) services public facilities owned or operated by State or local governments (including schools, town halls, libraries, and other public buildings) or private or nonprofit facilities (including commercial and business facilities, such as hospitals, office buildings, apartment buildings, and manufacturing and industrial buildings); and

''(iii) uses woody biomass, including residuals from wood processing facilities, as the primary fuel.

''(B) INCLUSIONS.—The term 'community wood energy system' includes single-facility central heating, district heating systems serving multiple buildings, combined heat and electric systems where thermal energy is the primary energy output, and other related biomass energy systems.

''(2) INNOVATIVE WOOD PRODUCT FACILITY.—The term 'innovative wood product facility' means a manufacturing or processing plant or mill that produces—

''(A) building components or systems that use large panelized wood construction, including mass timber;

''(B) wood products derived from nanotechnology or other new technology processes, as determined by the Secretary; or

''(C) other innovative wood products that use low-value, low-quality wood, as determined by the Secretary.

''(3) MASS TIMBER.—The term 'mass timber' includes—

''(A) cross-laminated timber;

''(B) nail-laminated timber;

''(C) glue-laminated timber;

''(D) laminated strand lumber; and

''(E) laminated veneer lumber.

''(4) PROGRAM.—The term 'Program' means the Community Wood Energy and Wood Innovation Program established under subsection (b).

''(b) COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM.—The Secretary, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service, shall establish a competitive grant program to be known as the 'Community Wood Energy and Wood Innovation Program'.

''(c) MATCHING GRANTS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Under the Program, the Secretary shall make grants to cover not more than 35 percent of the capital cost for installing a community wood energy system or building an innovative wood product facility.

''(2) SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES.—The Secretary may establish special circumstances, such as in the case of a community wood energy system project or innovative wood product facility project involving a school or hospital in a low-income community, under which grants under the Program may cover up to 50 percent of the capital cost.

''(3) SOURCE OF MATCHING FUNDS.—Matching funds required pursuant to this subsection from a grant recipient must be derived from non-Federal funds.

''(d) PROJECT CAP.—The total amount of grants under the Program for a community wood energy system project or innovative wood product facility project may not exceed—

''(1) in the case of grants under the general authority provided under subsection (c)(1), $1,000,000; and

''(2) in the case of grants for which the special circumstances apply under subsection (c)(2), $1,500,000.

''(e) SELECTION CRITERIA.—In selecting applicants for grants under the Program, the Secretary shall consider the following:

''(1) The energy efficiency of the proposed community wood energy system or innovative wood product facility.

''(2) The cost effectiveness of the proposed community wood energy system or innovative wood product facility.

''(3) The extent to which the proposed community wood energy system or innovative wood product facility represents the best available commercial technology.

''(4) The extent to which the applicant has demonstrated a high likelihood of project success by completing detailed engineering and design work in advance of the grant application.

''(5) Other technical, economic, conservation, and environmental criteria that the Secretary considers appropriate.

''(f) GRANT PRIORITIES.—In selecting applicants for grants under the Program, the Secretary shall give priority to proposals that—

''(1) would be carried out in a location where markets are needed for the low-value, low-quality wood;

''(2) would be carried out in a location with limited access to natural gas pipelines;

''(3) would include the use or retrofitting (or both) of existing sawmill facilities located in a location where the average annual unemployment rate exceeded the national average unemployment rate by more than 1 percent during the previous calendar year; or

''(4) would be carried out in a location where the project will aid with forest restoration.

''(g) LIMITATIONS.—

''(1) CAPACITY OF COMMUNITY WOOD ENERGY SYSTEMS.—A community wood energy system acquired with grant funds under the Program shall not exceed nameplate capacity of 10 megawatts of thermal energy or combined thermal and electric energy.

''(2) FUNDING FOR INNOVATIVE WOOD PRODUCT FACILITIES.—Not more than 25 percent of funds provided as grants under the Program for a fiscal year may go to applicants proposing innovative wood product facilities, unless the Secretary has received an insufficient number of qualified proposals for community wood energy systems.

''(h) FUNDING.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out the Program $25,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023.''.

SEC. 8107. HEALTHY FORESTS RESTORATION ACT OF 2003 AMENDMENTS.

(a) HEALTHY FORESTS RESERVE PROGRAM.—

(1) ADDITIONAL PURPOSE OF PROGRAM.—Section 501(a) of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6571(a)) is amended—

(A) by striking ''and'' at the end of paragraph (2);

(B) by redesignating paragraph (3) as paragraph (4); and

(C) by inserting after paragraph (2) the following new paragraph:

''(3) to conserve forest land that provides habitat for species described in section 502(b)(1); and''.

(2) ELIGIBILITY FOR ENROLLMENT.—Subsection (b) of section 502 of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6572) is amended to read as follows:

''(b) ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible for enrollment in the healthy forests reserve program, land shall be private forest land, or private land being restored to forest land, the enrollment of which will maintain, restore, enhance, or otherwise measurably—

''(1) increase the likelihood of recovery of a species that is listed as endangered or threatened under section 4 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1533); or

''(2) improve the well-being of a species that—

''(A) is—

''(i) not listed as endangered or threatened under such section; and

''(ii) a candidate for such listing, a State-listed species, or a special concern species; or

''(B) is deemed a species of greatest conservation need by a State wildlife action plan.''.

(3) OTHER ENROLLMENT CONSIDERATIONS.—Section 502(c) of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6572(c)) is amended—

(A) by striking ''and'' at the end of paragraph (1);

(B) by redesignating paragraph (2) as paragraph (3); and

(C) by inserting after paragraph (1) the following new paragraph:

''(2) conserve forest lands that provide habitat for species described in subsection (b)(1); and''.

(4) ELIMINATION OF LIMITATION ON USE OF EASEMENTS.—Section 502(e) of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6572(e)) is amended by striking paragraph (2) and redesignating paragraph (3) as paragraph (2).

(5) ENROLLMENT OF ACREAGE OWNED BY AN INDIAN TRIBE.—Section 502(e)(2)(B) of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6572(e)(3)(B)), as redesignated under paragraph (4), is amended by striking clauses (ii) and (iii) and inserting the following new clauses:

''(ii) a 10-year, cost-share agreement;

''(iii) a permanent easement; or

''(iv) any combination of the options described in clauses (i) through (iii).''.

(6) SPECIES-RELATED ENROLLMENT PRIORITY.—Subparagraph (B) of section 502(f)(1) of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6572(f)(1)) is amended to read as follows:

''(B) secondarily, species that—

''(i) are—

''(I) not listed as endangered or threatened under section 4 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1533); and

''(II) candidates for such listing, State-listed species, or special concern species; or

''(ii) are species of greatest conservation need, as identified in State wildlife action plans.''.

(7) RESTORATION PLANS.—Subsection (b) of section 503 of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6573) is amended to read as follows:

''(b) PRACTICES.—The restoration plan shall require such restoration practices and measures, as are necessary to restore and enhance habitat for species described in section 502(b), including the following:

''(1) Land management practices.

''(2) Vegetative treatments.

''(3) Structural practices and measures.

''(4) Other practices and measures.''.

(8) FUNDING.—Section 508(b) of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6578(b)) is amended—

(A) in the subsection heading, by striking ''FISCAL YEARS 2014 THROUGH 2018'' and inserting ''AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS''; and

(B) by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

(9) TECHNICAL CORRECTION.—Section 503(a) of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6573(a)) is amended by striking ''Secretary of Interior'' and inserting ''Secretary of the Interior''.

(b) INSECT AND DISEASE INFESTATION.—

(1) TREATMENT OF AREAS.—Section 602(d)(1) of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6591a(d)(1)) is amended by striking ''subsection (b) to reduce the risk or extent of, or increase the resilience to, insect or disease infestation in the areas.'' and inserting the following: ''subsection (b)—

''(A) to reduce the risk or extent of, or increase the resilience to, insect or disease infestation; or

''(B) to reduce hazardous fuels.''.

(2) PERMANENT AUTHORITY.—Section 602(d)(2) of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6591a(d)(2)) is amended by striking ''for which a public notice to initiate scoping is issued on or before September 30, 2018,''.

(c) ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW.—

(1) CLARIFICATION OF TREATMENT OF AREAS.—Section 603(a) of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6591b(a)) is amended by striking ''in accordance with section 602(d)'' and inserting ''in accordance with section 602(d)(1)''.

(2) PROJECT SIZE AND LOCATION.—Section 603(c)(1) of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6591b(c)(1)) is amended by striking ''3000'' and inserting ''6,000''.

SEC. 8108. NATIONAL FOREST FOUNDATION ACT AUTHORITIES.

(a) EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY TO PROVIDE MATCHING FUNDS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE AND

PROJECT EXPENSES.—Section 405(b) of the National Forest Foundation Act (16 U.S.C. 583j–3(b)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 410(b) of the National Forest Foundation Act (16 U.S.C. 583j–8(b)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

Subtitle B—Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 Amendments

SEC. 8201. USE OF RESERVED FUNDS FOR TITLE II PROJECTS ON FEDERAL LAND AND CERTAIN NON-FEDERAL LAND.

Section 204(f) of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 7124(f)) is amended to read as follows:

''(f) REQUIREMENTS FOR PROJECT FUNDS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (2), the Secretary concerned shall ensure that at least 50 percent of the project funds reserved under section 102(d) by a participating county shall be available only for projects that—

''(A) include—

''(i) the sale of timber or other forest products;

''(ii) reduce fire risks; or

''(iii) improve water supplies; and

''(B) implement stewardship objectives that enhance forest ecosystems or restore and improve land health and water quality.

''(2) APPLICABILITY.—The requirement in paragraph (1) shall apply only to project funds reserved by a participating county whose boundaries include Federal land that the Secretary concerned determines has been subject to a timber or other forest products program within 5 fiscal years before the fiscal year in which the funds are reserved.''.

SEC. 8202. RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMITTEES.

(a) RECOGNITION OF RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMITTEES.—Section 205(a)(4) of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 7125(a)(4)) is amended by striking ''2018'' each place it appears and inserting ''2023''.

(b) REDUCTION IN COMPOSITION OF COMMITTEES.—Section 205(d) of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 7125(d)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking ''15 members'' and inserting ''9 members''; and

(2) by striking ''5 persons'' each place it appears and inserting ''3 persons''.

(c) EXPANDING LOCAL PARTICIPATION ON COMMITTEES.—Section 205(d) of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 7125(d)) is further amended—

(1) in paragraph (3), by inserting before the period at the end the following: '', consistent with the requirements of paragraph (4)''; and

(2) by striking paragraph (4) and inserting the following new paragraph:

''(4) GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION.—The members of a resource advisory committee shall reside within the county or counties in which the committee has jurisdiction, or an adjacent county.''.

(d) APPOINTMENT OF RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMITTEES BY APPLICABLE DESIGNEE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 205 of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 7125) is further amended—

(A) in subsection (a)—

(i) in paragraph (1), by inserting ''(or applicable designee)'' after ''The Secretary concerned'';

(ii) in paragraph (3), by inserting ''(or applicable designee)'' after ''the Secretary concerned''; and

(iii) in paragraph (4), by inserting ''(or applicable designee)'' after ''the Secretary concerned'' both places it appears;

(B) in subsection (b)(6), by inserting ''(or applicable designee)'' after ''the Secretary concerned'';

(C) in subsection (c)—

(i) in the subsection heading, by inserting ''OR APPLICABLE DESIGNEE'' after ''BY THE SECRETARY'';

(ii) in paragraph (1), by inserting ''(or applicable designee)'' after ''The Secretary concerned'' both places it appears;

(iii) in paragraph (2), by inserting ''(or applicable designee)'' after ''The Secretary concerned'';

(iv) in paragraph (4), by inserting ''(or applicable designee)'' after ''The Secretary concerned''; and

(v) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(6) APPLICABLE DESIGNEE.—In this section, the term 'applicable designee' means—

''(A) with respect to Federal land described in section 3(7)(A), the applicable Regional Forester; and

''(B) with respect to Federal land described in section 3(7)(B), the applicable Bureau of Land Management State Director.'';

(D) in subsection (d)(3), by inserting ''(or applicable designee)'' after ''the Secretary concerned''; and

(E) in subsection (f)(1)—

(i) by inserting ''(or applicable designee)'' after ''the Secretary concerned''; and

(ii) by inserting ''(or applicable designee)'' after ''of the Secretary''.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 201(3) of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 7121(3)) is amended by inserting ''(or applicable designee (as defined in section 205(c)(6)))'' after ''Secretary concerned'' both places it appears.

SEC. 8203. PROGRAM FOR TITLE II SELF-SUSTAINING RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE PROJECTS.

(a) SELF-SUSTAINING RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE PROJECTS.—Title II of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 7121 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''SEC. 209. PROGRAM FOR SELF-SUSTAINING RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE PROJECTS.

''(a) RAC PROGRAM.—The Chief of the Forest Service shall conduct a program (to be known as the 'self-sustaining resource advisory committee program' or 'RAC program') under which 10 resource advisory committees will propose projects authorized by subsection (c) to be carried out using project funds reserved by a participating county under section 102(d).

''(b) SELECTION OF PARTICIPATING RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMITTEES.—The selection of resource advisory committees to participate in the RAC program is in the sole discretion of the Chief of the Forest Service.

''(c) AUTHORIZED PROJECTS.—Notwithstanding the project purposes specified in sections 202(b), 203(c), and 204(a)(5), projects under the RAC program are intended to—

''(1) accomplish forest management objectives or support community development; and

''(2) generate receipts.

''(d) DEPOSIT AND AVAILABILITY OF REVENUES.—Any revenue generated by a project conducted under the RAC program, including any interest accrued from the revenues, shall be—

''(1) deposited in the special account in the Treasury established under section 102(d)(2)(A); and

''(2) available, in such amounts as may be provided in advance in appropriation Acts, for additional projects under the RAC program.

''(e) TERMINATION OF AUTHORITY.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The authority to initiate a project under the RAC program shall terminate on September 30, 2023.

''(2) DEPOSITS IN TREASURY.—Any funds available for projects under the RAC program and not obligated by September 30, 2024, shall be deposited in the Treasury of the United States.''.

(b) EXCEPTION TO GENERAL RULE REGARDING TREATMENT OF RECEIPTS.—Section 403(b) of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 7153(b)) is amended by striking ''All revenues'' and inserting ''Except as provided in section 209, all revenues''.

Subtitle C—Availability of Categorical Exclusions To Expedite Forest Management Activities

PART I—GENERAL PROVISIONS

SEC. 8301. DEFINITIONS.

In this subtitle:

(1) CATASTROPHIC EVENT.—The term ''catastrophic event'' means any natural disaster (such as hurricane, tornado, windstorm, snow or ice storm, rain storm, high water, wind-driven water, tidal wave, earthquake, volcanic eruption, landslide, mudslide, drought, or insect or disease outbreak) or any fire, flood, or explosion, regardless of cause.

(2) COOS BAY WAGON ROAD GRANT LANDS.—The term ''Coos Bay Wagon Road Grant lands'' means the lands reconveyed to the United States pursuant to the first section of the Act of February 26, 1919 (40 Stat. 1179).

(3) FOREST MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY.—The term ''forest management activity'' means a project or activity carried out by the Secretary concerned on National Forest System lands or public lands consistent with the forest plan covering the lands.

(4) FOREST PLAN.—The term ''forest plan'' means—

(A) a land use plan prepared by the Bureau of Land Management for public lands pursuant to section 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1712); or

(B) a land and resource management plan prepared by the Forest Service for a unit of the National Forest System pursuant to section 6 of the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. 1604).

(5) NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM.—The term ''National Forest System'' has the meaning given that term in section 11(a) of the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. 1609(a)).

(6) OREGON AND CALIFORNIA RAILROAD GRANT LANDS.—The term ''Oregon and California Railroad Grant lands'' means the following lands:

(A) All lands in the State of Oregon revested in the United States under the Act of June 9, 1916 (39 Stat. 218), that are administered by the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Bureau of Land Management, pursuant to the first section of the Act of August 28, 1937 (43 U.S.C. 1181a).

(B) All lands in that State obtained by the Secretary of the Interior pursuant to the land exchanges authorized and directed by section 2 of the Act of June 24, 1954 (43 U.S.C. 1181h).

(C) All lands in that State acquired by the United States at any time and made subject to the provisions of title II of the Act of August 28, 1937 (43 U.S.C. 1181f).

(7) PUBLIC LANDS.—The term ''public lands'' has the meaning given that term in section 103 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1702), except that the term includes Coos Bay Wagon Road Grant lands and Oregon and California Railroad Grant lands.

(8) REFORESTATION ACTIVITY.—The term ''reforestation activity'' means a forest management activity carried out by the Secretary concerned where the primary purpose is the reforestation of impacted lands following a catastrophic event. The term includes planting, evaluating and enhancing natural regeneration, clearing competing vegetation, and other activities related to reestablishment of forest species on the impacted lands.

(9) RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE.—The term ''resource advisory committee'' has the meaning given that term in section 201 of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 7121).

(10) SALVAGE OPERATION.—The term ''salvage operation'' means a forest management activity carried out in response to a catastrophic event where the primary purpose is—

(A) to prevent wildfire as a result of the catastrophic event, or, if the catastrophic event was wildfire, to prevent a re-burn of the fire-impacted area;

(B) to provide an opportunity for utilization of forest materials damaged as a result of the catastrophic event; or

(C) to provide a funding source for reforestation for the National Forest System lands or public lands impacted by the catastrophic event.

(11) SECRETARY CONCERNED.—The term ''Secretary concerned'' means—

(A) the Secretary of Agriculture, with respect to National Forest System lands; and

(B) the Secretary of the Interior, with respect to public lands.

SEC. 8302. RULE OF APPLICATION FOR NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM LANDS AND PUBLIC LANDS.

Unless specifically provided by a provision of this subtitle, the authorities provided by this subtitle do not apply with respect to any National Forest System lands or public lands—

(1) that are included in the National Wilderness Preservation System;

(2) that are located within a national or State-specific inventoried roadless area established by the Secretary of Agriculture through regulation, unless—

(A) the forest management activity to be carried out under such authority is consistent with the forest plan applicable to the area; or

(B) the Secretary of Agriculture determines the forest management activity is permissible under the applicable roadless rule governing such lands; or

(3) on which timber harvesting for any purpose is prohibited by Federal statute.

SEC. 8303. CONSULTATION UNDER THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT.

(a) NO CONSULTATION IF ACTION NOT LIKELY TO ADVERSELY AFFECT A LISTED SPECIES OR DESIGNATED CRITICAL HABITAT.—With respect to a forest management activity carried out pursuant to this subtitle, consultation under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1536) shall not be required if the Secretary concerned determines that such forest management activity is not likely to adversely affect a listed species or designated critical habitat.

(b) EXPEDITED CONSULTATION.—With respect to a forest management activity carried out pursuant to this subtitle, consultation required under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1536) shall be concluded within the 90-day period beginning on the date on which such consultation was requested by the Secretary concerned.

SEC. 8304. SECRETARIAL DISCRETION IN THE CASE OF TWO OR MORE CATEGORICAL EXCLUSIONS.

To the extent that a forest management activity may be categorically excluded under more than one of the sections of this subtitle, the Secretary concerned shall have full discretion to determine which categorical exclusion to use.

PART II—CATEGORICAL EXCLUSIONS

SEC. 8311. CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION TO EXPEDITE CERTAIN CRITICAL RESPONSE ACTIONS.

(a) CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION ESTABLISHED.—Forest management activities described in subsection (b) are a category of actions hereby designated as being categorically excluded from the preparation of an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement under section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332).

(b) FOREST MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES DESIGNATED FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION.—The category of forest management activities designated under this section for a categorical exclusion are forest management activities carried out by the Secretary concerned on National Forest System lands or public lands where the primary purpose of such activity is—

(1) to address an insect or disease infestation;

(2) to reduce hazardous fuel loads;

(3) to protect a municipal water source;

(4) to maintain, enhance, or modify critical habitat to protect it from catastrophic disturbances;

(5) to increase water yield; or

(6) any combination of the purposes specified in paragraphs (1) through (5).

(c) AVAILABILITY OF CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION.—On and after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary concerned may use the categorical exclusion established under subsection (a) in accordance with this section.

(d) ACREAGE LIMITATIONS.—A forest management activity covered by the categorical exclusion established under subsection (a) may not contain treatment units exceeding a total of 6,000 acres.

SEC. 8312. CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION TO EXPEDITE SALVAGE OPERATIONS IN RESPONSE TO CATASTROPHIC EVENTS.

(a) CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION ESTABLISHED.—Salvage operations carried out by the Secretary concerned on National Forest System lands or public lands are a category of actions hereby designated as being categorically excluded from the preparation of an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement under section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332).

(b) AVAILABILITY OF CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION.—On and after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary concerned may use the categorical exclusion established under subsection (a) in accordance with this section.

(c) ACREAGE LIMITATION.—A salvage operation covered by the categorical exclusion established under subsection (a) may not contain treatment units exceeding a total of 6,000 acres.

(d) ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS.—

(1) STREAM BUFFERS.—A salvage operation covered by the categorical exclusion established under subsection (a) shall comply with the standards and guidelines for stream buffers contained in the applicable forest plan, except that the Regional Forester, in the case of National Forest System lands, or the State Director of the Bureau of Land Management, in the case of public lands, may, on a case-by-case basis, waive the standards and guidelines.

(2) REFORESTATION PLAN.—A reforestation plan shall be developed under section 3 of the Act of June 9, 1930 (commonly known as the Knutson-Vandenberg Act; (16 U.S.C. 576b)), as part of a salvage operation covered by the categorical exclusion established under subsection (a).

SEC. 8313. CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION TO MEET FOREST PLAN GOALS FOR EARLY SUCCESSIONAL FORESTS.

(a) CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION ESTABLISHED.—Forest management activities described in subsection (b) are a category of actions hereby designated as being categorically excluded from the preparation of an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement under section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332).

(b) FOREST MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES DESIGNATED FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION.—The category of forest management activities designated under this section for a categorical exclusion are forest management activities carried out by the Secretary concerned on National Forest System lands or public lands where the primary purpose of such activity is to improve, enhance, or create early successional forests for wildlife habitat improvement and other purposes, consistent with the applicable forest plan.

(c) AVAILABILITY OF CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION.—On and after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary concerned may use the categorical exclusion established under subsection (a) in accordance with this section.

(d) PROJECT GOALS.—To the maximum extent practicable, the Secretary concerned shall design a forest management activity under this section to meet early successional forest goals in such a manner so as to maximize production and regeneration of priority species, as identified in the forest plan and consistent with the capability of the activity site.

(e) ACREAGE LIMITATIONS.—A forest management activity covered by the categorical exclusion established under subsection (a) may not contain treatment units exceeding a total of 6,000 acres.

SEC. 8314. CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION FOR HAZARD TREES.

(a) CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION ESTABLISHED.—Forest management activities carried out by the Secretary concerned to remove hazard trees for purposes of the protection of public health or safety, water supply, or public infrastructure are a category of actions hereby designated as being categorically excluded from the preparation of an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement under section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332).

(b) AVAILABILITY OF CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION.—On and after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary concerned may use the categorical exclusion established under subsection (a) in accordance with this section.

SEC. 8315. CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION TO IMPROVE OR RESTORE NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM LANDS OR PUBLIC LAND OR REDUCE THE RISK OF WILDFIRE.

(a) CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION ESTABLISHED.—Forest management activities described in subsection (b) are a category of actions hereby designated as being categorically excluded from the preparation of an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement under section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332).

(b) FOREST MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES DESIGNATED FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION.—

(1) DESIGNATION.—The category of forest management activities designated under this section for a categorical exclusion are forest management activities described in paragraph (2) that are carried out by the Secretary concerned on National Forest System lands or public lands where the primary purpose of such activity is to improve or restore such lands or reduce the risk of wildfire on those lands.

(2) ACTIVITIES AUTHORIZED.—The following forest management activities may be carried out pursuant to the categorical exclusion established under subsection (a):

(A) Removal of juniper trees, medusahead rye, conifer trees, piñon pine trees, cheatgrass, and other noxious or invasive weeds specified on Federal or State noxious weeds lists through late-season livestock grazing, targeted livestock grazing, prescribed burns, and mechanical treatments.

(B) Performance of hazardous fuels management.

(C) Creation of fuel and fire breaks.

(D) Modification of existing fences in order to distribute livestock and help improve wildlife habitat.

(E) Stream restoration and erosion control, including the installation of erosion control devices.

(F) Construction of new and maintenance of permanent infrastructure, including stock ponds, water catchments, and water spring boxes used to benefit livestock and improve wildlife habitat.

(G) Performance of soil treatments, native and non-native seeding, and planting of and transplanting sagebrush, grass, forb, shrub, and other species.

(H) Use of herbicides, so long as the Secretary concerned determines that the activity is otherwise conducted consistently with agency procedures, including any forest plan applicable to the area covered by the activity.

(c) AVAILABILITY OF CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION.—On and after the date of the enactment

of this Act, the Secretary concerned may use the categorical exclusion established under subsection (a) in accordance with this section.

(d) ACREAGE LIMITATIONS.—A forest management activity covered by the categorical exclusion established under subsection (a) may not contain treatment units exceeding a total of 6,000 acres.

(e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) HAZARDOUS FUELS MANAGEMENT.—The term ''hazardous fuels management'' means any vegetation management activities that reduce the risk of wildfire.

(2) LATE-SEASON GRAZING.—The term ''late-season grazing'' means grazing activities that occur after both the invasive species and native perennial species have completed their current-year annual growth cycle until new plant growth begins to appear in the following year.

(3) TARGETED LIVESTOCK GRAZING.—The term ''targeted livestock grazing'' means grazing used for purposes of hazardous fuels management.

SEC. 8316. CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION FOR FOREST RESTORATION.

(a) CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION ESTABLISHED.—Forest management activities described in subsection (b) are a category of actions hereby designated as being categorically excluded from the preparation of an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement under section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332).

(b) FOREST MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES DESIGNATED FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION.—

(1) DESIGNATION.—The category of forest management activities designated under this section for categorical exclusion are forest management activities described in paragraph (2) that are carried out by the Secretary concerned on National Forest System lands or public lands where the primary purpose of such activity is—

(A) to improve forest health and resiliency to disturbances;

(B) to reduce hazardous fuels; or

(C) to improve wildlife and aquatic habitat.

(2) ACTIVITIES AUTHORIZED.—The following forest management activities may be carried out pursuant the categorical exclusion established under subsection (a):

(A) Timber harvests, including commercial and pre-commercial timber harvest, salvage harvest, and regeneration harvest.

(B) Hazardous fuels reduction.

(C) Prescribed burning.

(D) Improvement or establishment of wildlife and aquatic habitat.

(E) Stream restoration and erosion control.

(F) Road and trail decommissioning.

(c) AVAILABILITY OF CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION.—On and after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary concerned may use the categorical exclusion established under subsection (a) in accordance with this section.

(d) ACREAGE LIMITATIONS.—A forest management activity covered by the categorical exclusion established under subsection (a) may not contain treatment units exceeding a total of 6,000 acres.

(e) LIMITATIONS ON ROAD BUILDING.—

(1) PERMANENT ROADS.—A forest management activity covered by the categorical exclusion established by subsection (a) may include—

(A) the construction of permanent roads not to exceed 3 miles; and

(B) the maintenance and reconstruction of existing permanent roads and trails, including the relocation of segments of existing roads and trails to address resource impacts.

(2) TEMPORARY ROADS.—Any temporary road constructed for a forest management activity covered by the categorical exclusion established by subsection (a) shall be decommissioned not later than 3 years after the date on which the project is completed.

SEC. 8317. CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION FOR INFRASTRUCTURE FOREST MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES.

(a) CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION ESTABLISHED.—Forest management activities described in subsection (b) are a category of actions hereby designated as being categorically excluded from the preparation of an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement under section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332).

(b) FOREST MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES DESIGNATED FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION.—The category of forest management activities designated under this section for categorical exclusion are forest management activities carried out by the Secretary of Agriculture on National Forest System lands where the primary purpose of such activity is—

(1) constructing, reconstructing, or decommissioning National Forest System roads not exceeding 3 miles;

(2) adding an existing road to the forest transportation system;

(3) reclassifying a National Forest System road at a different maintenance level;

(4) reconstructing, rehabilitating, or decommissioning bridges;

(5) removing dams; or

(6) maintaining facilities through the use of pesticides as authorized by applicable Federal and State law and as applied in accordance with label instructions.

(c) AVAILABILITY OF CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION.—On and after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture may use the categorical exclusion established under subsection (a) in accordance with this section.

SEC. 8318. CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION FOR DEVELOPED RECREATION SITES.

(a) CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION ESTABLISHED.—Forest management activities described in subsection (b) are a category of actions hereby designated as being categorically excluded from the preparation of an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement under section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332).

(b) FOREST MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES DESIGNATED FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION.—

(1) DESIGNATION.—The category of forest management activities designated under this section for a categorical exclusion are forest management activities described in paragraph (2) carried out by the Secretary of Agriculture on National Forest System lands where the primary purpose of such activity is to operate, maintain, modify, reconstruct, or decommission existing developed recreation sites.

(2) ACTIVITIES AUTHORIZED.—The following forest management activities may be carried out pursuant to the categorical exclusion under subsection (a):

(A) Constructing, modifying, or reconstructing toilet or shower facilities.

(B) Constructing, modifying, or reconstructing fishing piers, wildlife viewing platforms, docks, or other constructed recreation sites or facilities.

(C) Constructing, reconstructing, or maintaining, parking areas, National Forest System roads, or National Forest System trails within or connecting to recreation sites, including paving and road and trail rerouting, except that—

(i) permanent roads constructed under this section may not exceed 3 miles; and

(ii) temporary roads constructed for projects covered by this section shall be decommissioned within 3 years of completion of the project.

(D) Modifying or reconstructing existing water or waste disposal systems.

(E) Constructing, modifying, or reconstructing single or group use sites.

(F) Decommissioning recreation facilities or portions of recreation facilities.

(G) Decommissioning National Forest System roads or National Forest System trails not exceeding 3 miles within or connecting to developed recreation sites.

(H) Constructing, modifying, or reconstructing boat landings.

(I) Reconstructing existing ski lifts.

(K) Modifying or reconstructing a recreation lodging rental.

(c) AVAILABILITY OF CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION.—On and after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture may use the categorical exclusion established under subsection (a) in accordance with this section.

SEC. 8319. CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SITES.

(a) CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION ESTABLISHED.—Forest management activities described in subsection (b) are a category of actions hereby designated as being categorically excluded from the preparation of an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement under section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332).

(b) FOREST MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES DESIGNATED FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION.—The category of forest management activities designated under this section for a categorical exclusion are forest management activities carried out by the Secretary of Agriculture on National Forest System lands where the primary purpose of such activity is to construct, reconstruct, maintain, decommission, relocate, or dispose of an administrative site.

(c) AVAILABILITY OF CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION.—On and after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture may use the categorical exclusion established under subsection (a) in accordance with this section.

(d) LIMITATIONS.—

(1) PERMANENT ROADS.—A project covered by the categorical exclusion established by subsection (a) may include—

(A) the construction of permanent roads not to exceed 3 miles; and

(B) the maintenance and reconstruction of existing permanent roads and trails, including the relocation of segments of existing roads and trails to address resource impacts.

(2) TEMPORARY ROADS.—Any temporary road constructed for a project covered by the categorical exclusion established by subsection (a) shall be decommissioned not later than 3 years after the date on which the project is completed.

(3) PESTICIDES.—Pesticides may only be used to carry out a project covered by the categorical exclusion established by subsection (a) as authorized by applicable Federal and State law and as applied in accordance with label instructions.

(e) DEFINITION OF ADMINISTRATIVE SITE.—In this section, the term ''administrative site'' has the meaning given the term in section 502(1) of the Forest Service Facility Realignment and Enhancement Act of 2005 (16 U.S.C. 580d note).

SEC. 8320. CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION FOR SPECIAL USE AUTHORIZATIONS.

(a) CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION ESTABLISHED.—Forest management activities described in subsection (b) are a category of actions hereby designated as being categorically excluded from the preparation of an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement under section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332).

(b) FOREST MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES DESIGNATED FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION.—The category of forest management activities designated under this section for a categorical exclusion are forest management activities carried out by the Secretary of Agriculture on National Forest System lands where the primary purpose of such activity is:

(1) Issuance of a new special use authorization for an existing or expired special use authorization, without any substantial change in the scope and scale of the authorized use and occupancy when—

(A) the issuance is a purely ministerial action to account for administrative changes, such as a change in ownership or expiration of the current authorization; and

(B) the applicant or holder is in compliance with the terms and conditions of the existing or expired special use authorization.

(2) Modification, removal, repair, maintenance, reconstruction, or replacement of a facility or improvement for an existing special use authorization.

(3) Issuance of a new special use authorization or amendment to an existing special use authorization for activities that will occur on existing roads, trails, facilities, or areas approved for use in a land management plan or other documented decision.

(4) Approval, modification, or continuation of minor, short-term (5 years or less) special uses of National Forest System lands or public lands.

(5) Issuance of a special use authorization for an existing unauthorized use or occupancy that has not been deemed in trespass where no new ground disturbance is proposed.

(6) Approval or modification of minor special uses of National Forest System lands or public lands that require less than 20 contiguous acres.

(7) Approval of vegetative management plans, and vegetation management activities in accordance with an approved vegetation management plan, under a special use authorization for an electric transmission and distribution facility right-of-way.

(c) AVAILABILITY OF EXCLUSION.—On and after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture may use the categorical exclusion established under subsection (a) in accordance with this section.

(d) DOCUMENT REQUIREMENTS.—The Secretary of Agriculture shall not be required to prepare a project file or decision memorandum to categorically exclude a forest management activity described under paragraphs (1) through (4) of subsection (b).

SEC. 8321. CLARIFICATION OF EXISTING CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION AUTHORITY RELATED TO INSECT AND DISEASE INFESTATION.

Section 603(c)(2)(B) of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6591b(c)(2)(B)) is amended by striking ''Fire Regime Groups I, II, or III'' and inserting ''Fire Regime I, Fire Regime II, Fire Regime III, Fire Regime IV, or Fire Regime V''.

PART III—MISCELLANEOUS FOREST MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

SEC. 8331. GOOD NEIGHBOR AGREEMENTS.

Section 8206 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (16 U.S.C. 2113a) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (1)(B), by striking ''Secretary or a Governor'' and inserting ''Secretary, Governor, or Indian Tribe'';

(B) in paragraph (4) by striking ''Secretary and a Governor'' and inserting ''Secretary and either a Governor or an Indian Tribe'';

(C) by redesignating paragraphs (6), (7), and (8) as paragraphs (7), (8), and (9), respectively; and

(D) by inserting after paragraph (5) the following new paragraph:

''(6) INDIAN TRIBE.—The term 'Indian Tribe' has the meaning given the term in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5304));''; and

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (1)(A), by inserting ''or an Indian Tribe'' after ''Governor''; and

(B) in paragraph (3), by inserting ''or an Indian Tribe'' after ''Governor''.

SEC. 8332. PROMOTING CROSS-BOUNDARY WILDFIRE MITIGATION.

Section 103 of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6513) is amended—

(1) in subsection (d), by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(3) CROSS-BOUNDARY CONSIDERATIONS.—For any fiscal year for which the amount appropriated to the Secretary for hazardous fuels reduction is in excess of $300,000,000, the Secretary—

''(A) is encouraged to use the excess amounts for hazardous fuels reduction projects that incorporate cross-boundary treatments of landscapes on Federal land and non-Federal land; and

''(B) may use the excess amounts to support authorized hazardous fuels reduction projects on non-Federal lands through grants to State Foresters, or equivalent State officials, in accordance with subsection (e) in an amount equal to the greater of—

''(i) 20 percent of the excess amount; and

''(ii) $20,000,000.''; and

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

''(e) CROSS-BOUNDARY FUELS REDUCTION PROJECTS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—To the maximum extent practicable, the Secretary shall use the excess funds described in subsection (d)(3) to support hazardous fuels reduction projects that incorporate treatments for hazardous fuels reduction in landscapes across ownership boundaries on Federal, State, county, or Tribal land, private land, and other non-Federal land, particularly in areas identified as priorities in applicable State-wide forest resource assessments or strategies under section 2A(a) of the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978 (16 U.S.C. 2101a(a)), as mutually agreed to by the State Forester and the Regional Forester.

''(2) LAND TREATMENTS.—To conduct and fund treatments for projects that include Federal and non-Federal land, the Secretary may—

''(A) use the authorities of the Secretary relating to cooperation and technical and financial assistance, including the good neighbor authority under—

''(i) section 8206 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (16 U.S.C. 2113a); and

''(ii) section 331 of the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2001 (16 U.S.C. 1011 note; Public Law 106–291); and

''(B) allocate excess funds under subsection (d)(3) for projects carried out pursuant to section 8206 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (16 U.S.C. 2113a).

''(3) COOPERATION.—In carrying out this subsection, the State Forester, in consultation with the Secretary (or a designee)—

''(A) shall consult with the owners of State, county, Tribal, and private land and other non-Federal land with respect to hazardous fuels reduction projects; and

''(B) shall not implement any project on non-Federal land without the consent of the owner of the non-Federal land.

''(4) EXISTING LAWS.—Regardless of the individual or entity implementing a project on non-Federal land under this subsection, only the laws and regulations that apply to non-Federal land shall be applicable with respect to the project.''.

SEC. 8333. REGULATIONS REGARDING DESIGNATION OF DEAD OR DYING TREES OF CERTAIN TREE SPECIES ON NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM LANDS IN CALIFORNIA AS EXEMPT FROM PROHIBITION ON EXPORT OF UNPROCESSED TIMBER ORIGINATING FROM FEDERAL LANDS.

(a) ISSUANCE OF REGULATIONS.—Consistent with the rulemaking procedures specified in paragraph (2) of subsection (b) of section 489 of the Forest Resources Conservation and Shortage Relief Act of 1990 (16 U.S.C. 620a), the Secretary of Agriculture shall make a determination under paragraph (1) of such subsection that unprocessed timber derived from dead or dying trees of a covered tree species originating on National Forest System lands in the State of California are surplus to domestic manufacturing needs and therefore exempt from the export prohibition contained in subsection (a) of such section.

(b) ELIMINATION OF ADVERSE EFFECTS.—In making the determination under subsection (a) and in implementing any regulations issued under such subsection, the Secretary of Agriculture shall—

(1) consult with representatives of sawmills in the State of California and other interested persons; and

(2) make reasonable efforts to avoid adversely impacting the domestic sawmill industry in the State of California.

(c) SPECIAL CONTRACT PROVISIONS.—The Secretary of Agriculture may adjust contract provisions for Forest Service contracts in region 5 of the National Forest System as the Secretary considers appropriate to ensure successful implementation of, and compliance with, the regulations issued under subsection (a).

(d) RELATION TO LIMITATIONS ON TIMBER SUBSTITUTION.—Section 490 of the Forest Resources Conservation and Shortage Relief Act of 1990 (16 U.S.C. 620b) shall not apply to unprocessed timber designated as surplus pursuant to the regulations issued under subsection (a).

(e) ADDITIONAL STAFF FOR IMPLEMENTATION.—Using funds otherwise available to the Forest Service for management, protection, improvement, and utilization of the National Forest System, the Secretary of Agriculture may hire additional Forest Service employees to implement the regulations issued under subsection (a).

(f) DURATION OF REGULATIONS; PERIODIC REVIEW.—The regulations issued under subsection (a) shall remain in effect for a 10-year period beginning on the date of the issuance of the regulations, except that the continued need for the regulations shall be subject to the periodic review required by the second sentence of section 489(b)(2) of the Forest Resources Conservation and Shortage Relief Act of 1990 (16 U.S.C. 620a(b)(2)).

(g) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) COVERED TREE SPECIES.—The term ''covered tree species'' means the following pine species:

(A) Ponderosa pine (Pinus ponderosa).

(B) Sugar pine (Pinus lambertiana).

(C) Jeffrey pine (Pinus jefferyi).

(D) Lodgepole pine (Pinus contorta).

(2) DIED OR DYING.—The term ''died or dying'', with respect to a covered tree species, shall be determined in a manner consistent with applicable Forest Service standards.

Subtitle D—Tribal Forestry Participation and Protection

SEC. 8401. PROTECTION OF TRIBAL FOREST ASSETS THROUGH USE OF STEWARDSHIP END RESULT CONTRACTING AND OTHER AUTHORITIES.

(a) PROMPT CONSIDERATION OF TRIBAL REQUESTS.—Section 2(b) of the Tribal Forest Protection Act of 2004 (25 U.S.C. 3115a(b)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking ''Not later than 120 days after the date on which an Indian tribe submits to the Secretary'' and inserting ''In response to the submission by an Indian Tribe of''; and

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

''(4) TIME PERIODS FOR CONSIDERATION.—

''(A) INITIAL RESPONSE.—Not later than 120 days after the date on which the Secretary receives a Tribal request under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall provide an initial response to the Indian Tribe regarding—

''(i) whether the request may meet the selection criteria described in subsection (c); and

''(ii) the likelihood of the Secretary entering into an agreement or contract with the Indian Tribe under paragraph (2) for activities described in paragraph (3).

''(B) NOTICE OF DENIAL.—Notice under subsection (d) of the denial of a Tribal request under paragraph (1) shall be provided not later than 1 year after the date on which the Secretary received the request.

''(C) COMPLETION.—Not later than 2 years after the date on which the Secretary receives a Tribal request under paragraph (1), other than a Tribal request denied under subsection (d), the Secretary shall—

''(i) complete all environmental reviews necessary in connection with the agreement or contract and proposed activities under the agreement or contract; and

''(ii) enter into the agreement or contract with the Indian Tribe under paragraph (2).''.

(b) CONFORMING AND TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS.—Section 2 of the Tribal Forest Protection Act of 2004 (25 U.S.C. 3115a) is amended—

(1) in subsections (b)(1) and (f)(1), by striking ''section 347 of the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1999 (16 U.S.C. 2104 note; Public Law 105–277) (as amended by section 323 of the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2003 (117 Stat. 275))'' and inserting ''section 604 of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6591c)''; and

(2) in subsection (d), by striking ''subsection (b)(1), the Secretary may'' and inserting ''paragraphs (1) and (4)(B) of subsection (b), the Secretary shall''.

SEC. 8402. TRIBAL FOREST MANAGEMENT DEMONSTRATION PROJECT.

The Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture may carry out demonstration projects by which federally recognized Indian Tribes or Tribal organizations may contract to perform administrative, management, and other functions of programs of the Tribal Forest Protection Act of 2004 (25 U.S.C. 3115a et seq.) through contracts entered into under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5304 et seq.).

Subtitle E—Other Matters

SEC. 8501. CLARIFICATION OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR WOOD BUILDING CONSTRUCTION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall conduct performance-driven research and development, education, and technical assistance for the purpose of facilitating the use of innovative wood products in wood building construction in the United States.

(b) ACTIVITIES.—In carrying out subsection (a), the Secretary shall—

(1) after receipt of input and guidance from, and collaboration with, the wood products industry, conservation organizations, and institutions of higher education, conduct research and development, education, and technical assistance that meets measurable performance goals for the achievement of the priorities described in subsection (c); and

(2) after coordination and collaboration with the wood products industry and conservation organizations, make competitive grants to institutions of higher education to conduct research and development, education, and technical assistance that meets measurable performance goals for the achievement of the priorities described in subsection (c).

(c) PRIORITIES.—The research and development, education, and technical assistance conducted under subsection (a) shall give priority to—

(1) ways to improve the commercialization of innovative wood products;

(2) analyzing the safety of tall wood building materials;

(3) calculations by the Secretary of the life cycle environmental footprint, from extraction of raw materials through the manufacturing process, of tall wood building construction;

(4) analyzing methods to reduce the life cycle environmental footprint of tall wood building construction;

(5) analyzing the potential implications of the use of innovative wood products in building construction on wildlife; and

(6) one or more other research areas identified by the Secretary, in consultation with conservation organizations, institutions of higher education, and the wood products industry.

(d) TIMEFRAME.—To the maximum extent practicable, the measurable performance goals for the research and development, education, and technical assistance conducted under subsection (a) shall be achievable within a 5-year period.

(e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) INNOVATIVE WOOD PRODUCT.—The term ''innovative wood product'' means a type of building component or system that uses large panelized wood construction, including mass timber.

(2) MASS TIMBER.—The term ''mass timber'' includes—

(A) cross-laminated timber;

(B) nail-laminated timber;

(C) glue-laminated timber;

(D) laminated strand lumber; and

(E) laminated veneer lumber.

(3) SECRETARY.—The term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Research and Development deputy area and the State and Private Forestry deputy area of the Forest Service.

(4) TALL WOOD BUILDING.—The term ''tall wood building'' means a building designed to be—

(A) constructed with mass timber; and

(B) more than 85 feet in height.

SEC. 8502. UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE RIGHTS-OF-WAY VEGETATION MANAGEMENT PILOT PROGRAM.

(a) PILOT PROGRAM REQUIRED.—To encourage owners or operators of rights-of-way on National Forest System land to partner with the Forest Service to voluntarily perform vegetation management on a proactive basis to better protect utility infrastructure from potential passing wildfires, the Secretary shall conduct a limited, voluntary pilot program, in the manner described in this section, to permit vegetation management projects on National Forest System land adjacent to or near such rights-of-way.

(b) ELIGIBLE PARTICIPANTS.—A participant in the pilot program must have a right-of-way on National Forest System land. In selecting participants, the Secretary shall give priority to holders of a right-of-way who have worked with Forest Service fire scientists and used technologies, such as Light Detection and Ranging surveys, to improve utility infrastructure protection prescriptions.

(c) PROJECT ELEMENTS.—A vegetation management project under the pilot program involves limited and selective vegetation management activities, which—

(1) shall create the least amount of disturbance reasonably necessary to protect utility infrastructure from passing wildfires based on applicable models, including Forest Service fuel models;

(2) may include thinning, fuel reduction, creation and treatment of shaded fuel breaks, and other measures as appropriate;

(3) shall only take place adjacent to the participant's right-of-way or within 75 feet of the participant's right-of-way;

(4) shall not take place in any designated wilderness area, wilderness study area, or inventoried roadless area; and

(5) shall be subject to approval by the Forest Service in accordance with this section.

(d) PROJECT COSTS.—A participant in the pilot program shall be responsible for all costs, as determined by the Secretary, incurred in participating in the pilot program, unless the Secretary determines that it is in the public interest for the Forest Service to contribute funds for a vegetation management project conducted under the pilot program.

(e) LIABILITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Participation in the pilot program does not affect any existing legal obligations or liability standards that—

(A) arise under the right-of-way for activities in the right-of-way; or

(B) apply to fires resulting from causes other than activities conducted pursuant to an approved vegetation management project.

(2) PROJECT WORK.—A participant shall not be liable to the United States for damage proximately caused by activities conducted pursuant to an approved vegetation management project unless—

(A) such activities were carried out in a manner that was grossly negligent or that violated criminal law; or

(B) the damage was caused by the failure of the participant to comply with specific safety requirements expressly imposed by the Forest Service as a condition of participating in the pilot program.

(f) IMPLEMENTATION.—The Secretary shall utilize existing laws and regulations in the conduct of the pilot program and, in order to implement the pilot program in an efficient and expeditious manner, may waive or modify specific provisions of the Federal Acquisition Regulation, including modifications to allow for formation of contracts or agreements on a noncompetitive basis.

(g) TREATMENT OF PROCEEDS.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary may—

(1) retain any funds provided to the Forest Service by a participant in the pilot program; and

(2) use such funds, in such amounts as may be appropriated, in the conduct of the pilot program.

(h) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM LAND.—The term ''National Forest System land'' means land within the National Forest System, as defined in section 11(a) of the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. 1609(a)) exclusive of the National Grasslands and land utilization projects designated as National Grasslands administered pursuant to the Act of July 22, 1937 (7 U.S.C. 1010–1012).

(2) PASSING WILDFIRE.—The term ''passing wildfire'' means a wildfire that originates outside the right-of-way.

(3) RIGHT-OF-WAY.—The term ''right-of-way'' means a special use authorization issued by the Forest Service allowing the placement of utility infrastructure.

(4) UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE.—The term ''utility infrastructure'' means electric transmission lines, natural gas infrastructure, or related structures.

(i) DURATION.—The authority to conduct the pilot program, and any vegetation management project under the pilot program, expires December 21, 2027.

(j) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than December 31, 2019, and every two years thereafter, the Secretary shall issue a report to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate, the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate, the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives, and the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives on the status of the program and any projects established under this section.

SEC. 8503. REVISION OF EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES REGULATIONS.

(a) DETERMINATIONS OF EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES.—In determining whether extraordinary circumstances related to a proposed action preclude use of a categorical exclusion, the Forest Service shall not be required to—

(1) consider whether a proposed action is within a potential wilderness area;

(2) consider whether a proposed action affects a Forest Service sensitive species;

(3) conduct an analysis under section 220.4(f) of title 36, Code of Federal Regulations, of the proposed action's cumulative impact (as the term is defined in section 1508.7 of title 40, Code of Federal Regulations);

(4) consider a determination under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1536) that a proposed action may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect, threatened, endangered, or candidate species, or designated critical habitats; or

(5) consider a determination under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1536) that a proposed action may affect, and is likely to adversely affect threatened, endangered, candidate species, or designated critical habitat if the agency is in compliance with the applicable provisions of the biological opinion.

(b) PROPOSED RULEMAKING.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture shall publish a notice of proposed rulemaking to revise section 220.6(b) of title 36, Code of Federal Regulations to conform such section with subsection (a).

(c) ADDITIONAL REVISION.—As part of the proposed rulemaking described in subsection (b), the Secretary of Agriculture shall revise section 220.5(a)(2) of title 36, Code of Federal Regulations, to provide that the Forest Service shall not be required to consider proposals that would substantially alter a potential wilderness area as a class of actions normally requiring environmental impact statements.

(d) ADDITIONAL ACTIONS.—Not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture shall issue final regulations to carry out the revisions described in subsections (b) and (c).

SEC. 8504. NO LOSS OF FUNDS FOR WILDFIRE SUPPRESSION.

Nothing in this title or the amendments made by this title may be construed to limit from the availability of funds or other resources for wildfire suppression.

SEC. 8505. TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS.

(a) WILDFIRE SUPPRESSION FUNDING AND FOREST MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES ACT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Wildfire Suppression Funding and Forest Management Activities Act (Public Law 115–141) is amended—

(A) in section 102(a)(2), by striking ''the date of enactment'' and inserting ''the date of the enactment''; and

(B) in section 401(a)(1), by inserting ''of 2000'' after ''Self-Determination Act''.

(2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by paragraph (1) shall take effect as if enacted as part of the Wildfire Suppression Funding and Forest Management Activities Act (Public Law 115–141).

(b) AGRICULTURAL ACT OF 2014.—Section 8206(a) of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (16 U.S.C. 2113a(a)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (3)(B)(i)(II), by striking ''Good Neighbor Authority Improvement Act'' and inserting ''Wildfire Suppression Funding and Forest Management Activities Act''; and

(2) in paragraph (7), as redesignated by section 8331, by striking ''Good Neighbor Authority Improvement Act'' and inserting ''Wildfire Suppression Funding and Forest Management Activities Act''.

TITLE IX—HORTICULTURE

Subtitle A—Horticulture Marketing and Information

SEC. 9001. SPECIALTY CROPS MARKET NEWS ALLOCATION.

Section 10107(b) of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 1622b(b)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 9002. FARMERS' MARKET AND LOCAL FOOD PROMOTION PROGRAM.

Section 6(g) of the Farmer-to-Consumer Direct Marketing Act of 1976 (7 U.S.C. 3005(g)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (3), by striking ''this section'' and all that follows through ''2018.'' and inserting the following: ''this section—

''(A) $10,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2014 through 2018; and

''(B) $30,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023.'';

(2) by striking paragraph (2); and

(3) by redesignating paragraphs (3), (4), (5), and (6) as paragraphs (2), (3), (4), and (5), respectively.

SEC. 9003. FOOD SAFETY EDUCATION INITIATIVES.

Section 10105(c) of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 7655a(c)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 9004. SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANTS.

Section 101 of the Specialty Crops Competitiveness Act of 2004 (7 U.S.C. 1621 note; Public Law 108–465) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''; and

(B) by striking ''agriculture solely to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops.'' and inserting the following: ''agriculture to—

''(1) enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops;

''(2) leverage efforts to market and promote specialty crops;

''(3) assist producers with research and development;

''(4) expand availability and access to specialty crops;

''(5) address local, regional, and national challenges confronting specialty crop producers; and

''(6) other priorities as determined by the Secretary in consultation with relevant State departments of agriculture.'';

(2) in subsection (k), by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(3) EVALUATION OF PERFORMANCE.—The Secretary shall enter into a cooperative agreement with relevant State departments of agriculture and specialty crop industry stakeholders that agree to—

''(A) develop, in consultation with the Secretary, performance measures to be used as the sole means for performing an evaluation under subparagraph (B); and

''(B) periodically evaluate the performance of the program established under this section.''; and

(3) in subsection (l)(2)(E), by striking ''fiscal year 2018'' and inserting ''each of fiscal years 2018 through 2023''.

SEC. 9005. AMENDMENTS TO THE PLANT VARIETY PROTECTION ACT.

(a) ASEXUALLY REPRODUCED DEFINED.—Section 41(a) of the Plant Variety Protection Act (7 U.S.C. 2401(a)) is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraphs (1), (2), (3), (4), (5), (6), (7), (8), and (9) as paragraphs (2), (3), (4), (5), (6), (7), (8), (9), and (10), respectively; and

(2) by inserting before paragraph (2), as so redesignated, the following new paragraph:

''(1) ASEXUALLY REPRODUCED.—The term 'asexually reproduced' means produced by a method of plant propagation using vegetative material (other than seed) from a single parent, including cuttings, grafting, tissue culture, and propagation by root division.''.

(b) RIGHT TO PLANT VARIETY PROTECTION; PLANT VARIETIES PROTECTABLE.—Section 42(a) of the Plant Variety Protection Act (7 U.S.C. 2402(a)) is amended by striking ''or tuber propagated'' and inserting '', tuber propagated, or asexually reproduced''.

(c) INFRINGEMENT OF PLANT VARIETY PROTECTION.—Section 111(a)(3) of the Plant Variety Protection Act (7 U.S.C. 2541(a)(3)) is amended by inserting ''or asexually'' after ''sexually''.

(d) FALSE MARKETING; CEASE AND DESIST ORDERS.—Section 128(a) of the Plant Variety Protection Act (7 U.S.C. 2568(a)) is amended, in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by inserting ''or asexually'' after ''sexually''.

SEC. 9006. ORGANIC PROGRAMS.

(a) ADDITIONAL ACCREDITATION AUTHORITY.—Section 2115 of the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 6514) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsection (c) as subsection (d); and

(2) by inserting after subsection (b) the following new subsection:

''(c) SATELLITE OFFICES AND OVERSEAS OPERATIONS.—The Secretary—

''(1) has oversight and approval authority with respect to a certifying agent accredited under this section who is operating as a certifying agent in a foreign country for the purpose of certifying a farm or handling operation in such foreign country as a certified organic farm or handling operation; and

''(2) shall require that each certifying agent that intends to operate in any foreign country as described in paragraph (1) is authorized by the Secretary to so operate on an annual basis.''.

(b) NATIONAL LIST OF APPROVED AND PROHIBITED SUBSTANCES FOR ORGANIC FARMING OR HANDLING OPERATIONS.—Section 2119(n) of the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 6518(n)) is amended to read as follows:

''(n) PETITIONS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Board shall establish procedures under which persons may petition the Board for the purpose of evaluating substances for inclusion on the National List.

''(2) EXPEDITED REVIEW.—The Secretary shall develop procedures under which the review of a petition referred to in paragraph (1) may be expedited if the petition seeks to include on the National List a postharvest handling substance that is related to food safety or a class of such substances.

''(3) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in paragraph (2) shall be construed as providing that section 2118(d) does not apply with respect to the inclusion of a substance on the National List pursuant to such paragraph.''.

(c) CERTAIN EMPLOYEES ELIGIBLE TO SERVE AS NATIONAL ORGANICS STANDARDS BOARD MEMBERS.—Section 2119(b) of the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 6518(b)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by inserting '', or employees of such individuals'' after ''operation'';

(2) in paragraph (2), by inserting '', or employees of such individuals'' after ''operation''; and

(3) in paragraph (3), by inserting '', or an employee of such individual'' after ''products''.

(d) NATIONAL ORGANIC STANDARDS BOARD CONSULTATION REQUIREMENTS.—Section 2119(l) of the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 6518(l)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2), by striking ''; and'' at the end and inserting a semicolon;

(2) in paragraph (3)—

(A) by striking ''and the evaluation of the technical advisory panel'' and inserting '', the evaluation of the technical advisory panel, and the determinations of the task force required under paragraph (4)''; and

(B) by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(4) in the case of a substance not included in the National List that the Commissioner of Food and Drugs has determined to be safe for use within the meaning of section 201(s) of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 321(s)) or the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency has determined there is a reasonable certainty that no harm will result from aggregate exposure to the pesticide chemical residue, including all anticipated dietary exposures and all other exposures for which there is reliable information, convene a task force to consult with the Commissioner or Administrator (or the designees thereof), as applicable, to determine if such substance should be included in the National List.''.

(e) RECORDKEEPING, INVESTIGATION, AND ENFORCEMENT.—

(1) COLLABORATIVE INVESTIGATIONS AND ENFORCEMENT.—Section 2120 of the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 6519) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(d) COLLABORATIVE INVESTIGATIONS AND ENFORCEMENT.—

''(1) INFORMATION SHARING DURING ACTIVE INVESTIGATION.—In carrying out this title, all parties to an active investigation (including certifying agents, State organic certification programs, and the national organic program) may share confidential business information with Federal and State government officers and employees and certifying agents involved in the investigation as necessary to fully investigate and enforce potential violations of this title.

''(2) ACCESS TO DATA DOCUMENTATION SYSTEMS.—The Secretary shall have access to available data from cross-border documentation systems administered by other Federal agencies, including—

''(A) the Automated Commercial Environment system of U.S. Customs and Border Protection; and

''(B) the Phytosanitary Certificate Issuance and Tracking system of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

''(3) ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION AND VERIFICATION.—The Secretary, acting through the Deputy Administrator of the national organic program under this title, has the authority, and shall grant an accredited certifying agent the authority, to require producers and handlers to provide additional documentation or verification before granting certification under section 2104, in the case of a known area of risk or when there is a specific area of concern, with respect to meeting the national standards for organic production established under section 2105, as determined by the Secretary or the certifying agent.''.

(2) MODIFICATION OF REGULATIONS ON EXCLUSIONS FROM CERTIFICATION.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture shall issue regulations to limit the type of operations that are excluded from certification under section 205.101 of title 7, Code of Federal Regulations (or a successor regulation).

(f) REPORTING REQUIREMENT.—Section 2122 of the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 6521) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(c) REPORTING REQUIREMENT.—Not later than March 1, 2019, and annually thereafter through March 1, 2023, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report describing national organic program activities with respect to all domestic and overseas investigations and compliance actions taken pursuant to this title during the preceding year.''.

(g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR NATIONAL ORGANIC PROGRAM.—Subsection (b) of section 2123 of the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 6522) is amended to read as follows:

''(b) NATIONAL ORGANIC PROGRAM.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, in order to carry out activities under the national organic program established under this title, there are authorized to be appropriated—

''(1) $15,000,000 for fiscal year 2018;

''(2) $16,500,000 for fiscal year 2019;

''(3) $18,000,000 for fiscal year 2020;

''(4) $20,000,000 for fiscal year 2021;

''(5) $22,000,000 for fiscal year 2022; and

''(6) $24,000,000 for fiscal year 2023.''.

(h) INTERNATIONAL TRADE TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS AND DATA COLLECTION.—Subsection (c) of section 2123 of the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 6522) is amended to read as follows:

''(c) MODERNIZATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS AND DATA COLLECTION.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall modernize international trade tracking and data collection systems of the national organic program.

''(2) ACTIVITIES.—In carrying out paragraph (1), the Secretary shall modernize trade and transaction certificates to ensure full traceability without unduly hindering trade, such as through an electronic trade document exchange system.

''(3) FUNDING.—Of the funds of the Commodity Credit Corporation, the Secretary shall make available $5,000,000 for fiscal year 2019 for the purposes of—

''(A) carrying out this subsection; and

''(B) maintaining the database and technology upgrades previously carried out under this subsection, as in effect on the day before the date of the enactment of the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018.

''(4) AVAILABILITY.—The amounts made available under paragraph (3) are in addition to any other funds made available for the purposes specified in such paragraph and shall remain available until expended.''.

(i) ORGANIC PRODUCTION AND MARKET DATA INITIATIVES.—Section 7407(d) of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (7 U.S.C. 5925c(d)) is amended—

(1) by striking paragraphs (1) and (2) and inserting the following new paragraph:

''(1) MANDATORY FUNDING FOR FISCAL YEAR 2019.—Of the funds of the Commodity Credit Corporation, the Secretary shall use to carry out this section $5,000,000 for fiscal year 2019, to remain available until expended.'';

(2) in paragraph (3)—

(A) by striking ''paragraphs (1) and (2)'' and inserting ''paragraph (1)''; and

(B) by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''; and

(3) by redesignating paragraph (3), as so amended, as paragraph (2).

Subtitle B—Regulatory Reform

PART I—STATE LEAD AGENCIES UNDER FEDERAL INSECTICIDE, FUNGICIDE, AND RODENTICIDE ACT

SEC. 9101. RECOGNITION AND ROLE OF STATE LEAD AGENCIES.

(a) STATE LEAD AGENCY DEFINED.—Section 2(aa) of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (7 U.S.C. 136(aa)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''(aa) STATE.—The term'' and inserting the following:

''(aa) STATE; STATE LEAD AGENCY.—

''(1) STATE.—The term''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(2) STATE LEAD AGENCY.—The term 'State lead agency' means a statewide department, agency, board, bureau, or other entity in a State that is authorized to regulate, in a manner consistent with section 24(a), the sale or use of any federally registered pesticide or device in such State.''.

(b) UNIFORM REGULATION OF PESTICIDES.—

(1) COOPERATION WITH AND ROLE OF STATE LEAD AGENCY.—Section 22(b) of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (7 U.S.C. 136t(b)) is amended by inserting before the period at the end the following: ''promulgated by the Administrator or, when authorized pursuant to a cooperative agreement entered into under section 23(a)(1), by a State lead agency for a State''.

(2) AUTHORITY TO ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN UNIFORM REGULATIONS.—Section 23(a)(1) of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (7 U.S.C. 136u(a)(1)) is amended by inserting after ''enforcement of this Act,'' the following: ''to authorize the State or Indian Tribe to establish and maintain uniform regulation of pesticides within the State or for the Indian Tribe,''.

(3) CONDITION ON MORE RESTRICTIVE REGULATION.—Section 24(a) of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (7 U.S.C. 136v(a)) is amended by striking ''A State may'' and inserting ''A State, but not a political subdivision of a State, may''.

(c) ROLE OF STATE LEAD AGENCIES IN PROMULGATION OF REGULATIONS.—Section 25(a)(2) of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (7 U.S.C. 136w(a)(2)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A)—

(A) in the first sentence, by inserting ''and each State lead agency'' after ''Agriculture'';

(B) by striking the second sentence and inserting the following: ''If the Secretary or any State lead agency comments in writing to the Administrator regarding any such regulation within 30 days after receiving the copy of the regulation, the Administrator shall publish in the Federal Register (with the proposed regulation) all such comments and the response of the Administrator to the comments.''; and

(C) in the third sentence, by inserting ''or any State lead agency'' after ''Secretary'';

(2) in subparagraph (B)—

(A) in the first sentence, by inserting ''and each State lead agency'' after ''Agriculture'';

(B) by striking the second sentence and inserting the following: ''If the Secretary or any State lead agency comments in writing to the Administrator regarding any such regulation within 15 days after receiving the copy of the regulation, the Administrator shall publish in the Federal Register (with the final regulation) the comments of the Secretary or State lead agency, if requested by the Secretary or State lead agency, and the response of the Administrator to the comments.''; and

(C) in the third sentence, by inserting ''or any State lead agency'' after ''Secretary''; and

(3) in subparagraph (C), by inserting before the period at the end the following: '', in consultation with the State lead agencies''.

PART II—PESTICIDE REGISTRATION AND USE

SEC. 9111. REGISTRATION OF PESTICIDES.

(a) APPROVAL OF REGISTRATION.—Section 3(c)(5) of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (7 U.S.C. 136a(c)(5)) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subparagraphs (A) through (D) as clauses (i) through (iv), respectively and moving the margins of such clauses (as so redesignated) 2 ems to the right;

(2) by striking ''REGISTRATION.—The Administrator'' and inserting the following: ''REGISTRATION.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator;'';

(3) in clause (iii), as so redesignated, by striking ''; and'' at the end and inserting a semicolon;

(4) in clause (iv), as so redesignated, by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and'';

(5) in the matter following clause (iv), as so redesignated, by striking ''The Administrator shall not make any lack'' and all that follows through ''for use of the pesticide in such State.'';

(6) in subparagraph (A), as amended, by adding at the end the following new clause:

''(v) when used in accordance with widespread and commonly recognized practice it is not likely to jeopardize the survival of a federally listed threatened or endangered species or directly or indirectly alter, in a manner that is likely to appreciably diminish its value, critical habitat for both the survival and recovery of such species.''; and

(7) by adding at the end the following new subparagraphs:

''(B) PRINCIPLES TO BE APPLIED TO CERTAIN DETERMINATIONS.—In determining whether the condition specified in subparagraph (A)(v) is met, the Administrator shall take into account the best scientific and commercial information and data available, and shall consider all directions for use and restrictions on use specified by the registration. In making such determination, the Administrator shall use an economical and effective screening process that includes higher-tiered probabilistic ecological risk assessments, as appropriate. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Administrator shall not be required to consult or otherwise communicate with the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Commerce except to the extent specified in subparagraphs (C) and (D).

''(C) SPECIES INFORMATION AND DATA.—

''(i) REQUEST.—Not later than 30 days after the Administrator begins any determination under subparagraph (A)(v) with respect to the registration of a pesticide, the Administrator shall request that the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Commerce transmit, with respect to any federally listed threatened and endangered species involved in such determination, the Secretaries' best available and authoritative information and data on—

''(I) the location, life history, habitat needs, distribution, threats, population trends and conservation needs of such species; and

''(II) relevant physical and biological features of designated critical habitat for such species.

''(ii) TRANSMISSION OF DATA.—After receiving a request under clause (i), the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Commerce shall transmit the information described in such clause to the Administrator on a timely basis, unless the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Commerce have made such information available through a web-based platform that is updated on at least a quarterly basis.

''(iii) FAILURE TO TRANSMIT DATA.—The failure of the Secretary of the Interior or the Secretary of Commerce to provide information to the Administrator under clause (ii) shall not constitute grounds for extending any deadline for action under section 33(f).

''(D) CONSULTATION.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—At the request of an applicant, the Administrator shall request consultation with the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Commerce.

''(ii) REQUIREMENTS.—With respect to a consultation under this subparagraph, the Administrator and the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Commerce shall comply with subpart D of part 402 of title 50, Code of Federal Regulations (commonly known as the Joint Counterpart Endangered Species Act Section 7 Consultation), or successor regulations.

''(E) FAILURE TO CONSULT.—

''(i) NOT ACTIONABLE.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, beginning on the date of the enactment of this subparagraph, the failure of the Administrator to consult with the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Commerce, except as provided by this section, is not actionable in any Federal court.

''(ii) REMEDY.—In any action pending in Federal court on the date of the enactment of this subparagraph or any action brought in Federal court after such date, with respect to the Administrator's failure to consult with the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Commerce, the sole and exclusive remedy for any such action, other than as otherwise specified in this Act, shall be scheduling the determinations required by section 3(c)(5)(E) for an active ingredient consistent with the periodic review of registrations established by this section.

''(F) ESSENTIALITY AND EFFICACY.—The Administrator shall not make any lack of essentiality a criterion for denying registration of any pesticide. Where two pesticides meet the requirements of this paragraph, one should not be registered in preference to the other. In considering an application for the registration of a pesticide, the Administrator may waive data requirements pertaining to efficacy, in which event the Administrator may register the pesticide without determining that the pesticide's composition is such as to warrant proposed claims of efficacy. If a pesticide is found to be efficacious by any State under section 24(c), a presumption is established that the Administrator shall waive data requirements pertaining to efficacy for use of the pesticide in such State.''.

(b) REGISTRATION UNDER SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES.—Section 3(c)(7) of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (7 U.S.C. 136a(c)(7)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A)—

(A) by inserting ''and when used in accordance with widespread and commonly recognized practice, it is not likely to jeopardize the survival of a federally listed threatened or endangered species or appreciably diminish the value of critical habitat for both the survival and recovery of the listed species,'' after ''or differ only in ways that would not significantly increase the risk of unreasonable adverse effects on the environment,''; and

(B) by inserting ''and it is not likely to jeopardize the survival of a federally listed threatened or endangered species or appreciably diminish the value of critical habitat for both the survival and recovery of the listed species'' before ''. An applicant seeking conditional registration''; and

(2) in subparagraph (B), by inserting ''and it is not likely to jeopardize the survival of a federally listed threatened or endangered species or directly or indirectly appreciably diminish the value of critical habitat for both the survival and recovery of the listed species'' before ''. Notwithstanding the foregoing provisions''.

(c) REGISTRATION REVIEW.—Section 3(g)(1)(A) of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (7 U.S.C. 136a(g)(1)(A)) is amended by adding at the end the following new clause:

''(vi) ENSURING PROTECTION OF SPECIES AND HABITAT.—The Administrator shall complete the determination required under subsection (c)(5)(A)(v) for an active ingredient consistent with the periodic review of registrations under clauses (ii) and (iii) in accordance with the following schedule:

''(I) With respect to any active ingredient first registered on or before October 1, 2007, not later than October 1, 2026.

''(II) With respect to any active ingredient first registered between October 1, 2007, and the day before the date of the enactment of this clause, not later than October 1, 2033.

''(III) With respect to any active ingredient first registered on or after the date of the enactment of this clause, not later than 48 months after the effective date of registration.''.

SEC. 9112. EXPERIMENTAL USE PERMITS.

Section 5(a) of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (7 U.S.C. 136c(a)) is amended by inserting ''and that the issuance of such a permit is not likely to jeopardize the survival of a federally listed threatened or endangered species or diminish the value of critical habitat for both the survival and recovery of the listed species'' after ''section 3 of this Act''.

SEC. 9113. ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW; SUSPENSION.

Section 6(b) of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (7 U.S.C. 136d(b)) is amended by inserting ''or does not meet the criteria specified in section 3(c)(5)(A)(v)'' after ''adverse effects on the environment''.

SEC. 9114. UNLAWFUL ACTS.

Section 12 of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (7 U.S.C. 136j) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(c) LAWFUL USE OF PESTICIDE RESULTING IN INCIDENTAL TAKING OF CERTAIN SPECIES.—If the Administrator determines, with respect to a pesticide that is registered under this Act, that the pesticide meets the criteria specified in section 3(c)(5)(A)(v), any taking of a federally listed threatened or endangered species that is incidental to an otherwise lawful use of such pesticide pursuant to this Act shall not be considered unlawful under—

''(1) section 4(d) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1533(d)); or

''(2) section 9(a)(1)(B) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1538(a)(1)(B)).''.

SEC. 9115. AUTHORITY OF STATES.

Section 24(c) of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (7 U.S.C. 136v(c)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2), in the second sentence, by inserting ''and the State registration is not likely to jeopardize the survival of a federally listed threatened or endangered species or directly or indirectly alter in a manner that is likely to appreciably diminish the value of critical habitat for both the survival and recovery of the listed species'' before the period at the end; and

(2) by striking paragraph (4).

SEC. 9116. REGULATIONS.

Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency shall publish, and revise thereafter as appropriate, a work plan and processes for completing the determinations required by clause (v) of section 3(c)(5)(A) of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (7 U.S.C. 136a(c)(5)(A)), as added by section 9111(a), and implementing and enforcing standards of registration consistent with such clause and consistent with registration reviews and other periodic reviews.

SEC. 9117. USE OF AUTHORIZED PESTICIDES.

Section 3(f) of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (7 U.S.C. 136a(f)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(5) USE OF AUTHORIZED PESTICIDES.—Except as provided in section 402(s) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, the Administrator or a State may not require a permit under such Act for a discharge from a point source into navigable waters of a pesticide authorized for sale, distribution, or use under this Act, or the residue of such a pesticide, resulting from the application of such pesticide.''.

SEC. 9118. DISCHARGES OF PESTICIDES.

Section 402 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1342) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(s) DISCHARGES OF PESTICIDES.—

''(1) NO PERMIT REQUIREMENT.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), a permit shall not be required by the Administrator or a State under this Act for a discharge from a point source into navigable waters of a pesticide authorized for sale, distribution, or use under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act, or the residue of such a pesticide, resulting from the application of such pesticide.

''(2) EXCEPTIONS.—Paragraph (1) shall not apply to the following discharges of a pesticide or pesticide residue:

''(A) A discharge resulting from the application of a pesticide in violation of a provision of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act that is relevant to protecting water quality, if—

''(i) the discharge would not have occurred but for the violation; or

''(ii) the amount of pesticide or pesticide residue in the discharge is greater than would have occurred without the violation.

''(B) Stormwater discharges subject to regulation under subsection (p).

''(C) The following discharges subject to regulation under this section:

''(i) Manufacturing or industrial effluent.

''(ii) Treatment works effluent.

''(iii) Discharges incidental to the normal operation of a vessel, including a discharge resulting from ballasting operations or vessel biofouling prevention.''.

SEC. 9119. ENACTMENT OF PESTICIDE REGISTRATION IMPROVEMENT ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2017.

H.R. 1029 of the 115th Congress, entitled the ''Pesticide Registration Improvement Enhancement Act of 2017'', as passed by the House of Representatives on March 20, 2017, is hereby enacted into law.

PART III—AMENDMENTS TO THE PLANT PROTECTION ACT

SEC. 9121. METHYL BROMIDE.

Section 419 of the Plant Protection Act (7 U.S.C. 7719) is amended to read as follows:

''SEC. 419. METHYL BROMIDE.

''(a) AUTHORIZATION.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraphs (2) and (3), a State, local, or Tribal authority may authorize the use of methyl bromide for a qualified use if the authority determines the use is required to respond to an emergency event. The Secretary may authorize such a use if the Secretary determines such a use is required to respond to an emergency event.

''(2) NOTIFICATION.—Not later than 5 days after the date on which a State, local, or Tribal authority makes the determination described in paragraph (1), the State, local, or Tribal authority intending to authorize the use of methyl bromide for a qualified use shall submit to the Secretary a notification that contains the information described in subsection (b).

''(3) OBJECTION.—A State, local, or Tribal authority may not authorize the use of methyl bromide under paragraph (1) if the Secretary objects to such use under subsection (c) within the 5-day period specified in such subsection.

''(b) NOTIFICATION CONTENTS.—A notification submitted under subsection (a)(2) by a State, local, or Tribal authority shall contain—

''(1) a certification that the State, local, or Tribal authority requires the use of methyl bromide to respond to an emergency event;

''(2) a description of the emergency event and the economic loss that would result from such emergency event;

''(3) the identity and contact information for the responsible individual of the authority; and

''(4) with respect to the qualified use of methyl bromide that is the subject of the notification—

''(A) the specific location in which the methyl bromide is to be used and the total acreage of such location;

''(B) the identity of the pest or pests to be controlled by such use;

''(C) the total volume of methyl bromide to be used; and

''(D) the anticipated date of such use.

''(c) OBJECTION.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, not later than 5 days after the receipt of a notification submitted under subsection (a)(2), may object to the authorization of the use of methyl bromide under such subsection by a State, local, or Tribal authority by sending the State, local, or Tribal authority a notification in writing of such objection that—

''(A) states the reasons for such objection; and

''(B) specifies any additional information that the Secretary would require to withdraw the objection.

''(2) REASONS FOR OBJECTION.—The Secretary may object to an authorization described in paragraph (1) if the Secretary determines that—

''(A) the notification submitted under subsection (a)(2) does not—

''(i) contain all of the information specified in paragraphs (1) through (4) of subsection (b); or

''(ii) demonstrate the existence of an emergency event; or

''(B) the qualified use specified in the notification does not comply with the limitations specified in subsection (e).

''(3) WITHDRAWAL OF OBJECTION.—The Secretary shall withdraw an objection under this subsection if—

''(A) not later than 14 days after the date on which the Secretary sends the notification under paragraph (1) to the State, local, or Tribal authority involved, the State, local, or Tribal authority submits to the Secretary the additional information specified in such notification; and

''(B) such additional information is submitted to the satisfaction of the Secretary.

''(4) EFFECT OF WITHDRAWAL.—Upon the issuance of a withdrawal under paragraph (3), the State, local, or Tribal authority involved may authorize the use of methyl bromide for the qualified use specified in the notification submitted under subsection (a)(2).

''(d) USE FOR EMERGENCY EVENTS CONSISTENT WITH FIFRA.—The production, distribution, sale, shipment, application, or use of a pesticide product containing methyl bromide in accordance with an authorization for a use under subsection (a) shall be deemed an authorized production, distribution, sale, shipment, application, or use of such product under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act, regardless of whether the intended use is registered and included in the label approved for the product by the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency under such Act.

''(e) LIMITATIONS ON USE.—

''(1) LIMITATIONS ON USE PER EMERGENCY EVENT.—The amount of methyl bromide that may be used per emergency event at a specific location shall not exceed 20 metric tons.

''(2) LIMITS ON AGGREGATE AMOUNT.—The aggregate amount of methyl bromide allowed pursuant to this section for use in the United States in a calendar year shall not exceed the total amount authorized by the Parties to the Montreal Protocol pursuant to the Montreal Protocol process for critical uses in the United States in calendar year 2011.

''(f) ENSURING ADEQUATE SUPPLY OF METHYL BROMIDE.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, it shall not be unlawful for any person or entity to produce or import methyl bromide, or otherwise supply methyl bromide from inventories (produced or imported pursuant to the Clean Air Act for other purposes) in response to an emergency event in accordance with subsection (a).

''(g) EXCLUSIVE AUTHORITY OF THE SECRETARY.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to alter or modify the authority of the Secretary to use methyl bromide for quarantine and pre-shipment, without limitation, under the Clean Air Act.

''(h) DEFINITIONS.—

''(1) EMERGENCY EVENT.—The term 'emergency event' means a situation—

''(A) that occurs at a location on which a plant or commodity is grown or produced or a facility providing for the storage of, or other services with respect to, a plant or commodity;

''(B) for which the lack of availability of methyl bromide for a particular use would result in significant economic loss to the owner, lessee, or operator of such a location or facility or the owner, grower, or purchaser of such a plant or commodity; and

''(C) that, in light of the specific agricultural, meteorological, or other conditions presented, requires the use of methyl bromide to control a pest or disease in such location or facility because there are no technically or economically feasible alternatives to methyl bromide easily accessible by an entity referred to in subparagraph (B) at the time and location of the event that—

''(i) are registered under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (7 U.S.C. 136 et seq.) for the intended use or pest to be so controlled; and

''(ii) would adequately control the pest or disease presented at such location or facility.

''(2) PEST.—The term 'pest' has the meaning given such term in section 2 of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (7 U.S.C. 136).

''(3) QUALIFIED USE.—The term 'qualified use' means, with respect to methyl bromide, a methyl bromide treatment or application in an amount not to exceed the limitations specified in subsection (e) in response to an emergency event.''.

PART IV—AMENDMENTS TO OTHER LAWS

SEC. 9131. DEFINITION OF RETAIL FACILITIES.

Not later than 180 days of the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Labor shall revise the process safety management of highly hazardous chemicals standard under section 1910.119 of title 29, Code of Federal Regulations, promulgated pursuant to section 6 of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 (29 U.S.C. 655), to provide that the definition of the term ''retail facility'', when used with respect to a facility that provides direct sales of highly hazardous chemicals to end users or consumers (including farmers or ranchers), means a facility that is exempt from such standard because such facility has obtained more than half of its income during the most recent 12-month period from such direct sales.

Subtitle C—Other Matters

SEC. 9201. REPORT ON REGULATION OF PLANT BIOSTIMULANTS.

(a) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit a report to the President and Congress that identifies potential regulatory and legislative reforms to ensure the expeditious and appropriate review, approval, uniform national labeling, and availability of plant biostimulant products to agricultural producers.

(b) CONSULTATION.—The Secretary of Agriculture shall prepare the report required by subsection (a) in consultation with the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, the several States, industry stakeholders, and such other stakeholders as the Secretary determines necessary.

(c) PLANT BIOSTIMULANT DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''plant biostimulant'' means a substance or micro-organism that, when applied to seeds, plants, or the rhizosphere, stimulates natural processes to enhance or benefit nutrient uptake, nutrient efficiency, tolerance to abiotic stress, or crop quality and yield.

SEC. 9202. PECAN MARKETING ORDERS.

Section 8e(a) of the Agricultural Adjustment Act, reenacted with amendments by the Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937 (7 U.S.C. 608e–1(a)), is amended in the first sentence, by inserting ''pecans,'' after ''walnuts,''.

SEC. 9203. REPORT ON HONEY AND MAPLE SYRUP.

Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture shall submit to the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate a report examining the effect of the final rule entitled ''Food Labeling: Revision of the Nutrition and Supplement Facts Labels'', published in the Federal Register by the Department of Agriculture on May 27, 2016 (81 Fed. Reg. 33742), (providing for updates to the nutrition facts panel on the labeling of packaged food) has on consumer perception regarding the ''added sugar'' statement required to be included on such panel by such final rule with respect to packaged food in which no sugar is added during processing, including pure honey and maple syrup.

TITLE X—CROP INSURANCE

SEC. 10001. TREATMENT OF FORAGE AND GRAZING.

(a) AVAILABILITY OF CATASTROPHIC RISK PROTECTION FOR CROPS AND GRASSES USED FOR GRAZING.—Section 508(b)(1) of the Federal Crop Insurance Act (7 U.S.C. 1508(b)(1)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), the'' and inserting ''The''; and

(2) by striking subparagraph (B).

(b) LIMITATION ON MULTIPLE BENEFITS FOR SAME LOSS.—Section 508(n)(2) of the Federal Crop Insurance Act (7 U.S.C. 1508(n)(2)) is amended by inserting before the period the following: ''or to coverage described in section 508D''.

(c) COVERAGE FOR FORAGE AND GRAZING.—The Federal Crop Insurance Act is amended by inserting after section 508C (7 U.S.C. 1508C) the following new section:

''SEC. 508D. COVERAGE FOR FORAGE AND GRAZING.

''Notwithstanding section 508A, and in addition to any other available coverage, for crops that can be both grazed and mechanically harvested on the same acres during the same growing season, producers shall be allowed to purchase, and be independently indemnified on, separate policies for each intended use, as determined by the Corporation.''.

SEC. 10002. ADMINISTRATIVE BASIC FEE.

Section 508(b)(5)(A) of the Federal Crop Insurance Act (7 U.S.C. 1508(b)(5)(A)) is amended by striking ''$300'' and inserting ''$500''.

SEC. 10003. PREVENTION OF DUPLICATIVE COVERAGE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 508(c)(1) of the Federal Crop Insurance Act (7 U.S.C. 1508(c)(1)) is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(C) INELIGIBLE CROPS AND ACRES.—Crops for which the producer has elected under section 1117 of the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018 to receive agriculture risk coverage and acres that are enrolled in the stacked income protection plan under section 508B shall not be eligible for—

''(i) coverage based on an area yield and loss basis under paragraph (3)(A)(ii); or

''(ii) supplemental coverage under paragraph (4)(C).''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 508(c)(4)(C) of the Federal Crop Insurance Act (7 U.S.C. 1508(c)(4)(C)) is amended—

(1) by striking clause (iv); and

(2) by redesignating clause (v) as clause (iv).

SEC. 10004. REPEAL OF UNUSED AUTHORITY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 508(d) of the Federal Crop Insurance Act (7 U.S.C. 1508(d)) is amended—

(1) by striking paragraph (3); and

(2) by redesignating paragraph (4) as paragraph (3).

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 508(a)(9)(B) of the Federal Crop Insurance Act (7 U.S.C. 1508(a)(9)(B)) is amended—

(1) in clause (i), by inserting ''or'' after the semicolon;

(2) by striking clause (ii); and

(3) by redesignating clause (iii) as clause (ii).

SEC. 10005. CONTINUED AUTHORITY.

Section 508(g) of the Federal Crop Insurance Act (7 U.S.C. 1508(g)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(6) CONTINUED AUTHORITY.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Corporation shall establish—

''(i) underwriting rules that limit the decrease in the actual production history of a producer, at the election of the producer, to not more than 10 percent of the actual production history of the previous crop year provided that the production decline was the result of drought, flood, natural disaster, or other insurable loss (as determined by the Corporation); and

''(ii) actuarially sound premiums to cover additional risk.

''(B) OTHER AUTHORITY.—The authority provided under subparagraph (A) is in addition to any other authority that adjusts the actual production history of the producer under this Act.

''(C) EFFECT.—Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed to require a change in the carrying out of any provision of this Act as the Act was carried out for the 2018 reinsurance year.''.

SEC. 10006. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION.

Section 516(b)(2)(C)(i) of the Federal Crop Insurance Act (7 U.S.C. 1516(b)(2)(C)(i)) is amended by striking ''$9,000,000'' and inserting ''$7,000,000''.

SEC. 10007. MAINTENANCE OF POLICIES.

(a) Section 522(b) of the Federal Crop Insurance Act (7 U.S.C. 1522(b)) is amended—

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

''(B) REIMBURSEMENT.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—An applicant who submits a policy under section 508(h) shall be eligible for the reimbursement of reasonable and actual research and development costs directly related to the policy if the policy is approved by the Board for sale to producers.

''(ii) REASONABLE COSTS.—For the purpose of reimbursing research and development and maintenance costs under this section, costs of the applicant shall be considered reasonable and actual costs if the costs are based on—

''(I) wage rates equal to 2 times the hourly wage rate plus benefits, as provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics for the year in which such costs are incurred, calculated using the formula applied to an applicant by the Corporation in reviewing proposed project budgets under this section on October 1, 2016; or

''(II) actual documented costs incurred by the applicant.''; and

(2) in paragraph (4)—

(A) in subparagraph (C), by striking ''approved insurance provider'' and inserting ''applicant''; and

(B) in subparagraph (D)—

(i) in clause (i), by striking ''determined by the approved insurance provider'' and inserting ''determined by the applicant'';

(ii) by striking clause (ii) and inserting the following new clauses:

''(ii) APPROVAL.—Subject to clause (iii), the Board shall approve the amount of a fee determined under clause (i) unless the Board determines, based on substantial evidence in the record, that the amount of the fee unnecessarily inhibits the use of the policy.

''(iii) CONSIDERATION.—The Board shall not disapprove a fee on the basis of—

''(I) a comparison to maintenance fees paid with respect to the policy; or

''(II) the potential for the fee to result in a financial gain or loss to the applicant based on the number of policies sold.''.

(b) APPLICABILITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to reimbursement requests made on or after October 1, 2016.

(2) RESUBMISSION OF DENIED REQUEST.—An applicant that was denied all or a portion of a reimbursement request under paragraph (1) of section 522(b) of the Federal Crop Insurance Act (7 U.S.C. 1522(b)) during the period between October 1, 2016 and the date of the enactment of this Act shall be given an opportunity to resubmit such request.

SEC. 10008. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES.

(a) REPEAL OF CERTAIN RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES.—Section 522(c) of the Federal Crop Insurance Act (7 U.S.C. 1522(c)) is amended—

(1) by striking paragraphs (7) through (18);

(2) by striking paragraphs (20) through (23); and

(3) by redesignating paragraphs (19) and (24) as paragraphs (7) and (8), respectively.

(b) WHOLE FARM APPLICATION TO BEGINNING FARMERS AND RANCHERS.—Paragraph (7) of section 522(c) of the Federal Crop Insurance Act (7 U.S.C. 1522(c)), as redesignated by subsection (a), is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(E) BEGINNING FARMER OR RANCHER DEFINED.—Notwithstanding section 502(b)(3), with respect to plans described under this paragraph, the term 'beginning farmer or rancher' means a farmer or rancher who has not actively operated and managed a farm or ranch with a bona fide insurable interest in a crop or livestock as an owner-operator, landlord, tenant, or sharecropper for more than 10 crop years.''.

(c) RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES.—Section 522(c) of the Federal Crop Insurance Act (7 U.S.C. 1522(c)) as amended by subsection (a), is further amended by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:

''(9) TROPICAL STORM OR HURRICANE INSURANCE.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Corporation shall offer to enter into 1 or more contracts with qualified entities to carry out research and development regarding a policy to insure crops, including tomatoes, peppers, and citrus, against losses due to a tropical storm or hurricane.

''(B) RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT.—Research and development with respect to the policy required under subparagraph (A) shall—

''(i) evaluate the effectiveness of a risk management tool for a low frequency, catastrophic loss weather event; and

''(ii) provide protection for production or revenue losses, or both.

''(10) SUBSURFACE IRRIGATION PRACTICES.—The Corporation shall offer to enter into a contract with a qualified entity to conduct research and development regarding the creation of a separate practice for subsurface irrigation, including the establishment of a separate transitional yield within the county that is reflective of the average gain in productivity and yield associated with the installation of a subsurface irrigation system.

''(11) STUDY AND REPORT ON GRAIN SORGHUM RATES AND YIELDS.—

''(A) STUDY.—The Corporation shall contract with a qualified entity to conduct a study to assess the difference in rates, average yields, and coverage levels of grain sorghum policies as compared to other feed grains within a county.

''(B) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this paragraph, the Corporation shall submit to the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate a report that describes the results of the study conducted under subparagraph (A).

''(12) QUALITY LOSSES.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Corporation shall offer to enter into a contract with a qualified entity to conduct research and development regarding the establishment of an alternative method of adjusting for quality losses that does not impact the average production history of producers.

''(B) REQUIREMENTS.—Notwithstanding subsections (g) and (m) of section 508, if the Corporation uses any method developed as a result of the contract described in subparagraph (A) to adjust for quality losses, such method shall be—

''(i) optional for producers to elect to use; and

''(ii) offered at an actuarially sound premium rate.''.

SEC. 10009. EXTENSION OF FUNDING FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT.

Section 522 of the Federal Crop Insurance Act (7 U.S.C. 1522) is amended—

(1) by striking subsection (d);

(2) in subsection (e)(2)(A)—

(A) by striking ''under subsections (c) and (d)'' and inserting ''under subsection (c)'' ; and

(B) by striking ''not more than $12,500,000 for fiscal year 2008 and each subsequent fiscal year.'' and inserting the following: ''not more than—

''(i) $12,500,000 for fiscal year 2008 through 2018; and''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

''(ii) $8,000,000 for fiscal year 2019 and each fiscal year thereafter.''; and

(3) by redesignating subsection (e), as so amended, as subsection (d).

SEC. 10010. EDUCATION AND RISK MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE.

Section 524 of the Federal Crop Insurance Act (7 U.S.C. 1524) is amended to read as follows:

''SEC. 524. EDUCATION AND RISK MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE.

''(a) EDUCATION ASSISTANCE.—Subject to the amounts made available under subsection (d), the Secretary, acting through the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, shall carry out the program established under subsection (b).

''(b) PARTNERSHIPS FOR RISK MANAGEMENT EDUCATION.—

''(1) AUTHORITY.—The Secretary, acting through the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, shall establish a program under which competitive grants are made to qualified public and private entities (including land-grant colleges, cooperative extension services, and colleges or universities), as determined by the Secretary, for the purpose of educating agricultural producers about the full range of risk management activities, including futures, options, agricultural trade options, crop insurance, cash forward contracting, debt reduction, production diversification, farm resources risk reduction, farm financial benchmarking, and other risk management strategies.

''(2) BASIS FOR GRANTS.—A grant under this subsection shall be awarded on the basis of merit and shall be subject to peer or merit review.

''(3) OBLIGATION PERIOD.—Funds for a grant under this subsection shall be available to the Secretary for obligation for a 2-year period.

''(4) ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS.—The Secretary may use not more than 4 percent of the funds made available for grants under this subsection for administrative costs incurred by the Secretary in carrying out this subsection.

''(c) REQUIREMENTS.—In carrying out the program established under subsection (b), the Secretary shall place special emphasis on risk management strategies (including farm financial

benchmarking), education, and outreach specifically targeted at—

''(1) beginning farmers or ranchers;

''(2) legal immigrant farmers or ranchers that are attempting to become established producers in the United States;

''(3) socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers; and

''(4) farmers or ranchers that—

''(A) are preparing to retire;

''(B) are using transition strategies to help new farmers or ranchers get started; and

''(C) new or established farmers or ranchers that are converting production and marketing systems to pursue new markets.

''(d) FUNDING.—From the insurance fund established under section 516(c), there is transferred for the partnerships for risk management education program established under subsection (b) $5,000,000 for fiscal year 2018 and each subsequent fiscal year.''.

TITLE XI—MISCELLANEOUS

Subtitle A—Livestock

SEC. 11101. ANIMAL DISEASE PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE.

(a) NATIONAL ANIMAL DISEASE PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PROGRAM.—The Animal Health Protection Act is amended by inserting after section 10409A (7 U.S.C. 8308A) the following new section:

''SEC. 10409B. NATIONAL ANIMAL DISEASE PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PROGRAM.

''(a) PROGRAM REQUIRED.—The Secretary shall establish a program, to be known as the 'National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program', to address the increasing risk of the introduction and spread of animal pests and diseases affecting the economic interests of the livestock and related industries of the United States, including the maintenance and expansion of export markets.

''(b) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—To carry out the National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program, the Secretary shall offer to enter into cooperative agreements, or other legal instruments, with eligible entities, to be selected by the Secretary, which may include any of the following entities, either individually or in combination:

''(1) A State department of agriculture.

''(2) The office of the chief animal health official of a State.

''(3) A land-grant college or university or NLGCA Institution (as those terms are defined in section 1404 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3103)).

''(4) A college of veterinary medicine, including a veterinary emergency team at such college.

''(5) A State or national livestock producer organization with direct and significant economic interest in livestock production.

''(6) A State emergency agency.

''(7) A State, national, allied, or regional veterinary organization or specialty board recognized by the American Veterinary Medical Association.

''(8) An Indian Tribe (as defined in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5304)).

''(9) A Federal agency.

''(c) ACTIVITIES.—

''(1) PROGRAM ACTIVITIES.—Activities under the National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program shall include, to the extent practicable, the following:

''(A) Enhancing animal pest and disease analysis and surveillance.

''(B) Expanding outreach and education.

''(C) Targeting domestic inspection activities at vulnerable points in the safeguarding continuum.

''(D) Enhancing and strengthening threat identification and technology.

''(E) Improving biosecurity.

''(F) Enhancing emergency preparedness and response capabilities, including training additional emergency response personnel.

''(G) Conducting technology development and enhancing electronic sharing of animal health data for risk analysis between State and Federal animal health officials.

''(H) Enhancing the development and effectiveness of animal health technologies to treat and prevent animal disease, including—

''(i) veterinary biologics and diagnostics;

''(ii) animal drugs for minor use and minor species; and

''(iii) animal medical devices.

''(I) Such other activities as determined appropriate by the Secretary, in consultation with eligible entities specified in subsection (b).

''(2) PRIORITIES.—In entering into cooperative agreements or other legal instruments under subsection (b), the Secretary shall give priority to applications submitted by—

''(A) a State department of agriculture or an office of the chief animal health official of a State; or

''(B) an eligible entity that will carry out program activities in a State or region—

''(i) in which an animal pest or disease is a Federal concern; or

''(ii) which the Secretary determines has potential for the spread of an animal pest or disease after taking into consideration—

''(I) the agricultural industries in the State or region;

''(II) factors contributing to animal disease or pest in the State or region, such as the climate, natural resources, and geography of, and native and exotic wildlife species and other disease vectors in, the State or region; and

''(III) the movement of animals in the State or region.

''(3) CONSULTATION.—For purposes of setting priorities under this subsection, the Secretary shall consult with eligible entities specified in subsection (b). The Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.) shall not apply to consultation carried out under this paragraph.

''(d) APPLICATION.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—An eligible entity specified in subsection (b) seeking to enter into a cooperative agreement, or other legal instrument, under the National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program shall submit to the Secretary an application containing such information as the Secretary may require.

''(2) NOTIFICATION.—The Secretary shall notify each applicant of—

''(A) the requirements to be imposed on the recipient of funds under the Program for auditing of, and reporting on, the use of such funds; and

''(B) the criteria to be used to ensure activities supported using such funds are based on sound scientific data or thorough risk assessments.

''(3) NON-FEDERAL CONTRIBUTIONS.—When deciding whether to enter into an agreement or other legal instrument under the Program with an eligible entity described in subsection (b), the Secretary—

''(A) may take into consideration an eligible entity's ability to contribute non-Federal funds to carry out such a cooperative agreement or other legal instrument under the Program; and

''(B) shall not require such an entity to make such a contribution.

''(e) USE OF FUNDS.—

''(1) USE CONSISTENT WITH TERMS OF COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT.—The recipient of funds under the National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program shall use the funds for the purposes and in the manner provided in the cooperative agreement, or other legal instrument, under which the funds are provided.

''(2) SUB-AGREEMENT.—Nothing in this section prevents an eligible entity from using funds received under the Program to enter into sub-agreements with political subdivisions of State that have legal responsibilities relating to animal disease prevention, surveillance, or rapid response.

''(f) REPORTING REQUIREMENT.—Not later than 90 days after the date of completion of an activity conducted using funds provided under the National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program, the recipient of such funds shall submit to the Secretary a report that describes the purposes and results of the activities.''.

(b) NATIONAL ANIMAL HEALTH VACCINE BANK.—The Animal Health Protection Act (7 U.S.C. 8301 et seq.) is amended by inserting after section 10409B, as added by subsection (a), the following new section:

''SEC. 10409C. NATIONAL ANIMAL HEALTH VACCINE BANK.

''(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall establish a national vaccine bank (to be known as the 'National Animal Health Vaccine Bank') for the benefit of the domestic interests of the United States and to help protect the United States agriculture and food system against terrorist attack, major disaster, and other emergencies.

''(b) ELEMENTS OF VACCINE BANK.—Through the National Animal Health Vaccine Bank, the Secretary shall—

''(1) maintain sufficient quantities of animal vaccine, antiviral, therapeutic, or diagnostic products to appropriately and rapidly respond to an outbreak of those animal diseases that would have the most damaging effect on human health or the United States economy; and

''(2) leverage, when appropriate, the mechanisms and infrastructure that have been developed for the management, storage, and distribution of the National Veterinary Stockpile of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

''(c) PRIORITY FOR RESPONSE TO FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE.—The Secretary shall prioritize the acquisition of sufficient quantities of foot and mouth disease vaccine, and accompanying diagnostic products, for the National Animal Health Vaccine Bank. As part of such prioritization, the Secretary shall consider contracting with one or more entities that are capable of producing foot and mouth disease vaccine and that have surge production capacity of the vaccine.''.

(c) FUNDING.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 10417 of the Animal Health Protection Act (7 U.S.C. 8316) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(d) AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS FOR SPECIFIED PURPOSES.—

''(1) MANDATORY FUNDING.—

''(A) FISCAL YEAR 2019.—Of the funds of the Commodity Credit Corporation, the Secretary shall make available for fiscal year 2019 $250,000,000 to carry out sections 10409A, 10409B, and 10409C, of which—

''(i) $30,000,000 shall be made available to carry out the National Animal Health Laboratory Network under section 10409A;

''(ii) $70,000,000 shall be made available to carry out the National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program under section 10409B; and

''(iii) $150,000,000 shall be made available to establish and maintain the National Animal Health Vaccine Bank under section 10409C.

''(B) SUBSEQUENT FISCAL YEARS.—Of the funds of the Commodity Credit Corporation, the Secretary shall make available to carry out sections 10409A, 10409B, and 10409C, $50,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2020 through 2023, of which not less than $30,000,000 shall be made available for each of those fiscal years to carry out the National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program under section 10409B.

''(2) ADDITIONAL AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—In addition to the funds made available under subparagraphs (A)(i) and (B) of paragraph (1) and funds authorized to be appropriated by subsection (a), there are authorized to be appropriated $15,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023 to carry out the National Animal Health Laboratory Network under section 10409A.

''(3) ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS.—Of the funds made available under subparagraphs (A)(i),

(A)(ii), and (B) and subparagraph (B) of paragraph (1), not more than four percent may be retained by the Secretary to pay administrative costs incurred by the Secretary to carry out the National Animal Health Laboratory Network under section 10409A and the National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program under section 10409B. Of the funds made available under subparagraphs (A)(ii) and (B) to carry out the National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program under section 10409B and (B) of such paragraph, not more than ten percent may be retained by an eligible entity to pay administrative costs incurred by the eligible entity to carry out such program.

''(4) DURATION OF AVAILABILITY.—Funds made available under this subsection, including any proceeds credited under paragraph (5), shall remain available until expended.

''(5) PROCEEDS FROM VACCINE SALES.—Any proceeds of a sale of vaccine or antigen from the National Animal Health Vaccine Bank shall be—

''(A) deposited into the Treasury of the United States; and

''(B) credited to the account for the operation of the National Animal Health Vaccine Bank.

''(6) LIMITATIONS ON USE OF FUNDS FOR CERTAIN PURPOSES.—Funds made available under the National Animal Health Laboratory Network, the National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program, and the National Animal Health Vaccine Bank shall not be used for the construction of a new building or facility or the acquisition or expansion of an existing building or facility, including site grading and improvement and architect fees.''.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(A) SECTION HEADING.—The heading of section 10417 of the Animal Health Protection Act (7 U.S.C. 8316) is amended to read as follows:

''SEC. 10417. FUNDING.''.

(B) OTHER AMENDMENTS.—Section 10417 of the Animal Health Protection Act (7 U.S.C. 8316) is further amended—

(i) in subsection (a), by striking ''IN GENERAL'' and inserting ''GENERAL AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS''; and

(ii) in subsection (c), by striking ''to carry out this subtitle'' and inserting ''pursuant to the authorization of appropriations in subsection (a)''.

(3) REPEAL OF SEPARATE AUTHORIZATION OF NATIONAL ANIMAL HEALTH LABORATORY NETWORK.—Section 10409A of the Animal Health Protection Act (7 U.S.C. 8308A(d)) is amended by striking subsection (d).

SEC. 11102. NATIONAL AQUATIC ANIMAL HEALTH PLAN.

Section 11013(d) of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 8322(d)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 11103. VETERINARY TRAINING.

Section 10504 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (7 U.S.C. 8318) is amended—

(1) by inserting ''and veterinary teams, including those based at colleges of veterinary medicine,'' after ''veterinarians''; and

(2) by inserting before the period at the end the following: ''and who are capable of providing effective services before, during, and after emergencies''.

SEC. 11104. REPORT ON FSIS GUIDANCE AND OUTREACH TO SMALL MEAT PROCESSORS.

Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Inspector General of the Department of Agriculture shall submit to the Secretary a report on the effectiveness of existing Food Safety and Inspection Service guidance materials and other tools used by small and very small establishments, as defined by regulations issued by the Food Safety and Inspection Service, as in effect on such date of enactment, including—

(1) an evaluation of the effectiveness of the outreach conducted by the Food Safety and Inspection Service to small and very small establishments;

(2) an evaluation of the effectiveness of the guidance materials and other tools used by the Food Safety and Inspection Service to assist small and very small establishments;

(3) an evaluation of the responsiveness of Food Safety and Inspection Service personnel to inquiries and issues from small and very small establishments; and

(4) recommendations on measures the Food Safety and Inspection Service should take to improve regulatory clarity and consistency and ensure all guidance materials and other tools take into account small and very small establishments.

Subtitle B—Beginning, Socially Disadvantaged, and Veteran Producers

SEC. 11201. OUTREACH AND ASSISTANCE FOR SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED FARMERS AND RANCHERS AND VETERAN FARMERS AND RANCHERS.

Section 2501(a)(4) of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 2279(a)(4)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A)—

(A) in the heading, by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''; and

(B) in clause (iii), by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023'';

(2) by redesignating subparagraph (E) as subparagraph (F);

(3) by inserting after subparagraph (D) the following new subparagraph:

''(E) PRIORITY.—In making grants and entering into contracts and other agreements under this section, the Secretary shall give priority to projects that—

''(i) deliver agricultural education to youth under the age of 18 in underserved and underrepresented communities;

''(ii) provide youth under the age of 18 with agricultural employment or volunteer opportunities, or both; and

''(iii) demonstrate experience in providing such education or opportunities to socially disadvantaged youth.''; and

(4) in subparagraph (F), as so redesignated, by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

SEC. 11202. OFFICE OF PARTNERSHIPS AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT.

(a) CHANGING NAME OF OFFICE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 226B of the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 6934) is amended—

*(A) in the section heading, by striking ''**advocacy and outreach**'' and inserting ''**partnerships and public engagement**'';*

(B) by striking ''Advocacy and Outreach'' each place it appears in subsections (a)(2), (b)(1), and (d)(4)(B) and inserting ''Partnerships and Public Engagement'';

(2) REFERENCES.—Beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act, any reference to the Office of Advocacy and Outreach established under section 226B of the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 6934) in any other provision of Federal law shall be deemed to be a reference to the Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement.

(b) INCREASING OUTREACH.—Section 226B of the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 6934), as amended by subsection (a), is further amended—

(1) in subsection (b)(1)—

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

(B) in subparagraph (B)—

(i) in clause (ii), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(ii) in clause (iii), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(iii) by adding at the end the following new clauses:

''(iv) limited resource producers;

''(v) veteran farmers and ranchers; and

''(vi) Tribal farmers and ranchers; and''; and

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

''(C) to promote youth outreach.''; and

(2) in subsection (c)—

(A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by inserting ''veteran farmers and ranchers, Tribal farmers and ranchers,'' after ''beginning farmers or ranchers,'';

(B) in paragraph (1), by striking ''or socially disadvantaged'' and inserting ''socially disadvantaged, veteran, or Tribal''; and

(C) in paragraph (5), by inserting ''veteran farmers or ranchers, Tribal farmers or ranchers,'' after ''beginning farmers or ranchers,''.

(c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 226B(f)(3)(B) of the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 6934(f)(3)(B)) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

(d) OFFICE OF TRIBAL RELATIONS.—Section 309 of the Federal Crop Insurance Reform and Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 6921) is amended by striking ''of the Secretary'' and inserting ''of Partnerships and Public Engagement established under section 226B''.

SEC. 11203. COMMISSION ON FARM TRANSITIONS—NEEDS FOR 2050.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established a commission to be known as the ''Commission on Farm Transitions–Needs for 2050'' (referred to in this section as the ''Commission'').

(b) STUDY.—The Commission shall conduct a study on issues impacting the transition of agricultural operations from established farmers and ranchers to the next generation of farmers and ranchers, including—

(1) access to, and availability of—

(A) quality land and necessary infrastructure;

(B) affordable credit; and

(C) adequate risk management tools;

(2) agricultural asset transfer strategies in use as of the date of the enactment of this Act and improvements to such strategies;

(3) incentives that may facilitate agricultural asset transfers to the next generation of farmers and ranchers, including recommendations for new Federal tax policies to facilitate lifetime and estate transfers;

(4) the causes of the failures of such transitions, if any; and

(5) the status of programs and incentives providing assistance with respect to such transitions in effect on the date of the enactment of this Act, and opportunities for the revision or modernization of such programs.

(c) MEMBERSHIP.—

(1) COMPOSITION.—The Commission shall be composed of 10 members as follows:

(A) 3 members appointed by the Secretary.

(B) 3 members appointed by the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate.

(C) 3 members appointed by the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives.

(D) The Chief Economist of the Department of Agriculture.

(2) FEDERAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYMENT.—In addition to the Chief Economist of the Department of Agriculture, the membership of the Commission may include 1 or more employees of the Department of Agriculture or other Federal agencies.

(3) DATE OF APPOINTMENTS.—The appointment of a member of the Commission shall be made not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of this Act.

(4) TERM; VACANCIES.—

(A) TERM.—A member shall be appointed for the life of the Commission.

(B) VACANCIES.—A vacancy on the Commission—

(i) shall not affect the powers of the Commission; and

(ii) shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment was made.

(5) INITIAL MEETING.—Not later than 30 days after the date on which all members of the Commission have been appointed, the Commission shall hold the initial meeting of the Commission.

(d) QUORUM.—A majority of the members of the Commission shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, but a lesser number of members may hold hearings.

(e) CHAIRPERSON.—The Secretary shall appoint 1 of the members of the Commission to serve as Chairperson of the Commission.

(f) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Commission shall submit to the President, the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives, and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate a report containing the results of the study required by subsection (b), including such recommendations as the Commission considers appropriate.

(g) HEARINGS.—The Commission may hold such hearings, meet and act at such times and places, take such testimony, and receive such evidence as the Commission considers advisable to carry out this section.

(h) INFORMATION FROM FEDERAL AGENCIES.—The Commission may secure directly from a Federal agency such information as the Commission considers necessary to carry out this section. On request of the Chairperson of the Commission, the head of the agency shall provide the information to the Commission.

(i) POSTAL SERVICES.—The Commission may use the United States mail in the same manner and under the same conditions as other agencies of the Federal Government.

(j) ASSISTANCE FROM SECRETARY.—The Secretary may provide to the Commission appropriate office space and such reasonable administrative and support services as the Commission may request.

(k) COMPENSATION OF MEMBERS.—

(1) NON-FEDERAL EMPLOYEES.—A member of the Commission who is not an officer or employee of the Federal Government shall be compensated at a rate equal to the daily equivalent of the annual rate of basic pay prescribed for level IV of the Executive Schedule under section 5315 of title 5, United States Code, for each day (including travel time) during which the member is engaged in the performance of the duties of the Commission.

(2) FEDERAL EMPLOYEES.—A member of the Commission who is an officer or employee of the Federal Government shall serve without compensation in addition to the compensation received for the services of the member as an officer or employee of the Federal Government.

(3) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—A member of the Commission shall be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates authorized for an employee of an agency under subchapter I of chapter 57 of title 5, United States Code, while away from the home or regular place of business of the member in the performance of the duties of the Commission.

(l) FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ACT.—The Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.) shall not apply to the Commission or any proceeding of the Commission.

SEC. 11204. AGRICULTURAL YOUTH ORGANIZATION COORDINATOR.

Subtitle A of the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 is amended by inserting after section 220 (7 U.S.C. 6920) the following new section:

"SEC. 221. AGRICULTURAL YOUTH ORGANIZATION COORDINATOR.

''(a) AUTHORIZATION.—The Secretary shall establish in the Department the position of Agricultural Youth Organization Coordinator.

''(b) DUTIES.—The Agricultural Youth Organization Coordinator shall—

''(1) promote the role of youth-serving organizations and school-based agricultural education in motivating and preparing young people to pursue careers in the agriculture, food, and natural resources systems;

''(2) work to help build awareness of the reach and importance of agriculture, across a diversity of fields and disciplines;

''(3) identify short-term and long-term interests of the Department and provide opportunities, resources, input, and coordination with programs and agencies of the Department to youth-serving organizations and school-based agricultural education, including the development of internship opportunities;

''(4) share, internally and externally, the extent to which active steps are being taken to encourage collaboration with, and support of, youth-serving organizations and school-based agricultural education;

''(5) provide information to young farmers concerning the availability of, and eligibility requirements for, participation in agricultural programs, with particular emphasis on beginning farmer and rancher programs;

''(6) serve as a resource for assisting young farmers in applying for participation in agricultural programs; and

''(7) advocate on behalf of young farmers in interactions with employees of the Department.

''(c) CONTRACTS AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—For purposes of carrying out the duties under subsection (b), the Agricultural Youth Organization Coordinator shall consult with the cooperative extension and the land-grant university systems, and may enter into contracts or cooperative agreements with the research centers of the Agricultural Research Service, cooperative extension and the land-grant university systems, non-land-grant colleges of agriculture, or nonprofit organizations for—

''(1) the conduct of regional research on the profitability of small farms;

''(2) the development of educational materials;

''(3) the conduct of workshops, courses, and certified vocational training;

''(4) the conduct of mentoring activities; or

''(5) the provision of internship opportunities.''.

Subtitle C—Textiles

SEC. 11301. REPEAL OF PIMA AGRICULTURE COTTON TRUST FUND.

Effective December 31, 2018, the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 2101 note; Public Law 113–79) is amended by striking section 12314 (and by conforming the items relating to such section in the table of sections accordingly).

SEC. 11302. REPEAL OF AGRICULTURE WOOL APPAREL MANUFACTURERS TRUST FUND.

Effective December 31, 2018, the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 2101 note; Public Law 113–79) is amended by striking section 12315 (and by conforming the items relating to such section in the table of sections accordingly).

SEC. 11303. REPEAL OF WOOL RESEARCH AND PROMOTION GRANTS FUNDING.

Effective December 31, 2018, the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 2101 note; Public Law 113–79) is amended by striking section 12316 (and by conforming the items relating to such section in the table of sections accordingly).

SEC. 11304. TEXTILE TRUST FUND.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established in the Treasury of the United States a trust fund, to be known as the ''Textile Trust Fund'', consisting of such amounts as may be transferred to the Textile Trust Fund pursuant to subsection (e), and to be used for the purposes of—

(1) reducing the injury to domestic manufacturers resulting from tariffs on cotton fabric that are higher than tariffs on certain apparel articles made of cotton fabric;

(2) reducing the injury to domestic manufacturers resulting from tariffs on wool products that are higher than tariffs on certain apparel articles made of wool products; and

(3) wool research and promotion.

(b) DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS.—From amounts in the Textile Trust Fund, the Secretary shall make payments annually, beginning in calendar year 2019, for each of calendar years 2019 through 2023 as follows:

(1) PIMA COTTON.—From amounts specified in subsection (e)(2)(A), the Secretary shall make payments as follows:

(A) Twenty-five percent of such amounts for a calendar year shall be paid to one or more nationally recognized associations established for the promotion of pima cotton for use in textile and apparel goods.

(B) Twenty-five percent of such amounts for a calendar year shall be paid to yarn spinners of pima cotton that produce ring spun cotton yarns in the United States, to be allocated to each spinner in an amount that bears the same ratio as—

(i) the spinner's production of ring spun cotton yarns, measuring less than 83.33 decitex (exceeding 120 metric number) from pima cotton in single and plied form during the previous calendar year (as evidenced by an affidavit provided by the spinner that meets the requirements of subsection (c)(1)); bears to

(ii) the production of the yarns described in clause (i) during the previous calendar year for all spinners who qualify under this subparagraph.

(C) Fifty percent of such amounts for a calendar year shall be paid to manufacturers who cut and sew cotton shirts in the United States who certify that they used imported cotton fabric during the previous calendar year, to be allocated to each such manufacturer in an amount that bears the same ratio as—

(i) the dollar value (excluding duty, shipping, and related costs) of imported woven cotton shirting fabric of 80s or higher count and 2-ply in warp purchased by the manufacturer during the previous calendar year (as evidenced by an affidavit provided by the manufacturer that meets the requirements of subsection (c)(2)) used in the manufacturing of men's and boys' cotton shirts; bears to

(ii) the dollar value (excluding duty, shipping, and related costs) of the fabric described in clause (i) purchased during the previous calendar year by all manufacturers who qualify under this subparagraph.

(2) WOOL MANUFACTURERS.—From amounts specified in subsection (e)(2)(B), the Secretary shall make payments as follows:

(A) To each eligible manufacturer under paragraph (3) of section 4002(c) of the Wool Suit and Textile Trade Extension Act of 2004 (Public Law 108–429; 118 Stat. 2600), as amended by section 1633(c) of the Miscellaneous Trade and Technical Corrections Act of 2006 (Public Law 109–280; 120 Stat. 1166) and section 325(b) of the Tax Extenders and Alternative Minimum Tax Relief Act of 2008 (division C of Public Law 110–343; 122 Stat. 3875), and any successor-in-interest to such a manufacturer as provided for under paragraph (4) of such section 4002(c), that submits an affidavit in accordance with subsection (c)(3) for the year of the payment for calendar years 2019 through 2023, payments in amounts authorized under that paragraph.

(B) To each eligible manufacturer under paragraph (6) of such section 4002(c) for calendar years 2019 through 2023, payments in amounts authorized under that paragraph.

(c) AFFIDAVITS.—

(1) YARN SPINNERS.—The affidavit required by subsection (b)(1)(B)(i) for a calendar year is a notarized affidavit provided by an officer of a producer of ring spun yarns that affirms—

(A) that the producer used pima cotton during the year in which the affidavit is filed and during the previous calendar year to produce ring spun cotton yarns in the United States, measuring less than 83.33 decitex (exceeding 120 metric number), in single and plied form;

(B) the quantity, measured in pounds, of ring spun cotton yarns, measuring less than 83.33 decitex (exceeding 120 metric number), in single and plied form during the previous calendar year; and

(C) that the producer maintains supporting documentation showing the quantity of such yarns produced, and evidencing the yarns as ring spun cotton yarns, measuring less than 83.33 decitex (exceeding 120 metric number), in single and plied form during the previous calendar year.

(2) SHIRTING MANUFACTURERS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The affidavit required by subsection (b)(1)(C)(i) for a calendar year is a notarized affidavit provided by an officer of a manufacturer of men's and boys' shirts that affirms—

(i) that the manufacturer used imported cotton fabric during the year in which the affidavit is filed and during the previous calendar year, to cut and sew men's and boys' woven cotton shirts in the United States;

(ii) the dollar value of imported woven cotton shirting fabric of 80s or higher count and 2-ply in warp purchased by the manufacturer during the previous calendar year;

(iii) that the manufacturer maintains invoices along with other supporting documentation (such as price lists and other technical descriptions of the fabric qualities) showing the dollar value of such fabric purchased, the date of purchase, and evidencing the fabric as woven cotton fabric of 80s or higher count and 2-ply in warp; and

(iv) that the fabric was suitable for use in the manufacturing of men's and boys' cotton shirts.

(B) DATE OF PURCHASE.—For purposes of the affidavit under subparagraph (A), the date of purchase shall be the invoice date, and the dollar value shall be determined excluding duty, shipping, and related costs.

(3) FILING DATE FOR AFFIDAVITS.—Any person required to provide an affidavit under this section shall file the affidavit with the Secretary or as directed by the Secretary for any of calendar years 2019 through 2023, not later than March 15 of that calendar year.

(4) INCREASE IN PAYMENTS TO WOOL MANUFACTURERS IN CASE OF EXPIRATION OF DUTY SUSPENSIONS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—In any calendar year in which the suspension of duty on wool products described in subparagraphs (B) and (C) is not in effect, the amount of any payment described in subsection (b)(2) to a manufacturer or successor-in-interest shall be increased by an amount the Secretary, after consultation with the Secretary of Commerce, determines is equal to the amount the manufacturer or successor-in-interest would have saved during the calendar year of the payment if the suspension of duty on such wool products were in effect.

(B) SPECIAL RULE FOR CERTAIN FABRICS OF WORSTED WOOL.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—With respect to fabrics of worsted wool described in clause (ii), subparagraph (A) shall be applied by substituting ''rate of duty on such wool products was 10 percent'' for ''suspension of duty on such wool products were in effect''.

(ii) FABRICS OF WORSTED WOOL DESCRIBED.—Fabrics of worsted wool described in this paragraph are fabrics of worsted wool—

(I) with average fiber diameters greater than 18.5 micron; and

(II) containing 85 percent or more by weight of wool.

(C) COVERED WOOL PRODUCTS.—Subparagraph (A) applies with respect to the following:

(i) Yarn, of combed wool, not put up for retail sale, containing 85 percent or more by weight of wool, formed with wool fibers having average diameters of 18.5 micron or less.

(ii) Wool fiber, waste, garnetted stock, combed wool, or wool top, the foregoing having average fiber diameters of 18.5 micron or less.

(iii) Fabrics of combed wool, containing 85 percent or more by weight of wool, with wool yarns of average fiber diameters of 18.5 micron or less, certified by the importer as suitable for use in making men's and boys suits, suit-type jackets, or trousers and must be imported for the benefit of persons who cut and sew such clothing in the United States.

(iv) Fabrics of combed wool, containing 85 percent or more by weight of wool, with wool yarns of average fiber diameters of 18.5 micron or less, certified by the importer as suitable for use in making men's and boys suits, suit-type jackets, or trousers and must be imported for the benefit of persons who weave worsted wool fabric suitable for use in such clothing in the United States.

(D) NO APPEAL OF DETERMINATIONS.—A determination of the Secretary under this paragraph shall be final and not subject to appeal or protest.

(d) TIMING FOR DISTRIBUTIONS.—The Secretary shall make a payment under subsection (b) for each of calendar years 2019 through 2023, not later than April 15 of the year of the payment.

(e) FUNDING.—

(1) TRANSFER REQUIRED.—Of the funds of the Commodity Credit Corporation, the Secretary shall transfer to the Textile Trust Fund $25,250,000 for each of calendar years 2019 through 2023.

(2) ALLOCATION OF FUNDS.—Of the funds transferred under paragraph (1) for a calendar year—

(A) $8,000,000 shall be available for distribution under subsection (b)(1);

(B) $15,000,000 shall be available for distribution under subsection (b)(2); and

(C) notwithstanding subsection (f) of section 506 of the Trade and Development Act of 2000 (7 U.S.C. 7101 note; Public Law 106–200), $2,250,000 shall be available to provide grants described in subsection (d) of such section.

(3) SHEEP PRODUCTION AND MARKETING.—In addition to funds made available under paragraph (1), of the funds of the Commodity Credit Corporation, the Secretary shall use to carry out section 209 of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (7 U.S.C. 1627a), $2,000,000 for fiscal year 2019, to remain available until expended.

(4) DURATION OF AVAILABILITY.—Amounts transferred to the Textile Trust Fund pursuant to this subsection shall remain available until expended.

Subtitle D—United States Grain Standards Act

SEC. 11401. RESTORING CERTAIN EXCEPTIONS TO UNITED STATES GRAIN STANDARDS ACT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Grain handling facilities described in subsection (b) may, on or before the date that is 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, restore a prior exception with an official agency designated under the rule entitled ''Exceptions to Geographic Areas for Official Agencies Under the USGSA'' published by the Department of Agriculture in the Federal Register on April 18, 2003 (68 Fed. Reg. 19137) if—

(1) such grain handling facility and official agency agree to restore such prior exception; and

(2) such grain handling facility notifies the Secretary of Agriculture of—

(A) the exception described in paragraph (1); and

(B) the effective date of such exception.

(b) ELIGIBLE GRAIN HANDLING FACILITIES.—Subsection (a) shall apply with respect to grain handling facilities that were—

(1) granted exceptions pursuant to the rule specified in subsection (a); and

(2) had such exceptions revoked on or after September 30, 2015.

(c) NO UNILATERAL TERMINATION ALLOWED.—Beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act, a nonuse of service exception may only be terminated if two or more parties to such exception, including the grain handling facility, are in joint agreement with respect to such termination.

Subtitle E—Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program

SEC. 11501. ELIGIBLE CROPS.

Section 196(a)(2) of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (7 U.S.C. 7333(a)(2)) is amended by striking subparagraph (A) and inserting the following new subparagraph:

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subparagraph (B), in this section, the term 'eligible crop' means each commercial crop or other agricultural commodity that is produced for food or fiber (except livestock) for which catastrophic risk protection under subsection (b) of section 508 of the Federal Crop Insurance Act (7 U.S.C. 1508) and additional coverage under subsections (c) and (h) of such section are not available or, if such coverage is available, it is only available under a policy that provides coverage for specific intervals based on weather indexes or under a whole farm plan of insurance.''.

SEC. 11502. SERVICE FEE.

Section 196(k)(1) of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (7 U.S.C. 7333(k)(1)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''$250'' and inserting ''$350''; and

(2) in subparagraph (B)—

(A) by striking ''$750'' and inserting ''$1,050''; and

(B) by striking ''$1,875'' and inserting ''$2,100''.

SEC. 11503. PAYMENTS EQUIVALENT TO ADDITIONAL COVERAGE.

(a) PREMIUMS.—Section 196(l)(2)(B)(i) of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (7 U.S.C. 7333(l)(2)(B)(i)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''and'' at the end of subclause (IV);

(2) by striking ''or'' at the end of subclause (V) and inserting ''and''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new subclause:

''(VI) the producer's share of the crop; or''.

(b) ADDITIONAL AVAILABILITY OF COVERAGE.—Section 196(l) of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (7 U.S.C. 7333(l)) is amended—

(1) by striking paragraph (3); and

(2) by redesignating paragraphs (4) and (5) as paragraphs (3) and (4), respectively.

(c) PERIOD OF AVAILABILITY.—Paragraph (4) of section 196(l) of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (7 U.S.C. 7333(l)), as redesignated by subsection (b)(2), is amended—

(1) by striking ''Except as provided in paragraph (3)(A), additional'' and inserting ''Additional''; and

(2) by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2023''.

Subtitle F—Other Matters

SEC. 11601. UNDER SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE FOR FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION.

(a) REFERENCES TO FORMER UNDER SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE FOR FARM AND FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL SERVICES.—

(1) FOOD AID CONSULTATIVE GROUP.—Section 205(b) of the Food for Peace Act (7 U.S.C. 1725(b)) is amended by striking paragraph (2) and inserting the following new paragraph:

''(2) the Under Secretary of Agriculture for Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs;''.

(2) OFFICE OF RISK MANAGEMENT.—Section 226A(d)(1) of the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 6933(d)(1)) is amended by striking ''Under Secretary of Agriculture for Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services'' and inserting ''Under Secretary of Agriculture for Farm Production and Conservation''.

(3) MULTIAGENCY TASK FORCE.—Section 242(b)(3) of the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 6952(b)(3)) is amended by striking ''Under Secretary for Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services'' and inserting ''Under Secretary of Agriculture for Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs''.

(4) INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE ON MINORITY CAREERS IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS.—Section 625(c)(1)(A) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1131c(c)(1)(A)) is amended by striking ''Under Secretary for Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services'' and inserting ''Under Secretary of Agriculture for Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs''.

(b) REFERENCES TO OTHER DESIGNATED DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS.—

(1) DEFINITIONS UNDER CONSOLIDATED FARM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT ACT.—Section 343(a)(13)(D) of the Agricultural Act of 1961 (7 U.S.C. 1991(a)(13)(D)) is amended—

(A) in clause (ii)—

(i) by inserting ''(or other official designated by the Secretary)'' after ''Under Secretary for Rural Development''; and

(ii) by inserting ''or designated official'' after ''Under Secretary'' each other place it appears; and

(B) in clause (iii)—

(i) by inserting ''(or other official designated by the Secretary)'' after ''Under Secretary for Rural Development''; and

(ii) in subclauses (III) and (IV), by inserting ''or designated official'' after ''Under Secretary'' both places it appears.

(2) NATIONAL SHEEP INDUSTRY IMPROVEMENT CENTER.—Section 210(f)(3)(B)(i) of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (7 U.S.C. 1627b(f)(3)(B)(i)) is amended by inserting ''(or other official designated by the Secretary of Agriculture)'' after ''Under Secretary of Agriculture for Rural Development''.

(3) INTERTRIBAL TOURISM DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS.—Section 6(a)(2)(A) of the Native American Business Development, Trade Promotion, and Tourism Act of 2000 (25 U.S.C. 4305(a)(2)(A)) is amended by inserting ''(or other official designated by the Secretary of Agriculture)'' after ''Under Secretary of Agriculture for Rural Development''.

(4) STATE PLANS FOR VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES.—Section 101(a)(11)(C) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 721(a)(11)(C)) is amended by inserting ''(or other official designated by the Secretary of Agriculture)'' after ''Under Secretary for Rural Development of the Department of Agriculture''.

SEC. 11602. AUTHORITY OF SECRETARY TO CARRY OUT CERTAIN PROGRAMS UNDER DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1994.

Section 296(b)(8) of the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 7014(b)(8)) is amended by inserting '', section 772 of the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2018, or the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018'' before the period at the end.

SEC. 11603. CONFERENCE REPORT REQUIREMENT THRESHOLD.

Section 14208(a)(3)(A) of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2255b(a)(3)(A)) is amended by striking ''$10,000'' and inserting ''$75,000''.

SEC. 11604. NATIONAL AGRICULTURE IMAGERY PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Administrator of the Farm Service Agency, shall carry out a national agriculture imagery program to annually acquire aerial imagery during agricultural growing seasons from the continental United States.

(b) DATA.—The aerial imagery acquired under this section shall—

(1) consist of high resolution processed digital imagery;

(2) be made available in a format that can be provided to Federal, State, and private sector entities;

(3) be technologically compatible with geospatial information technology; and

(4) be consistent with the standards established by the Federal Geographic Data Committee.

(c) SUPPLEMENTAL SATELLITE IMAGERY.—The Secretary of Agriculture may supplement the aerial imagery collected under this section with satellite imagery.

(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section $23,000,000 for fiscal year 2019 and each fiscal year thereafter.

SEC. 11605. REPORT ON INCLUSION OF NATURAL STONE PRODUCTS IN COMMODITY PROMOTION, RESEARCH, AND INFORMATION ACT OF 1996.

Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture shall submit to the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives a report examining the effect the establishment of a Natural Stone Research and Promotion Board pursuant to the Commodity Promotion, Research, and Information Act of 1996 (7 U.S.C. 7401 et seq.) would have on the natural stone industry, including how such a program would effect—

(1) research conducted on, and the promotion of, natural stone;

(2) the development and expansion of domestic markets for natural stone;

(3) economic activity of the natural stone industry subject to such a Board;

(4) economic development in rural areas; and

(5) benefits to consumers in the United States of natural stone products.

SEC. 11606. SOUTH CAROLINA INCLUSION IN VIRGINIA/CAROLINA PEANUT PRODUCING REGION.

Section 1308(c)(2)(B)(iii) of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (7 U.S.C. 7958(c)(2)(B)(iii)) is amended by striking ''Virginia and North Carolina'' and inserting ''Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina''.

SEC. 11607. ESTABLISHMENT OF FOOD LOSS AND WASTE REDUCTION LIAISON.

Subtitle A of the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 6901 et seq.), as amended by section 11204, is further amended by adding at the end the following:

''SEC. 222. FOOD LOSS AND WASTE REDUCTION LIAISON.

''(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall establish within the Office of the Secretary a Food Loss and Waste Reduction Liaison to coordinate Federal programs to measure and reduce the incidence of food loss and waste in accordance with this section.

''(b) DUTIES.—The Food Loss and Waste Reduction Liaison shall—

''(1) coordinate food loss and waste reduction efforts with other Federal agencies, including the Environmental Protection Agency and the Food and Drug Administration;

''(2) support and promote Federal programs to measure and reduce the incidence of food loss and waste and increase food recovery;

''(3) provide information to, and serve as a resource for, entities engaged in food loss and waste reduction and food recovery concerning the availability of, and eligibility requirements for, participation in Federal programs;

''(4) raise awareness of the liability protections afforded under the Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act (42 U.S.C. 1791) to persons engaged in food loss and waste reduction and food recovery; and

''(5) make recommendations with respect to expanding food recovery efforts and reducing the incidence of food loss and waste.

''(c) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—For purposes of carrying out the duties under subsection (b), the Food Loss and Waste Reduction Liaison may enter into contracts or cooperative agreements with the research centers of the Research, Education, and Economics mission area, institutions of higher education (as defined in section 101 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001)), or nonprofit organizations for—

''(1) the development of educational materials;

''(2) the conduct of workshops and courses; or

''(3) the conduct of research on best practices with respect to food loss and waste reduction and food recovery.''.

SEC. 11608. COTTON CLASSIFICATION SERVICES.

Section 3a of the Act of March 3, 1927 (7 U.S.C. 473a), is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsection (g) as subsection (h); and

(2) by inserting after subsection (f) the following new subsection:

''(g) HIRING AUTHORITY.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, employees hired to provide cotton classification services pursuant to this section may work up to 240 calendar days in a service year and may be rehired noncompetitively every year in the same or a successor position if they meet performance and conduct expectations, as determined by the Secretary.''.

SEC. 11609. CENTURY FARMS PROGRAM.

The Secretary shall establish a program under which the Secretary recognizes any farm that—

(1) a State department of agriculture or similar statewide agricultural organization recognizes as a Century Farm; or

(2)(A) is defined as a farm or ranch under section 4284.902 of title 7, Code of Federal Regulations (as in effect on the date of enactment of this Act);

(B) has been in continuous operation for at least 100 years; and

(C) has been owned by the same family for at least 100 consecutive years, as verified through deeds, wills, abstracts, tax statements, or other similar legal documents considered appropriate by the Secretary.

SEC. 11610. REPORT ON AGRICULTURAL INNOVATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture, in consultation with the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency and the Commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration, shall prepare and submit a report to the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate on plans for improving the Federal government's policies and procedures with respect to gene editing and other precision plant breeding methods.

(b) CONTENT.—The report under subsection (a) shall include plans to implement measures designed to ensure that—

(1) the United States continues to provide a favorable environment for research and development in precision plant breeding innovation and maintains its leadership with respect to that innovation;

(2) for plants for which premarket review is required under the Plant Protection Act (7 U.S.C. 7701 et seq.), the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (7 U.S.C. 136), or the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, the process for such review is designed—

(A) to minimize regulatory burden while assuring protection of public health and welfare; and

(B) to ensure that resources of the Department of Agriculture are focused on plants with less familiar characteristics, more complex risk pathways, or both;

(3) each agency referred to in subsection (a) recognizes that certain applications of gene editing in plants do not warrant such a premarket review process;

(4) each agency referred to in subsection (a) clearly communicates the rationale for the regulatory policies and decisions of such agency to the public through broadly available and easily accessible tools;

(5) categories of plants that are familiar and have a history of safe use be identified and exempted from such premarket review or be subject to an expedited, independent premarket review process for which data requirements are reduced;

(6) regulatory processes of each agency referred to in subsection (a) are predictable, efficient, not duplicative, and designed to accommodate rapid advances in plant breeding technology; and

(7) where Federal law provides for regulatory oversight of plant breeding technology by more than one Federal agency, the relevant Federal agencies enter into appropriate interagency agreements to shift responsibility for particular

categories of plant products and regulatory activities for purposes of meeting the goals specified in paragraphs (1) through (6).

SEC. 11611. REPORT ON DOG IMPORTATION.

Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture, in consultation with the Secretary of Commerce, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, and the Secretary of Homeland Security, shall submit to the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate a report that contains the following information, with respect to the importation of dogs into the United States:

(1) An estimate of the number of dogs so imported each year.

(2) The number of dogs so imported for resale.

(3) The number of dogs for which such importation for resale was requested but denied because such importation failed to meet the requirements of section 18 of the Animal Welfare Act (7 U.S.C. 2148).

(4) The Secretary's recommendations for Federal statutory changes determined to be necessary for such importation for resale to meet the requirements of such section.

SEC. 11612. PROHIBITION ON SLAUGHTER OF DOGS AND CATS FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION.

The Animal Welfare Act (7 U.S.C. 2131 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

"SEC. 30. PROHIBITION OF SLAUGHTER OF DOGS AND CATS FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION.

''(a) PROHIBITION.—No person may—

''(1) knowingly slaughter a dog or cat for human consumption; or

''(2) knowingly ship, transport, move, deliver, receive, possess, purchase, sell, or donate—

''(A) a dog or cat to be slaughtered for human consumption; or

''(B) dog or cat parts for human consumption.

''(b) PENALTY.—Any person who violates this section shall be subject to imprisonment for not more than 1 year, or a fine of not more than $2,500, or both.

''(c) SCOPE.—Subsection (a) shall apply only with respect to conduct in or affecting interstate or foreign commerce or within the special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States.

''(d) CONFLICT WITH STATE LAW.—This section shall not be construed to limit any State or local law or regulations protecting the welfare of animals or to prevent a State or local governing body from adopting and enforcing animal welfare laws and regulations that are more stringent than this section.''.

Subtitle G—Protecting Interstate Commerce

SEC. 11701. PROHIBITION AGAINST INTERFERENCE BY STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS WITH PRODUCTION OR MANUFACTURE OF ITEMS IN OTHER STATES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Consistent with article I, section 8, clause 3 of the Constitution of the United States, the government of a State or locality therein shall not impose a standard or condition on the production or manufacture of any agricultural product sold or offered for sale in interstate commerce if—

(1) such production or manufacture occurs in another State; and

(2) the standard or condition is in addition to the standards and conditions applicable to such production or manufacture pursuant to—

(A) Federal law; and

(B) the laws of the State and locality in which such production or manufacture occurs.

(b) AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''agricultural product'' has the meaning given such term in section 207 of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (7 U.S.C. 1626).

SEC. 11702. FEDERAL CAUSE OF ACTION TO CHALLENGE STATE REGULATION OF INTERSTATE COMMERCE.

(a) PRIVATE RIGHT OF ACTION.—A person, including a producer, transporter, distributer, consumer, laborer, trade association, the Federal Government, a State government, or a unit of local government, which is affected by a regulation of a State or unit of local government which regulates any aspect of an agricultural product, including any aspect of the method of production, which is sold in interstate commerce, or any means or instrumentality through which such an agriculture product is sold in interstate commerce, may bring an action in the appropriate court to invalidate such a regulation and seek damages for economic loss resulting from such regulation.

(b) PRELIMINARY INJUNCTION.—Upon a motion of the plaintiff, the court shall issue a preliminary injunction to preclude the State or unit of local government from enforcing the regulation at issue until such time as the court enters a final judgment in the case, unless the State or unit of local government proves by clear and convincing evidence that—

(1) the State or unit of local government is likely to prevail on the merits at trial; and

(2) the injunction would cause irreparable harm to the State or unit of local government.

(c) STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS.—No action shall be maintained under this section unless it is commenced within 10 years after the cause of action arose.

The Acting CHAIR. No amendment to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be in order except those printed in part C of House Report 115–677. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question.

AMENDMENT NO. 1 OFFERED BY MR. KING OF IOWA

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 1 printed in part C of House Report 115–677.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk made in order by the rule.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 134, line 7, strike ''or''.

Page 134, after line 7, insert the following (and redesignate the subsequent subparagraph accordingly):

''(C) the use of existing drainage systems, or to upgrade drainage systems, to provide irrigation or water efficiency; or

Page 134, line 14, insert ''DRAINAGE DISTRICTS,'' after ''IRRIGATION ASSOCIATIONS,''.

Page 134, line 18, insert ''drainage district,'' after ''irrigation association,''.

Page 135, lines 5 and 6, insert ''drainage district,'' after ''irrigation association,''.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 891, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Iowa.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I bring this amendment, amendment No. 1, to help supplement some of the good programs that are already existing within the existing farm bill, and what it does is it allows drainage districts to also compete for EQIP money along with the irrigation districts that exist in the country.

I have worked in this arena for a lot of my adult life, and there are roughly 2,000 drainage districts in the State of Iowa, but the important part of this is that we are concerned about water quality and water management and nutrient management, and we have developed technology that, when a producer goes into a pattern tile system, a drainage system—and we used to, and we still do in most places—we just drain all that water out down to the bottom of the tile, and we do that for 12 months out of the year.

And what happens is the nutrients that are applied, the nitrogen and the phosphorous, in particular, go down the stream, and it impacts the water quality downstream; and it contributes to the hypoxia in the Gulf Coast, as well.

So we have developed a method by which especially the flattest ground in the corn belt—this began at least 8 million acres that were under a 2 percent grade—could be pattern tiled and put stop logs in and store the water in the subsoil; drain it down for the 2 weeks in the spring that we are in the field, let the water table come back up again, hold it there, drain it down again for the 2 weeks in the fall that we are in the field, and let it come up the rest of the time.

While that is going on, the root system of our crop—corn and soybeans in my country, different crops in others—will draw up those nutrients out of that water and they will pull the nitrogen out, they will pull the phosphorous out, and we can minimize the application of our fertilizer. In doing so and having a better utilization of our fertilizer, we can also see the water that finally does go down the stream be a far higher quality.

So this allows EQIP to be spent also in drainage districts for that purpose. It is good for water quality. It is good for production efficiency, and it is something that I think has a big future for the United States of America.

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

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition, even though I am in favor of this.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, this is something that I have been working on up in my area for some time as well.

We have the Red River Valley, which is a river that flows north, and it always causes a lot of trouble with the

flooding and so forth, a lot of erosion problems, and we have been looking at ways to deal with this.

One of the ways that we found that really works is to put in pattern tile along with lift stations and pumps and stop logs and so forth that allow you to control this water and keep it until the water goes down. You can let it out at the appropriate time. It improves the water quality, and it will help us with flooding situations.

Our water management districts up there need this authority. They would very much use this, and it would be a good thing for not only stopping a lot of erosion, it would also improve the water quality substantially in our watershed up there.

Mr. Chairman, I strongly support the amendment. I encourage my colleagues to support it as well, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank the gentleman from Minnesota. They understand the water quality issues and the drainage issues at least as well as we do in Iowa, and working together on this kind of a proposal, I think, will yield good results all the way down, especially the Mississippi River, the hypoxia in the Gulf.

This is good for the entire United States of America. It is something that I wish we would have done some time ago, but I appreciate the support for this amendment. I urge its adoption.

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

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 2 OFFERED BY MR. GIBBS

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 2 printed in part C of House Report 115–677.

Mr. GIBBS. I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of subtitle D of title II, add the following:

SEC. 2407. SENSE OF CONGRESS ON INCREASED WATERSHED-BASED COLLABORATION.

It is the sense of Congress that the Federal Government should recognize and encourage partnerships at the watershed level between nonpoint sources and regulated point sources to advance the goals of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act and provide benefits to farmers, landowners, and the public.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 891, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. GIBBS) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. GIBBS. Mr. Chairman, this amendment is really a sense of Congress that will help support water and wastewater utilities innovating to meet Clean Water Act targets more effectively and potentially at lower costs to the utility by working throughout the watershed on water quality improvements.

Utilities often need to look at costly end-of-pipe treatment to remove nutrients like phosphorus and nitrogen. These facilities can cost hundreds of millions of dollars, and this is particularly important in Ohio where nutrient management is an important concern.

This commonsense approach that many water and wastewater utilities would like to take is to work with farmers and landowners in the watershed to help reduce the nutrient runoff in the waterways in the first place, which in turn helps reduce the cost to utility ratepayers for water treatment. This would produce a win-win for farmers, local communities, and utilities. The farmers will receive an additional revenue stream, and local communities will see lower fees for their water and wastewater services on their utility bills.

For example, a utility in the city of Green Bay, Wisconsin, has put this practice to work on a pilot basis, and instead of spending $200 million on phosphorus removal treatment at the end of the pipe, they are spending an estimated $50 million investing in conservation practices with local farmers to reduce nutrient loading throughout the watershed.

This amendment aligns squarely with the objectives of the farm bill conservation programs and will allow greater leveraging of public-private partnerships, and it would also benefit private entities that operate within MMDS permits on TMDLs on their loads. They can encourage them to work with landowners and farmers in the watershed to reduce the TMDLs and reduce the nutrient load in the watershed completely so we bring down the whole TMDL issue by working together and instituting more conservation practices and partnerships with utilities and other private entities with the local farmers and landowners.

Mr. Chairman, I encourage support of this conservation program to help provide cleaner water for all of us in the watersheds, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Chairman, I claim time in opposition to the amendment, even though I am not opposed to it.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Chairman, I don't oppose this amendment. I don't really have any problem with it.

We are using RCPP in my part of the world. I have not heard any request for this, but I don't think it does any harm.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GIBBS. Mr. Chairman, I just want to thank the ranking member for the support, and I think it is important because there are numerous examples of where, if we work collaboratively together in a watershed, we can reduce the nutrient load and also encourage more economic activity, and it is also beneficial for the farmers and landowners.

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the support, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. GIBBS).

The amendment was agreed to.

The Acting CHAIR. It is now order to consider amendment No. 3 printed in part C of House Report 115–677.

AMENDMENT NO. 4 OFFERED BY MR. ROGERS OF ALABAMA

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 4 printed in part C of House Report 115–677.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of subtitle A of title IV, insert the following:

SEC. ___. MULTIVITAMIN-MINERAL DIETARY SUPPLEMENTS ELIGIBLE FOR PURCHASE WITH SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE BENEFITS.

Section 3 of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2012) is amended—

(1) in subsection (k) by—

(A) striking ''and (9)'' and inserting ''(9)'', and

(B) inserting before the period at the end the following: '', and (10) a multivitamin-mineral dietary supplement for home consumption'',

(2) by inserting after subsection (m) the following:

''(m–1) 'Multivitamin-mineral dietary supplement' means a substance that—

''(1) provides at least half of the vitamins and minerals for which the National Academy of Medicine establishes dietary reference intakes, at 50 percent or more of the daily value for the intended life stage per daily serving as determined by the Food and Drug Administration; and

''(2) does not exceed the tolerable upper intake levels for those nutrients for which an established tolerable upper intake level is determined by the National Academy of Medicine.'', and

(3) in subsection (q)(2) by striking ''and spices'' and inserting ''spices, and multivitamin-mineral dietary supplements''.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 891, the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. ROGERS) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Alabama.

□ 1900

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Chairman, I rise today to offer my amendment, which would allow SNAP users to purchase multivitamins.

First, I would like to thank Chairman CONAWAY for his hard work during this farm bill process. H.R. 2 is a bill that will strengthen the farm safety net for America's farmers and ranchers, and give folks on SNAP a path out of poverty with workforce training programs.

The multivitamins can serve as an effective bridge between what Americans should eat and what they actually consume. Repeated studies have shown that Americans do not consume essential nutrients at recommended levels through diet alone. Low-income and older Americans are more likely than others to have insufficient and nutritionally inadequate diets.

Multivitamins are not a replacement for a healthy diet, but these supplements can help fill that nutrient gap. Safe, convenient, and scientifically supported multivitamins represent a low-cost immediate solution for SNAP recipients looking to ensure their families receive adequate intake of essential vitamins and minerals.

It is my hope that by empowering low-income Americans to achieve optimal nutrition, SNAP recipients will develop lifelong habits that will eventually break the cycle of poverty and allow them to reach their full potential.

Mr. Chair, I urge passage of this commonsense, no-cost amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. ROGERS).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 5 OFFERED BY MR. BERGMAN

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 5 printed in part C of House Report 115–677.

Mr. BERGMAN. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of my amendment to H.R. 2.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 326, after line 6, insert the following:

SEC. _____. GAO REPORT ON ABILITY OF THE FARM CREDIT SYSTEM TO MEET THE AGRICULTURAL CREDIT NEEDS OF INDIAN TRIBES AND THEIR MEMBERS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall—

(1) study the agricultural credit needs of farms, ranches, and related agricultural businesses that are owned or operated by—

(A) Indian tribes on tribal lands; or

(B) enrolled members of Indian tribes on Indian allotments; and

(2) determine whether the institutions of the Farm Credit System have sufficient authority and resources to meet the needs.

(b) DEFINITION OF INDIAN TRIBE.—In subsection (a), the term ''Indian tribe'' means an Indian tribal entity that is eligible for funding and services from the Bureau of Indian Affairs by virtue of the status of the entity as an Indian tribe.

(c) REPORT TO THE CONGRESS.—Within 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall prepare and submit to the Committees on Agriculture and on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives a written report that contains the findings of the study conducted under subsection (a). If the Comptroller General finds that the institutions of the Farm Credit System do not have sufficient authority or resources to meet the needs referred to in subsection (a), the report shall include such legislative and other recommendations as the Comptroller General determines would result in a system under which the needs are met in an equitable and effective manner.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 891, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BERGMAN) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

Mr. BERGMAN. Mr. Chair, my amendment is simple. It directs GAO to study the credit needs of agricultural businesses that are owned and operated by Indian Tribes on Tribal lands.

My district is home to eight federally recognized Tribes, and it has been my honor to represent each of them over the last 16 months. We often hear about how most Tribes are located within food deserts, but we must remember, most Tribes are also located within credit deserts.

Credit deserts occur when there are very few lenders available in a region. The lack of credit options severely impacts the ability of Tribes and Tribal Members to invest and expand their agricultural businesses. By directing GAO to study the unique credit needs of Tribes, we can identify solutions that will result in a system under which their needs are met in an equitable and effective manner.

The Farm Credit System is vitally important for agricultural communities in rural America. Without sufficient access to credit, young farmers will not be able to begin a career and experienced farmers will not be able to expand their businesses. Tribes across the country need fair and equal access to all agricultural programs so they can promote their historical and cultural knowledge for the next generation of American farmers.

This farm bill represents an investment in rural America. With net farm income dropping by nearly 50 percent over the past 4 years, Congress must recognize the vital role our agricultural communities play and provide the resources they need for success.

I thank Chairman CONAWAY for his leadership in bringing forth a bill that is responsive to the needs of farm country.

Mr. Chairman, I urge support for my amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BERGMAN).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 6 OFFERED BY MR. ARRINGTON

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 6 printed in part C of House Report 115–677.

Mr. ARRINGTON. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 337, after line 18, insert the following:

SEC. _____. REFINANCING OF CERTAIN RURAL HOSPITAL DEBT.

Subtitle D of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1981 et seq.) is amended by inserting after section 341 the following:

''SEC. 342. REFINANCING OF CERTAIN RURAL HOSPITAL DEBT.

''Assistance under section 306(a) for a community facility or under section 310B may include the refinancing of a debt obligation of a rural hospital as an eligible loan or loan guarantee purpose if the assistance would help preserve access to a health service in a rural community and meaningfully improve the financial position of the hospital.''.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 891, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARRINGTON) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. ARRINGTON. Mr. Chair, I want to thank Chairman CONAWAY for his leadership on H.R. 2. This farm bill is critical to this country's food supply and to rural America. I want to thank him for a great first step of getting it out of the committee.

We have strengthened the safety net to provide stability to the ag economy here in the United States. We have made an important investment in rural America and rural infrastructure, especially around the technology backbone, and we have also fully funded R&D for agriculture, which allows us to be globally competitive and gives our producers an advantage.

Lastly, but certainly not least, I am very proud of the reforms to the Food Stamp program that encourage work. We have got 6 million surplus jobs, and we don't need policies that trap people in a cycle of dependency on government and poverty. It is not the right thing to do to them. It is not right for the taxpayers. It is not good for America.

Mr. Chairman, the amendment I am offering today would provide a critical lifeline to rural hospitals by expanding the eligibility requirements in two of USDA's loan programs, the Business and Industry Guaranteed Loan Program and the Community Facilities Direct Loan and Guaranteed Loan Program, to allow these community hospitals to refinance their existing debt under these programs.

This will lower their cost of capital and free up precious resources needed to keep these facilities operating. If we are going to maintain the ability to feed our own people and fuel the American economy, we need a strong and sustainable rural America. The heart of rural communities is access to quality healthcare. What would this country be without the hardworking energy and agriculture producers in small towns across this great land?

There are over 5,000 hospitals in the United States, and roughly half of them are in rural areas, serving one out of every five Americans. Without access to basic medical services, communities in America's breadbasket and energy basin would not survive.

Since 2010, over 80 rural hospitals across the country have closed, including 11 in my home State of Texas. With

almost half of existing hospitals operating at a loss, the number of these hospitals that are closing are guaranteed to go up. In less than 10 years, a whopping 25 percent of our Nation's rural hospitals could close. For many of the nearly 700 rural hospitals struggling to keep their doors open, this will give them the tools and the resources necessary to maintain their viability and to continue to serving their communities.

If we fail to act and some of these hospitals close down, it could result in tens of thousands of lost jobs in rural communities across the country. That would cripple rural communities across this great Nation and potentially devastate our agriculture and energy economy, affecting all Americans, including our friends in urban and suburban areas.

I would like to conclude my remarks by thanking again, the chairman, my friend and fellow west Texan, for his leadership on this farm bill. I am proud to support it. I urge my colleagues to support my amendment, so we can protect rural America by giving our community hospitals the certainty and the resources they need to keep our people and our communities healthy.

I include in the RECORD a letter of support from the National Rural Health Association.

NATIONAL RURAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION,
May 16, 2018.

Hon. JODEY ARRINGTON,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE ARRINGTON: The National Rural Health Association (NRHA), a nonprofit membership organization with more than 21,000 members in rural America, applauds your proposed amendment to H.R. 2.

Rural America encompasses more than 90% of the nation's land area, houses 46 million residents, and 20% of our nation's population. Still, rural communities make up only 3% of job growth since the Great Recession, and many rural areas continue to see increasing unemployment. From 2010 to 2014, rural areas saw more businesses close than open. Rural hospitals and providers are a critical part of the rural community, and often are the backbone of the rural economy. Eighty-three rural hospitals have closed since 2010, and 673 are vulnerable to closure. If the 673 vulnerable hospitals closed, rural patients would need to seek alternatives for 11.7 million hospitals visits, 99,000 health care workers would need to find new jobs, and $277 billion in GPD would be lost.

When a rural community is faced with a hospital struggling to remain open, the community often looks for resources to keep this essential point of care. The USDA has the experience and expertise to help struggling rural hospitals negotiate, reorganize, and revitalize. Rural hospitals are an essential pillar of their communities and are necessary to create the economic growth that is direly needed in rural communities. No business wants to relocate to a community that does not have an emergency room to care for an employee injured at work or a place for a young worker to deliver a baby or take a sick child. Allowing refinancing of debt obligations through the Business and Industry and Community Facilities Loan Programs supports communities in improving the financial position of the hospital to maintain necessary local access to care in rural communities.

We applaud you for your efforts to ensure that these important loan programs can be used by rural hospitals in need and appreciate your leadership in introducing this important and timely amendment. Please contact Jessica Seigel in my Government Affairs office if NRHA can offer more support on this or future health issues.

Sincerely,

ALAN MORGAN,
Chief Executive Officer.

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

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Minnesota is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Chair, I appreciate the intent of the amendment, but there are a couple of problems here. One is that I have got some hospitals in my area that have used this to establish rural hospitals.

There is a limited amount of money available in this fund, and what you are going to do here with this is you are going to increase the competition for it. There is already an increase in fees on the loans in this bill. So, for smaller communities, it is going to make it more difficult.

But the bigger problem I have with this, as I understand it, this bill raises the limits for what is a rural area from 20,000 in the case of broadband and water, and 10,000 on waste. These are numbers that were put in in the 2008 farm bill when I was chairman. I just want to point out to people: The biggest city in my district is 32,000 people. I have 350 towns in my district, and only 12 of them are over 10,000.

So what this does is it puts us in a situation where we are going to not be able to build hospitals because they are going to be sucked up by these bigger communities in these other parts of the country.

So I just think this is something that is not needed. If you have got a town of 50,000 people, you can go get financing some other place. You don't need to be financed by USDA.

Mr. Chair, I oppose the amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ARRINGTON. Mr. Chair, I ask unanimous consent to reclaim the balance of my time.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. ARRINGTON. Mr. Chair, I respect the ranking member's comments, and I appreciate his commitment to rural America, but I would submit that my hometown, which is over the 20,000 threshold but under the 50,000, has every bit of the challenges that small towns at 20,000 and below face. They deserve access to quality care. This amendment, by the way, does not change that threshold. However, that threshold is changed in the farm bill. It reserves the direct lending portion of the program at $2.8 billion for those communities at 20,000 and below, and it actually expands the Guaranteed Loan Program that has delivered capital to levels close to $150 million. That program would be the one we would expand for communities above 20,000 but below 50,000.

Again, Plainview, Texas, is a rural small town. It is an ag community, and if the people of Plainview and towns like that don't have access to healthcare, then they cannot sustain the ag economy in west Texas.

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

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Chair, I just have a problem with a town of 50,000 being called a rural town. The average town in my district is 1,000 people, 1,500 people. Those are the folks who cannot afford to do this. That is what this program is for.

I don't know how much money we have wasted on broadband in this Congress, and one of the reasons we wasted it is we had a 50,000 population limit. What happened is these telecom companies and cable companies went into these bigger communities because that is where they could make money, and they overbuilt the systems two or three times.

Did they come out in the rural areas and do anything? No. So we still don't have broadband, and in towns of 50,000, we have three systems. So what I was trying to do in 2008 was trying to focus this stuff down to where it—in my opinion—belongs. In your part of the world, that might be the thing to do, but this does not work in my district, and I don't agree with it.

Mr. Chair, I encourage my colleagues to oppose the amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARRINGTON).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 7 OFFERED BY MR. JONES

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 7 printed in part C of House Report 115–677.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 387, after line 24, insert the following:

SEC. ____. LIMITED EXCLUSION OF MILITARY BASE RESIDENTS FROM DEFINITION OF RURAL AREA.

(a) PROGRAMS UNDER THE CONSOLIDATED FARM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT ACT.—Section 343(a)(13) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1991(a)(13)), as amended by section 6218 of this Act, is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''(H)'' and inserting ''(I)''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(I) LIMITED EXCLUSION OF MILITARY BASE POPULATIONS.—The first 1,500 individuals who reside in housing located on a military base shall not be included in determining whether an area is 'rural' or a 'rural area'.''.

(b) RURAL BROADBAND LOANS AND GUARANTEE PROGRAM.—Section 601(b)(3) of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C.

950bb(b)(3)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(C) EXCLUSION OF MILITARY BASE POPULATIONS.—The first 1,500 individuals who reside in housing located on a military base shall not be included in determining whether an area is a 'rural area'.''.

(c) DISTANCE LEARNING AND TELEMEDICINE LOANS AND GRANTS.—Section 2332 of the Food Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 950aaa–1) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(4) RURAL AREA.—The term 'rural area' has the meaning given the term in section 601(b)(3) of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936.''.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 891, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Chairman, I thank the chairman and the ranking member for allowing me to have this opportunity to speak about this amendment.

The amendment allows military towns who are on the bubble of eligibility for USDA rural development programs the ability to apply for loans and grants for their communities.

Given the transitory nature of military service, town populations change frequently and having this buffer will allow otherwise ineligible communities to have the ability to apply and compete for assistance in funding critical facilities such as fire departments, hospitals, and children's centers.

□ 1915

Allowing these communities to compete for financial assistance does not increase spending for these programs. We are probably only talking about four military towns at this point. So these towns are in the rural part of America, and, again, we are just saying that they should have the ability to compete.

That is the amendment, the best I can explain it, and I ask for support of the amendment.

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

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 8 OFFERED BY MR. LATTA

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 8 printed in part C of House Report 115–677.

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 397, after line 12, insert the following:

Subtitle I—Precision Agriculture Connectivity

SEC. 6801. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) Precision agriculture technologies and practices allow farmers to significantly increase crop yields, eliminate overlap in operations, and reduce inputs such as seed, fertilizer, pesticides, water, and fuel.

(2) These technologies allow farmers to collect data in real time about their fields, automate field management, and maximize resources.

(3) Studies estimate that precision agriculture technologies can reduce agricultural operation costs by up to 25 dollars per acre and increase farm yields by up to 70 percent by 2050.

(4) The critical cost savings and productivity benefits of precision agriculture cannot be realized without the availability of reliable broadband Internet access service delivered to the agricultural land of the United States.

(5) The deployment of broadband Internet access service to unserved and underserved agricultural land is critical to the United States economy and to the continued leadership of the United States in global food production.

(6) Despite the growing demand for broadband Internet access service on agricultural land, broadband Internet access service is not consistently available where needed for agricultural operations.

(7) The Federal Communications Commission has an important role to play in the deployment of broadband Internet access service on unserved and underserved agricultural land to promote precision agriculture.

SEC. 6802. TASK FORCE FOR REVIEWING THE CONNECTIVITY AND TECHNOLOGY NEEDS OF PRECISION AGRICULTURE.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

(1) the term ''broadband Internet access service'' has the meaning given the term in section 8.2 of title 47, Code of Federal Regulations, or any successor regulation;

(2) the term ''Commission'' means the Federal Communications Commission;

(3) the term ''Department'' means the Department of Agriculture; and

(4) the term ''Task Force'' means the Task Force for Reviewing the Connectivity and Technology Needs of Precision Agriculture in the United States established under subsection (b).

(b) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Commission shall establish the Task Force for Reviewing the Connectivity and Technology Needs of Precision Agriculture in the United States.

(c) DUTIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Task Force shall consult with the Secretary, or a designee of the Secretary, and collaborate with public and private stakeholders in the agriculture and technology fields to—

(A) identify and measure current gaps in the availability of broadband Internet access service on agricultural land;

(B) develop policy recommendations to promote the rapid, expanded deployment of broadband Internet access service on unserved agricultural land, with a goal of achieving reliable capabilities on 95 percent of agricultural land in the United States by 2025;

(C) promote effective policy and regulatory solutions that encourage the adoption of broadband Internet access service on farms and ranches and promote precision agriculture;

(D) recommend specific new rules or amendments to existing rules of the Commission that the Commission should issue to achieve the goals and purposes of the policy recommendations described in subparagraph (B);

(E) recommend specific steps that the Commission should take to obtain reliable and standardized data measurements of the availability of broadband Internet access service as may be necessary to target funding support, from existing or future programs of the Commission dedicated to the deployment of broadband Internet access service, to unserved agricultural land in need of broadband Internet access service; and

(F) recommend specific steps that the Commission should consider to ensure that the expertise of the Secretary and available farm data are reflected in existing or future programs of the Commission dedicated to the infrastructure deployment of broadband Internet access service and to direct available funding to unserved agricultural land where needed.

(2) CONSULTATION.—The Secretary, or a designee of the Secretary, shall explain and make available to the Task Force the expertise, data mapping information, and resources of the Department that the Department uses to identify cropland, ranchland, and other areas with agricultural operations that may be helpful in developing the recommendations required under paragraph (1).

(3) LIST OF AVAILABLE FEDERAL PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary and the Commission shall jointly submit to the Task Force a list of all Federal programs or resources available for the expansion of broadband Internet access service on unserved agricultural land to assist the Task Force in carrying out the duties of the Task Force.

(d) MEMBERSHIP.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Task Force shall be—

(A) composed of not more than 15 voting members who shall—

(i) be selected by the Chairman of the Commission, in consultation with the Secretary; and

(ii) include—

(I) agricultural producers representing diverse geographic regions and farm sizes, including owners and operators of farms of less than 100 acres;

(II) Internet service providers, including regional or rural fixed and mobile broadband Internet access service providers and telecommunications infrastructure providers;

(III) representatives from the electric cooperative industry;

(IV) representatives from the satellite industry;

(V) representatives from precision agriculture equipment manufacturers, including drone manufacturers, manufacturers of autonomous agricultural machinery, and manufacturers of farming robotics technologies; and

(VI) representatives from State and local governments; and

(B) fairly balanced in terms of technologies, points of view, and fields represented on the Task Force.

(2) PERIOD OF APPOINTMENT; VACANCIES.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—A member of the Committee appointed under paragraph (1)(A) shall serve for a single term of 2 years.

(B) VACANCIES.—Any vacancy in the Task Force—

(i) shall not affect the powers of the Task Force; and

(ii) shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment.

(3) EX-OFFICIO MEMBER.—The Secretary, or a designee of the Secretary, shall serve as an ex-officio, nonvoting member of the Task Force.

(e) REPORTS.—Not later than 1 year after the date on which the Commission establishes the Task Force, and annually thereafter, the Task Force shall submit to the Chairman of the Commission a report, which shall be made public not later than 30 days after the date on which the Chairman receives the report, that details—

(1) the status of fixed and mobile broadband Internet access service coverage of agricultural land;

(2) the projected future connectivity needs of agricultural operations, farmers, and ranchers; and

(3) the steps being taken to accurately measure the availability of broadband Internet access service on agricultural land and the limitations of current, as of the date of the report, measurement processes.

(f) TERMINATION.—The Commission shall renew the Task Force every 2 years until the Task Force terminates on January 1, 2025.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 891, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATTA) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Chairman, before I begin, I want to thank the gentleman from Texas, the chairman of the committee, for his hard work on the bill. I appreciate it.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of the precision agriculture connectivity amendment. This bipartisan amendment offered by myself and my friend from Iowa (Mr. LOEBSACK) recognizes the need for broadband in rural areas, especially on agricultural lands.

I represent the largest farm-income-producing district in the State of Ohio. Precision agriculture technologies and practices, like the use of IoT equipment, provide a great opportunity to improve U.S. farm productivity and sustainability.

However, the lack of high-speed broadband in rural areas, especially in farmlands and ranchlands, hinder the use of advanced technologies in agriculture operations.

My amendment seeks to improve broadband access to farmers and ranchers by establishing a task force for reviewing the connectivity and technology needs of precision agriculture.

The task force would be created primarily by the Federal Communications Commission due to their expertise in broadband. However, we also recognize the value of the United States Department of Agriculture in this discussion. Therefore, the FCC would be required to work in collaboration with the USDA on gathering broadband data and for selecting the members of the task force.

This task force would be required to identify current gaps in broadband coverage on agricultural lands and recommend policies that will promote their rapid, expanded deployment of broadband internet access service in unserved areas.

Simply put, this amendment would help to address a significant need in agricultural lands. Without broadband, farmers cannot utilize precision agriculture that allows for the collection of field data in real time that can help with crop management. This type of technology helps farmers maximize resources to reduce costs and increase crop yields by up to 70 percent by 2050, helping to maintain America's long-term leadership in global food production.

Furthermore, advanced machinery helps promote environmentally sustainable practices.

I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan amendment to help deploy much-needed broadband in unserved rural, agricultural areas.

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

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Chairman, I am not going to oppose this amendment, but I claim the time.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Chairman, I just want to point out that what you did in amendment No. 6 is going to undermine what you are trying to do in amendment No. 8 because it is going to allow the telecom companies to game the system.

I don't know how many billions of dollars we have wasted on those companies, and they have not accomplished hardly a thing. In fact, they are the ones that have stopped us from getting broadband in the rural parts of my district because they have vetoed some stuff that the State is doing that actually would work.

What we need to do to fix this is we need to change the Universal Service Fund, which is still tied to telephones. That is what got us telephones in all of rural America because we had a Universal Service Fund that was put on everybody's phone bill, and that gave us the money to go out and put the phones in every house.

They are still doing that today. So I have broadband at my deer camp, and the way I got it was because I had to put a telephone in in order for them to get the subsidies so they could run the line to my camp.

So, if you want to get this done, what really needs to be done is we need to change the Universal Service Fund and put it on broadband so we have got the money to go out into those underserved areas that are never going to get—there is one person a mile, one house a mile. Nobody can make money on it. So the only way that is going to work is if you have money coming from us to get those companies to go out and do it.

I agree with what the gentleman is trying to do here, and I am for what he is trying to do. But I think it is not going to happen because we have tried. We have spent billions of dollars, and nothing has happened so far. I have no confidence in these big telecom companies getting anything done.

So, with that, I have got it off my chest. I am not going to oppose the gentleman's amendment. God bless you and good luck.

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

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the gentleman's comments. Again, it is important because, again, in the area I represent in the State of Ohio, we have a lot of unserved areas.

When we talk about unserved and underserved areas, we want to make sure that, especially out in agricultural areas, that we get that area served because they are unserved at this time.

Mr. Chairman, I ask for support of the amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATTA).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 9 OFFERED BY MR. THOMPSON OF PENNSYLVANIA

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 9 printed in part C of House Report 115–677.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 429, after line 4, insert the following:

''(16) CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE.—Research and extension grants may be made under this section for projects relating to treating, mitigating, or eliminating chronic wasting disease.''.

Page 429, line 5, strike ''(16)'' and insert ''(17)''.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 891, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Chairman, Chairman CONAWAY, and Ranking Member PETERSON, I am grateful for the opportunity to be here today and speak on this amendment.

Chronic wasting disease is a wildlife health disorder impacting the cervid populations in 24 States, including Pennsylvania. The disease attacks the brain and nervous system of these animals, which include deer, elk, and mule and moose species, and always results in death.

Currently, we don't have a way to live test, and there is no cure or vaccine for the disease.

First identified in Colorado in the 1960s, CWD, as it is known, wasn't detected in Pennsylvania until 2012. However, the problem continues to grow as the State Game Commission has found a doubling of instances between 2016 and 2017.

If this trend continues, we will see devastating impacts on our cervid populations as well as related ecological consequences.

Title VII, the research portion of the farm bill, provides important support for innovation, research, and development at our Nation's land grant universities and agricultural colleges.

To help wildlife managers and States combat the problem of CWD, my amendment simply adds chronic wasting disease to section 7208, high-priority research and extension initiatives.

According to the CBO, this amendment would have no change in direct spending or revenue. However, this amendment would help focus some resources toward chronic wasting disease research.

A number of organizations have endorsed this amendment, including the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, Wildlife Management Institute, The Quality Deer Management Association, National Deer Alliance, National Wildlife Federation, and the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

I appreciate the opportunity today to offer this amendment and request the support of my colleagues.

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

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Chairman, I claim time in opposition, even though I am not opposed to the amendment.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. PETERSON. I agree that chronic wasting is a serious problem. We have it in Minnesota. We have spent a lot of money already in Minnesota on research as they have in Wisconsin and probably other places.

Does this do anything about the problem of this getting out of farm deer, farms and so forth? Because they just found in southern Minnesota that this was spread by deer getting out of a farm deer situation. They went in there, and every deer that was in that farm had chronic wasting disease.

Does it do anything in terms of doing research to go in and make sure those herds are not contributing to the problem?

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. PETERSON. I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Chairman, I thank the ranking member for that question. It is an important part of this discussion. Actually, first of all, it is important for people to understand that, let me just say upfront, chronic wasting disease is not transmitted to humans. There is no case of that. I know that wasn't your question, but I think that is important. It is not transmitted to humans.

I think it is important for those who might be listening to understand that. I don't want to create a fear factor here.

The research of the USDA so far shows there has never been a documented case of a farm deer transferring CWD to wild population.

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Chairman, reclaiming my time. That is not true.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. PETERSON. I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. All farm deer must be CWD certified, meaning testing for over 5 years, to be eligible for interstate shipment and commerce, and there is a USDA Federal rule, all farm deer in the Federal herd certification program must test 100 percent of their death loss for CWD, and State and Federal fish and wildlife agencies test a low percentage of wild deer for CWD.

So the focus on this is the wild deer. If a farm deer is determined to be CWD positive, in almost all cases, the entire herd is put down, as you had mentioned in your experience, leaving the farmer without a source of income or business.

The goal of the amendment, however, I think would help in that situation because the goal of the amendment is to find a live test or a cure for CWD since scientists believe it is naturally occurring in the wild. If we had a vaccine, we could then increase the number of sportsmen and -women in the field to help with the Pittman-Robertson funds that go to conservation.

The total economic impact of the farmed cervid industry is $7.9 billion a year in the U.S. and employs almost 57,000 people who contribute greatly to rural American, State, and certainly Federal economies as well.

The outcome of this would benefit both farm but also wild CWD instances and cases, and prevent them.

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Chairman, reclaiming my time, is the gentleman saying that USDA says there has never been a case where it has been transmitted from a farm to wildlife?

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. PETERSON. I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Yes.

Mr. PETERSON. That is not true because it has happened in Minnesota in two or three cases. So maybe they need to be researched. They are a little behind the times it seems to me.

In southeast Minnesota, we don't have it up where I am at, but in the southeast, this is prevalent. The same thing in Wisconsin. So everybody that takes a deer has to take it into the DNR and get it tested currently.

Once this thing gets into the wild, it is very hard to eradicate without wiping out the whole herd, which some places are going to do that.

So I am supportive of what you are trying to do. I just want to make sure that we are doing, within the USDA and the animal welfare, health thing, that they have got some resources there that can go in and make sure that these farms are not transferring this stuff out in the wild when a deer gets loose. That is apparently what happened in southeast Minnesota. That is my only concern. Maybe we can work together on the language and improve it. I will support your amendment.

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON).

The amendment was agreed to.

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Chairman, I move that the House do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. LAMALFA) having assumed the chair, Mr. LEWIS of Minnesota, Acting Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2) to provide for the reform and continuation of agricultural and other programs of the Department of Agriculture through fiscal year 2023, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

□ 1930

RUSSIAN INVESTIGATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LEWIS of Minnesota). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. PERLMUTTER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, tonight, as we have every other week for the last few months, I want to talk about the Mueller investigation and the kinds of results that are being developed by the FBI, by the Department of Justice, on a lot of very serious topics. The main topic is the Russians interfering with our elections, particularly the 2016 election.

That kind of interference goes to the heart of our Nation. It goes to the heart of our freedom. It goes to the heart of our independence. It goes to the heart of this country's sovereignty and to be able to make decisions without interference by nations other than the United States of America, other than us as citizens of the United States of America. I think we need to step back and think about this a little bit, because it is clear now.

Just today, the Senate Republican chair of the Intelligence Committee said there is no doubt that Russia undertook an unprecedented effort to interfere with our 2016 elections. He says he looks forward to completing the committee's inquiry and issuing findings and recommendations to Americans.

The vice chairman, Senator WARNER from Virginia, says:

> After a thorough review, our staff concluded that the intelligence community's conclusions were accurate and on point. The Russian effort was extensive, sophisticated, and ordered by President Putin himself for the purpose of helping Donald Trump and hurting Hillary Clinton.

In order to protect our democracy from future threats, we must understand what happened in 2016.

So, a year ago, Special Counsel Robert Mueller was appointed to look into this affair and what exactly happened and to bring those to justice who broke our laws, who interfered with our sovereignty and our freedoms.

But all along the way, the White House has objected, has tried to describe it as a witch hunt, as a hoax, as nothing but a charade, when, in fact, in this 1-year period there have been five guilty pleas and 22 indictments.

We kind have got to go back to the beginning, Mr. Speaker.

A year ago, Democrats were asking the President to turn over his tax returns, which all Presidents have done and which candidates do. The President refused and continues to refuse to this day to turn over his tax returns.

So the question is: What is in there to hide? What is the big deal? What is he afraid of us seeing in those tax returns?

Today, it came out in the news that the financial disclosure statement shows a payment to Michael Cohen, his attorney, that he said he never made.

We have got to get to the bottom of these numbers, to the bottom of this Russian interference. Mr. Mueller and the FBI need to conclude their investigation without any interference, without any obstruction. For all of us as Americans, this applies to the very core of what a democracy is, and that is free, fair, and unimpeded elections.

So there are three key questions that we keep asking. We ask our friends on the Republican side, particularly Speaker RYAN and Senate Majority Leader MCCONNELL: Let's move forward with investigations here in this Congress. Why not?

Let's find out what is really going on. Let's protect this investigation so that threats by the White House to fire Mr. Mueller, to fire Rod Rosenstein from the Department of Justice—they did fire individuals out of the FBI—let's let these detectives and these law enforcement officials finish their job. But the questions are: What are they hiding? What are they afraid that people will see? And why not let the detectives and the law enforcement officers finish their job?

Let's play this out and see exactly what the facts are so we all know what happened and how we can stop it from happening again to make sure we have free and fair elections.

I have been able to ask these questions and participate in these Special Order hours with several of my friends. One of those who has taken a keen interest in protecting this investigation and making sure that the facts do come to light has been my friend, JARED HUFFMAN from northern California.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. HUFFMAN), for some of his thoughts as to where we are, because we have had many, many changes in terms of the lawyers who were representing either the White House or the President personally. They are gone. We have got new lawyers. Former District Attorney and Mayor Giuliani is now involved. Other people. The President's personal lawyer, Mr. COHEN, is now out and under investigation himself. There seems to be something happening pretty much every day. I would like to get my friend's thoughts about it.

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Colorado is right that the pace of revelations and controversies surrounding this Trump White House and their personal financial and political involvement with Russia, their attempts to interfere with and obstruct justice relating to Mr. Mueller's investigation, the pace of all that is just dizzy. So, here we are, 1 year into the work of Special Counsel Mueller.

I am glad that Congressman PERLMUTTER began his remarks by reminding us of the context of this issue; the fact that what happened in the 2016 Presidential election was a big deal. It was unprecedented. A foreign adversary maliciously interfered in our election with a specific intent to help one candidate and to hurt another. They placed a bet on Donald Trump. They put their thumb on the scale in every way they could to help Donald Trump.

Maybe that is why all along he has been reluctant to acknowledge what obviously happened. He doesn't want to talk about it. He wants to write it all off as a witch hunt and a conspiracy theory. He probably feels a little defensive about that cloud of legitimacy involving Russian interference.

Based on what we know so far, there may be an even more sinister explanation for some of his behavior. It may be that he—or, at least a lot of people very close to him—were actively working with the Russians as part of this. That is what the Mueller investigation is looking into and that is what the American people have to find out. We have to know the full extent of exactly what happened, no matter where those facts may lead.

The truth is, at this 1-year mark in this historic investigation, this historic scandal, there is plenty of reason to worry about what President Trump might do by way of trying to block and stop and interfere with this investigation. It is not just us saying it. You can look at his own word.

He has said at various times in recent months: ''At some point I will have no choice but to use the powers granted to the Presidency and get involved.''

That is obviously a threat, whether that is using his pardon power or beginning to fire people in the Department of Justice, the FBI, or even the Special Counsel himself.

He has threatened to reveal conflicts of interest of the Special Counsel. Obviously, this is a favorite tactic of President Trump, trying to intimidate, trying to posture with folks who he perceives as adversaries.

He said on another occasion: ''Mueller is most conflicted of all (except Rosenstein who signed FISA & Comey letter). No Collusion, so they go crazy.''

These are the ravings of someone who is acting very defensively. And I would say as a former attorney—Congressman PERLMUTTER is a former attorney himself—it really speaks to a consciousness of guilt. We would argue that if we were in a court of law and we had evidence of statements such as this repeatedly calling this investigation a witch hunt.

On another occasion, he says: ''As I have been saying all along, it is all a big hoax by Democrats based on payments and lies. There should never have been a Special Counsel appointed. Witch hunt.''

On another occasion he said:

> Why don't I just fire Mueller? Well, we'll see what happens.

Taken together, all of his various statements should be very troubling to anyone who cares about the independence of our law enforcement agencies and about the integrity of this critically important investigation.

I am glad to stand with the gentleman tonight and every night that we have had these Special Order hours to continue to make sure that our colleagues here in the House know that we are going to defend this investigation, that we are going to do everything we can to make sure that our law enforcement professionals and Special Counsel Mueller have the chance to fully find the evidence, wherever it may lead, to get the truth out to the American people. We deserve nothing less.

I am glad to see our colleague, JOE COURTNEY from Connecticut, joining the conversation.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from northern California, and his points are really well taken. This investigation, rather than just sort of pushing some paper around, we have had other special counsel appointed from time to time and just in this—some of them take years. Whether it was the Contra affair, Watergate, or whatever, it takes years and years.

Here, really in 1 year, we have had 13 Russian either agencies or corporations and individuals indicted. We have had at least six or seven Americans indicted in this whole process.

Recently, I think within the last few days, or maybe it was even today, Paul Manafort, chairman of the Trump campaign, objected to the indictment that he found himself under. He went to court and said that Mueller had exceeded his authority by bringing the indictment. The judge said: No, that indictment stands.

There has been a lot of smoke. We know that there is some fire creating that smoke. We have got to find that. We have got to find precisely what happened.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to my friend from Connecticut (Mr. COURTNEY), who has joined us and has got some thoughts about this that he will share.

Mr. COURTNEY. First of all, I want to thank Congressman PERLMUTTER and Congressman HUFFMAN who have been, again, diligent in terms of coming to the floor on a regular basis to push back against what is clearly a pretty coordinated, concerted effort to discredit the Mueller investigation. It is really pretty disturbing on many levels, fundamentally because it is an attack on institutions within our country which we all took an oath to uphold and defend.

The rule of law is, frankly, one of the fundamental pillars of this country in terms of being a free society. When you have folks who, again, are holding public office going beyond just disagreements of opinion regarding actions that all of us as public officials have to be held accountable for, but really to attack the institutions themselves, which is clearly the drumbeat of criticism of the Mueller investigation and where it is headed, is something that really we need to speak out and push back against.

Again, the 1-year anniversary is, I think, a very important moment to step back and reflect in terms of where this investigation started and where it is today.

Again, if you go back a year ago and look at the reaction that greeted this appointment from, again, Republican leaders, Newt Gingrich, Robert Mueller is a superb choice to be special counsel. His reputation is impeccable for honesty and integrity.

Speaker PAUL RYAN: ''My priority has been to ensure thorough . . . investigations are allowed to follow the facts wherever they may lead. . . . The addition of Robert Mueller as special counsel is consistent with this goal, and I welcome his role at the Department of Justice.''

□ 1945

Senator CORY GARDNER:

Robert Mueller had an incredible reputation.

Senator ORRIN HATCH:

I commend the Department of Justice for bringing an independent voice to help clarify this situation.

The list goes on and on. And again, why not? I mean, Robert Mueller is somebody who has a record of service to this country going back to when he was a marine in Vietnam. He led a rifle platoon, was wounded, received a Purple Heart as well as the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry and two Navy Commendation medals for his military service.

He went on, obviously, to become a distinguished legal practitioner. He was appointed by President Bush to be the head of the FBI and did such a great job that, after his 10-year term, the U.S. Senate extended his term 2 years by a vote of 100–0.

So when you are talking about somebody who has really earned a reputation for being, really, a pretty conservative prosecutor, both in terms of his time as a U.S. attorney and also in terms of his term as head of the FBI, we are dealing with someone who is beyond reproach, frankly.

And as was pointed out by Mr. PERLMUTTER, the decision came down at the Washington, D.C., district court by Federal Judge Amy Berman Jackson in a 37-page opinion which, again, pushed back very powerfully about the notion that somehow he has strayed from his mission that the Department of Justice gave him.

Again, her decision, just in case after case, points out that the indictment of Manafort fell perfectly within the charge that he was given by Assistant U.S. Attorney Rosenstein, which, again, is to investigate other issues that ''may arise from the investigation.''

Again, in the case of Manafort, we are talking about somebody who was squarely within the intelligence community's conclusion that the election was basically under attack from Russians. Manafort's connections to Ukrainian interests, which clearly were sort of on the Russian side of Ukrainian politics, is just an obvious place for the special counsel to pursue.

Again, as you point out, the number of indictments, the number of convictions, clearly show that this is not a fishing expedition, it is not a witch hunt. It is a serious prosecution whose every-step-of-the-way actions have been ratified by the courts and also ratified by the appointing authority, Mr. Rosenstein.

It is time for all elected officials to step back and let this process proceed. Again, the forensics on this in terms of just the endorsements to Mr. Mueller's credibility and experience and knowledge in this area scream out for all of us to respect the rule of law and let this investigation proceed.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for holding this event on the 1-year milestone of the Mueller investigation.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, my friend from Connecticut has reminded me of something. And I think something that has really infuriated me is the President's attacks on the FBI, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, our chief and top law enforcement agency in this country.

Is it perfect? Absolutely not. But are they doing their job to the best of their ability to protect Americans, to protect America? Absolutely. And for the President to sort of just continue to chip away and to excoriate the FBI because it is undertaking an investigation that may implicate him in breaking laws of the United States of America, I think, is something that we haven't seen. This investigation needs to continue to do its work, to talk to witnesses, to determine what has occurred here.

The Senate Judiciary today, or within the last day or two, released thousands of pages of testimony and information. One of the places that it talked about was what happened at a meeting—I think it was at the Trump Tower—in June of 2016, so 5 months, 6 months before the election, between a Russian attorney. I think another Russian was there; Paul Manafort, the chairman of the campaign; Jared Kushner, son-in-law of the President; and Donald Trump, Jr., his son.

There is a lot of concern about what actually occurred in that particular meeting. There is a lot of material here that is very, very troubling.

I know my friend from California has thought about this. He has thoughts about Mr. Giuliani saying that Donald Trump may take the Fifth Amendment, which I think came out of nowhere. But why would he want to take the Fifth Amendment?

Again, the question is: What is he hiding? What is he afraid of? Let's just let law enforcement complete its work.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back to the gentleman from California.

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I have a couple of thoughts. First of all, that infamous Trump Tower meeting in June of 2016 just stinks to high heaven; the gentleman is absolutely right. Anyone who looks objectively at what we know about that meeting, anyone who is not hosting a show on FOX News, at least, would feel that there is a big, big problem here and we have got to ask some hard questions.

Of course, Donald Trump, Jr., initially outright lied about it, said it was about adoption. And then we saw the full text of the email exchange, making it very clear that this was the front-end part of a quid pro quo between the Trump operation and the Russians, that this was the offer of assistance, of dirt, of a bombshell on the Clinton campaign. And of course that was greeted with enthusiasm by Trump, Jr., who hastily arranged the meeting, brought in the top brass, said he was very excited about it if it is what he thought it was.

And then, when it proved not to reveal that bombshell, he immediately expressed how disappointed he was, and some phone calls ensued. One of those phone calls was from a restricted number, and he claims he didn't remember exactly who that call was. Well, turns out his dad, our President now, has a restricted number.

And that is a knowable fact. If our colleagues on the House Intelligence Committee were serious about this investigation, they would find out who that phone call was to because it is one of the dots that could need to be connected around this very controversial Trump Tower meeting. But they are not interested at all. They didn't ask those questions. They didn't even require Trump, Jr., to answer the questions, and they have rushed to shut down their investigation.

So that brings me to the other point. We have all talked about the threats to the Mueller investigation from President Trump himself, but there is another threat from within these walls, from our colleagues on the House Intelligence Committee, who have taken this sacred trust of oversight that we have as Members of Congress and, unfortunately, compromised it to the level that they seem to simply be fronting for the President instead of doing a genuine investigation.

Unlike their colleagues in the Senate who at least acknowledge the obvious, that Russia was trying to help President Trump in its interference, their report doesn't even say that. And then they include a gratuitous statement that they find no evidence of collusion, despite everything we have been talking about, everything that is already in

the public record. We have got a real problem within these walls that also threatens the investigation.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman talked about quid pro quo, and the thing that I am worried about, I serve on the Terrorism and Illicit Finance Subcommittee of the Committee on Financial Services, where we deal a lot with sanctions: sanctions against North Korea, sanctions against Iran, sanctions against China, sanctions against Russia. With Russia having gone into Ukraine, Russia having gone into Crimea, and then Russia having interfered with our elections, a lot of sanctions are out there, but this administration seems to be using kid gloves in applying them.

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman would yield.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Yes, I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman has just hit on the ''quo.'' We talked about the ''quid'': the solicitations from Russia. Through Papadopoulos, even earlier, in April, the spring of 2016, those solicitations were welcomed and embraced by the highest levels of the Trump campaign, possibly even Mr. Trump himself. We need to nail down that phone call and a few other details.

But now we are talking about the ''quo'' part: what would Russia get in return? And we know from undisputed evidence that Mike Flynn was working on sanctions relief even before they took office, during the transition, violating, apparently, the Logan Act as he was doing it. We know that this President and others in his administration have bent over backwards to try to cut Russia breaks on these sanctions.

So, Mr. Speaker, the gentleman is exactly right to focus on that obvious piece, the ''quo'' part of this seeming quid pro quo. That is another reason why we have to let this investigation run its course: so that we can find out exactly what happened here.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I know my friend from Connecticut has some other thoughts, so I yield to him.

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, real briefly, again, as I mentioned earlier and the two gentlemen have alluded to, we are talking about an effort to discredit the Mueller investigation that I think, really, as all Americans, we really should be concerned about the questions about whether or not our court system is truly fair, whether or not the FBI, the leading law enforcement agency of this country, is corrupt, which is, again, some of the language that has been sort of tossed around by the President's defenders. The harm that does in terms of really basic institutions in this country is something that I just think you can't treat as normal political discourse. We are talking about real long-lasting harm to the country.

Right now there are FBI counterterrorism agents who are hard at work, literally, as we are standing here on this floor, keeping this country safe. They are involved in investigations of mass shootings. You see the FBI jackets when these events happen, and they were in Connecticut when Sandy Hook took place.

I would just say, from a personal standpoint, my parents both served in the FBI. My dad was a G-man back in the day, and my mother actually was a clerical worker there. That is how they met, actually. So I guess you could say I was born under the watchful eye of the FBI.

But the fact of the matter is that he was somebody who was very proud of his service. Again, it was during World War II. His job was actually tracking fifth columnists in the U.S. who were looking to cause sabotage to critical facilities in the country.

Again, there are always, in every organization, instances where there are bad apples. But the fact of the matter is, as an institution, in terms of law enforcement, these agents are out there every single day protecting this country; and to attack not just an individual decision but an institution is, again, the real sort of level that we are watching happen here with the pushback on the Mueller investigation, and it is just totally unacceptable.

As I said, on the 1-year anniversary, it has proved its credibility, the Mueller team, in terms of concrete, real results. And the courts and, as I said, the Department of Justice have repeatedly reconfirmed and reaffirmed the rationale for the creation of the Mueller investigation and the fact that it is operating totally within the mission and charge that was given.

So I think it is important for all of us to continue to raise our voices and defend the rule of law and institutions that are out there to protect our Constitution and our democracy.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, we will wrap up this portion of our Special Orders because I know we have another subject that Ms. PINGREE and Mr. BLUMENAUER and Mr. TONKO would like to address.

Mr. Speaker, the seriousness of this subject can't be overstated: the impact on elections; the trust in our system of elections; the trust in our law enforcement; the trust in our courts; the trust, which is attacked by this President and too many others, of our institutions of the press, whether it is The Washington Post or The New York Times or somebody investigating.

And it goes to trust of this Nation and what we have formed. And when you have got outside influences like Russia sticking their nose in our business and trying to put their thumb on the scale as to who should run this Nation, I can't think of a higher crime.

□ 2000

And we know the National Security Advisor for Donald Trump, Michael Flynn, indicted; Rick Gates, campaign advisor for the Trump campaign; George Papadopoulos, foreign affairs advisor for Trump campaign; Richard Pinedo; Alexander van der Zwaan—all indicted, sentenced, or at least pled guilty. Indicted still: the campaign chairman, Paul Manafort; 13 Russian nationals; and 3 Russian entities.

This investigation needs to get to the bottom of all of this. We have got to try to figure out: Is there anything being hidden? Is there anything that we, as Americans, should know about this interference that we don't know today? And our law enforcement officers, from Robert Mueller to the FBI to the cop on the beat, need to be allowed to finish this investigation.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend from California and my friend from Connecticut. I yield to my friend from Maine (Ms. PINGREE) because she seems to be ready to go here. I don't know about her two colleagues, the one from New York and the one from Oregon, because they seem to be kind of getting ready but not nearly as ready as my friend, Congresswoman PINGREE.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to my friend from Maine.

Ms. PINGREE. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. PERLMUTTER for yielding, and I thank him for, really, the eloquent conversation he has been having for the last half an hour about the extreme importance of the investigation that is going on and recognizing the fact that this is the 1-year anniversary, and obviously, we still have a long ways to go. This is a very critical issue, and we need to continue to support Robert Mueller and the work that he is doing, and I am very grateful for all that is going on.

May 17 is not only the first anniversary of that investigation, but it is also the day we started the debate on the farm bill. And for those of you who have been following this, you will see that this week there are going to be amendments and general debate around this particular bill. I have also been joined by a couple of my colleagues from SEEC, the Sustainable Energy and Environment Coalition, because we want to talk specifically tonight about how this farm bill harms the environment and conservation.

You are going to hear all kinds of things about the farm bill. Some of the most egregious challenges are within the nutrition title, which takes up about 80 percent of the resources of the farm bill. But it is very important to talk about the role of the environment in this bill.

A lot of people don't think about the farm bill as an environmental bill, but actually, farmland accounts for over 40 percent of our Nation's land, and what happens to farms and working forests has a huge impact on water quality, on wildlife, on environmental health, and the farm bill contains many provisions, some of which people don't often know that much about, that are important to conservation programs for farmers.

Farmers understand why it is important to care for the land that takes

care of them. They know that conservation practices ensure that the resource remains sustainable while helping them to save money, preparing for environmental issues like drought and extreme weather. Conservation practices that sequester carbon in the soil, put more organic matter in the soil, have a huge impact on our ability to sequester carbon, which we all know is very important to issues around climate change.

I just want to go over a few of the highlights, or you could say the low lights, of this bill when it comes to environmental practices, and then I am happy to share with several others who would like to talk about some of the programs, and we will have a little dialogue about it.

One of the things that happens is it eliminates the Conservation Stewardship Program. These are financial incentives for farmers to implement long-term conservation practices that benefit wildlife and natural resources, which also help their bottom line. Elimination of this program is about $1 billion cut for conservation.

Also, within the program, they are folding in the Conservation Stewardship Program into another program called EQIP, and these two programs will be worked together. And while maybe that sounds like it is streamlining in Maine, we are worried that they will have far less in resources overall.

In Maine, programs have been particularly important to helping what has been a growth in small farms in our State and more resources to our farmers. People have built hoop houses, which extend our season and allow you to grow more in the early season and into the late season, helped with wells, composting facilities, a variety of other things. Now we are going to combine those programs, have less in resources, and farmers will just be fighting for far less dollars.

The bill also eliminates a lot of mandatory funding. And one program I wanted to mention was the REAP program, Renewable Energy for America Program. I think many of us really care about renewable resources and allowing our farms and rural businesses to have more energy efficiency, use alternative energy improvements. This helps to reduce their environmental impact, and, again, their costs. It is very difficult to make a good living on a farm, and that has to be factored in as well.

In Maine, the REAP program has helped install solar power, helped maple syrup producers reduce energy costs, generated energy from biomass, built more efficient processing systems, built an anaerobic digester, and so much more. So this is also a very critical program that is now going to be changed in the way it is funded, and that means we can't count on it going into the future.

There are a lot of policy riders—and I am hoping my colleagues will talk about a few more of them—that will hurt farmers and the health of rural communities in many ways, and these have no place in the farm bill.

One of them that I have heard a lot about from my constituents—and there is a lot of talk about—is the King amendment—the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING)—that would preempt local and State laws, which would preempt many of those laws that impact pesticides and animal welfare.

Now, Maine, where we are a very outspoken State, we believe in agriculture, and we care deeply about the environment. We already have 30 communities that have local pesticide laws restricting pesticides. That would be eliminated under this because they would be preempted.

We have other laws about crate sizes, breeding crate sizes, puppy mills; any of those kinds of things that regulate animal practices, States would no longer be allowed to do. This is not a good States' rights issue. It is bad for the issues that we care about, and we should not allow this amendment to pass.

There are also a variety of issues that would impact the Endangered Species Act. Now, we are lucky in Maine. Since 1978, when the impacts of DDT had reduced the number of bald eagles to about 20 nesting pairs, once that was eliminated and there was no more DDT, fast forward to today, in the last count, we have 500-plus bald eagles in our State. Almost everywhere in our State you can see a bald eagle out there fishing, doing its work.

Well, the language in this bill would say that when reviewing pesticides and herbicides, there would no longer be any requirement for the EPA to consult expert wildlife agencies to identify and minimize impact to endangered species. Many of us are deeply worried about the effect on pollinators like bees and butterflies, which are critically important to agriculture. We can't exist without pollinators, and this is a terrible time to put them in further danger.

I will just mention one more and then yield to a couple of my colleagues who are ready to speak. One provision in the farm bill would undermine the National Environmental Policy Act, that is, NEPA. Again, those are critically important reviews that go on in anything that we do. To weaken that would harm our communities, our environment, and our public health.

So I have done a little bit of a broad overview, and I could talk about things that frustrate me in this farm bill all night long, but I want to yield to one of my great colleagues from the State of Oregon, someone who represents the other Portland, as we say. I have the first Portland.

Mr. Speaker, more importantly, I yield back to my friend from Colorado.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Maine. The farm bill—and agriculture and the environment—is always something she cares a lot about, whether it is conversations about milk or eggs or local control, which is really sort of at the heart of her concern about this bill, that, you know, Maine, and its local governments and the State as a whole, cares about its environment and it cares about its agriculture. And she, as a Representative, makes that clear to the rest of us how important it is to her State.

So I thank the gentlewoman from Maine, and I now yield to my friend from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER).

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman's courtesy in allowing us to join in this conversation, and I strongly identify with what the Representative from the other Portland just said.

In fact, North Haven, I am reflecting right now that, in 3 short months, during the summer recess, I plan on sitting on a deck looking out at North Haven and enjoying looking for those eagles that have been rescued and are very much in evidence in her beautiful part of the country.

She is not just an advocate for the environment and for agriculture; she is a practitioner. And I have had an opportunity to tour her magnificent farm in North Haven that is really a model of sustainability, showing really what value-added agriculture is, reclaiming the history of that island in terms of the bounty of the land.

But that doesn't happen by accident. It takes commitment and follow-through and, step by step, trying to harness the forces of sound agricultural policies, good environmental stewardship to be able to add value while it protects the environment.

So I am looking forward to seeing her handiwork again this summer, and I deeply appreciate her leadership tonight in terms of the environment, what she cares about in terms of nutrition, celebrity chefs. There are a whole range of things, and it underscores why we are here talking about the farm bill.

It is the most important legislation that most Americans pay no attention to. It is the most important piece of legislation that, sadly, few in the House of Representatives really drill down and look at what is in it. It will be the most important health bill that this Congress will pass or consider for the remainder of this session. We still subsidize a diet that makes Americans sick, paying too much to the wrong people to grow the wrong food in the wrong places, and it is the most important environmental bill, bar none.

If you care about emissions of greenhouse gasses, the agriculture sector plays a role—9 percent, it is claimed statistically. But if you factor in all of the inputs in terms of pesticides and transportation, refrigeration, you will find that it is far greater than that, and these are elements that are within our control.

The gentlewoman referenced the conservation programs. It is interesting to me, in reading the guidance that the

administration has put out about the farm bill and what they tout, they want to promote independence. They don't want to support dependency. They want to have higher performance standards for projects that they are involved with, yet the farm bill that is being considered now by the Republicans undercuts performance standards.

When we eliminate, as the gentlewoman said, the Conservation Reserve Program, only one out of four conservation grants is currently funded. There is not enough money, and they are going to reduce it $1 billion more while eliminating the Conservation Stewardship Program. It is also stunning when there is an opportunity to provide performance standards for conservation.

I have offered an amendment before the Rules Committee that would apply conservation standards, that you get conservation funding if you produce results. But that is not the way it works now.

The EQIP program, which hands out grants to help farmers improve the environment, you look at the practices that are authorized under this bill, that are funded under this bill, there are six or eight of them that actually hurt the environment. They are not required to enhance their environment. We pay for things like fencing and hog lagoons for big operations that ought to be able to pay their own way, and they take that money that would be available to other farmers and ranchers to be able to fund programs that would actually enhance the environment.

I deeply appreciate the gentlewoman's leadership, and I appreciate what my friend from Colorado has offered up. We have other colleagues here who have some things to say. I will hang tight for a moment in case we run out of speakers, but I want to cheer folks on because it is time that we put the spotlight on this egregious bill, the King amendment, the lack of accountability, and wasteful spending.

□ 2015

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Oregon for those comments, who, as always, is very knowledgeable and passionate about the things that really matter to most Americans, and I thank him for being such an advocate for the environment, always, every day.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. POLIS), my friend. I know Mr. POLIS has some things he would like to add to this conversation.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the senior gentleman from Colorado for the time.

Mr. Speaker, I want to discuss a couple of the terrible conservation and environmental bills that affect the district I represent, our State, and our country.

As the gentleman from Oregon mentioned, the elimination of the Conservation Stewardship Program, a program that has been successful to help preserve over 70 million acres, is, frankly, inexcusable. The Conservation Stewardship Program supports farmers, ranchers, and owners of forests who want to pursue high-level conservation stewardship activities. It is important to protect our watershed that our towns and communities rely on, to keep our air clean, to sequester carbon, to maintain diverse habitats for wildlife, and, yes, to keep our farms productive and sustainable in the long term.

Working lands conservation programs are so popular that the Natural Resources Conservation Service wound up having to have a waiting list. It had to turn away almost three-quarters of the qualified applicants. Under the proposal today it would have to turn away 100 percent of applicants.

Now, they claim that they are consolidating some programs into the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, or EQIP, but, frankly, those programs are very different. Whereas, the Conservation Stewardship Program helps farmers and ranchers implement advanced conservation and stewardship systems to help preserve and protect the resources on their lands.

EQIP is more of an introduction or on-ramp to working lands conservation. It is on a one-time basis to help a specific conservation practice. It is not a program that designed, nor does it provide, assistance for long-term sustainability.

That is why the Conservation Stewardship Program is so important for our forest health. Switching gears to our national forests, it seems that some Members of this body are still seeking to erode protections for our national forests.

One example in this bill, the Tongass National Forest, in Alaska, which is one of the crown jewels of our National Forest System, faces a huge threat with two amendments. One of those amendments in the bill, which was already ruled in order last night without any debate, would exempt all of the Federal forests in Alaska—more Federal forests than any State in the country—to one of the most important conservation safeguards: the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule.

The second amendment would overturn the Tongass forest plan, which protects roadless areas and other ecologically important lands from unsustainable logging, and charts a transition away from taxpayer subsidized, industrial scale, old-growth logging, to better and new forms of sustainable economic development.

Our country's old-growth forests are, frankly, a National treasure. Clear-cutting ancient forests not only compromises our public lands; but it devastates and fragments habitat for wildlife, it introduces invasive species that compete with native species; and, yes, it pollutes the drinking water supplies for as many as 60 million people.

The Roadless Rule is very important because it provides a balanced protection between our old-growth forests and public roads, and hydropower projects. Its application in Alaska has a very positive impact on community access and economic development, and we need to maintain the rule.

As representatives and stewards of our forests, under the U.S. Department of Agriculture, it is absolutely critical to protect our public lands. From the Clean Water Act to NEPA, which this bill would devastate for projects that are 6,000 acres or less, to the Endangered Species Act, which has had so many great successes, we need to protect the tools we have to secure a safe environment and a diverse habitat for our wildlife.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Colorado, and others, for speaking out on the important environmental provisions in this bill.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Colorado for bringing up these important points, and I wish him well as he goes on about a campaign for Governor in the State of Colorado.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New York (Mr. TONKO), my friend, again, a tireless advocate for the environment. Obviously, New York produces, especially in his part of the State, a lot of farms and a lot of agriculture. This is a subject that he knows well.

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. PERLMUTTER) for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I speak, this evening, joining with some members of SEEK. You heard earlier from the gentlewoman from Maine, who spoke of the SNAP cuts, the nutrition cuts. Congresswoman PINGREE is absolutely right: It is a big portion of the farm bill.

But, beyond that, I am horrified with this current farm bill that proposes many harmful provisions that would completely disregard some very bedrock environmental laws. As one of the cochairs of SEEK, which aims for sustainable outcomes for energy and environment policy, you must speak to this bill, because it is so dreadful as it relates to our environmental and energy policy.

This bill weakens environmental and public health protections against pesticides, many of which were established to protect the health of our children. Those protections that would be destroyed by this farm bill include allowing companies to spray pesticides into our waterways without even obtaining a Clean Water Act permit, endangering sources of drinking water and places where we swim and where we fish; preempts local governments from taking steps to protect their communities from pesticides; and weakens protections for endangered species by eliminating the requirement to consult with Federal wildlife experts.

These pesticides can elevate the risk of cancer and other chronic diseases.

Removal of Clean Water Act protections, and the preemption of local efforts to protect communities, puts our public health at great risk.

The International Agency for Research on Cancer in 2015 classified the pesticide glyphosate as a probable human carcinogen. The United States Geological Survey routinely finds glyphosate in our United States waterways.

EPA's scientific review found that the pesticide chlorpyrifos in water and on food is unsafe for children and increases the risk of learning disabilities. Prenatal exposures to this chemical are associated with reduced IQ and delayed motor development. Whenever chlorpyrifos is sprayed, it can cause immediate and long-term health harms to kids, to farmers, to farmworkers, and others who are exposed.

These provisions also put our wildlife at risk. Decades ago, bald eagles and peregrine falcons were brought to the brink of extinction by the pesticide DDT.

To address such issues, the EPA is required, under the Endangered Species Act, to consult with the expert Federal wildlife agencies when approving chemicals that can harm endangered species. This bill eliminates that requirement, threatening endangered wildlife and hindering recovery of imperiled species.

Our farm bill is about supporting farmers, strengthening communities, and providing food for America. Rolling back public health and wildlife protections has no place in this bill.

The cuts of $23-plus billion in SNAP benefits, kicking an estimated 1 million households off of the program and affects 265,000 children out of free school meals is torturous in its own right.

Someone, today, earlier said: When I was a kid, my money for food programs, for lunch programs was taken by the school. Now Congress is taking the money for school lunch programs away from the kids.

Cuts of $800 million in conservation funding are devastating to our environment, and the cutting of vital funding for renewable energy and energy efficiency in our rural communities, which will eliminate the Rural Energy for America Program, is going to be a great consequence of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I was compelled to come to the floor and join with my colleagues as a member of SEEK that is looking for sustainable energy and environment outcomes to speak against this bill, which is going to hurt the progress over the last decades that speaks to agriculture in America, farming in America, and the quality of life for children and families across this great land.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from New York for those comments. I can say, to those who are listening, that Mr. TONKO serves on the Science, Space, and Technology Committee and speaks up about the environment and about concerns about chemicals, the effects on public health, the effects on the environment, and I thank him for his advocacy.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KIND), my friend, for his thoughts on this particular subject, a gentleman who is an outdoorsman, and talks about the farms and the cheeses of Wisconsin. He is here as a real advocate for his State. I am sorry that he has had the Green Bay Packers and they have fallen on hard times.

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, even with that introduction, I thank my very good friend and colleague from Colorado for holding this Special Order.

I am honored actually to be on the House floor with so many of my esteemed colleagues, who have taken a back seat to no one when it comes to standing up for our natural resources: for the conservation title, specifically, of this farm bill. And I am looking at the gentlewoman from Maine (Ms. PINGREE) and the work that she has done on agriculture policy throughout the years, and her service to her district: the introduction of the local Farms Act that she has worked on in a bipartisan fashion. My friend from Oregon, who is one of the foremost thinkers and leaders when it comes to environmental policy, but the impact on our family farms throughout our country.

This is an important moment, because this is one of the more important bills that we have to consider in this session of Congress: the renewal of the farm bill. We have a chance every five or six years to take a look at the program to see what is working, what isn't, and fix what isn't working to make sure that we are empowering our farmers with the tools and resources that they need to be successful.

I come from one of the largest agriculture producing districts in the Nation, in rural western and north-central Wisconsin. It has been tough in farm country in the last few years, given where commodity prices have been, and, yes, where milk prices have been falling for the last 3 years. It is very difficult for these individual entities and family farms to succeed with this very tough market that they are facing right now.

That is why taking our time to get this farm bill done right is the appropriate thing to do. But, unfortunately, the farm bill in its current form misses the mark in so many areas.

There has been a lot of discussion about what is happening under the conservation title, the elimination of the Conservation Stewardship Program, which has worked incredibly well, and has been very successful for my family farmers in Wisconsin. I come from a very hilly area with bluffs and coulees: a lot of highly sensitive and erodible land and a lot of water source.

Being able to use a Conservation Stewardship Program that is built in for the flexibility for what my farmers need, and the technical assistance that they need, to put good conservation plans in practice is very important. As the previous speaker highlighted, too, the demand is overwhelming. Three out of every four farmers nationwide applying for conservation funding assistance are currently turned away because of the inadequacy of resources.

By eliminating the Conservation Stewardship Program and rolling it into the EQIP program eliminates $800 million worth of base funding. This comes on the heels of the previous farm bill, where there were $8 billion worth of cuts under the conservation title. We are not stepping up to address the need that exists in farm country; instead, we are rolling it back even further.

But the problems with this farm bill don't just end under the conservation title. Under title I commodity programs, they are lifting the payment limitation caps that had been in existence for some time. Now, pass-through entities will be able to qualify for these subsidy payments.

I think the average viewer, and average taxpayer, would be shocked to see the mailing addresses for these commodity subsidy programs going to New York, Chicago, and San Francisco, ending up on the doorsteps of multi-millionaires and billionaires, who are receiving government subsidies under the commodity program. That is wrong. These people won't even set foot on a family farm. Rolling back any protections that exist under the multiple entity rule, which means that husbands, wives, daughters, sisters, sons, aunts, and uncles can qualify for the same payments, is also wrong.

Finally, there is an opportunity to tighten the crop insurance program. Right now, it is prohibited from even tracking these crop insurance premium subsidies. You can't even track it to the individual.

If there is one thing that this farm bill should demand is complete transparency. The American taxpayer deserves to know where their tax dollars are going, but they can't now under the crop insurance program. That is something else that I am trying to fix with an amendment. We are going to find out later today what amendments are made in order to try to improve this bill. It may be beyond salvage at this point coming out of the House, but we still have time later this year to do the right thing to make sure that this farm bill speaks to the needs of our family farmers back home and not to the powerful special interests here in Washington.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague again for yielding me this time.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Wisconsin for those comments. He makes so many good points, and he does it in a way that really is understandable by all of us.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER), my friend, if he wishes, to close.

□ 2030

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. I appreciate that.

It has been fun working with Congresswoman PINGREE, with my friend RON KIND, looking at these programs over the years.

There is a great essay written by Marion Nestle, an author, a professor of nutrition at NYU, and the title of the essay is ''The Farm Bill Drove Me Insane.'' As she tried to actually teach a class about the farm bill to graduate students, she dove into it and found that it was just hopelessly complex.

What I appreciate about working with the gentlewoman from Maine and the gentleman from Wisconsin is it doesn't have to be that complex.

We ought to be able to strip this away, have a full and honest debate, and get to the basics that make the most difference for the American public.

Hopefully this thing will collapse, and we will have some time this year to work on it and make it better.

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

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GAETZ). Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 8 o'clock and 31 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 2140

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WOODALL) at 9 o'clock and 40 minutes p.m.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2, AGRICULTURE AND NUTRITION ACT OF 2018

Mr. SESSIONS, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 115–679) on the resolution (H. Res. 900) providing for further consideration of the bill (H.R. 2) to provide for the reform and continuation of agricultural and other programs of the Department of Agriculture through fiscal year 2023, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 41 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, May 17, 2018, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

4850. A letter from the Under Secretary, Comptroller, Department of Defense, transmitting a status report on the account balance in the Defense Cooperation Account, as of March 31, 2018, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 2608(e); Public Law 101-403, Sec. 202(a)(1) (as amended by Public Law 112-81, Sec. 1064(7)); (125 Stat. 1587); to the Committee on Armed Services.

4851. A letter from the Director, Defense Pricing/Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's final rule — Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Promoting Voluntary Post-Award Disclosure of Defective Pricing (DFARS Case 2015-D030) [Docket: DARS-2015-0051] (RIN: 0750-AI75) received April 30, 2018, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Armed Services.

4852. A letter from the Director, Defense Pricing/Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's final rule — Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Amendments Related to Sources of Electronic Parts (DFARS Case 2016-D013) [Docket: DARS-2016-0014] (RIN: 0750-AI92) received April 30, 2018, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Armed Services.

4853. A letter from the Chairman, National Credit Union Administration, transmitting the Administration's 2017 Annual Report, pursuant to 12 U.S.C. 1752a(d); June 26, 1934, ch. 750, title I, Sec. 102(d) (as amended by Public Law 95-630, Sec. 501); (92 Stat. 3680); to the Committee on Financial Services.

4854. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Education, transmitting the Department's final rule — Definitions and Selection Criteria that Apply to Direct Grant Programs (RIN: 1855-AA13) received April 26, 2018, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

4855. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Konjac glucomannan; Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance [EPA-HQ-OPP-2017-0249; FRL-9976-60] received May 7, 2018, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

4856. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Duddingtonia flagrans strain IAH 1297; Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance [EPA-HQ-OPP-2017-0294; FRL-9977-31] received May 7, 2018, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

4857. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; Texas; Revisions to Permitting and Public Participation for Air Quality Permit Applications [EPA-R06-OAR-2017-0124; FRL-9976-95-Region 6] received May 7, 2018, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

4858. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; New Jersey; Motor Vehicle Enhanced Inspection and Maintenance Program [EPA-R02-OAR-2017-0101; FRL-9977-61-Region 2] received May 7, 2018, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

4859. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Air Plan Approval; Georgia; Regional Haze Plan and Prong 4 (Visibility) for the 2012 PM2.5, 2010 NO2, 2010 SO2, and 2008 Ozone NAAQS [EPA-R04-OAR-2016-0315; FRL-9977-49-Region 4] received May 7, 2018, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

4860. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — State of North Dakota Underground Injection Control Program; Class VI Primacy Approval [EPA-HQ-OW-2013-0280; FRL-9976-92-OW] received April 24, 2018, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

4861. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's direct final rule — New York: Incorporation by Reference of State Hazardous Waste Management Program [EPA-R02-RCRA-2018-0034; FRL-9974-06-Region 2] received April 24, 2018, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

4862. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Chlormequat Chloride; Pesticide Tolerances [EPA-HQ-OPP-2016-0661; FRL-9974-42] received April 24, 2018, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

4863. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Bacillus subtilis strain FMCH002; Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance [EPA-HQ-OPP-2017-0186; FRL-9971-55] received April 24, 2018, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

4864. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Bacillus licheniformis strain FMCH001; Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance [EPA-HQ-OPP-2017-0185; FRL-9971-54] received April 24, 2018, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

4865. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Approval of State Plans for Designated Facilities and Pollutants; Missouri; Hospital, Medical, and Infectious Waste Incineration (HMIWI) Units [EPA-R07-OAR-2018-0005; FRL-9977-10-Region 10] received April 24, 2018, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

4866. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's direct final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; Texas; Control of Air Pollution from Visible Emissions and Particulate Matter [EPA-R06-OAR-

2017-0519; FRL-9977-04-Region 6] received April 24, 2018, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

4867. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Air Plan Approval; Arizona; Stationary Sources; New Source Review [EPA-R09-OAR-2017-0255; FRL-9977-23-Region 9] received April 27, 2018, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

4868. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; Louisiana; Interstate Transport Requirements for the 2012 PM2.5 NAAQS [EPA-R06-OAR-2015-0851; FRL-9977-02-Region 6] received April 27, 2018, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

4869. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Delegation of Authority to North Carolina and the Western North Carolina Regional Air Quality Agency of Federal Plan for Existing Sewage Sludge Incineration Units [EPA-R04-OAR-2018-0119; FRL-9977-22-Region 4] received April 27, 2018, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

4870. A letter from the Deputy Chief, Auctions and Spectrum Access Division, Wireless Telecommunications and Media Bureaus, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Auction of Cross-Service FM Translator Construction Permits Scheduled for May 15, 2018; Notice and Filing Requirements, Minimum Opening Bids, Upfront Payments, and Other Procedures for Auction 99 (AU Docket No.: 17-143) received April 26, 2018, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

4871. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting notification that the national emergency with respect to Yemen, declared in Executive Order 13611 of May 16, 2012, is to continue in effect beyond May 16, 2018, pursuant to 50 U.S.C. 1622(d); Public Law 94-412, Sec. 202(d); (90 Stat. 1257) (H. Doc. No. 115—124); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed.

4872. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, NMFS, Office of Sustainable Fisheries — Southeast Region, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Reef Fish Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico; Modifications to Greater Amberjack Recreational Fishing Year and Fixed Closed Season [Docket No.: 171017999-8262-01] (RIN: 0648-BH32) received April 26, 2018, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

4873. A letter from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Secret Service, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Restricted Buildings and Grounds received April 26, 2018, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

4874. A letter from the Acting Chairman, Federal Maritime Commission, transmitting the 56th Annual Report covering activities of the Federal Maritime Commission for FY 2017, pursuant to 46 U.S.C. 306(a); Public Law 109-304, Sec. 4; (120 Stat. 1489); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4875. A letter from the Chairman, Surface Transportation Board, transmitting the Board's final rules — Updating the Code of Federal Regulations [Docket No.: EP 746] received April 26, 2018, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4876. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's IRB only rule — Modifications to Definition of United States Property under Section 956 (Notice 2018-46) received May 8, 2018, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

4877. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's IRB only rule — Empowerment Zone Designation Extension (Notice 2018-47) received May 8, 2018, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

4878. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting a certification to Congress under Sec. 609(b) of Public Law 101-162 Regarding the Incidental Capture of Sea Turtles in Commercial Shrimping Operations; jointly to the Committees on Natural Resources and Appropriations.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. NEWHOUSE: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 900. A resolution providing for further consideration of the bill (H.R. 2) to provide for the reform and continuation of agricultural and other programs of the Department of Agriculture through fiscal year 2023, and for other purposes (Rept. 115–679). Referred to the House Calendar.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California:

H.R. 5833. A bill to authorize appropriations for family unification vouchers for rental housing assistance, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. CUMMINGS (for himself, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Ms. NORTON, and Mr. SARBANES):

H.R. 5834. A bill to require the Attorney General to make competitive grants to State, tribal, and local governments to establish and maintain witness protection and assistance programs; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BISHOP of Michigan (for himself and Ms. JENKINS of Kansas):

H.R. 5835. A bill to amend title IV-A of the Social Security Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BISHOP of Michigan (for himself, Mr. RENACCI, and Mr. CURBELO of Florida):

H.R. 5836. A bill to amend title IV-A of the Social Security Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. SEWELL of Alabama (for herself and Mr. ROGERS of Alabama):

H.R. 5837. A bill to amend the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act to modify provisions relating to the household water well system grant program; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Mr. LAHOOD:

H.R. 5838. A bill to amend title IV-A of the Social Security Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico (for himself, Mr. FLEISCHMANN, Mr. HULTGREN, and Mr. LIPINSKI):

H.R. 5839. A bill to amend the Energy Policy Act of 2005 to require the establishment of a small business voucher program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.

By Mr. BILIRAKIS (for himself and Mr. SARBANES):

H.R. 5840. A bill to state the policy of the United States with respect to the extended nuclear deterrence posture of the United States in support of NATO and to direct the Secretary of Defense to provide Congress a briefing on such posture; to the Committee on Armed Services, and in addition to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. PITTENGER:

H.R. 5841. A bill to modernize and strengthen the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States to more effectively guard against the risk to the national security of the United States posed by certain types of foreign investment, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committees on Financial Services, Energy and Commerce, Intelligence (Permanent Select), and Oversight and Government Reform, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. REED (for himself and Mr. SMITH of Nebraska):

H.R. 5842. A bill to amend title IV-A of the Social Security Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. SMITH of Missouri (for himself and Mr. SMITH of Nebraska):

H.R. 5843. A bill to amend title IV-A of the Social Security Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BUCK:

H.R. 5844. A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of the site known as ''Amache'' in the State of Colorado; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi (for himself, Ms. FUDGE, Mr. MCEACHIN, Mr. CLYBURN, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mrs. BEATTY, Mrs. DEMINGS, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Ms. ADAMS, Ms. BASS, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Mr. HASTINGS, Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. EVANS, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. PAYNE, Ms. LEE, Mr.

CLAY, Ms. WILSON of Florida, and Mr. AL GREEN of Texas):

H.R. 5845. A bill to prohibit Members of the House of Representatives from using their congressional offices for personal overnight accommodations and to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow a deduction for living expenses incurred by Members of the House of Representatives, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committees on Rules, and Ethics, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. BLUMENAUER (for himself, Mr. SANFORD, Mr. DUFFY, and Mr. DEFAZIO):

H.R. 5846. A bill to require the Comptroller General of the United States to conduct a study regarding the buyout practices of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. CURBELO of Florida (for himself and Mr. SMITH of Nebraska):

H.R. 5847. A bill to amend title IV-A of the Social Security Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois (for himself, Mr. CARTER of Texas, Mr. HARRIS, and Mr. O'ROURKE):

H.R. 5848. A bill to direct the Secretary of Defense to provide travel to Dover Air Force Base for family members of members of the Armed Forces who die outside of the United States but not in a theater of combat operations so the family may receive the remains of the deceased; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. DEUTCH (for himself, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Mr. SOTO, Mr. CAPUANO, Ms. TITUS, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, and Mr. CARSON of Indiana):

H.R. 5849. A bill to amend the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 to require that supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits be calculated with reference to the cost of the low-cost food plan as determined by the Secretary of Agriculture, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico:

H.R. 5850. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to waive the 90-10 rule for proprietary institutions impacted by Hurricanes Irma or Maria; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. KEATING (for himself and Mr. COOK):

H.R. 5851. A bill to provide for the termination of residential or motor vehicle leases and telephone service contracts for combat support agency personnel working in combat theaters of operation; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. NORMAN:

H.R. 5852. A bill to prohibit the expenditure of funds to carry out the Global Climate Change Initiative of the United States Agency for International Development, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. REICHERT (for himself and Mr. SMITH of Nebraska):

H.R. 5853. A bill to prohibit assistance provided under the program of block grants to States for temporary assistance for needy families from being accessed through the use of an electronic benefit transfer card at any store that offers marijuana for sale; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. SCHWEIKERT (for himself, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. NORMAN, Mr. SMITH of Nebraska, and Mr. BIGGS):

H.R. 5854. A bill to amend title IV-A of the Social Security Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia (for himself and Ms. FRANKEL of Florida):

H.R. 5855. A bill to require the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to revise labeling requirements for fuel pumps that dispense E15, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. WEBSTER of Florida:

H.R. 5856. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a deduction for certain charity care furnished by physicians, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. ROE of Tennessee:

H. Con. Res. 121. Concurrent resolution directing the Secretary of the Senate to make a correction in the enrollment of the bill S. 2372; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. WOODALL:

H. Res. 897. A resolution electing Members to certain standing committees of the House of Representatives; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi:

H. Res. 898. A resolution directing the Secretary of Homeland Security to transmit certain documents to the House of Representatives relating to Department of Homeland Security policies and activities relating to homeland security information produced and disseminated regarding cybersecurity threats posed by the ZTE Corporation, headquartered in Shenzhen, China; to the Committee on Homeland Security.

By Mr. CHABOT:

H. Res. 899. A resolution requesting the Senate to return to the House of Representatives the bill H.R. 4743; considered and agreed to.

MEMORIALS

Under clause 3 of rule XII, memorials were presented and referred as follows:

198. The SPEAKER presented a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Michigan, relative to House Concurrent Resolution No. 15, memorializing Congress of the United States to take action on immigration reform; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

199. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Arizona, relative to House Concurrent Memorial 2002, urging the Congress of the United States to act to increase the number of United States Customs Field Office personnel at the ports of entry in Nogales, Douglas, and San Luis, Arizona; jointly to the Committees on Homeland Security and Ways and Means.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statements are submitted regarding the specific powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the accompanying bill or joint resolution.

By Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California:

H.R. 5833.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 5 and Clause 18 of the United States Constitution

By Mr. CUMMINGS:

H.R. 5834.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The Spending Clause, Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the U.S. Constitution.

By Mr. BISHOP of Michigan:

H.R. 5835.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution, to ''provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States.''

By Mr. BISHOP of Michigan:

H.R. 5836.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution, to ''provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States.''

By Ms. SEWELL of Alabama:

H.R. 5837.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. LAHOOD:

H.R. 5838.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution, to ''provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States.''

By Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico:

H.R. 5839.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. BILIRAKIS:

H.R. 5840.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the Constitution of the United States.

By Mr. PITTENGER:

H.R. 5841.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8: to regulate commerce with foreign nations.

By Mr. REED:

H.R. 5842.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution, to ''provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the Unite States.''

By Mr. SMITH of Missouri:

H.R. 5843.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution, to ''provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States.''

By Mr. BUCK:

H.R. 5844.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2 allows Congress to create national parks (or to create a study to determine the suitability and feasibility of designating the study area as a unit of the National Parks System) under the ''Property Clause.'' ''The Congress shall have Power to dispose of and make all needful Rules and Regulations respecting the Territory or other Property belonging to the United States . . .''

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 is a coefficient clause which states that Congress generally may assume additional powers not specifically listed in the Constitution, such as enacting a special resource study of a specified study area.

By Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi:

HR. 5845.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I Section 8

By Mr. BLUMENAUER:

H.R. 5846.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. CURBELO of Florida:

H.R. 5847.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution, to ''provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States.''

By Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois:

H.R. 5848.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The constitutional authority on which this bill rests is the power of Congress ''to provide for the common Defence'', ''to raise and support Armies'', ''to provide and maintain a Navy'' and ''to make Rules for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval Forces'' as enumerated in Article I, section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. DEUTCH:

H.R. 5849.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clauses 1 and 18 of the Constitution of the United States.

By Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico:

H.R. 5850.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 1 of the Constitution of the United States of America

All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

By Mr. KEATING:

H.R. 5851.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, section 8 of the Constitution of the United States

By Mr. NORMAN:

H.R. 5852.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 7

By Mr. REICHERT:

H.R. 5853.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution, to ''provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States.''

By Mr. SCHWEIKERT:

H.R. 5854.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution, to ''provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States.''

By Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia:

H.R. 5855.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. WEBSTER of Florida:

H.R. 5856.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 20: Ms. ADAMS.
H.R. 154: Mr. AGUILAR.
H.R. 233: Miss RICE of New York and Mr. GOTTHEIMER.
H.R. 398: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY and Mr. LOWENTHAL.
H.R. 489: Mr. KENNEDY.
H.R. 681: Mr. HUNTER.
H.R. 712: Ms. NORTON.
H.R. 754: Mr. LANCE.
H.R. 781: Mr. STIVERS.
H.R. 788: Mr. MULLIN.
H.R. 811: Mr. JORDAN and Mr. CURBELO of Florida.
H.R. 846: Mr. BLUM.
H.R. 1171: Mr. COOK and Mr. ABRAHAM.
H.R. 1267: Mr. HARRIS.
H.R. 1279: Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas.
H.R. 1300: Ms. CLARKE of New York.
H.R. 1318: Mr. HARRIS.
H.R. 1339: Mr. POLIQUIN.
H.R. 1377: Mrs. RADEWAGEN.
H.R. 1406: Mr. CUMMINGS and Mr. GARAMENDI.
H.R. 1409: Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS and Mr. PAYNE.
H.R. 1472: Ms. DELAURO and Mr. MULLIN.
H.R. 1566: Ms. CLARKE of New York and Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois.
H.R. 1911: Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico and Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois.
H.R. 2004: Mr. TIPTON.
H.R. 2022: Mr. NORMAN.
H.R. 2259: Mr. SHERMAN.
H.R. 2358: Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. BLUM, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, and Ms. BORDALLO.
H.R. 2401: Mr. SERRANO.
H.R. 2417: Mr. HASTINGS, Ms. SÁNCHEZ, Mr. MOULTON, and Mr. MCEACHIN.
H.R. 2452: Ms. DEGETTE.
H.R. 2486: Mr. NADLER, Mr. COHEN, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, and Ms. BARRAGÁN.
H.R. 2514: Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. HECK, Ms. ESHOO, and Mr. KIHUEN.
H.R. 2871: Mr. KING of Iowa.
H.R. 2917: Mr. ROUZER.
H.R. 2925: Mr. SCHIFF and Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN.
H.R. 2938: Mr. O'ROURKE.
H.R. 2996: Mr. SMUCKER.
H.R. 2999: Mr. WITTMAN.
H.R. 3030: Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Ms. FRANKEL of Florida, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, and Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN.
H.R. 3186: Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana.
H.R. 3395: Mr. KILDEE and Mr. COOK.
H.R. 3409: Mr. CURTIS and Mr. GOTTHEIMER.
H.R. 3671: Mr. CARBAJAL.
H.R. 3738: Ms. WILSON of Florida.
H.R. 3790: Mr. TIPTON.
H.R. 4158: Mr. NORCROSS.
H.R. 4391: Mr. EVANS and Mr. MOULTON.
H.R. 4425: Ms. JAYAPAL.
H.R. 4492: Mr. BILIRAKIS.
H.R. 4505: Mr. GALLEGO.
H.R. 4680: Mr. MOULTON.
H.R. 4714: Ms. ESHOO, Mr. GIBBS, and Ms. NORTON.
H.R. 4720: Mr. RYAN of Ohio.
H.R. 4732: Ms. MCSALLY, Mrs. LOWEY, Mr. DESAULNIER, and Mr. TED LIEU of California.
H.R. 4944: Mr. ESPAILLAT.
H.R. 4958: Ms. LOFGREN.
H.R. 4983: Mr. WESTERMAN.
H.R. 5011: Ms. MATSUI and Mr. MCGOVERN.
H.R. 5060: Mr. CARBAJAL and Mr. KING of New York.
H.R. 5121: Mr. COSTA.
H.R. 5132: Ms. BARRAGÁN, Mr. DUFFY, Mr. CONAWAY, Mr. POLIQUIN, Mr. BISHOP of Michigan, Mr. BLUM, Mr. SMUCKER, Mr. HIMES, Mrs. LOVE, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. RUTHERFORD, Mr. DENHAM, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. FASO, and Mr. BERA.
H.R. 5199: Mr. STIVERS.
H.R. 5244: Mr. GRIJALVA.
H.R. 5248: Mr. JEFFRIES and Mr. HIGGINS of New York.
H.R. 5270: Ms. CHENEY.
H.R. 5288: Ms. SINEMA.
H.R. 5292: Mr. LOWENTHAL.
H.R. 5307: Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana.
H.R. 5358: Mr. WESTERMAN, Ms. TENNEY, and Mr. DUFFY.
H.R. 5395: Mrs. LOWEY, Mr. NADLER, Mr. SUOZZI, and Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York.
H.R. 5413: Mr. ABRAHAM, Mr. KING of Iowa, Mr. TAYLOR, Mr. BOST, Mr. MULLIN, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mr. POE of Texas, Mrs. COMSTOCK, Mr. BUCHANAN, Mr. STIVERS, Mr. HARPER, Mr. KIND, Mr. CORREA, Mr. ROTHFUS, Mr. HULTGREN, Mr. BIGGS, Mrs. WALORSKI, Mr. ROYCE of California, Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Ms. GABBARD, Mr. LEWIS of Minnesota, Mrs. HARTZLER, Mr. OLSON, Mr. PANETTA, Mr. DENHAM, Mr. AMODEI, Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California, Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS, and Mr. SMITH of Missouri.
H.R. 5415: Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee.
H.R. 5467: Mr. LAWSON of Florida.
H.R. 5472: Ms. TENNEY.
H.R. 5486: Ms. NORTON, Mr. TAKANO, and Mrs. NAPOLITANO.
H.R. 5517: Mr. MCKINLEY.
H.R. 5626: Mr. SHERMAN.
H.R. 5628: Mr. DELANEY.
H.R. 5637: Mr. CRAMER.
H.R. 5658: Mr. BERGMAN.
H.R. 5665: Mr. ROE of Tennessee and Mr. BYRNE.
H.R. 5671: Mr. WELCH.
H.R. 5682: Mr. MEEKS, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mrs. HANDEL, and Mr. SENSENBRENNER.
H.R. 5689: Mr. RATCLIFFE.
H.R. 5694: Mr. GALLAGHER and Mr. WENSTRUP.
H.R. 5706: Ms. MATSUI.
H.R. 5710: Mr. GUTIÉRREZ.
H.R. 5715: Mr. KILMER.
H.R. 5728: Mr. SOTO, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. NADLER, Mr. PALLONE, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Ms. MOORE, Mr. CROWLEY, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. SERRANO, and Mrs. NAPOLITANO.
H.R. 5754: Mr. CICILLINE.
H.R. 5761: Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Ms. MATSUI, and Ms. MOORE.
H.R. 5782: Ms. JAYAPAL.
H.R. 5795: Mr. RENACCI, Ms. BONAMICI, Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana, and Mr. BILIRAKIS.
H.R. 5819: Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. ROHRABACHER, Ms. CLARKE of New York, and Mr. ELLISON.
H.J. Res. 129: Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas and Mr. CLYBURN.
H. Con. Res. 8: Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California.
H. Con. Res. 60: Mr. SCOTT of Virginia.
H. Res. 69: Mr. BARLETTA.
H. Res. 274: Mr. BOST.
H. Res. 401: Mr. GARAMENDI and Mr. SMUCKER.

H. Res. 750: Mr. POSEY.

H. Res. 763: Mr. BRAT, Mr. TIPTON, Mr. LONG, Mr. BLUM, Ms. CHENEY, Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California, Mr. HUIZENGA, Mr. GIANFORTE, Mr. STIVERS, Mr. WENSTRUP, Mr. RUSSELL, and Ms. JACKSON LEE.

H. Res. 857: Mr. KILMER.

H. Res. 861: Mr. CURTIS and Mr. BILIRAKIS.

H. Res. 869: Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Ms. BARRAGÁN, and Mr. PALLONE.

H. Res. 881: Mr. BRAT and Mr. RATCLIFFE.

H. Res. 893: Mr. PASCRELL.

United States of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 115th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 164 WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, MAY 16, 2018 No. 80

Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on us, molding and making us according to Your will. Thank You for the favor You show us, because we belong to You and have been chosen to fulfill Your purposes. Lord, help us to grasp the significance of Your unfolding providence as You continue to sustain us with the many acts of Your faithful love.

Today, inspire our lawmakers to work to the best of their ability, striving always to do what is right for our Nation and world. Give them the wisdom in their labors to depend upon Your mercy, power, and grace, believing that You can do for them more than they can ask or imagine.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore 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.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PAUL). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Mitchell Zais, of South Carolina, to be Deputy Secretary of Education.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

CALLING FOR THE RELEASE OF PASTOR ANDREW BRUNSON

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, this is my third occasion on a speech that I wish that I didn't have to give on the floor of the U.S. Senate, but I promise that I am going to give a speech on this subject every week that the Senate is open for as long as I am a U.S. Senator and there is a man in a Turkish prison who I don't believe should be.

This man's name is Andrew Brunson, Pastor Brunson. He is a Presbyterian minister from Black Mountain, NC, who has been in Turkey for about the last 20 years with his wife. He raised his family there. He is a Presbyterian minister who at first just did ministry work. He didn't have a church to actually open up to the community. He just did ministry work—preached the Word and delivered the Word for the people in Turkey who wanted to hear it. It was a small church with only about 50 full-time members. It was a church that was just outside of Izmir. It was actually in Izmir proper, which is one of the larger cities in Turkey.

As of today, this man has been in prison for 586 days. He was actually taken to prison, without charges, under the emergency order after the coup in 2016. He was put in prison on October 4, 2016. For almost 17 months, he was held in a prison cell that was designed for 8 prisoners but had 21 in it. None of the other ones were American. None of the other ones were English speaking. Many of them were charged on either ISIS or terrorist charges or for plotting a coup attempt. He was in that prison for almost 17 months. He lost 50 pounds. His health diminished. His mental state, as anyone would expect, diminished. Yet he is a strong man of faith, and hopefully he will continue to have the strength to go through this horrible process.

We have been handling this. We have what we call casework. If somebody in North Carolina needs help, whatever that may be, we encourage them to call our office, and we open a case. We do any number of things for veterans, for military families, for seniors—anybody. If you need help in getting through to the Federal Government, you call our office. So we opened a case on Pastor Brunson about a year ago, and we have been trying to work through diplomatic channels to get him released.

About 3 months ago or 4 months ago, we heard that the indictment was going to be served on Pastor Brunson. I received word from some of the family members and people in the faith-based community that they were concerned that the American people were going to read the indictment and really judge him as guilty and turn their backs on him and have him languish in prison for what would be, essentially, a life sentence. He is 50 years old, and the charges would be up to 35 years.

It was so important for me to have him know that we cared about him that I traveled to Turkey. I got a visa to go to Turkey and made a request to go to that Turkish prison and look Pastor Brunson eye to eye and tell him that we were not going to forget about him and that we were going to do everything we could to work for his release and the release of a number of other people who I genuinely believe, in Turkey, are subject to religious persecution.

I met with him in the prison for about an hour and a half. It turns out

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

Printed on recycled paper.

that we had just found out that his first court date was going to be about 3 weeks later, so I decided to go back to Turkey 3 weeks later and be in that courtroom to hear the testimony for myself, to hear the 62-page indictment play out. I was in that courtroom from about 9 o'clock in the morning on Monday until about 10 o'clock that night. If you don't know what a kangaroo court is and you can't read it on this slide, just Google it quickly, because what I saw was a kangaroo court.

First off, you should think about the setting. It is unlike any setting you could ever imagine in the United States. It doesn't have a trial jury, but it has a three-judge panel up there, and the prosecutor is really elevated to almost being another judge. The prosecutor was up at the dais. We were in a room that was about half the size of this room. It was maybe about two-thirds the size. It was a big room. The defense attorney was off to the side about another 30 or 40 feet, and the defendant was right in front of this panel of judges and was being looked down upon. He had to testify for 6 hours on his own behalf. One doesn't have a choice in Turkey. Then they listed the charges.

Why do I say it was a kangaroo court? Let me give a summary. I am not going to cover all of the charges because my time is limited today, but let me give a summary of some of the charges.

In the time I was there, there were about a half dozen secret witnesses. The defendant didn't get to face his accusers. In Turkey, these secret witnesses can say what they want to say. The essence of one secret witness's testimony was that he knew that Pastor Brunson was involved in either plotting the coup or in working with the PKK, which is a terrorist organization fundamentally made up of Kurds, because he witnessed a light on in this church for 4 hours.

First off, in the U.S. system, I know you are probably not going to get prosecuted for 35 years for having a light on for 4 hours—at least I hope not. Yet what makes this even more challenging is that this is the church. This church only seats about 120 people. It has two very small upstairs' rooms. I know because I have been there. We took these pictures when I visited Turkey after the visit to the prison. This is the room that is alleged to have had a light on for 4 hours, but there is one problem—no window, no way to possibly see into this room. In fact, the windows downstairs are closed with storm—I am trying to think of the name—shutters, wooden shutters. There is no way you could even see in. Yet this witness had what they considered to be compelling testimony that a light had been on, and for that reason, the pastor had to have been involved in the terrorist plot or the coup.

Another of the charges that have been alleged by the prosecution is that all of the churches in America are connected and that they actually work in unison in other countries to disrupt the governments of other countries. A Christian church may take the Word to people in other countries, but it is really kind of organized as an intelligence-gathering and destabilizing force on behalf of the American Government in order to disrupt other sovereign nations.

Literally, this is how they have been thinking, and this is what they have been using to prosecute him. It is a kangaroo court.

I maintain that what we have is a hostage situation here. We have President Erdogan saying: If we give him a pass, give us somebody we are trying to extradite from the United States. On the one hand, they say you have to work through the system, and we have to let justice be served. On the other hand, the President has said: If you give us somebody we are trying to extradite from the United States, then we will give you Pastor Brunson. This is a hostage situation. This is religious persecution.

I will finish with this. Turkey is a NATO ally. It is an important NATO ally. It has been in NATO since 1952. It is in a very dangerous part of the world. It has a lot of challenges that it has to deal with—the Syrian conflict and its own internal economic challenges. There are a number of challenges, and I understand that President Erdogan's job is difficult. I would like to make it easier. As a co-lead of the Senate's NATO Observer Group, I would like to actually strengthen our partnership and make safer and more secure its homeland and its threat from foreign adversaries.

Yet, today, I have a NATO ally that is behaving like no NATO ally ever has in the history of the alliance. These are the sorts of things we are supposed to be doing as members of the NATO alliance, not illegally imprisoning for 586 days a Presbyterian minister.

We will be doing the NDAA markup next week, which is the National Defense Authorization Act. I will be working with other Members and will have to put forth provisions in the NDAA, which is the last thing that I would like to do. I would like to put provisions forward that strengthen the alliance with NATO, that send a very clear signal that we want to help them secure their homeland, and that send a clear signal that we want to work together in the fight in Syria. But today I can't have that as a priority. Today my No. 1 priority is releasing Pastor Brunson. I hope everybody understands that this is something that everybody—whether you are from North Carolina, North Dakota, or any State in this Nation—should all stand as a nation saying: This is not how you treat an American citizen and certainly not a NATO ally.

I look forward, hopefully, to never doing this speech again. I hope that by next week Pastor Brunson is free and that we sent a very clear message to all the other people in Turkey who are in prison because of their faith that this is unacceptable behavior.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

NOMINATION OF GINA HASPEL

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, yesterday, the Senate confirmed two more superbly qualified circuit court nominees. Joel Carson and John Nalbandian are the 20th and the 21st circuit judges we have confirmed this Congress.

This morning our colleagues on the Intelligence Committee finished their consideration of Gina Haspel to be CIA Director and reported her nomination favorably with bipartisan support. Ms. Haspel's testimony and record have showcased the poise, talent, and experience that make her an excellent selection.

Senators heard about her 30-plus years of CIA experience, spanning sensitive operations from the Cold War to the Global War on Terror. That background makes Ms. Haspel an ideal pick at this particular moment, when Secretary Mattis has explained that counterterrorism and a renewed great-power competition are two of the key challenges facing our Nation.

So it is no wonder that James Clapper, President Obama's Director of National Intelligence, said: ''I think the world of Gina; she is capable, smart, very experienced, well-respected by the Agency rank and file, and a great person.''

Just yesterday, our current DNI, Dan Coats, wrote in USA Today that ''she is a person of high integrity with valuable frontline and executive experience . . . who is willing to speak truth to power when required on behalf of our nation.''

Gina Haspel is the right woman at the right time. Her nomination has support from national security leaders and Senators in both parties. There is no reason why her confirmation should be delayed, and I look forward to advancing it expeditiously following the committee's action.

NET NEUTRALITY

Mr. President, on another matter, over the last 20 years, the internet has yielded progress that was the stuff of science fiction just a generation ago. In so many ways it has spawned a new economy and fostered new connections across the country and the world.

In large part these successes owe to a bipartisan consensus that Washington, DC, should be largely hands-off, but, of course, like every exciting new frontier of the economy, the internet attracted attention from the crowd that prefers to regulate first and ask questions later.

In 2015 President Obama's FCC set out to fix what wasn't broken. It imposed regulations designed for Depression-era telephones on new technologies that fit in our pockets. So

much for the light-touch approach that helped the early internet grow.

Last year, under the leadership of Chairman Ajit Pai, the FCC sought to rectify this mistake and restore the rules that helped the internet flourish while still protecting consumers from abuses. The resolution Democrats are putting forward today would undo that progress. It would reimpose heavy-handed Depression-era rules on the most vibrant, fast-growing sectors of our economy. It is wrong on the merits. It is also the wrong way to go about this process.

The CRA is useful when it lets elected representatives rein in regulatory overreach by unelected bureaucrats, but this resolution doesn't seek to rein in overregulation. It seeks to reimpose it. What is worse, by using the CRA mechanism, the Democrats seek to make the 2015 rules permanent going forward. The CRA would handicap this FCC or future FCC's ability to revise the rules even if provisions were widely seen as necessary.

There is a better way to proceed. It is called bipartisan legislation. Senator THUNE has reached out to the Democrats on the committee to draft internet ''rules of the road'' for the 21st century—a set of rules that would safeguard consumers but still prevent regulators from stifling innovation at every turn. Already, multiple Democratic colleagues have drawn the same conclusions with regards to preemptive overcorrection by the FCC. The senior Senator from Florida and the junior Senator from Hawaii, for example, have both expressed a desire to collaborate on bipartisan legislation.

But Democrats have already made clear that the resolution today is about the elections in November. They know they will not ultimately be successful, but they want to campaign on their desire to add new regulations to the internet. This resolution takes us in the wrong direction, and we should reject it.

TAX REFORM

Mr. President, on one final matter, later today I will be meeting with members of an industry with deep roots in my home State of Kentucky—our bourbon and spirits distillers.

Judging by recent headlines, we will have plenty of good news to discuss. After 8 years of Democrats' policies enriching big cities but leaving small businesses behind, Republican policies are helping workers and job creators to thrive all across our country. From Louisville to Kansas City to Portland, our growing craft distilling industry is a perfect example. They are enjoying a pro-growth provision in the historic tax reform Republicans passed last year, which lowered excise taxes on beer, wine, and spirits and modernized the regulatory policy affecting each.

Interestingly enough, the Craft Beverage Modernization and Tax Reform Act even began as a bipartisan effort with 56 cosponsors here in the Senate, led by Senators BLUNT, WYDEN, and PORTMAN.

Of course, not a single Democrat showed up when it was time to vote on tax reform. But Republicans accomplished it anyway, and now the New York Times can publish stories about how the measure is making a big difference for small craft distillers.

As one such report puts it, distilling is a burgeoning source of jobs, tax revenue, and tourism dollars in every State. For example, the Kentucky Distillers' Association reported that just last year the bourbon industry accounted for 17,500 jobs and over 1 million visitors to my home State. That is a big shift from the so-called Obama recovery, when almost all the limited jobs and investment poured into the biggest cities. But it is a new day.

Now, FEW Spirits, in Illinois, has hired more workers and is replacing its overseas glassmaker with an American one. J. Rieger & Co., in Missouri, has found extra room in the budget to expand its sales team and begin selling its products further across the country.

In the Democratic leader's own backyard of Brooklyn, the New York Distilling Company recently cut the wholesale case price on its signature gin by more than 50 percent. According to one of its cofounders, Allen Katz, ''the reaction from our industry peers has been jaw-dropping.'' In Kentucky, which is home to more than 50 distilleries, there are plenty of examples to choose from. Thanks to the lowered excise tax, Casey Jones Distillery, a small operation in Hopkinsville, is growing its team, increasing production and planning to enhance its event space. Copper & Kings, in Louisville, has been able to hire more workers and is preparing to expand its warehouse and add a new bar for guests. The Copper & Kings team recently shared with me that tax reform is ''one of the most important initiatives [the Senate] could pursue to help create jobs for small businesses in Kentucky.''

My Democratic colleagues failed to block tax reform last year, and now they want to just keep arguing about it. They even propose to repeal it and roll back Americans' tax cuts, but entrepreneurs across the country are loving our new 21st century Tax Code. They are using it to expand operations and to create jobs.

It is hard to argue with results—not that it has stopped our Democratic friends from trying, and I am sure they will continue to try. But Republicans will stay focused on taking steps like these and raising a glass to America's small businesses.

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

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

NET NEUTRALITY

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, today is a monumental day. Today is the day the U.S. Senate votes on the future of the internet, the most powerful platform for commerce and communications in the history of the planet. Today, we show the American people who sides with them and who sides with the powerful special interests and corporate donors who are thriving under this administration.

Today, we vote on my Congressional Review Act resolution to save net neutrality. Net neutrality may sound complicated, but it is actually very simple. After you pay your monthly internet bill, you should be able to access all content on the web at the same speed—no slowing down certain websites, no blocking websites, and no charging you more to exercise your 21st century right to access the internet. It is as simple as that.

If that sounds like common sense, you are not alone. In fact, according to a recent poll, 86 percent of Americans support net neutrality. This isn't a partisan issue; 82 percent of Republicans support net neutrality.

Every day, we are told that this country is more divided than ever, that our differences outnumber our similarities. Well, the American people agree on net neutrality. They agree that the internet is for everyone. They agree that we cannot afford to blindly trust a few internet service providers—AT&T, Comcast, Verizon, Charter—to put consumers first. Yet, once again, the Trump administration has neglected the will of everyday Americans and given a gift to the rich and the powerful.

In December, the Trump Federal Communications Commission eliminated the very rules that prevent your internet service provider from indiscriminately charging more for internet fast lanes, slowing down websites, blocking websites, and making it harder and maybe even impossible for entrepreneurs, job creators, and small businesses—the lifeblood of the American economy—to connect to the internet.

The Trump Federal Communications Commission picked clear winners and losers when it repealed net neutrality. When the Federal Communications Commission decision takes effect on June 11, Big Telecom will have new tools to inflate profits, but Americans and small businesses that use the internet to do their jobs, communicate with each other, and participate in civic life will be left defenseless.

Don't be fooled by the army of lobbyists marching the Halls of Congress on behalf of the big internet service providers. They say that we don't need these rules because the internet service providers will self-regulate. Blocking, throttling, paid prioritization—these harms are alarmist and hypothetical, they say. Well, that simply is not the case. These practices are very real, and in a world without net neutrality, they may become the new normal. But don't just take my word for it. Let's look at the facts.

In 2007, an Associated Press investigation found that Comcast was blocking or severely slowing down BitTorrent, a website that allowed consumers to share video, music, and video game files. From 2007 to 2009, AT&T forced Apple to block Skype and other competing services from using AT&T's wireless network to encourage users to purchase more voice minutes. In 2011, Verizon blocked Google Wallet to protect a competing service it had a financial stake in developing and promoting.

There is no shortage of evidence that we need clear and enforceable rules of the road so that these discriminatory practices do not become commonplace schemes that consumers and small businesses must suffer through without any options for recourse.

This isn't the first time Congress has had to step in to protect the integrity of the marketplace. In the 1800s, we didn't have the information superhighway. We had railroads. American farmers used trains to deliver their products to consumers, and powerful railroad trusts started charging certain farmers higher rates to move their goods. Congress stepped in and passed the Sherman Antitrust Act to put a stop to this price discrimination.

Today, we have left the steam engine era, and we have moved into the search engine era. Internet service providers are the 21st century trusts controlling the channels of commerce. And in 2018, many American job creators aren't moving alfalfa seeds; they are moving kernels of ideas for the next big app, the next new startup.

Net neutrality is about continuing the American tradition of promoting competition and providing the level economic playing field we need to continue to prosper in this rapidly changing global economy. But net neutrality isn't just an economic issue; it is also central to the health of our democracy.

Over the past several months and years, Americans all over the country from all walks of life have mobilized and marched, fighting for progress and change—Black Lives Matter, the Women's March, the ''me too.'' movement, high school students demanding gun control, teachers calling for fair pay. Today citizens of all walks of life are carrying the torch of American activism, and they are doing it online.

In 2018, this is how the American people are organizing. This is how the American people are doing the indispensable work of an active citizenry. This is how the American people are speaking truth to power.

Asking individuals to pay extra to speak out for what they believe in, allowing companies to stifle or even block access to certain ideas—that isn't who we are as a country. It isn't consistent with the values of nondiscrimination. Net neutrality is the free speech issue of our time, and the well-being of our precious democracy depends on the public having equal, unfettered access to the internet.

Today, the U.S. Senate will show its true colors. It will either heed the calls of thousands of small businesses that have written in support of this Congressional Review Act resolution and the millions of Americans who have sent letters, posted tweets, and made calls defending net neutrality or the Senate will give another present to the rich and the powerful.

The Senate will either follow the example of Governors, State legislators, and attorneys general all over the country who are fighting to save the internet as we know it or it will let President Trump, once again, break his campaign promise of putting average Americans ahead of swampy special interests. It will either stand up for the principles that have allowed the U.S. internet economy to become the envy of the world or it will make another unforced error that threatens our long-term competitiveness.

I urge my colleagues to make the decision our constituents—with one voice—overwhelmingly are asking us to make. I urge my colleagues to vote yes on this Congressional Review Act resolution to restore net neutrality, to restore the principle of nondiscrimination, to restore the protections for small startups, for individuals in our country so that they cannot be discriminated against online.

This is net neutrality day here on the floor of the U.S. Senate. Today is the day of reckoning, when the Trump Federal Communications Commission is going to have their act judged by the U.S. Senate. My hope is that before the end of this day, the Senate will vote to overturn the Trump FCC and restore net neutrality, restore the principle of nondiscrimination, restore the principle of equality, restore the principle that small software and internet startups are given the same protections that the biggest companies in our country are provided.

Today is the day. Net neutrality is the vote that will determine whether we are going to give those protections to every American.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TILLIS). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic Leader is recognized.

NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, this week is National Police Week. It is a time to honor the brave men and women who put their lives on the line every day to keep our streets safe.

Every morning, police officers all across the country wake up, put on their uniform praying for the kind of day the rest of us typically enjoy: a routine one. Praise God, most days that is the case, but sometimes our police officers are asked to put their own lives at risk in defense of others. Back in my hometown, New York, we are protected by the finest law enforcement organization in the world—the NYPD. Just 2 weeks ago, two rookie New York police officers, Flavio Chauca and Jason Truglio, rushed into a burning apartment building and up nine flights of smoke-filled stairs to pull several people to safety. It was an extraordinary act of heroism—and just another day in the line of duty for the over 35,000 men and women of the New York Police Department.

All of us in Congress are indebted to the U.S. Capitol Police who spend long hours protecting us every day. We saw their bravery in action last year when a gunman attacked a congressional baseball practice. If it weren't for the grit and valor of Officers David Bailey and Crystal Griner, things would have gotten much worse.

We should all take a moment to thank the hard-working law enforcement officers at the FBI. Over the last year, our Nation's top law enforcement officers have been unfairly maligned by this President. It is unheard of, particularly on the Republican side, to be so anti-law enforcement, and it maligns the brave men and women who work under them too. Our FBI agents are patriots, just like the men and women out on the beat.

So, today, I salute the men and women in blue, particularly my friends at the NYPD and our fine Capitol Police, as we commemorate the lives of their colleagues lost in the line of duty.

NORTH KOREA

Mr. President, last night, we received reports that Kim Jong Un is threatening to pull out of a planned meeting with President Trump as a result of the routine and scheduled joint military exercise by American and South Korean forces.

After weeks of halting progress, it is a reminder that the North Korean regime has not suddenly moderated. Remember, all that has happened so far is, North Korea has announced it is closing a nuclear test site that was defunct anyway and returned American citizens they never should have detained. We are all thankful those three Americans have returned home, but it was not some major give by Kim Jong Un. Americans should never be imprisoned unlawfully by a foreign power and treated as diplomatic bargaining chips, and we, as a country, should not be giving huge kudos to a leader who does just that.

President Trump, on the other hand, made a significant concession when he agreed to meet with Kim Jong Un. We are rooting for the President's gamble, with this mischievous and dangerous regime, to work. Now that push is coming to shove, Kim Jong Un is baiting the President into making more concessions to ensure a meeting that was a concession to them in the first place.

I strongly urge President Trump: Mr. President, don't give Kim Jong Un anything for free. North Korea is threatening to cancel the summit over our joint military exercises with the South. That would be a mistake. It would be a mistake for the President to cancel this exercise, to begin making further concessions before Kim has dismantled a single nuclear weapon or agreed to a single inspector. If we show weakness—if the minute Kim Jong Un threatens, we go along, he will continue to take advantage of us. We must show strength and fortitude. By continuing these military exercises, we will do just that. I urge the President to not even blink an eye but say we are going forward with these exercises. We have seen North Korea play these games before. When North Korea wants or needs something, exercises are a problem. When they don't need something, the exercises are not a problem. Kim is clearly testing the United States and President Trump, trying to see if there is any weakness or desperation or division on our side. We must be strong. We must be resolute. This exercise should move forward.

The best way to head into these negotiations with the North is to make clear that we will not be bullied and to show strength. We have to be willing to walk away from an insufficiently robust deal, and making concessions before we even sit down at the table would send the opposite signal. To achieve an enforceable, verifiable, and enduring agreement to denuclearize the North Korean Peninsula, the United States cannot give away leverage before even getting in the room.

RUSSIA INVESTIGATION

Mr. President, on another matter, the Judiciary Committee report, this morning Republicans on the Judiciary Committee released the transcripts of interviews conducted as part of its investigation into Russian meddling. It was a perfunctory move, apparently intended to signal the end of the Judiciary Committee's on-again, off-again, halting investigation.

Senate Judiciary Committee Republicans are rushing to declare their investigation complete when they have barely scratched the surface. After more than a year of intermittent effort, Senate Republicans have interviewed only 12 witnesses in total. Today they are releasing the transcripts of the testimony of just five witnesses who were interviewed about the notorious June 2016 Trump Tower meeting. One of the witnesses, an infamous, Kremlin-connected lawyer, was allowed to provide only written answers—no followup questions, no probing. Astoundingly, our Republican friends decided not to even interview two of the other key participants in that meeting—Jared Kushner and Paul Manafort.

To call the Senate Judiciary Committee's Trump-Russia investigation halfhearted is too generous. It has been no different from the effort taken by Representative NUNES. It is designed to let the President and his lawyers interfere with the Mueller probe and to get a peek at any potential evidence.

That is why the Democrats on the committee, led by Senator FEINSTEIN, have today released a document detailing the open threats of the committee's investigation—the interviews not conducted, the leads not followed. The information Judiciary Committee Democrats provided today shows one thing: Committee Democrats have made crystal clear that committee Republicans are prematurely saying ''pencils down.'' There is much left to investigate, many witnesses still to be heard, and many facts left to follow.

The message of Senate Republicans on this investigation is ''Pay no attention to the man behind the curtain.'' The American people will not be fooled. They know the difference between a genuine search for truth and a whitewash.

I remain hopeful that Senators Burr and Warner are running down every lead and every thread, but there is no doubt that the Senate Intelligence Committee's investigation will be the next target of the President's talking heads on FOX News.

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Mr. President, finally, on prescription drugs, I read a headline in this morning's Washington Post: ''Trump's drug price retreat adds to list of abandoned populist promises.'' That headline is spot-on. The President has repeatedly talked like a populist but governed like a plutocrat.

On taxes, the President said that his bill would be for the middle class. It turned out to be a trillion-dollar boondoggle for the rich and powerful.

On prescription drugs, it is no different. After saying that pharmaceutical companies were getting away with murder and that he would bring down prices, President Trump proposed only the policies most palatable to the drug industry.

Just today, I read about a company that proposed tripling the price of a widely used cancer drug. They ultimately backed down after a public outcry, but it shows that this problem isn't going away anytime soon.

We Democrats have proposed an independent group to go after egregious increases in drug prices, such as the one mentioned about cancer drugs today. Where is the President on this issue? He has to walk the walk, not just talk the talk.

As President Trump was giving his speech last Friday outlining his plan on prescription drugs, guess what the reaction was. The stocks of major pharmaceutical companies shot upward. That says all you need to know about how tough President Trump's plan on prescription drugs really is. Just like the issues of taxes, healthcare, infrastructure, and draining the swamp, on the issue of prescription drugs, President Trump continues to fail to deliver for the middle class.

I yield the floor.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, today the Senate is finally voting to confirm a well-qualified nominee, BG Mitchell Zais, to serve as Deputy Secretary at the Department of Education. I worked to get a time agreement for this vote because General Zais did not deserve to be subject to the Democrats' unreasonable and unnecessary obstructions and delays. For example, General Zais was nominated on October 5, 2017, 223 days ago, and the HELP Committee approved his nomination for the first time on December 13, 2017, 154 days ago. Because the Democrats forced his nomination to be returned to the President at the end of the session in December, the HELP Committee had to approve his nomination again on January 18, 2018, after he was renominated.

It is time to confirm General Zais and give Secretary DeVos a Deputy Secretary. He has extensive experience working in education and in government. From January 2011 to January 2015, General Zais served as South Carolina's elected State Superintendent of Education. Before that, he was president of Newberry College in South Carolina for 10 years. He also served as a commissioner on South Carolina's Commission on Higher Education for 6 years. Further, after 31 years in the U.S. Army, he retired as a brigadier general. He graduated from West Point, has a Ph.D. from the University of Washington, as well as an honorary doctorate of education from the Citadel.

As Deputy Secretary, his job will be to help the Secretary manage the Department of Education, which includes implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act. I am glad we are having this vote today. I support his nomination, and I urge my colleagues to support him as well.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, this is National Police Week, and I join my colleagues in saluting all of our law enforcement personnel and our brave men and women who have put their lives on the line every single day to keep our communities safe.

NET NEUTRALITY

Mr. President, turning to another subject, net neutrality, protecting a free and open internet is something every American should care about. Restoring net neutrality protections is about more than just what shows we can watch on Netflix and Hulu. We depend on the internet for nearly everything in our lives—from staying in touch with loved ones on social media to communicating with doctors and paying our bills. It is also about preserving access to information in times of need.

Over the past month, Hawaii residents have depended on the internet to access lifesaving information and to communicate with their friends and family during a series of devastating

natural disasters. On April 15 and 16, nearly 50 inches of rain fell on Hanalei on the North Shore of Kauai, setting the record for the largest rainfall in a 24-hour period in American history. This storm destroyed many homes, triggered mudslides that closed Kuhio Highway, and damaged local businesses. That same storm also caused widespread flooding and damage on another island in East Oahu.

In an event that has drawn international attention, volcanic activity on Hawaii Island—including fissures, along the Kilauea east rift zone, around 100 earthquakes per day, lava eruptions, and significant ash fall events—has already destroyed 40 structures in the Puna community. More than 2,000 residents have been evacuated as the lava continues to flow and toxic sulfur dioxide pollutes the air.

Residents on Kauai, Oahu, and the Big Island have depended on a free and open internet to receive up-to-the-minute, lifesaving information from local media, as well as from Federal, State, and local governments.

Rules on net neutrality established by the Obama administration prevented internet service providers—ISPs—from discriminating against and blocking content. These essential protections help to ensure a level playing field for all content providers and consumers, but under the leadership of Donald Trump's handpicked Chairman, the Federal Communications Commission issued an order late last year that would completely eviscerate net neutrality protections.

Internet service providers looking to maximize profits should not be able to restrict access to information or slow speed for providers unable to pay more, particularly during a natural disaster or other emergency.

During the flooding on Kauai and Oahu and the ongoing volcanic activity on Hawaii Island, local news providers have been a critical lifeline for local residents in search of timely, accurate, and understandable information. Traditional newspapers like the Honolulu Star-Advertiser, the Garden Island, and the Hawaii Tribune-Herald, as well as online news sources like Honolulu Civil Beat, Big Island Now, and Big Island Video News have provided an essential service to the public. Through their websites and social media channels, these news sources have provided detailed reporting about the precise location of hazardous locations, where evacuees can find shelter and essential services, and where the public can make donations of clothing and nonperishable food. Television stations like Hawaii News Now, KITV, and KHON have also used their websites and social media platforms to livestream news reports that have been a critical lifeline for local residents and for their families and friends.

National and international journalists have also drawn on the work of local Hawaii journalists to report their stories to a national and international audience. The good work of journalists at Hawaii News Now, KITV, and Anthony Quintano at Civil Beat, for example, is being seen by people across the country and around the world on CNN and NBC News, among others. The response of these local news outlets to natural disasters in Hawaii demonstrates why they are so important to the communities they serve. These news outlets depend—depend—on a free and open internet to deliver their content to consumers where and when they need it.

For an industry already facing a funding crisis driven by declining advertising revenue, the rollback of net neutrality would have a devastating impact on local news. A 2017 report by Adam Hersh at the Center for Internet and Society at Stanford University cogently summarizes what is at stake. According to his report, local news sources would be particularly hard hit if ISPs could charge access fees, block traffic from certain providers, throttle speeds, and charge fast-lane fees in exchange for preferential treatment. Huge media conglomerates would have little trouble paying for access, but local papers like the Star-Advertiser and nonprofit news sources like Civil Beat could be hard hit or even driven out of business.

In addition to the impact on local news providers, repealing net neutrality could make it more difficult and expensive for relief organizations to collect donations for people affected by natural disasters. The Pu'uhonua o Puna community center, for example, is using social media to organize a community and statewide relief response to help families affected by volcanic activity. Using their online platform, the center is coordinating donations, identifying families requiring special assistance, and connecting evacuated residents with people who can help.

Eliminating net neutrality would also have a negative impact on small businesses in Hawaii, including those hard hit by recent disasters and those affected by decreased visitor access. Small businesses depend on high-speed and high-quality internet to reach their customers and grow their businesses. We all know this.

We had a Small Business Committee meeting hearing yesterday, where it was acknowledged that small businesses depend very much on the internet and free and open access. These businesses don't have the resources to compete in a pay-to-play system on the internet.

It is because of stories like these that a bipartisan group of Senators is forcing a vote to save net neutrality. An internet service provider should not be able to restrict access, especially—especially—during a major disaster, such as those being experienced in Hawaii, just so they can make more money.

I encourage all of my colleagues to join this effort and pass this resolution to prevent the elimination of net neutrality today.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Hawaii, and our sympathy is with the State of Hawaii as they respond to this volcanic eruption. I noticed on the news this morning that they were referencing it could be as bad as Mount St. Helens. Trust me, that had a devastating impact on our State. I hope that all Federal agencies are helping in whatever ways they can with Hawaii's natural disaster.

I also thank her for talking about the importance of net neutrality. I, too, have come to the floor to defend the open internet. It is a pro-consumer, pro-innovation rule that we have to build on because it is worth 7 percent of our GDP and 6.9 million jobs. That is what the internet economy is.

The net neutrality rules that we are fighting for today have four bright-line rules that help businesses, help consumers, and help our internet economy to grow. They are these: No. 1, don't block content; No. 2, don't throttle content—that is, don't slow it down—and No. 3, don't create paid prioritization, which is like in the Burger King ad saying: If you want the next Whopper available, pay $15. I think they did a pretty good job of showing what would happen if you had every business operating that way. No. 4 is transparency, to make sure that you know exactly what you are getting charged for.

The Obama-era Federal Communications Commission adopted rules that basically protected consumers and businesses on those four things. Why did they do that? Because there were some who were trying to eke their way into making more money off of consumers and businesses on what is basic service.

Title II was the regulatory framework that the Obama-era FCC used to make sure that consumers were protected. They were the strongest tools available, and they helped to make sure that there was not monopolistic behavior that would harm businesses.

The rule that was established by the then-Federal Communications Commission was an open internet with the FCC being the cop on the beat. That is to say, if you have these rules, you also have to have someone who is going to enforce them, someone who is going to look at the monopolistic behaviors of cable companies or providers and say: That is unfair to consumers and businesses.

But under the Trump-era FCC, all of those rules were thrown out. That is why we are here today. I and my colleagues are saying that we want to go back to the protections of the internet that are called ''net neutrality'' to make sure that the FCC—instead of a passive entity that just OKs every charge that cable companies want to do—says: These are rules about not slowing down content, not engaging in

monopolistic behavior. These things are wrong, and we are going to be the policeman on the beat.

The FCC can protect consumers and innovators, and they can make sure that internet traffic does not violate an open internet. But, as I said, the Trump-era FCC is trying to throw out these strong rules, and cable companies are already—already—starting to raise prices for higher speed.

In Vancouver, WA, Comcast recently announced that higher speed tiers would be available but only to consumers who purchase expensive paid TV-internet bundles. That is why we are here. Because while it sounds like: Why do we want to give cable companies the opportunity to throttle, block, or create paid prioritization, we also have to realize that today the internet economy is so much bigger than it has ever been; that it is a job creator and an innovator. In my State, it is 13 percent of our economy, and thousands of jobs that continue to grow every day as new applications for the internet are created.

It is so important that businesses, which are even using these apps to help run their businesses more efficiently, continue to get access to those tools. But what about an internet in which a cable provider decided to artificially slow down that website and thereby create a disincentive for the very things that are helping to make our businesses more efficient?

So we want to make sure that the FCC does its original job. What is that? Well, they are there to promote development and adaptation of communication networks in the public interest. They are serving consumers, and that is the center of their mission.

The center of their mission should not be serving cable companies. That is why courts have said to the FCC: If you want to have the authority to protect an open internet, you have to do that under title II. Basically, the court explained that if enforcing open internet principles and being a watchdog against abuses is important to the FCC's mission of promoting the deployment and adoption of communications in the public interest, then, those powers have to flow from title II of the Communications Act. So that is why the Obama-era FCC adopted those rules.

Today we know that the internet is a basic necessity. It provides access that helps our healthcare delivery system work, our education system work, our banking system work, shopping, and all sorts of things that make it a necessary tool in life today.

When a service is that essential and critical to individuals and communities and their economic success, we need to make sure that consumers have protections and to make sure that it is not abused.

In the United States, just three providers of internet access have about 70 percent of consumers. In any market with only a few players, it is essential that we protect businesses and consumers, and that is exactly what title II does. It helps to protect us from a cable company gouging and its close cousin—paid prioritization.

Title II makes sure that the barriers to entry are not erected so that entrepreneurs or startups that want to bring new products to market aren't artificially slowed down and a larger competitor that can pay more for it can continue the access.

Just recently, we had an event with Redfin, a company that is changing the real estate market in the Pacific Northwest by helping to drive down the cost to consumers for real estate purchases. They made it very clear that Redfin was able to develop today because it had an open internet and its consumers and business partners could connect to it. But in a world where they were just starting out new and they had to pay for prioritization to get good broadband service, they may not have been as successful.

These rules—title II—give expert agencies the tools to look behind the curtain and make sure that cable companies are providing the services that do not violate an open internet.

There is a reason that cable companies don't want to follow these rules. It is because they want to make more money. I get it. They want to make more money. But I would say that with 40 percent of Americans having no choice in whom they buy internet services from, we have to be much more vigilant. These companies have several vertically integrated companies at the top, and they are seeking to amass more and more content. That could give them the tools, again, to block content, to slow it down, or to x out a competitor if they so choose. I do not want to see the FCC sitting on the sidelines and not policing this kind of environment.

I know that AT&T is now trying to merge with Time Warner. These large companies want to continue to amass content and to drive the marketplace. The American Consumer Satisfaction Index tracks consumer satisfaction, and these big companies are at an all-time low. Do consumers think they are going to do the right thing on their own? Do they think cable companies will do that?

The cable industry ranks at the very bottom of 43 industries in consumer satisfaction. In fact, it has been in the dead-last position for 5 years. So does the public think they are doing the right things when it comes to them or their businesses? I think that survey says it all. They have great concern.

One of the reasons cable companies give for why they don't want to follow net neutrality rules is because they say it will hurt their investment in networks. Well, I guess I would ask the question: Did the Obama-era FCC rules slow down investment? No, they didn't. The big cable companies continued to make investments in their networks.

In the year immediately following the FCC rule that went into place, the entire industry showed that the total capital expenditures increased by more than $550 million above the previous year's investment. For example, in a 2017 earnings report, Comcast, the Nation's largest broadband provider, noted that its capital expenditures increased 7.5 percent to $9 billion and that it continued to make deployment in platforms like X1 and wireless gateways.

Likewise, AT&T spent $22 billion on capital investments, up $20 billion from the previous year.

In fact, 2016 represents the industry's highest single-year jump in broadband network investment since 1999.

So the notion that they are somehow going to slow down on investment is just not true. The historic growth came after companies had a full year to digest the impacts of title II and net neutrality rules being put in place by the Obama-era FCC.

So where are we today? Well, these companies continue to make money, and they want a free pass on continuing to make more. That is why our goal is not the profits of big cable companies. Our goal is to make sure that the internet economy continues to grow and the juggernaut of job creation and innovation continues to expand.

We want the internet ecosystem that has doubled as a percentage of GDP from 2007 to 2017 to continue to grow. As I said, in my State it is about 13 percent of our State's economy, and I spend practically every day in the Senate hearing about another innovation from someone in my State. It might be the farm economy and more efficient ways to produce products or get products to market or manage their livestock. It might be in telemedicine and helping someone from one side of the State to the other to get access to care. It might be as basic as connecting people to their families and loved ones, but it is the internet that we know today that is so integral to our lives.

I hope the commonsense legislation in front of us—the CRA—which would restore those Obama-era FCC net neutrality rules, passes. I hope our colleagues will understand that getting exorbitant internet fees from cable providers is not the direction the American people want to go. American entrepreneurs, innovators, and consumers cannot afford to take that hit. What they want to see is an open internet—one that continues to allow so much more of the internet economy to flourish.

Let's make sure that we say to the FCC: We don't want you folding or sitting on your hands. We want you to police the internet, and we want you to have the rules to do it.

That is why we must pass the CRA today. I hope our colleagues on the other side of the aisle will join us, because there is just too much at stake in our innovation economy.

I thank the Chair.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Washington for her leadership and her articulation of a big issue before us. I too rise today ahead of a vote that is of vital importance to protecting a free and open internet.

Last week FCC Chairman Ajit Pai announced that June 11 would be the date when key net neutrality protections will officially end. This backward, misguided decision from the FCC threatens the consumer friendly internet that Americans know today—an internet that ensures equal access to content, regardless of which internet service provider you use.

Ending net neutrality could impact all of our people. In New Hampshire, our citizens are rightly concerned, with thousands of Granite Staters contacting my office to urge Congress to save these key protections.

I am pleased to join my colleagues, both Republican and Democrat, to force a vote to do just that.

Reinstating net neutrality is critical to promoting innovation, supporting entrepreneurs and small businesses across New Hampshire, and encouraging economic growth. By ensuring that our businesses can compete on the internet on an equal footing, we provide more opportunity for a wide range of businesses, from high-tech companies and startups to farming and agriculture.

On Monday, I visited Stoneyfield Farm in Londonderry, NH, to discuss the negative impact that repealing net neutrality will have on their business and countless other businesses across our State. Stoneyfield is a New Hampshire business that sells organic dairy products all over our country and relies on the internet to reach their customers. They also rely on the internet to connect with small businesses and dairy farmers that help source their products.

When I met with representatives from Stoneyfield and farmers from around New England on Monday, they made clear that they are worried about what could happen if smaller farms are charged more for access to websites and services—a potential effect of repealing net neutrality.

Farmers are already operating on pretty small margins, and they could be hurt by having to pay even more to get the kind of speed on the internet they need in order to be competitive. This is particularly troubling in rural areas, where many communities still face challenges with access to broadband.

It is not just rural communities and farmers. This decision would hurt small businesses in any number of industries across New Hampshire, all to give big internet service providers another opportunity to raise their profits.

It would be unfair to all consumers to give internet service providers the power to discriminate against certain web pages, apps, and streaming and video services by slowing them down, blocking them, or favoring certain services while charging more for others.

Protecting a free and open internet means we are protecting the farmers who need the internet to sell their products. It means we are protecting the next great startup which needs a level playing field to compete against larger, more established companies. It means we are protecting the countless Americans who have used the internet as a mechanism to organize and civically engage online.

There has been so much energy from Granite Staters and Americans who are in favor of reinstating net neutrality because they know how much is at stake. I am grateful for their efforts to speak out because they have helped us get to this point today. I am hopeful more of my Republican colleagues will join us today to put consumers and small businesses first and to show that the U.S. Senate is in favor of a free and open internet.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SULLIVAN). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CARDIN. 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. CARDIN. Mr. President, I take this time to urge my colleagues to support S.J. Res. 52, which would reinstate the free and open internet. I thank my colleagues, Senator MARKEY and others, for bringing this to our attention. It deals with the Congressional Review Act to block regulation which had been suggested that would repeal the protections we have on the free internet. Let me just give a little bit of background so we can put this in context.

Internet service providers—known as ISPs—are basically utility companies that provide internet service to our constituents, to our businesses, and to America. Without the protection for net neutrality, these utilities have the ability to block or throttle content on the internet or charging what is known as being in the fast lane, charging more. So this is a debate between whether we are on the side of the big utility companies that provide internet service and their special interests or the individuals and small businesses of America to guarantee them equal access to this critical service. Let me give one example, and there are many that can be given.

I am sure, in every one of our communities, we have a lot of small businesses. They recognize that they can now do business on the internet, and they have an opportunity to compete with the large companies that do most of their business through the internet.

In Baltimore, in Maryland, I have small shop owners. One I am particularly familiar with sells bikes. This shop owner now is using the internet in order to get to customers so he can show his wares on the internet and be able to compete against one of the large, giant retailers that does a lot of business on the internet.

If a consumer in Baltimore goes onto that bike shop's website, and if the product that consumer is interested in will not pop up within a couple seconds, the consumer is gone. There has been study after study that shows that about 3 seconds is the maximum attention span of a consumer shopping on the internet.

The large store that has access to the fast-service broadband will have an incredible advantage over our small businesses if we allow the utility that provides the internet service to discriminate against the smaller users. That is what this debate is about. It is about protecting individual consumers, and it is about protecting small businesses.

There is a reason why, in 2015, the open internet order was passed to protect utilities that provide internet service from blocking or slowing down internet service.

Broadband internet service is a public utility. It is interesting that almost half of the consumers have no choice in whom they have to provide their internet service. They have basically one internet provider to choose from. Competition does not exist. So this is not a matter of competition; this is a matter of preventing discrimination.

I have had the honor of being the ranking member of the Small Business and Entrepreneurship Committee, and I can tell you, on behalf of the small businesses of Maryland and around the Nation, on behalf of farm owners around the Nation, they need to have access to the internet, and they depend upon net neutrality. Fifty-six percent of the small business owners oppose the FCC's repeal of net neutrality; 70 percent of small business owners feel they are at a disadvantage compared to a large corporation due to their size and market power. The internet gives them that capacity to try to equalize that disadvantage.

John Duda is co-owner of Red Emma's, a cooperative bookstore and restaurant in my hometown in Baltimore. He summed it up best by saying:

> I don't have the money to pay an internet service provider to guarantee my website will load quickly for all users, so I'm concerned the end of net neutrality means customers will buy from retailers that have the resources to pay for faster service. Additionally, if my internet service provider slows load times for—or blocks access to—my web content, we'll be up against more than just larger book sellers or restaurants—we're suddenly competing against any website that loads quickly because those are the ones that will draw people's attention.

This is a matter of economic survival for small businesses. Everybody wants to make sure they have access and that we have superhighways for broadband. We have that in Maryland, and we need the last mile to make sure you can get connected. Absolutely, we have to do

more to make sure all communities have access to internet service, but, like healthcare, if you don't have quality care, access is not going to help you. You need to be able to have reliable broadband service.

Net neutrality has lowered the barriers to starting and growing a small business, and that is undeniably good for our economy. We all brag about the fact that small businesses are the growth engine of America and more jobs are created by small business, innovation, et cetera. Let's make sure we give small business what they need. Let's preserve net neutrality.

As FCC Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel put it, ''For the first time, small business could think big and consumers could shop small, from anywhere in the world.'' Think about that for a moment: Small businesses can think big because they have access to the internet, and consumers can shop anywhere in the world and shop in small companies anywhere in the world. The loss of net neutrality jeopardizes that progress.

In every State, community, and home across our Nation, Americans expect the water coming out of their tap to flow on demand and be safe to drink. They expect the lights in their homes to go on thanks to the utility company that provides the electricity. And, yes, they not only want but need to have access to broadband internet in the very same way. This is a utility, and it needs to be regulated as such.

These providers should not have the last word in what any American can see on the internet. Access to the information vital for our democracy and our economy to function must be preserved.

Congress has a chance to put consumers and small businesses first and prevent the FCC from bowing to corporate interests instead of serving the public interest. I urge my colleagues to vote for S.J. Res. 52.

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

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

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, it is important for everybody to understand how things work today and what net neutrality is all about. What net neutrality is fundamentally about is that everybody gets a fair shake with respect to using the internet. After you pay your internet access fee, you get to go where you want, when you want, and how you want. There are no special deals. There are no priority lanes for those with deep pockets to get more content and get it faster than everybody else. That is not the way it works today. Everybody gets a fair shake on an open and free internet because of net neutrality.

What Mr. Pai, the head of the Federal Communications Commission, and his allies want is something very different. Under their vision of how things would work online, there would be toll booths all over the internet, and those higher costs would, one way or another, come out of your pocket. That would work a hardship on millions of Americans, on millions literally but especially on small businesses, seniors, and students. Everybody would be affected by a new approach that would establish toll booths all over the internet.

My view is that there is no vote this body is going to take in 2018 that will have a more direct impact on the wallets of Americans than the one that is going to happen in a few hours. This is the last chance to protect the free and open internet that comes about with real net neutrality. The fact is, if we don't do it, the Trump Federal Communications Commission and Chairman Pai want to turn the lights out on the system I described today where, after you pay for your internet access, you go where you want, when you want, how you want. That is what we have today. Without what we are doing here, Chairman Pai at the Federal Communications Commission can change that and take money away from typical Americans to line the pockets of their friends at the big communications monopolies, Big Cable.

If Republicans in Congress allow this administration to get away with repealing net neutrality, Americans can certainly expect to be charged more for Netflix, for music services on Spotify, and for video game downloads—for example, on PlayStation.

This isn't some academic policy question that is going to show up years from now. Certainly, there are matters we talk about where that could be the case. This is where the Trump Federal Communications Commission could hand big cable companies more power and take more money out of the pockets of the American people next month.

I am very appreciative of my colleague ED MARKEY for the extraordinary leadership role he has taken. He and I have enjoyed teaming up since the days when we began in public service. Senator MARKEY was then Congressman Markey, and he introduced the first net neutrality bill in the House. I had the honor of partnering with him when I introduced the first net neutrality bill in the Senate. Both of us said, literally, more than a decade ago, that we needed communications policies that were rooted in the principle of nondiscrimination—transparency, openness, and freedom for all online. Here we are, back in this fight once again, to pass the Markey resolution, which, in effect, will ensure that what my colleague has sponsored today and sought to do a decade ago, on which I partnered with him, will actually get done.

Everybody understands that you have to pay a fee to get access to the net. The question at the heart of this debate that you have to keep coming back to is this: Once you pay that fee, shouldn't everybody get a fair shake? Shouldn't we be able to say in America that once you pay that fee, you ought to be able to go where you want, when you want, and how you want? As the Trump FCC wants to do, should you be able to say that the big cable companies should be able to hot-wire the system—to rig the internet—for the benefit of those who can afford to pay more?

I would say, because I have been listening to my friend talk about this, that their vision is, really, something along the lines of an information aristocracy, whereby, if you have deep pockets, you are going to have access to a technology treasure trove, but the typical American, with his vision, is kind of on his way to digital serfdom. That is why it is so important to understand what Chairman Pai and the FCC are up to, which is special deals for special interests and more power—significantly more power—for those with deep pockets.

What the people who are opposed to real net neutrality have cooked up is a scheme called paid prioritization. I say to Senator MARKEY that I have called this effort that of erecting tollbooths online. What it means is that if you are among the fortunate few, you get faster download speeds and more content. If you are a big, established company, guess what. You can stifle the competition. You can squash the competition. Those opportunities aren't going to be available to an entrepreneur who is just starting out in his garage somewhere. For a family that is barely staying afloat, what it sounds like they are interested in is giving them second-rate internet service. I think Senator MARKEY and I remember that it was not that long ago when big chunks of America had dial-up, and people seemed to wait forever to get online.

Mr. Pai is going to tell you with a straight face that these big cable companies have the best of intentions and that they are sort of going to go along with all of this voluntarily because it is just the right thing to do. Yet my question is this: If the cable companies are just going to go along with net neutrality, why is Mr. Pai working so hard to get rid of it? It doesn't really stand up. I always say at home, because people ask what it means for us—and they have gotten to meet the charming William Peter Wyden, aged 10—that there is about as much chance that the cable companies will voluntarily go along with net neutrality as the likelihood that William Peter Wyden and his sister will voluntarily limit the number of their desserts. It is just not going to happen. In particular, if Mr. Pai says he believes in real net neutrality, the Markey resolution will give him a chance to actually show that. But we all know that he doesn't see it that way.

I just opened all townhall meetings in Oregon, most of them in rural communities, and I know the distinguished Presiding Officer of the Senate represents a lot of rural terrain. I am telling you that people in those rural areas understand what is at stake for rural America here. For rural America, without the Markey resolution, it will mean the net will move along at snail's pace. It will mean that rural businesses could have a harder time in getting off the ground and reaching customers. I talked to ranchers, for example, about just this issue. It will mean rural healthcare could miss out on technological marvels that could have the potential to save lives.

This is particularly important because Senator MARKEY and I have teamed up on a lot of the efforts to improve American healthcare. We have led the fight to show that we are updating the Medicare guarantee so that it will not be just an acute care program but will focus on chronic illnesses. Senator MARKEY and I have led the effort for more care at home and for greater access to telemedicine. All of those technological marvels really depend on rapid access to the net. If you are in rural America and you have had a stroke, rapid access to the net may be something that will saves lives and that will ensure those rural providers will be able to get connections to parts of the country that will have, for example, a neurologist available who will be able to help.

The Markey resolution and its passage should not be an issue seen along partisan lines. I don't see it as a political question. The bottom line of the debate is that if the resolution goes down, the stuff Americans do on the internet today is going to cost them a whole lot more tomorrow. It is not going to take place years from now and be some kind of an abstract question. It is going to be on Americans. Those extra costs will come out of their pockets, and it will cost them a lot more in a hurry.

I close by thanking my colleague from Massachusetts for all of his leadership. It has been my privilege to team up with him. I guess it becomes almost bicameral since the two of us started this in the House and the Senate.

I urge my colleagues to support the Markey resolution and do the right thing. Support the consumer and small businesses. Let's not hand more power and profit to the big cable companies at the expense of Americans, from sea to shining sea, who cannot afford more money to come out of their wallets and go to the big cable companies.

I see my friend on the floor.

Mr. MARKEY. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. WYDEN. I am happy to yield.

Mr. MARKEY. I thank the Senator.

Mr. President, I wanted to follow up on that very important point that the Senator was making, which is that these big companies are all saying: You don't have to worry because we don't have any intention of discriminating.

Then we say: Well, that is what net neutrality says, that you should not discriminate, that you should treat everybody equally.

Then they turn around and say: Oh, you can trust us, but take the rules off the books that we say that we agree with and that we are going to abide by.

From my perspective, they are trying to have it both ways, but the way they really want to have it is with no rules at all. Then, they will be free to go back to displaying conduct which we know, in the past, they have engaged in.

Does the Senator agree with that assessment?

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, my colleague from Massachusetts is probably being too logical for a lot of this discussion, whereby the special interests continue to shroud their real agenda, which is what my friend from Massachusetts has described. Clearly, with this effort the big cable companies, with their hopes riding on Mr. Pai, would like to go back to yesteryear, when they could gouge the consumer, when they could stick it to the person of modest means.

I think my colleague has summed it up very well. If Mr. Pai and his allies were really going to present us with a real net neutrality plan, I know we would be interested in hearing about it, but they have never been interested in that. What they have been interested in is taking a whole lot of legalisms and murky language to try and fool the American consumer. The bottom line is Mr. Pai and his allies would like to set up these tollbooths across the country and start with a policy that, one way or another, is going to cost the typical consumer more.

I look forward to my colleague's remarks.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I thank the Senator because, I think, that is what he identified 12 years ago when he introduced a net neutrality bill here in the Senate and what I had identified over in the House. We worked together on it at that time, and the need just continues, especially as we get deeper and deeper into this internet era. It is almost like oxygen for somebody now, especially for young people, young entrepreneurs. They need to know that they can gain access to the web in order to start up their new software or internet companies, but they shouldn't have to first raise money to pay exorbitant fees to the big broadband companies. First, they should be free to innovate and not worry that they be can be discriminated against.

Whether it is in Portland, OR, or in Springfield, MA, it is the same principle for which we have been trying to stand up for all of these years. It was the law until December of 2017, when Ajit Pai and the Trump FCC took it off the books. That is what the debate is about today: Are we going to put those rules, those nondiscriminatory rules, back on the books?

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, my colleague has said it very well. It is what I saw last week in these nine townhall meetings, and almost all of them were in rural Oregon.

People joked and asked: RON, why are you here? We have more cows than people.

I said: My hometown is Portland. I love Portland.

My only frustration, as my friend knows, is I didn't get to play for the Trail Blazers.

I am not a Senator from the State of Portland. I am a Senator who represents every nook and cranny of Oregon, however small. What I would say to my friend and, I hope, to my colleagues—because the Senate represents a lot of rural terrain—is what I heard in places like Burns and Prairie City last week. If they have to pay more for less content, which, I think, could easily happen under these trickle-down telecommunications policies of Mr. Pai's, then it is not just going to be Portland, OR, and Springfield, MA. It is going to be rural America—literally, from sea to shining sea—that is going to wake up very soon and find its bills going into the stratosphere.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, by the way, whether it is Burns or the Berkshires, there are rural parts in every State. We have them, as well, in Massachusetts. They have the same right of access to a free, unfettered internet as do the people who live in Cambridge, MA, or in Portland, OR. The rural parts in every State are entitled to it. The rural businesses, the farmers should all be able to rely upon—have a guarantee—its being free, open, and that they are not going to be discriminated against.

That is why I wanted to get up and thank the Senator for his historic leadership on this issue. He was there at the dawn of this whole era, and he continues to ensure that the internet is infused with the values that, I think, our Nation wants to have reflected.

Mr. WYDEN. It has been a privilege to work with my colleague. This has been bipartisan—especially making sure the kinds of policies that can come about with real net neutrality and making sure rural communities get a fair shake complement other work we are doing that represents the future. My colleague and I have talked about the fact that in our efforts to update the Medicare guarantee, for years and years both political parties have missed what Medicare has become.

Back when I was director of the Gray Panthers—the senior citizens—Medicare had two parts, Part A for hospitals and Part B for doctors. If you broke your ankle and went to the hospital, that was Part A of Medicare. That is not Medicare any longer. Today, Medicare is cancer, diabetes, heart disease, strokes, and chronic pulmonary disease—all of these chronic conditions. What my colleague has done—and I am so appreciative of the fact that we can work together on this. We said: Let's

update the Medicare guarantee. Medicare is not a voucher, a slip paper you give to people. It is a guarantee of basic services. So Senator MARKEY and I and others of both political parties have come along and said: Let's give people more care at home. Let's expand the role of telemedicine so that if you are in Burns or Prairie City, OR, or other small towns in America, you can have access to these technological marvels when you don't have a neurologist or a specialist.

Make no mistake about it, what Mr. Pai is looking at is a prescription for trouble for rural healthcare because they, like so many of the people they serve, are going to face the prospect of those toll booths, and they are going to pay more, in many cases, for less.

So I look forward to working with my colleague and listening to his remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, 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. MARKEY. 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. MARKEY. Mr. President, as we conclude this part of the debate, I will just take note of the fact that the American Association of Retired People today has come out in favor of the open internet order, which is the restoring of net neutrality principles, which follows on what the former head of the Gray Panthers, the Senator from the State of Oregon, Mr. WYDEN, raised today—the need to ensure that everyone gets the full protection of net neutrality rules.

The votes we are about to cast are nothing short of the most consequential votes on the internet in the history of this body. We will take the important step to reaffirm the principles of nondiscrimination online or we will allow a few companies to control how we access the internet. We will stand up for the small app developer with a bright idea to change the world or we give another gift to the powerful corporate interests and their lobbyists in the District of Columbia. We will take a stand to protect our online economy or we will say goodbye to the internet as we know it.

In 2018, essentially every company is an internet company. In my State of Massachusetts and in every other State, tech underpins the economy of the United States today. In 2017, almost half of all venture capital in the United States was invested into internet and software startups. That is over $34 billion.

This is working. This is capitalism at its best. This is small business being able to receive the capital it needs in order to start new companies in our country. Small businesses are the ones that hire new people who do innovation. That is what the venture capital industry is indicating by pouring money into these smaller companies under a regime of net neutrality.

So we found the secret recipe. When we take a democratized platform, with endless opportunity for communication, and add American ingenuity, the result is economic growth and innovation. What we are doing is working. With net neutrality protections in place, there is no problem that needs fixing.

This fight began when Senator WYDEN and I introduced net neutrality as legislation back more than a decade ago. I introduced it, Senator WYDEN introduced it, because we knew then the internet was the most powerful and pervasive platform in the history of the world. Since then, the importance of the internet has skyrocketed, and the movement to protect it has followed suit. Millions of Americans are raising their voices for net neutrality because they know the power of the internet. They know it can categorize staggering commercial growth, they know it can create endless connections, and they know it can change the course of civilization in fractions of a second.

A vote against net neutrality is a vote to change the fundamental character of the internet. A vote for net neutrality is a vote for America's future. I urge each and every one of my colleagues to vote yes on this resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. WICKER. Thank you, Mr. President.

I have been recognized to close the debate on this motion. In a few moments, we will be voting on the motion to proceed to this resolution. I will be voting no and urge my colleagues to do so.

This debate is about a free and open internet, and it is also about a thriving and innovative internet. We can have both. For decades, we have had both, and we can continue to do so if we are smart about this.

Does every Senator in this Chamber believe in a free and open internet? Yes.

Does every Member of this body want to prevent blocking and the throttling of the internet? The answer is a resounding yes.

Does any Member of the Senate advocate, as my friend from Massachusetts just suggested, that a company or two gets to set the rules for the entire internet? Absolutely not.

Do all Senators and all Congressmen want the internet to be a source of innovation and job creation and prosperity as it has been for a quarter century? I hope so.

I hope we all want this information superhighway, this technology superhighway to continue its success. I hope we all want the internet to continue being that phenomenal platform for market competition, health advancements, investment, technological progress, efficiency, and safety. I hope we all want this.

If we all want this great engine to keep going, it is important to ask how all this happened in the first place. How did we get here? How did we arrive at this point in our Nation's history, with a dynamic internet economy that is truly the envy of the world?

The answer lies in the creativity and ingenuity of the American spirit. This has allowed the internet to thrive under the light-touch regulatory framework that has governed the internet for most of its history.

Let's revisit a little of that history. It was in 1996. I was a freshman Member of the House of Representatives at this time under a Democratic President, under a Democratic administration. Our country was at a crossroads on how to govern this new thing called the worldwide web, the internet. No one could have imagined the success of the internet we have today, but policymakers had the foresight not to regulate these new emerging information services like the services of a bygone era.

Instead, in 1996, during the Clinton administration, a very deliberative, thoughtful decision was made not to impose title II rules—the same rules from the 1930s that were modeled for the Bell monopolies, that were modeled for a time during the Great Depression. That was the pivotal decision that allowed this great internet economy to thrive and to be the success it is today.

Now let's fast-forward to recently, to 2015. That was the year the FCC made an ill-advised decision to change all that. Despite explosive growth, new applications, services, and consumer choice that the internet was delivering to Americans, the FCC imposed these title II rules, and that is what we are debating today. Almost immediately we saw a chilling effect on investment and innovation. U.S. companies were right to be uncertain about the archaic title II regulations and how they would apply to modern technology.

Fortunately, this misguided action was reversed last year. The FCC lifted the 2015 regulations and restored the light-touch regulatory framework that has benefited consumers for almost two decades and has resulted in this great success. Today, some in Congress are trying to give the government more control again, applying utility-style regulations that would threaten the internet as we know it. We should reject these efforts.

Let me say this: Many of my colleagues correctly, on both sides of the aisle, have been calling for bipartisan legislation to enshrine the net neutrality principles into law—legislation which I support, legislation which Members of the minority party have supported. If this resolution passes today, it will amount to merely a statement, nothing more.

Senator THUNE will give Senators an opportunity to pass bipartisan legislation today. I hope we will do that. I hope, once this statement is made, we will move on to enshrining net neutrality principles into a law that protects consumers and promotes innovation.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). Under the previous order, the Senate will resume legislative session.

The Senator from Massachusetts.

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL OF A RULE SUBMITTED BY THE FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. MARKEY. Madam President, I move to proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 406, S.J. Res. 52.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The bill clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 406, S.J. Res. 52, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Federal Communications Commission relating to ''Restoring Internet Freedom.''

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

Mr. MARKEY. Madam President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The 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 52, nays 47, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 96 Leg.]

YEAS—52

Baldwin	Hassan	Nelson
Bennet	Heinrich	Peters
Blumenthal	Heitkamp	Reed
Booker	Hirono	Sanders
Brown	Jones	Schatz
Cantwell	Kaine	Schumer
Cardin	Kennedy	Shaheen
Carper	King	Smith
Casey	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Collins	Leahy	Tester
Coons	Manchin	Udall
Cortez Masto	Markey	Van Hollen
Donnelly	McCaskill	Warner
Duckworth	Menendez	Warren
Durbin	Merkley	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Murkowski	Wyden
Gillibrand	Murphy	
Harris	Murray	

NAYS—47

Alexander	Cassidy	Daines
Barrasso	Corker	Enzi
Blunt	Cornyn	Ernst
Boozman	Cotton	Fischer
Burr	Crapo	Flake
Capito	Cruz	Gardner
Graham	Lee	Sasse
Grassley	McConnell	Scott
Hatch	Moran	Shelby
Heller	Paul	Sullivan
Hoeven	Perdue	Thune
Hyde-Smith	Portman	Tillis
Inhofe	Risch	Toomey
Isakson	Roberts	Wicker
Johnson	Rounds	Young
Lankford	Rubio	

NOT VOTING—1

McCain

The motion was agreed to.

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL OF A RULE SUBMITTED BY THE FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the joint resolution.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (S.J. Res. 52) providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Federal Communications Commission relating to ''Restoring Internet Freedom.''

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to the provisions of the Congressional Review Act, 5 U.S.C. 802, there will be up to 10 hours of debate, equally divided between those favoring and opposing the resolution.

Who yields time?

If no one yields time, time will be equally divided between the sides.

The Democratic leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, as the minority, we typically cannot move legislation on the floor without the consent of the majority leader. But under the rules governing congressional review, any group of 30 Senators can petition to discharge a CRA—a Congressional Review Act—from the committee and bring it to the floor subject to a majority vote. That is what Senator MARKEY has just done with the CRA on net neutrality, and the vote that just concluded means the full Senate will now consider it, because I believe there were 52 votes in favor.

For the first time in this Congress, the majority will be called to vote on an issue that I suspect they would rather avoid.

Net neutrality is a complex issue, but an incredibly consequential one. At stake is the future of the internet, which until this point in our history, has remained free and open, accessible and affordable to most Americans. That fundamental equality of access is what has made the internet so dynamic—a catalyst for innovation, a tool for learning, a means of instant and worldwide communication.

To ensure the internet stayed that way, the Obama-era FCC instituted net neutrality rules to prevent large internet service providers from segmenting the internet into fast and slow lanes, from selling faster service to folks who could pay and slower service to others—we didn't want that—and from charging customers more for their favorite sites, divvying up the internet into packages like cable TV.

Why was this so important? Because if large cable and internet companies were allowed to do this, the internet wouldn't operate on a level playing field. Big corporations and folks who could pay would enjoy the benefits of fast internet and speedy delivery to their customers while startups and small businesses, public schools, average folks, including communities of color and rural Americans, could well be disadvantaged. Net neutrality protected everyone and prevented large ISPs from discriminating against any customers.

That era—the era of a free and open internet—unfortunately will soon come to an end. In December, the Republican-led FCC voted to repeal the net neutrality rules, and on June 11 of this year, that repeal will go into effect. It may not be a cataclysm on day one, but sure as rain, if internet service providers are given the ability to start charging more for preferred service, they will find a way to do it.

So the Democratic position is very simple: Let's treat the internet like the public good that it is. We don't let water companies or phone companies discriminate against customers. We don't restrict access to interstate highways, saying: You can ride on the highway, and you can't. We shouldn't do that with the internet either. That is what the Democratic net neutrality CRA would ensure.

We appreciate that three Republicans joined on the motion to proceed to our resolution. We hope more will come with us.

Where do Republicans stand on this issue? Why haven't we heard much from them on this issue, when it is a typical issue that protects the middle class, working families, and average Americans from big special interests taking advantage of them?

I suspect our colleagues are kind of quiet on this issue because the arguments made by opponents of net neutrality aren't very convincing. Some opponents say that net neutrality is an unwarranted and burdensome regulation—something that hampers the internet. I would remind those critics that net neutrality has been on the books for several years and the internet is working just fine. Furthermore, the net neutrality rules were upheld by the courts as appropriate consumer protection.

Yet we will hear too many of my Republican friends say that we shouldn't restore net neutrality through this CRA because we need bipartisan legislation to deal with this issue. That argument is a duck. It is a dodge. It is a way for my Republican friends to delay.

Democrats are happy to do bipartisan legislation to enshrine net neutrality into law, but the legislation is going to take time. In the meantime, we must ensure consumers have a safety net right now, and this CRA is the quickest

and surest way of doing it. Plain and simple, if you are for net neutrality, you ought to be for Senator MARKEY's CRA.

This issue presents a stark contrast: Are you on the side of the large internet and cable companies or are you on the side of the average American family? That is what the vote on this legislation is all about.

I say to every American who cares about an open and free internet: Today is the day. Contact your Republican Senator. See who votes for net neutrality and who votes against, and let them know how you feel about the way they voted. This is our chance—our best chance—to make sure the internet stays accessible and affordable for all Americans.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I rise today in support of net neutrality. Let me say that again. I rise in support of net neutrality.

Contrary to the assertions that some of our colleagues on the left have made, there are many of us who believe that codifying net neutrality principles makes sense if we really want to solve this problem. What doesn't make sense is this misguided resolution.

All of us value the internet. It connects us to commerce, friends, family, news, learning opportunities, and entertainment. Most Americans expect their internet experience to remain free from meddling by anyone. It doesn't matter if it is a cable company or an unelected bureaucrat, Americans appreciate online freedom.

If this resolution offered these protections and simply implemented widely supported net neutrality principles, I would support it. Unfortunately, this isn't the case.

The resolution offered by Senator MARKEY would impose partisan, onerous, and heavyhanded regulations on the internet.

Some of these regulations lack a fundamental connection to net neutrality principles and harm consumer freedom. Net neutrality, for example, isn't about regulating mobile phone plan offerings to meet a government internet standard. But the Markey resolution would restore rules that the Obama Federal Communications Commission used to scrutinize such popular and affordable plans.

Net neutrality principles don't necessitate government rate regulation on companies working to connect Americans in rural areas—places like my State of South Dakota—or on upgrading existing networks. But, again, the Chairman of the Obama FCC nonetheless defended the need for broad authority to threaten rate regulation, and that is exactly what the Markey resolution seeks to restore. The implicit threat of such government intervention and statements can have a profound impact on innovation and the 21st century internet.

The internet has certainly thrived under a model that rejects data discrimination. Needless to say, before 2015, it had never before faced such a threat of increased government control. Net neutrality—the idea that legal internet traffic should operate transparently and without discrimination—doesn't represent the heavy hand of government. The heavy hand of government is, however, plain to see in the plan that Democrats first passed in 2015 and are now seeking to reimpose.

The Democrats' plan relies on a legal framework passed by Congress in the 1930s to regulate telephone monopolies. This framework existed for an era and technology that lacked competition and the entrepreneurship of today's internet-based economy.

Last year, the new leadership at the Federal Communications Commission widely discarded these rules. Net neutrality wasn't the problem. The Commission's concern was that onerous, depression-era rules were having an adverse effect on efforts to connect more Americans to the internet and upgrade service. For Congress, the path to restore net neutrality protections while avoiding these unnecessary side effects is straightforward legislation.

This is what the Los Angeles Times had to say about this in their editorial. Last week, the editorial board of California's largest newspaper wrote an important analysis in an editorial entitled ''Senate Democrats move to revive net neutrality rules—the wrong way.'' The Times wrote:

> Rather than jousting over a resolution of disapproval, Congress needs to put this issue to bed once and for all by crafting a bipartisan deal giving the commission limited but clear authority to regulate broadband providers and preserve net neutrality.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the editorial be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the Los Angeles Times, May 10, 2018]

SENATE DEMOCRATS MOVE TO REVIVE NET NEUTRALITY RULES—THE WRONG WAY

(By the Times Editorial Board)

Senate Democrats opened up a new front Wednesday in the fight to preserve the internet from interference by the broadband providers that control its on-ramps. But as good as it was to see them push back against the wrongheaded approach taken by the new Republican majority on the Federal Communications Commission, the maneuver is likely to be more of a distraction than a solution.

At issue is how to preserve net neutrality. Broadband providers that serve home internet users face little real competition, and they are uniquely positioned to distort competition online by, for example, favoring particular websites and services for a fee.

After several earlier net-neutrality efforts ran into legal trouble, the FCC's Democratic majority in 2015 classified broadband access service as a utility and imposed a set of strict neutrality rules. Last year, however, the commission's new Republican majority voted not just to rescind those rules, but effectively to drop all efforts by the FCC to preserve net neutrality.

On Wednesday, Senate Democrats moved to force a vote on a resolution to restore the 2015 rules, and they have 50 Senators lined up in support. Yet the resolution faces next-to-insurmountable odds in the House, where top Republicans have praised the FCC's deregulatory approach, and with like-minded President Trump. The most meaningful fights will take place in the courts and in state legislatures, where net neutrality supporters are seeking to restore the 2015 rules or impose similar ones at the state level.

Even opponents of the strict 2015 rules recognize that the continual legal and regulatory gyrations are a problem. Rather than jousting over a resolution of disapproval, Congress needs to put this issue to bed once and for all by crafting a bipartisan deal giving the commission limited but clear authority to regulate broadband providers and preserve net neutrality.

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, in my hand, I hold the 2015 draft text of legislation I released with my colleagues in the House of Representatives, Congressman FRED UPTON and Congressman GREG WALDEN. Since 2015, I have publicly and consistently been ready to work with my colleagues across the aisle on bipartisan net neutrality legislation. Specifically, my draft proposed giving Federal regulators new authority to ban blocking, throttling, and paid prioritization of legal internet content. It did this without relying on the heavyhanded use of law written to police phone monopolies, which is what we are talking about here. We are talking about a 1934 law governing the 21st-century internet. Think about that. That is precisely what this resolution would do.

I recognize that this draft legislation I came up with isn't perfect. My draft obviously did not anticipate all the concerns my colleagues raised, and of course there is always room for compromise. That is what legislative discussion and legislative negotiation are all about. But I need a partner from the other side of the aisle who shares my commitment to crafting a bipartisan solution that puts net neutrality first.

Some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have certainly expressed a view about the need for legislation. Some of them come up to me privately, offline, and say: You are right. We need to do this legislatively. We need to put clear rules of the road in place. This is not the way to solve this problem.

But very few of them are willing to say that publicly. My colleague and the distinguished ranking member of the Commerce Committee's Subcommittee on Communications and Technology told the publication TechCrunch only 6 months ago: ''My point of view—and by the way, I had this point of view when it was President Obama and Tom Wheeler [at the FCC at the time], to the chagrin of my progressive friends—is that we should legislate.''

This statement was made with knowledge and virtually on the eve of the FCC's final vote to disassemble the 2015 rule. So what changed? Why aren't we debating a bipartisan bill instead of

this partisan resolution? Some on the other side of the aisle reached the cynical conclusion that exploiting concern about the internet outweighed the value of working with Republicans to pass net neutrality protections. For others who had a genuine desire to work with me, the forces of a highly politicized campaign to impose a Democrat-only solution can overwhelm the best of intentions.

Make no mistake—the campaign behind this Congressional Review Act resolution has been primarily driven by fearmongering hypotheticals, misdirection, and outright false claims. To make that point, this March, the Washington Post Fact Checker took Senate Democrats to task for a particularly egregious claim that failure to pass the Markey resolution would lead to a slower internet. The fact check concluded that the examined claim—made through the Democratic caucus's official Twitter account—conveyed the false impression that a slowdown is imminent. Fact Checker wrote that ''there's scant evidence that Internet users should brace for a slowdown.'' What that meant is that statement by the Democratic caucus on this particular subject got not one, not two, but three Pinocchios from the Washington Post for being a false claim—from the Washington Post Fact Checker.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the March 5, 2018, Fact Checker be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the Washington Post, Mar. 5, 2018]

WILL THE FCC'S NET NEUTRALITY REPEAL GRIND THE INTERNET TO A HALT?

(By Salvador Rizzo)

''If we don't save net neutrality, you'll get the Internet one word at a time.''—U.S. Senate Democrats, in a tweet, Feb. 27, 2018

THE PINOCCHIO TEST

The debate over net neutrality is reshaping the Internet and raising big-picture questions about modern life. But we can't help but feel that we've spilled a lot of pixels here analyzing something that simply hasn't happened.

Senate Democrats, industry leaders and net neutrality activists say the FCC's move to toss out the Obama-era rules will bog down and end the Internet as we know it. The biggest broadband providers forcefully reject this claim, saying they have no plans to block or throttle content or offer paid prioritization.

That could change in time. As the D.C. Circuit said, broadband companies could make more money from paid prioritization, and it's ''common sense'' to think they might try it. These providers have the ability and the incentive to slow down or speed up Internet traffic, and they've engaged in these practices in the past.

For now, though, there's scant evidence that Internet users should brace for a slowdown. Yet the Democrats' tweet conveys the false impression that a slowdown is imminent unless net neutrality rules are restored. This transmission error merits Three Pinocchios, but we will monitor the situation and update our ruling depending on whether the fears were overstated or came true.

Three Pinocchios

(Senate Commerce Committee note: the submission to the Senate Record includes only the conclusion of the Washington Post's fact check story.)

Mr. THUNE. In reality, all major cable and phone providers have said they will continue net neutrality policies. Under the new rules being put in place, Federal agencies can still take action against privacy violations and unfair business practices by internet companies.

In stark contrast, one unavoidable irony of the Markey resolution, as observed by an editorial in today's Wall Street Journal, is that it would actually weaken online consumer privacy protections by taking the only agency enforcing them off the beat. If this resolution were ultimately to be enacted—which it won't, but if it were, it would take the Federal Trade Commission, which currently regulates and polices privacy issues, completely out of the equation.

To be sure, Congress still needs to set long-term protections for the internet, and it shouldn't delay. But the significant harm uncertainty inflicts on the internet will manifest itself through stifled investment and innovation over time rather than on consumers in a sudden wave of net neutrality violations. That is just a simple fact.

After all, the new rules, approved under the Trump administration, closely follow those that long regulated the internet before 2015 and are largely, although not completely, in effect now.

One thing I want to continue to hammer is that what we are talking about here are the rules that were in place for the first two decades of the internet. For the first two decades of the internet, we operated under what was called a light-touch approach to regulation. Under that regime of light touch, the internet prospered, flourished, grew, expanded, and innovated to the point where it has become a huge economic engine in our economy. So what was the 2015 FCC ruling designed to solve? That, frankly, is a very good question. But the fact is, what the FCC is proposing to do and will do on June 11 of this year is to go back to the 2015 rules—the rules that were in place for the first two decades of the internet.

I would tell you that on June 12, after these rules go into effect, no consumer in this country is going to see any change from what they see today. They are still going to be able to watch the internet—they are still going to be to go to all their favorite social media platforms. There isn't going to be any change from what we have seen up to this point because that is what we are going back to—our rules that were in place for two decades, under a light-touch regulatory approach, that allowed the internet to explode and prosper and grow.

The Markey resolution is offered to this body without opportunity for amendment or any bipartisan input about what the rules governing the internet should say. A vote against the Markey resolution is a vote for ending this cynical exploitation of the internet. A vote against the Markey resolution is a vote for the Senate to get to work on bipartisan net neutrality legislation. That is what the L.A. Times said: Pass legislation. That is the best way to solve this, not coming up with this bizarre exercise, which we all know isn't going anywhere but will give the activists and the donors out there on the far left an opportunity to take this campaign to the House of Representatives, where it isn't going anywhere. Of course it would be vetoed by the President even if it did. So all we are doing is stalling, delaying, making it more difficult to get to a solution on this because what it will do is prevent those who are truly interested in a bipartisan solution and answer on net neutrality from coming to the table in order to make that happen.

As I have said, we have been working on this for a long time, and I have been looking for a Democratic partner. All we need are a few courageous Democrats who are willing to acknowledge what this is—which is a political, partisan charade—and get serious about bipartisan legislation, because there isn't going to be a single amendment that can be offered to this. This is not going anywhere.

If we really, truly want to solve the problem, there are fairminded people who are serious about this who would like to sit down across the table and work on a draft of legislation that would put internet principles in place and would put consumer protections in place but would use a light-touch regulatory approach—not the 1930s approach this resolution would turn to—to regulate the 21st-century internet. Frankly, I am at a loss to understand why any rational, reasonable person could come to the conclusion that using a 1934 law and regulating the internet like a public utility—a Ma Bell telephone company—would be the right approach in the age in which we live where the internet is thriving and prosperous under a light-touch regulatory regime.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 2853

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that S.J. Res. 52 be returned to the calendar and the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 2853. I further ask that it be in order for 10 amendments, equally divided, between the managers or their designees and relative to the bill to be made pending; further, that there be 10 hours of debate, equally divided between the managers or their designees, and that upon the use or yielding back of that time, the Senate vote on any pending amendments; finally, that upon disposition of the amendments, the bill, as amended, if amended, be considered read a third time and the Senate vote on passage of the bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TILLIS). Is there objection?

The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, Senator THUNE's bill is problematic both substantively and procedurally. There have been no committee hearings on his proposal, and it is not yet ripe for consideration here on the Senate floor. As a result, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, what you just heard is an objection to having a reasonable debate.

To the point that the Senator from Massachusetts made, clearly the unanimous consent request asks for—calls for—an opportunity to have amendments considered by both sides of this discussion. What that tells me is that what this is about isn't serious legislating; it is about, again, the political theater associated with this congressional resolution of disapproval, which has absolutely no future, is going nowhere, and does nothing to address the fundamental underlying problem that colleagues on both sides acknowledge needs to be address.

For the record, I will point out that we did attempt to bring up a serious piece of legislation, one that provides consumer protection, that bans blocking lawful content, that bans the throttling of lawful content, that bans paid prioritization—the very things most of my colleagues on the other side want addressed.

Frankly, no piece of legislation is perfect, and I would say to my colleague from Massachusetts that we would be more than willing to enter into a discussion and a debate, with an opportunity to offer amendments, in order to perfect this piece of legislation. But, frankly, if we continue down this path with the CRA, all we are going to do is waste more time—valuable time, I might add—and continue to live in a cloud of uncertainty where one FCC to the next continues to change the rules and where companies spend millions of dollars in litigation in courtrooms on lawsuits rather than ploughing it into infrastructure, investment, and new and innovative technologies that literally could deliver higher speed, faster internet services and higher quality services to people around this country, including those in rural areas who desperately need those types of services made available to them.

Mr. President, I reserve the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, only in Washington, DC, and perhaps only in the walls of this Capitol, is net neutrality regarded as a partisan issue. Only here are there accusations that the left or the right favor a position on net neutrality. In the rest of America, net neutrality is bipartisan; in fact, nonpolitical. It is the lifeblood of the internet. It is the animating principle that enables companies and individuals to have equal access to the internet without blocking, discriminating, price gouging, or favoring of some companies at the expense of others.

In fact, in legislatures across the country, like Connecticut, there have been proposals to do there what we are seeking to do here; that is, to preserve an open internet in accordance with the open internet order, which has been rolled back by the FCC. Strong net neutrality rules are accepted across the country on both sides of the aisle in State legislatures and State governments, in board rooms, and in all the communities where people come together seeking to communicate and use the internet in the highest and best way it can be used. One example, in New Haven, is SeeClickFix. SeeClickFix is a New Haven company that helps citizens communicate with their local governments to improve their community. The internet's incredible economic success and this company's have been made possible because it is a free and open platform. This company has a good idea. It can put that good idea to work, helping people make their local and State governments work better and be more responsive.

That success story has been repeated countless times because of net neutrality and the open internet. We are here to stop maligned rulemaking run amok. The FCC, under the leadership of its Chairman, has, in effect, rolled back the progress that was made with the open internet order. It defied 10 years of evidence and the pattern of market consolidation and merger that endangered the open internet. It defied evidence of discrimination that was taken over the rulemaking process, and it basically ignored a court order upholding the open internet order—a court order that was the result of in-depth and determined litigation to stop that order, and that effort was rejected.

The Justice Department has shown, from AT&T's own internal documents, that it sought to use its merger with Time Warner to raise prices and to hinder competition from online video services. A proposed merger between T-Mobile and Sprint threatens to further reduce scarce competition in wireless. Big broadband companies have more financial incentive and less market deterrence to obstruct competition than ever before.

Chairman Pai's plan would enable those broadband companies holding near-monopolies over access to consolidate even more power. If broadband companies are able to block, throttle, or charge fees for certain applications on websites, the result will be higher pricing, less innovation, and fewer new products. Reversal of net neutrality is a consumer's worst nightmare, but it is also a nightmare for small businesses and for competition and innovation and creativity in America.

I urge my colleagues to support S.J. Res. 52, the resolution of disapproval of the FCC's disastrous plan to roll back net neutrality. It is vital to protecting consumers and small businesses, preserving the open internet, and upholding the integrity of the rulemaking process.

If this effort fails to succeed, the challenge in the courts will overturn Chairman Pai's rollback of net neutrality because he embarked on a preordained purpose without proper rulemaking to overturn the rule adopted by the FCC before he became Chairman. When he initiated that process, he promised an ''open and transparent process,'' but the outcome was predetermined from the start. That is not the way rulemaking should occur. That is why the courts will overturn it, and that is why we should be protected and proactive in this body and pass S.J. Res. 52.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, at this very moment, a high school junior is reading a report online for a class paper she has due at the end of the week. Not far from her house, a single mom who recently quit her job to follow her dream of becoming an app developer is online teaching herself to code. In a city thousands of miles away, a small business owner is processing an order online to keep the lights on and the bills paid for another month. Every night in living rooms across this country, grandparents pick up their smartphones to video chat with newborn grandchildren who are hundreds or even thousands of miles away.

Let's face it, the internet is intricately woven into the fabric of American society. It is a very important part of our lives, but right now our access to a fair and open internet is under siege. In December, the Federal Communications Commission, the FCC, voted to eliminate the net neutrality protections that stop internet providers from blocking access, filtering content, or charging higher fees for fast lanes—three tactics that giant internet companies want to use to control the internet.

The repeal of these protections has corporate greed and corruption written all over it. This may be what the special interests want, but the American people are opposed to the very idea of a restricted internet. Net neutrality provisions are wildly popular. When it comes to a free and open internet, 83 percent of Americans are clear about their position. They want and demand a free and open internet. That is true for small businesses, entrepreneurs, and people from all backgrounds. You have to ask yourself, Why would the FCC vote to eliminate those protections?

I will tell you why. Because under this administration, the FCC has become a puppet for giant internet providers. The FCC's current Chairman, Ajit Pai, has made it clear he will work to put special interests over what is good for the American people.

The FCC was once an agency dedicated to protecting and promoting the public interest, but it has morphed into an agency that exists solely to do the bidding of giant telecom companies. It is a disgrace. Who can say we didn't see this coming? When Donald Trump won the White House, then-FCC Commissioner Pai said that net neutrality's days were numbered.

Once Trump selected Pai to lead the FCC, Chairman Pai immediately got to work getting rid of net neutrality. He opened up a new public comment period, laying out a plan to destroy net neutrality, and he made it clear he would ignore the views of millions of Americans who weighed in to urge him to abandon that plan.

The FCC received more comments on Chairman Pai's plan to kill net neutrality than any other rule in the FCC's history. Millions submitted comments opposing Chairman Pai's plan to kill net neutrality, but the FCC said it would ignore those comments unless they were, in its opinion, serious legal arguments. During the comment process, it was revealed that some of the comments had come from bots that had stolen Americans' identities and others had come from Russian addresses, but Pai dismissed those concerns. He demonstrated that, no matter what, he would forge ahead with his plan to hand over the internet to the biggest and most powerful internet providers.

If Chairman Pai's plan is implemented, internet companies will literally get to set their own rules governing access to the internet. As long as they put their rules somewhere in the fine print, internet providers can pretty much do whatever they please. That is not the way government is supposed to work. The internet was created by a bunch of government and government-funded workers, and it is the government's job to protect Americans' access to a fair and open internet.

The internet doesn't belong to giant internet companies. It belongs to the students striving to build a better future. It belongs to the young women and men working day and night on a new idea that will change the world. It belongs to the small business owner whose success depends on operating her business online. It belongs to the grandmas and grandpas, the mothers and fathers, the sisters and brothers, and friends who depend on the internet to remain connected to the people they love. It belongs to people who like to watch their favorite shows online or read the news or shop or play video games or just browse the internet. It belongs to all of us.

If the FCC will not stand up for the public interest, it is up to Congress to do so, but it will take this Republican-controlled Congress prying itself free from the grip of giant companies and doing what is right for the American people.

Today, we can take the first step. I ask every one of my colleagues in the Senate to join me in voting yes on the CRA resolution to restore net neutrality provisions.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I am here to lift up the voices of the families I represent in the State of Washington who, like so many other Americans, agree the internet should be free and open; who agree our country should support small business owners and entrepreneurs and students and middle-class families, not big corporations and special interests; who agree that consumers, not broadband providers, should get to pick the websites they visit or applications they use; who agree the internet should be a level playing field that benefits end users and not slanted by broadband providers blocking content or charging for prioritized access.

That is why so many of us are on the floor today, to give a voice to the vast majority of Americans who want the internet to remain a place that fosters innovation, economic opportunity, robust consumer choice, and the free flow of knowledge.

These things are not a luxury. They are what make American ingenuity possible. As a former preschool teacher, I support net neutrality because it helps the next generation of innovators—our students, especially those in rural and low-income areas. Schools have worked very hard to improve access to high-speed connectivity for all students because they know, from early education through higher education, and through workforce training, students need high-speed internet in order to learn and get the skills they need. Their teachers need the internet to collaborate with colleagues, access educational materials, help students learn valuable research and internet safety skills, and expand access to a high-quality education for students with disabilities and English learners.

Rolling back net neutrality threatens that educational equity and worsens the digital divide. So let's protect the free and open internet, not just for today's consumers but for our students—the next generation of American innovators. The choice could not be easier. Either we stand with everyday Americans or with the massive corporations that have found a new way to make more money off of them.

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. NELSON. 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. NELSON. Mr. President, I rise, along with my colleagues here, to speak in strong support of the resolution to restore strong net neutrality protections for Americans.

This is, obviously, what the American people want. For the vote that was just taken on the motion to proceed, 52 for and 47 against, I think it shows how the American people's will is being expressed in a bipartisan way. The American people understand how important these protections are to their lives and to the future of the internet. They do not want to have their websites blocked or internet access slowed, and they certainly don't want internet providers making those decisions to block or slow.

More than 20 million residents of Florida understand just how vital it is to have a free and open internet. I say that for my State, but that is, obviously, the same for every other State as well. Millions of schoolchildren in my State—from Pensacola to Orlando, to the Florida Keys—and across the entire country benefit from educations that are built on a free and open internet. That is why educators and librarians throughout the country have rallied in favor of net neutrality. They know that an internet that is no longer free and open is a lost educational opportunity for our children.

Florida's colleges, universities, and technical schools rely on the free and open internet for their vital educational and research missions. Unfettered access to the internet is essential for research into issues that are critical to the State and Nation, such as medical research, climate change, sea level rise—whatever the research is.

Florida's growing economy is equally reliant on a free and open internet. The growth of high-tech jobs all over the country and particularly in Florida, including the growth across the middle swath of Florida and the booming Space Coast has largely been built on advanced high-speed internet networks that have been available in those areas.

Small businesses that are all around also use the internet as the great equalizer and bring the global marketplace to their very doorsteps, but that global market for those companies exists only as long as everyone on the internet is treated the same. If you start picking and choosing, then you lose the value of that equalizing, of a small company's having a great idea and having access to the information just like a big company has.

Citizens throughout my home State rely on the internet for civic and social engagement. The internet is today's social forum—the tool we use to stay engaged in the lives of family, friends, and peers.

The internet can also be an equalizing force. As such, it has been a place where communities of color have been able to tell their own stories in a way that they have never been able to before. It has given minority communities the power to organize, to share, and to support each other's causes. To limit access to the net would be to help silence these voices that are just beginning to be heard. I don't think we want to do that.

Congress must ensure that the internet remains open to all—thus, the vote that we have coming up in just about an hour and a half. Unfortunately, the FCC has empowered internet providers to dictate consumers' experiences online. What the Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission did, Ajit Pai, is to go overboard in what he has tried. This Senator has spoken over and over for moderation in the approaches to how the FCC would be involved with regard to regulating the internet. When websites can be blocked, when downloads can be slowed, and when consumers then have to pay more to access what they are actually looking for—that is not a free and open internet. It becomes a closed internet.

I am very happy to be on the Senate floor with all of these other Senators who have spoken in favor of restoring the FCC's net neutrality protections. The resolution before us immediately restores the FCC's strong consumer protections for the internet. It will make sure that the internet content cannot be blocked or cannot be throttled. It will prevent internet providers from charging more for transmitting certain favored content. It will preserve the FCC's authority to examine other practices that could harm consumers, and it will make sure that consumers will be given understandable, basic information about their internet services. It is necessary that this Congress protect consumers' access to the internet.

The choice before us today is clear. A vote in favor of this resolution is a vote to restore the free and open internet. It is a vote to keep control of the internet in the hands of those who use it. Congress must undo the FCC's decision to turn its back on American consumers by stripping away net neutrality. The American public ought to be what we consider first. So I am happy to support this resolution. I call on my colleagues to join us in protecting a free and open internet.

In closing, this Senator, as one of the leaders of the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, has so often spoken in favor of the two sides getting together and negotiating legislation because we keep going on this roller coaster whereby the FCC does one thing and, then, the roller coaster goes the other way and it does another thing, and each time it acts, it goes to court. Ultimately, there ought to be a legislative solution.

Today is about taking a stand on the excessive action by the FCC so that we can make sure to protect the free and open internet and give the ingenuity and creativity and Yankee inventiveness of this country the opportunity to continue to blossom by using this new technological tool that has been, virtually, put into use in the past decade. We don't want that internet throttled and limited. It needs to be free and open.

I yield the floor.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr President, millions of Americans were outraged last year when the Federal Communications Commission, FCC, voted to repeal the strong and enforceable net neutrality rules that were adopted in 2015. As a supporter of a free and open internet, I share the public's outrage over the loss of these critical protections, which is why I am voting in favor of this resolution to restore the previous rules.

By repealing net neutrality rules, the FCC and its supporters in Congress have achieved little more than to plunge consumers and small businesses into a fog of uncertainty. Instead of having concrete legal protections in place against blocking, throttling, and paid prioritization, internet users now have little more than vague promises from broadband providers about how they will treat content online. These promises could disappear with little notice or no recourse for those affected. This is the wrong way to approach policy for the greatest engine of economic growth and free speech ever devised.

The uncertainty created by Republicans at the FCC and blessed by too many here in Congress jeopardizes the success of small businesses and startups across the country. One of the main concerns I hear from small businesses in Vermont is fear of paid prioritization. Without clear rules in place, broadband providers can set up pay-to-play schemes that disadvantage small businesses against deep-pocketed competitors.

In a pay-to-play online world, small businesses will be forced to decide whether or not to pay tolls in order to avoid being stuck in the slow lane. These tolls do nothing to promote innovation, but they would impose a tremendous cost on entrepreneurs. These costs would come at the expense of investing in new equipment, new products, or new jobs. For those who choose not to pay, the cost would be access to customers, who today already make decisions based on how fast a page or application loads. A few seconds of lag time can mean the difference between a sale made or a sale lost to a competitor.

Net neutrality rules matter because they provide small businesses with the certainty that paid prioritization will not happen. The promises and statements made by leading broadband providers following the repeal of the rules too often make no mention at all of their stance on paid prioritization. Others have quietly deleted promises not to engage in this behavior from their website. In February, the CEO of Sprint was quoted comparing the internet to roads, saying that, on many roads, ''you have a faster road and you pay more. There's nothing wrong with that.'' Concerns about paid prioritization cannot be dismissed when CEOs of leading companies are speaking openly about the benefits of toll roads on the internet.

This should not be a partisan issue. Republicans and Democrats alike should want to provide the small business community with the certainty that the internet will remain an equal playing field. The simple reality is that, without net neutrality rules, this certainty will not exist. The resolution we are considering today gives us the clearest path to restoring that certainty. I urge all Senators to stand with the American people, small businesses, and startups in supporting this resolution.

Mr. NELSON. 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. SCHATZ. 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. SCHATZ. Mr. President, in December, the FCC made a colossal mistake by rolling back net neutrality protections. Today, the Senate has an opportunity to begin the process of righting that wrong with an up-or-down vote to overturn the FCC's repeal and to restore the free and open internet.

This is a big deal. We just had a vote with all Democrats, Independents, and three Republicans, and we have another vote at around 3 o'clock. If we fail, the FCC will end net neutrality protections in early June. But if we succeed, then this fight will go on to the next step in the House of Representatives.

This vote is a no-brainer. Net neutrality is one of the most popular issues that the Senate will consider this year. There is no other issue that polls so decisively on one side. A survey by the University of Maryland found that 83 percent of people are in favor of net neutrality, and that includes 75 percent of Republicans, 89 percent of Democrats, and 86 percent of Independents.

When you think about people's experience with their ISP, it makes perfect sense. People are already frustrated with the limited competitive options for the providers they have. Then, once they sign up for service, they find there are hidden fees. They have to pay for the installation. They have to wait for the installation. They have to rent the cable box. Their bill suddenly goes up within a year of service, finding out they were only engaged in a promotional offer. In other words, many people don't like their internet service providers. They like the internet, but they don't like the lack of choice and all the hassle and expense that comes with getting on the internet.

So if you ask people if we should get rid of the rules that actually give consumers control over their internet access, if we should give broadband companies more power over our lives, they say no. Providers promise to be good to consumers. In fact, many of them have said that they don't need the FCC to

maintain a free and open internet because they are already officially committed to the idea. But without net neutrality, there is nothing in the law that prevents companies from treating content or websites differently.

In fact, many of these publicly traded companies—once the dust settles, once the politics of this net neutrality issue wanes—will be talking to their chief financial officers, and their board of directors will be asking: Why are you not maximizing revenue? Why are you not charging consumers more when you can?

If the answer is ''In the process of trying to prevent a piece of legislation from passing, we made a promise,'' the board of directors will say ''Well, change your mind.''

The only thing that can stop a corporation that provides broadband services to consumers from doing all the wrong things is a law. It is not a promise; it is a law.

So the question for the Senate is very simple: Whose side are you on? Are you for the consumers who are asking us to protect the internet or are you with the telecommunications companies?

I want to be really clear here. There is no constituency on the other side of this, other than the telecommunications companies. You don't go to a townhall meeting and see this thing evenly split. When we were debating the Iran deal or the Affordable Care Act or an infrastructure bill or the tax bill, even in a deep blue State like Hawaii or a deep red State like those of some of my colleagues, there are always people on both sides of the issue. I have not met one human being in Hawaii who is against net neutrality, and I challenge anyone out there to find someone who is against net neutrality. The only constituency for this is the people who would benefit from what the FCC has already done.

Some are pointing to a bill in the House that would take care of a few of the problems that come with getting rid of net neutrality. But when you dig a little deeper, it is clear that this is not a compromise. It doesn't offer close to the protection that net neutrality gives consumers and small businesses. In fact, it gives these ISPs the ability to charge small businesses and consumers more money for different types of content, and that is the crux of the issue. Again, go ask a consumer or a small business owner, and they will tell you that they are already frustrated with internet providers, and they expect Congress to do the right thing and look out for their interests.

This issue is incredibly important to young people. They have grown up on the internet. It is part of their lives, and they do not want Congress to stand by and do nothing as this FCC allows internet providers to change the way we access the internet.

It is clear to me that net neutrality is popular among everyone—older people, young people, small business owners, Republicans, Democrats, Independents, red States, and blue States. It is also clear that the benefits of the ISPs do not come close to outweighing the benefits that students, businesses, schools, families, and others will get from a free and open internet.

With this vote, every Member of the Senate will be on the record for or against net neutrality. I hope every Member will choose to vote the way nearly all of America wants us to and restore net neutrality.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I was in a conversation with a group of Oklahomans just last week, and the issue of net neutrality came up in that conversation. A gentleman there who had published his content on the internet seemed very concerned about net neutrality and wanted to make sure that the content he had he could continue to publish, and he would not have to go to every single ISP—internet service provider—across the country and negotiate a deal with them. That is what happens with net neutrality.

I said: It is very interesting. Has that happened to you? Have you faced that?

He said: No, but I am afraid I might.

Here is the problem we have with this conversation about net neutrality. For 20 years, the internet functioned under a very clear set of rules. The Federal Trade Commission had a set of rules both for content providers and for the fiber—the internet service providers. There was a clear set of rules. They couldn't violate any trade practices. They couldn't do monopolies. They couldn't violate the basic rules of commerce. There was a very clear set of rules.

Then, 2 years ago, the FCC—the FTC is the Federal Trade Commission, and the FTC has been the one regulating the internet for two decades. The FCC decided they wanted to regulate not the content and the internet service providers, just the internet service providers. So the FCC, in an unprecedented ruling that had already gone to court multiple times and failed, grabbed the regulatory control from the FTC and said: We will take the internet service providers, and we will manage them, and you keep the content folks. That is the fight we are in right now.

It is the funniest thing to me to be in a conversation about net neutrality because the implication is that the internet will not be free if the government doesn't regulate it with this particular entity—the FCC. When I ask people ''Would it be OK if the government regulated with the FTC, the Federal Trade Commission?'' most people say ''Well, that would be fine too.'' Well, good, because that is the way it has been for 20 years. For 20 years, there has been one set of rules on the superhighway of the internet—the Federal Trade Commission.

Here is what I would like to say to people who are trying to listen in and trying to figure this out: Most of the arguments and the fights that have come about cost increases and about paid prioritization and about blocking and about people monitoring content haven't been from the internet service providers. It has been from the content folks.

You tell me, when you go to your news feed on whatever social media site you go to or whatever news site you go to, are there paid commercials that come up first, and then your friends come up second? Probably most of the time. Are there certain bits of content that you pay more for if you are on Facebook? You can put this out, but you will reach more people if you pay for it? Yes. But that is not net neutrality.

The argument about net neutrality doesn't have anything to do with those content folks. It is about the internet service providers. So why do I bring this up?

Here is what has happened. Over the past 2 years, America has been drawn into a fight between two sets of megacompanies. Google, Facebook, and Netflix are at war with AT&T, Comcast, and all the major internet service providers. You have the content folks on the web fighting with the internet service providers that actually provide the fiber that connects the content. They are fighting over their business, and the way the content providers have worded it, they have said: We want the internet to be neutral. We don't want to have customers pay more for certain content, and we don't want the internet service providers to charge more based on that content, while the whole time the content folks are charging people for the type of content. They are literally arguing and saying: We don't want them to do what we do every single day—what Google does every day, what Facebook does every day. In fact, they fight about not wanting internet service providers to filter out content when, of late, Facebook seems to put out every week a new release about how they are filtering content from places they don't like.

Here is what we really want: a fair, flat playing field for everyone, and everyone who wants free speech can have free speech on the internet. If you want to start a new business, you can put up a website on the internet, and you don't have to worry about somebody filtering you out. This is not China—a place where they will filter out and decide whether you can put your content out. This is the United States of America, and everybody wants their content to be able to go out, to be fair, and not to have someone judge it. That is what we want with an open internet. By the way, that is what you have if the Federal Trade Commission goes back to regulating, as they have for 20 years.

I ask a simple question: Was the internet open and fair for content in 2015? I believe it was. If you check your history books from 3 years ago, I think you will find that the internet was

open in 2015. Facebook was out there. Netflix was out there. YouTube was out there. It was open in 2015.

We are not talking about any set of rules that is different than how the internet operated in 2015. But what we don't want to have is two different sets of rules where this set of companies—Google and Facebook and Netflix—gets to tell a different set of companies, the fiber, how to do their business. Neither do we want the fiber companies telling the content folks how to run their businesses. Let them compete.

A lot of people say that there are only a few internet service providers that are out there. Well, in the United States, there are 4,500 internet service providers that are out there. Yes, there are some big ones, but there are a lot of small ones. If the big ones misbehave, guess what happens. Competition will beat them down, and those small companies will beat them because the big companies get out of line. It is the way America works and the way competition works when you keep it fair and open.

It is a misnomer to talk about net neutrality as if it is not neutral right now. There are a lot of fears and a lot of innuendos. There are a lot of accusations and what-ifs and maybe they will come out and I am afraid the boogeyman is going to come and take the over the internet. Really, what is happening is that two giant sets of companies are competing and asking the government to jump in the middle and the Googles and Facebooks and Netflix are asking this government to put restrictions to the internet service providers that they are not willing to actually have themselves.

Why don't we just do this: Let everyone compete and not try to have the government in between. Can we have net neutrality where we don't have blocking of content, where we have fair trade rules, where we make sure everyone gets access to the internet? Yes. We can have that when the Federal Trade Commission actually oversees those rules as they have for two decades.

There is a lot of hyperbole in this. I just wish there were more facts coming to the table at the same time the hyperbole is coming out.

The simplest conversation I can have is actually a conversation I had with a mayor not long ago. We were talking through the complexity of this and about fiber networks and about broadband and capabilities and speed and all these things.

He said: Hold on. I am a mayor. Can we talk about water pipes for a minute?

I said: Sure.

He said: So what you are telling me is there is lots of water going into the water pipe and lots of people who are using that water, and we have to find a fair way to be able to get all that water out because there is more water trying to get into that pipe than we can actually get out on the other end, and it is backing up.

I said: Yes, sir. That is exactly what I am saying, but it is zeros and ones running through a piece of fiber, not water running through a pipe.

He said: I can get that. Let's just keep it fair so that every person who wants to get access to it can get access to it and we are not discriminating on the water coming through the pipe.

It is pretty easy. We can do that right now with the Federal Trade Commission.

Tomorrow, I am chairing the hearing in the subcommittee that I lead in Appropriations. We will have the Chairman of the FCC and the Chairman of the FTC sit down for a 2-hour conversation, and I am sure much of it will be on this issue of net neutrality. My encouragement is for people to actually listen in to get the facts about net neutrality and not the emotion and not what the Googles and Facebooks and NetFlix are telling you what to think, because they are competing against the other guys. Come and get the real facts. We will lay the facts on the table.

If there is an area that needs to be handled with new regulations, I would be glad to engage, but quite frankly, I think the internet needs the lightest touch possible. I don't see a reason why the Federal Government should get in the business of free speech and tell people what they can and can't say. Let's keep the internet open and free and fair and not block content, but let's also not try to jump between two sets of megacompanies and pick winners and losers at the same time. Let's keep it open and stay out of the business of telling businesses how to run their businesses.

Mr. President, I yield back.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. 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, before the Senate today is the question of whether we will continue to have free and open access to the internet in the United States of America.

Every day, millions of Americans log on. They rely on the internet to help their child with his or her homework assignment, help a father video call his mother, who may live three States away, or help a small business woman make a sale to a customer halfway across the world.

Currently, the people who use the internet in the United States and others like them are free to enjoy the internet as they wish. When you logged on this morning, you had the same access to the internet as every other American. There is no fear that some internet provider is going to step in and say: Wait a minute. We are going to slow down your service until you pay us more money or limit your access to certain apps and information based on whether you pay an additional fee. What a contrast that is to things like cable television. What package did you buy? How many channels are in there? How much access do you have? Are you going to pay the bill again next month? That is quite a bit different, isn't it, from our access to the internet?

Currently, users around the country are enjoying free access to an open and neutral internet, but that is all about to change. It is about to change because this new President and his new head of the Federal Communications Commission believe that our access to the internet should be for sale. In fact, this administration thinks everything ought to be for sale—public lands, our privacy, and in this case, our unfettered pathway to information.

Thanks to the leadership of ED MARKEY of Massachusetts and many of my colleagues, we come today to discuss this fundamental issue. This is a rare day in the Senate. We are actually discussing an issue of substance on the floor. I welcome the visitors for this historic moment. We are preparing to vote tomorrow on whether the decision of the Trump administration's Federal Communications Commission, which ends net neutrality, is going to succeed or fail.

Luckily, we were joined by at least one Republican—I didn't look at the final rollcall—to move us forward in this debate. All the Democrats and at least one Republican voted for this, and we prevailed. Tomorrow, we hope to do the same. We hope it will be done on a bipartisan basis as well.

Follow this debate because my guess is that it is going to impact you and your life. If the Trump administration and the Federal Communications Commission have their way, they are going to change our access to the internet for every single family, every single business, every single doctor—the list goes on.

In December, the FCC voted to put the needs of companies ahead of consumers and to undo net neutrality in the United States. This great party on the other side of the aisle who talks about freedom—we want Americans to have freedom—wants to take away our freedom for access to the internet. Why? So somebody can buy parts of it and sell them back to us.

Under their new plan, the FCC would allow companies to freely block or slow down any American's access to websites based on the company's financial interests and would allow paid prioritization practices which create internet fast lanes and slow lanes based on who can afford to pay more for the service. What a change that is from what we have today.

Everyone has a favorite website they visit every day. In the morning, I race in here and get to the newspapers in Illinois, for example, to see what is going on in my home State. Well, what if one

day you typed in the address of that newspaper and nothing popped up or you were able to visit it, but it took twice as long to download it?

Remember those days when you used to deal with dial-up? Some of the young people in the Chamber are probably scratching their head and asking: What is dial-up all about? Well, those days did exist, and it was a much different world in the internet, which we could return to because of that FCC decision. This could be the reality under the Trump administration's Federal Communications Commission.

For internet providers, this means they can discriminate against specific content on the internet and be free to do so in the name of competition. For consumers, it means less service and higher costs. For entrepreneurs and small businesses, there is also a risk.

I had a meeting this morning with the Illinois Realtors. There were about 20 of them gathered in the hallway. I was in a committee hearing.

They said: The first item on our agenda is net neutrality.

I said: Realtors and net neutrality? Explain.

They said: Well, people are now looking for their homes on the internet. Perspective purchasers of homes do video tours of all of these different homes. We want our customers to have access to the internet so they can go shopping for their next home. We think it is good for American business.

So do I—but not the Federal Communications Commission. They disagree.

The internet has given the businesses not only access to customers but a global reach and ability to compete with companies large and small. Success isn't determined on how rich your business is. It is how good your product is. If our country wants to grow its economy and continue to lead the world in innovation, we cannot allow the internet to become a place where businesses impose a pay-to-play scenario.

I can't understand how the other party—this party of individualism and freedom—wants to take this freedom away from the American people.

If the FCC's harmful new plan is allowed to take effect, consumers, businesses, and hard-working families will be hurt. It is no wonder that public support for net neutrality is overwhelming. America gets it. The Federal Communications Commission and the President may not, but America understands this. All over the country, students, teachers, businesses, individuals, and families, are all making their voices heard, and I encourage them to continue to do so.

We need more Republicans to stand up for your freedom. We need more Republican Senators to join us in what should be a strong, bipartisan effort.

The Federal Communications Commission has announced that its radical plan to end net neutrality will take effect next month—next month—unless Congress stops it.

We are starting today with this vote in the Senate. We will finish it tomorrow. Then, if we are successful, it goes across the Rotunda to the House. If they do nothing, your right to the internet is going to be destroyed.

Today every Senator will have a chance to tell their constituents exactly where they stood on this issue of personal freedom—whether content on the internet should be treated equally and consumer access be a matter of how much you can pay. I think the answer is obvious, and so do the overwhelming majority of Americans.

Will the Republican Party please join us in a bipartisan effort to stand up for something that Americans across the board support?

I urge my colleagues to support the concept of net neutrality and the CRA resolution before the Senate.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, last year, in 2017, we watched a series of battles related to the very fundamental vision of our Constitution—whether we are going to do the people's work or whether we are going to be a Senate run by the most powerful and privileged in America. There is no question how that came out. It was the powerful and the privileged.

Three major things happened in 2017. The first was a health bill designed to destroy healthcare for some 30 million Americans, thereby also affecting everybody else by raising the costs of healthcare and putting our rural healthcare clinics and our rural hospitals out of business. That was a bill for the powerful and the privileged and against the people.

Then we had the tax bill—a bill that borrows $1.5 trillion from the next generation. Our pages on the floor here are the next generation. We gave the bill to them and then gave the proceeds to the very richest of Americans, increasing and accelerating inequality in wages and inequality in wealth. That is legislation by and for the powerful—not we the people.

Then we saw the theft of a Supreme Court seat, done directly to maintain a court case called Citizens United, which allows the wealthiest Americans to spend hundreds of millions of dollars to drown out the voices of the people here in our democratic republic. That is government by and for the powerful and the privileged instead of we the people.

Wouldn't it be amazing if this Chamber actually believed in this Constitution—this vision of distributing power among the voting citizens—so we have, as Jefferson said, laws that reflect the will of the people?

Here we are today with another issue that is a battle between the vision of our Constitution and government by and for the powerful. It is called net neutrality

What is net neutrality? It is making the internet a place where we can all participate on an equal foundation, with the freedom to have a full right to participate in the information world of today and tomorrow and a full opportunity to participate on a level playing field in the economic battleground of today and tomorrow. Freedom is what net neutrality is about.

This is what the Federal Communications Commission wants: It wants to have a fast lane for the rich and the powerful, and it wants to have a slow lane, where you are hardly moving at all, for all the rest of us—all of working America, stuck here in a congested internet while they sell off the fast lane to the wealthiest. That is what this is about.

The FCC, or the Federal Communications Commission, proceeded in its decision to take away equality on the internet, to ignore the technical experts, to produce studies that are debunked by the experts, and to conduct a fraudulent public comment period where bots, or robotized comments, were filing fake comments by the millions. They didn't even want America to be able to weigh in legitimately.

We said: Redo the comment period and put up an interface to stop the bots so real people can weigh in. You could have real input from real Americans. That is ''we the people'' government. The FCC said: No way, because we are bent on our track.

What was their track? To allow discrimination on the internet by the type of user, to allow discrimination on the internet based on the type of business or the type of social content, to allow discrimination on the internet by the type of website, to allow discrimination by the type of platform or by using an iPhone or a desktop, to allow discrimination based on the software application—is it Safari or is it Google?

Why is that? Because the internet service providers can sell, through that license to discriminate, a fast lane to the rich and powerful while the rest of us are stuck in traffic.

It is totally unfair. People in America get it. They understand that this is the opposite of what it means to have a government that reflects the will of the people.

If we go back to our Founders, James Madison said: ''The advancement and diffusion of knowledge is the only guardian of true liberty.'' ''The advancement and diffusion of knowledge is the guardian of true liberty.'' But today a sizable share of the Members of the Senate want to shut down advancement and diffusion of knowledge on a level playing field and sell our right to equality to the highest bidder.

They want to put the modern user—the student, the child, the math teacher, the entrepreneur, the small business—they want to lock them in chains and say: We are taking away your freedom to participate in the public square on an equal basis. That is simply wrong. We know it is wrong because millions of Americans have weighed in.

On some days in my office, I have had phone calls that are 100 to 1—1 or 2 or 3 people arguing: Sure, let the powerful sell off our freedom. But for every 1 of those folks, there are 100 citizens saying: No way, fight for fairness. Fight for equality. Fight for our freedom to participate on a level playing field.

We hear it from all kinds of small businesses. More than 6,000 have formally weighed in. We hear it from all kinds of organizations. I hear it from the Realtors. I hear it from the restaurant owners. Everyone who isn't one of the superelite in America wants equal participation and freedom on the internet, but there is a whole host of colleagues today who are considering voting for the elite and rich and powerful over their constituents.

I encourage you to rethink your priorities because we have a responsibility, under our Constitution, to do government by and for the people, not the powerful.

We have heard from chiropractors. We have heard from people who perform at music venues. We have heard from graphic design artists. We have heard from medical startups. We have heard from everyone across the spectrum saying: Give me a fair chance to compete.

A fair chance to compete is an American value. Let us not trounce that value into the mud today.

I anticipate that at 3 p.m. we are going to have a vote on this floor, and the majority of this Senate—a slim majority—is going to fight for freedom, and the rest are going to say: No way, I am not fighting for freedom. I am fighting for the big and powerful people in America.

That is just wrong.

Then this bill will go to the House. When it goes to the House, there will be another battle. So having won here by a slim margin—a slim, bipartisan margin—we have to win in the House, which means that we need the American people to weigh in.

Here is the thing. The rich and powerful really want to win the fight. Oh, they are going to be spending a lot of money to win this fight. They are going to be sending a lot of lobbyists down the hall to win this fight. So we have to have the people of America weigh in and let them know across the hall, down the hall, down this road to the House that as the people's House, they should do the people's business.

Let's set the example here in the Senate. Let's not have a slim majority fight for freedom for Americans. Let's have the entire body weigh in with a robust, extensive majority, fighting—fighting—for freedom on the internet. Let's win this battle today, and let's win it in a few days down the hall.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

NOMINATION OF GINA HASPEL

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, yesterday President Trump joined Republican Senators for lunch. He was very optimistic and very positive about a lot of the developments in America's foreign policy in places like North Korea. At the same time, we all recognize that the world continues to be a very dangerous place. National security must be our first responsibility. My goal is a nation that is safe, strong, and secure.

To have safety and security at home, we need peace and stability abroad. Republicans in Congress understand that. So does President Trump, and so does Gina Haspel. That is why the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence today approved Gina Haspel's nomination to lead the Central Intelligence Agency. It was a bipartisan vote.

That used to be the normal way things operated around here—in a bipartisan way. When you had a nominee who was undeniably qualified, they got support from both sides of the aisle. It has become very uncommon over the past year.

Democrats have decided to obstruct President Trump's nominees for important jobs almost at any cost, but Gina Haspel got this rare bipartisan approval from the committee for the right reason—because she is the right person for this job. Now we will have a vote on the Senate floor.

This should be one of the easiest votes for Members of the Senate to cast all year. The Director of the Central Intelligence Agency is a very important member of the President Trump's national security team. She is the right person for the job.

She has been a career intelligence officer for 33 years. That goes back to the days of the Ronald Reagan administration. She actually got interested in the CIA when she learned that women could serve there doing clandestine work all around the world.

She has served in Africa, Russia, Central Europe, and Asia. She has held top jobs at the Agency's headquarters. She understands every element of the work of America's intelligence community.

Since she is actually the acting head of the Agency today, I think anyone would be hard-pressed to say she is not up to the job, because she is doing the job. She has the faith and the trust of the men and women in the field who keep us safe every day.

Let's not forget that she has also worked very closely with Mike Pompeo. He was head of the CIA. Now he is Secretary of State. Having two people in these important jobs who already have a solid, respectful working relationship is extremely important for making sure that the U.S. foreign policy is airtight.

No one else that the President could have nominated would have been able to work as closely with Secretary of State Pompeo. She is an expert on terrorism. She is an intelligence expert. She is a national security expert.

She began her work at the CIA during the Cold War. So she has a deep understanding of Russia and a deep understanding of our challenges there.

I think it is clear that Gina Haspel is an absolute star nominee for this vitally important job. I am not the only one saying so. The list of people who have come out and endorsed her nomination goes on and on. At least six former leaders of the Central Intelligence Agency have all come out publicly to praise her qualifications and her abilities. CIA Directors under President Obama, under President Bush, under President Clinton—Republicans and Democrats alike—all agree she is the right person for this job.

Look at what they have had to say. Michael Hayden was Director under President Bush. He wrote: ''Gina Haspel is the person America needs at the CIA.'' He said: ''She is someone you want in the room when big decisions are being made.''

Listen to what Leon Panetta, who had the job under President Obama, said. He said that he was glad she would be the first woman to head the Agency because ''frankly she is someone who really knows the CIA inside out.''

Look at John Brennan, who also ran the Agency for President Obama. He said in an interview that she has the experience, the breadth, and the depth—on intelligence issues and foreign policy issues over many, many years.

It is clear this is someone who is very highly regarded by people who know her, people who have worked with her, and people who have relied on her judgment and her expertise. That expertise and that clear-eyed judgment is more important today than perhaps at any other time since the end of the Cold War.

Our Nation's adversaries are cunning, they are opportunistic, and they are aggressive. We face challenges in dealing with Syria and in dealing with ISIS. We have a lot of work ahead of us in Iran.

Next month, President Trump will be meeting with North Korea to try to end their nuclear program. Now, I remain skeptical about North Korea, and so do a lot of Republicans in the Senate, but this is the best opportunity we have ever had to try to get nuclear weapons out of North Korea. The President needs his full team in place.

This isn't a simple political game for Democrats to play for the TV cameras. This is about the peace and security of the world and safety and strength for the United States.

As a CIA officer for more than 30 years, Gina Haspel has had to make tough decisions to keep our country safe. The decision we face to confirm her nomination to be Director of the Central Intelligence Agency is not a tough decision at all. I will vote loudly and clearly in support of her nomination.

When she is confirmed, all Americans will be able to sleep soundly, knowing she is on the job providing the security we all need.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MARKEY. 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. MARKEY. Mr. President, I thank the Presiding Officer, and I thank all of my colleagues here today. This has been a very important debate to have on the floor of the U.S. Senate. It is a debate over whether we are going to continue to have a free and open internet. This vote is a test of the U.S. Senate, and the American people are watching very closely.

This vote is about small businesses, librarians, schoolteachers, innovators, social advocates, YouTubers, college students, and millions of other Americans who have spoken with one voice to say: Access to the internet is our right, and we will not sit idly by while this administration stomps on that right.

This vote is our moment to show our constituents that the U.S. Senate can break through the partisanship and break past the powerful outside influences to do the right thing—the right thing for our economy, the right thing for our democracy, the right thing for our consumers, and the right thing for our future.

This is common sense to Americans around the country, with the only exception being telecom lobbyists and lawyers inside the beltway. How do I know? Because 86 percent of all Americans in polling agree that net neutrality should stay on the books as the law of the United States.

The public is telling us loudly and clearly to vote for this resolution. They are telling us they don't trust their internet service provider to show up on time for a customer service appointment at their house, so they certainly don't trust them to put consumers ahead of profits.

They are telling us that once they pay their internet bill, they expect fair access to the internet. They are telling us they are sick of the special interests getting their way while the rest of us get the short end of the stick.

So I ask each and every one of my colleagues today to heed the calls of the American people to keep the internet open, to keep the principle of nondiscrimination at the heart of what the internet has been and must continue to be, not just for the most powerful voices but for those who have the smallest voices inside of our society. That includes entrepreneurs who just last year received half of all venture capital in the United States which went to software and internet startups. That is what we need. We need to understand how this incredibly chaotic entrepreneurial system in our country works, and at the heart of it is net neutrality.

Just 2 weeks ago, in Massachusetts, I had a meeting with 500 people on net neutrality. I invited Tim Berners-Lee, the inventor of the worldwide web.

Tim Berners-Lee was selected by Time magazine as one of the 20 greatest thinkers, scientists, and innovators of the 20th century. Who else was on the list with him? Sigmund Freud, Edison, Henry Ford.

Tim Berners-Lee is the inventor of the worldwide web, the organizing principle of the web. What he said is, the principles of nondiscrimination are baked into the internet. It was his intent to have it work that way so there could be no discrimination. What we are talking about is a fundamental change. The largest companies now want to implement fundamental change in order for them to ensure that competitors cannot compete as well as they could if they could not be discriminated against—that consumers have the protections they need so they are not harmed, and so this innovation economy can continue to unleash itself for the benefit of the United States, so we are, No. 1, looking over our shoulders at Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 in the world.

The internet and its success is a story about the United States being No. 1, not any individual company, and certainly not a small handful of broadband companies. That is why the rest of the world envies what we have in our country, this incredible engine of innovation which has created millions of new jobs since the 1996 Telecommunications Act was passed, since this digital revolution was unleashed. We must keep these principles intact.

That is what we are debating here today on the floor of the United States Senate. We are debating what the principles should be for this organizing principle of our country for the 21st century, which is the internet. From my perspective, the only way in which every American, every entrepreneur, every new idea is going to have a shot at helping to make our country better is if net neutrality stays on the books.

So this is a defining vote, the most important vote that we are going to have in this generation, on the internet. The whole country is watching. Eighty-six percent of all voters support net neutrality, 82 percent of all Republicans support net neutrality. If it is not broke, don't fix it. It is working, and it works for the smallest voices and for the largest voices. What these huge internet companies, the internet service providers, want to do is change the rules, tilt the playing field.

It was a long route to get to this era. We had one telephone company, one cable company, monopolies going into people's homes. It took a lot to get away from that era so that smaller voices, newer voices could be heard. When that happened, it unleashed trillions of dollars of private-sector investment the software and internet companies, these innovators, were now able to gain access to. They could have done it if the rules made it possible before we changed the laws in the 1990s. But since then, they have—and they have reinvented, not just the United States of America, but they have reinvented the whole world. There is a vocabulary which has been created since 1996, words that now everyone thinks are common: Google, Amazon, E-Bay, Hulu, You Tube. They didn't exist. They didn't have a role in our society. We had to change the rules in order to make it possible for them. There is a whole new generations of companies whose names we do not know yet, but because of net neutrality they will be known. They will be the job creators for the next several decades in our country.

So I thank all Members who participated in this debate. There won't be a more important one that we have, because it goes right to the heart of our identity as a free and open society. I urge my fellow Senators to vote yes on my Congressional Review Act resolution to restore the net neutrality rules to the books.

Mr. President, I yield back the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TOOMEY). The Senator from South Dakota.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, we are about to vote on this Congressional Review Act resolution of disapproval dealing with this issue of net neutrality.

Let me say again what I said at the beginning of this discussion earlier today; that is, I support principles of net neutrality that can be enshrined in law, that actually do address the issues people on the other side are concerned about, whether that is a ban on blocking of lawful content, a ban on throttling of internet speeds, a ban on paid prioritization that would create fast lanes, slow lanes, and that sort of thing. Those are things on which I think there is pretty broad agreement.

Frankly, it seems to me, at least, there is bipartisan support for pursuing a legislative solution to this—to put into law, to codify once and for all those principles of an open internet. Instead, we are having this fake argument over a Congressional Review Act resolution of disapproval, which is going nowhere, and my colleagues on the other side know that. All it does is prolong the period of uncertainty in which we have been operating for some time, where internet service providers are not investing in new technologies, innovation, and infrastructure and instead are investing in lawyers and litigation as this cloud of uncertainty hangs over the regulation of the internet.

What our colleagues on the other side are proposing is simply this: Regulate the internet like a public utility in the same way that Ma Bell was regulated back in the 1930s, because the law they would use to regulate the internet is title II of the 1934 Communications Act—basically saying: We want to take

a law that is 80 years old and use it to regulate a 21st-century innovation like the internet—the internet that exploded under the light-touch regime that was in place up until 2015.

In 2015, the FCC decided they wanted to use the heavy hand of government regulation as opposed to a light touch. What this FCC has said, simply, is that we are going to go back to the light-touch regulation that was in place for the first two decades of its existence, two decades that led to explosive growth, dramatic increases in productivity, and economic opportunity for Americans all over the country. Here we are today talking about a Congressional Review Act resolution of disapproval that would roll back that FCC's decision in an attempt to restore and put back in place the heavyhanded regulation of title II under the 1934 Communications Act.

I think, frankly, that we can solve this issue quite simply; that is, to sit down in a bipartisan way and figure out a way to enshrine into law those principles of an open internet that would ban the things I just talked about—ban blocking, ban throttling, ban pay prioritization, but do it in a way that does not draw on the title II authority that essentially gives the FCC the authority, if they want to, to regulate rates.

This is a heavyhanded government approach to regulating the most powerful economic engine we have seen literally in generations. I think the clear vote here today is in favor of legislation that would put those rules into effect and against a Congressional Review Act resolution of disapproval, which is simply an attempt to, I guess, gain partisan advantage with an issue that people seem to think will be useful in the upcoming elections.

Honestly, it is not going anywhere. We all know that. I think the sooner we conclude that and the sooner we get serious about sitting down together across from each other and actually putting into law these principles of an open internet, the better off we will all be. I mentioned this earlier today. There are a number of our colleagues who have made statements publicly, as recently as yesterday at a Commerce Subcommittee hearing, where they supported that approach of bipartisan legislation. I had colleagues on the other side who have made public statements—and I quoted some of them today—in support of a legislative solution along the lines of what I am proposing here. Of course, we have had multiple examples of misstatements and hyped-up statements that aren't grounded in any sense of reality, so much so that even a Washington Post Fact Checker came out and said that the statements that were being made by the Democrats warranted three Pinocchios. The L.A. Times just this last week editorialized: ''Rather than jousting over a resolution of disapproval, Congress needs to put this issue to bed once and for all by crafting a bipartisan deal giving the commission limited but clear authority to regulate broadband providers and preserve net neutrality.''

That is the way to do this. It is not to have an FCC that bounces back and forth from administration to administration at the whim of whatever the political wins of the day are or, perhaps even worse yet, spends a lot of time in court litigating this issue—millions and millions of dollars that could be spent investing in innovation and new technology and new infrastructure that could deliver higher, faster speeds, higher quality of services to people across this country, including those in rural areas who have missed out on a lot of this. You are not going to get broadband providers to deliver services or invest in rural areas if they are operating under a cloud of uncertainty, which is what this CRA, if it were successful, would ultimately lead to.

I simply ask our colleagues on both sides of the aisle to reject this ill-fated, frankly, charade of an exercise that we are going through in exchange for a true discussion of bipartisan legislation. I mentioned earlier that I had a draft from 2015 that we put together. I have had numerous opportunities to discuss that draft with Members on the other side. We have socialized some of these issues. We shopped them around. It certainly is not the end-all product, but that is what legislation is about. It is about the opportunity to sit down, take input from both sides, and come up with a bipartisan solution. I think that is certainly within our reach here if we are willing to do it, but this is not the way to do it.

This is a dead-end canyon, which does nothing to solve the issue. All it does is perhaps whip up some people who are perhaps interested in trying to use this as a political wedge issue, but it is not going to do anything to solve the problem. I urge my colleagues to reject and vote no on this resolution of disapproval, and let's get serious about legislating.

I yield back the remainder of our time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time has been yielded back.

The joint resolution was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading and was read the third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The joint resolution having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the joint resolution pass?

Mr. MARKEY. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following 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 52, nays 47, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 97 Leg.]

YEAS—52

Baldwin	Hassan	Nelson
Bennet	Heinrich	Peters
Blumenthal	Heitkamp	Reed
Booker	Hirono	Sanders
Brown	Jones	Schatz
Cantwell	Kaine	Schumer
Cardin	Kennedy	Shaheen
Carper	King	Smith
Casey	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Collins	Leahy	Tester
Coons	Manchin	Udall
Cortez Masto	Markey	Van Hollen
Donnelly	McCaskill	Warner
Duckworth	Menendez	Warren
Durbin	Merkley	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Murkowski	Wyden
Gillibrand	Murphy	
Harris	Murray	

NAYS—47

Alexander	Flake	Perdue
Barrasso	Gardner	Portman
Blunt	Graham	Risch
Boozman	Grassley	Roberts
Burr	Hatch	Rounds
Capito	Heller	Rubio
Cassidy	Hoeven	Sasse
Corker	Hyde-Smith	Scott
Cornyn	Inhofe	Shelby
Cotton	Isakson	Sullivan
Crapo	Johnson	Thune
Cruz	Lankford	Tillis
Daines	Lee	Toomey
Enzi	McConnell	Wicker
Ernst	Moran	Young
Fischer	Paul	

NOT VOTING—1

McCain

The joint resolution (S.J. Res. 52) was passed, as follows:

S.J. RES. 52

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That Congress disapproves the rule submitted by the Federal Communications Commission relating to ''Restoring Internet Freedom'' (83 Fed. Reg. 7852 (February 22, 2018)), and such rule shall have no force or effect.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Mitchell Zais, of South Carolina, to be Deputy Secretary of Education.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, all time is expired.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Zais nomination?

Mr. MANCHIN. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

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

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) is necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 50, nays 48, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 98 Ex.]

YEAS—50

Alexander	Flake	Paul
Barrasso	Gardner	Perdue
Blunt	Graham	Portman
Boozman	Grassley	Risch
Burr	Hatch	Roberts
Capito	Heller	Rounds
Cassidy	Hoeven	Rubio
Collins	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Corker	Inhofe	Scott
Cornyn	Isakson	Shelby
Cotton	Johnson	Sullivan
Crapo	Kennedy	Thune
Cruz	Lankford	Tillis
Daines	Lee	Toomey
Enzi	McConnell	Wicker
Ernst	Moran	Young
Fischer	Murkowski	

NAYS—48

Baldwin	Hassan	Nelson
Bennet	Heinrich	Peters
Blumenthal	Heitkamp	Reed
Booker	Hirono	Sanders
Brown	Jones	Schatz
Cantwell	Kaine	Schumer
Cardin	King	Shaheen
Carper	Klobuchar	Smith
Casey	Leahy	Stabenow
Coons	Manchin	Tester
Cortez Masto	Markey	Udall
Donnelly	McCaskill	Van Hollen
Durbin	Menendez	Warner
Feinstein	Merkley	Warren
Gillibrand	Murphy	Whitehouse
Harris	Murray	Wyden

NOT VOTING—2

Duckworth	McCain

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The Senator from Texas.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session for a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

NET NEUTRALITY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, today our Democratic colleagues insisted on an aimless vote on the issue of net neutrality. This is what has been called by the Wall Street Journal a vague name which essentially is cover for regulation of the internet like a utility under the previous regime, which is the Obama-era regime.

Following the FCC issuance last December of the Restoring Internet Freedom Order, our Democratic colleagues vowed to make net neutrality a campaign issue.

To me, one of the most maddening things about the title ''net neutrality'' is that this is the opposite of neutrality. This is all about more regulation of the internet.

Oh, by the way, I noticed that the internet seemed to be working just fine while this Restoring Internet Freedom Order by the FCC was in effect.

How did they do this? By painting the FCC's decision as proof somehow—and I am not really sure how, other than maybe gullible press and people willing to just accept their argument at face value—that some of us are against net neutrality. That is just not the case.

I believe the free market has done more to help the internet grow and succeed as an engine of commerce and something that allows us to communicate with our friends and family, share pictures and the like, beyond our wildest dreams. I guess Thomas Friedman's book ''The World is Flat'' talked about how one of the most important events in recent history was the development of the world wide web in 1995. We have come a long way since 1995, and the internet has succeeded beyond our wildest dreams, which is the reason the last thing we should want is the government to come in and inject itself with more controls.

We have always supported a free and open internet. Internet service providers should not be able to block, slow, or otherwise unfairly discriminate against any legal website or online service. In fact, it was our Democratic colleagues who blocked Republicans from passing the bill earlier today that would have prevented the internet service providers from being able to do just that.

The issue up for debate this week, though, was how to classify these providers for regulatory purposes, and here, there was a choice. Our side of the aisle has long favored a light-touch approach that is offered under title I of the Telecommunications Act. Our Democratic friends favor a more onerous approach under title II. That is why they favor repealing the FCC's recent order, returning to Depression-era regulations implemented under the Obama administration.

Our Democratic colleagues have now gotten their wish, in a way. They voted here in the Senate to repeal the current FCC order by using the Congressional Review Act, which gives Congress the power to nullify agency rules and requires only a simple majority to pass. But our colleague, the senior Senator from South Dakota, is correct when he refers to their stunt as ''political theater.'' It is merely a ''show vote.''

First of all, even though our Democratic colleagues may have joined together to win this vote on the Congressional Review Act in the Senate, there is simply no indication that the House plans to take it up or that the President would sign it if they did.

Second, contrary to supporters' claims, the resolution will not ''restore'' net neutrality. In fact, it would accomplish the opposite. This resolution would remove rightful oversight of noncompetitive behavior and consumer protection from the Federal Trade Commission and, instead, subject ISPs to oversight by the FCC, including regulations regarding consumer data privacy, approval or disapproval of new innovation, and dictating the terms and conditions of service. That would create a major imbalance in our internet ecosystem between content and platform regulation, as edge providers like Google and Facebook would not be subject to the same standards as broadband providers.

Finally, the resolution would increase the digital divide across America, and that is no small matter. As Brent Wilkes, the former CEO of LULAC, wrote recently in the Houston Chronicle, ''the CRA would . . . reinstate Depression-era Title II rules that have not created the open internet's engine of opportunity with a level playing field that proponents envisioned.''

He went on to say: ''Placing the internet back under Title II rules would . . . curb the critical infrastructure investment necessary for connecting more Americans to high-speed broadband, including nearly 4 million Texans—about 15 percent of the state's population—who live in rural communities that are difficult and costlier to connect.''

As I said when I began, I believe in an open and free internet, but the vote we just held does not make the internet more open or more free—just the opposite. Let's be blunt about it. This vote was simply a waste of time.

The light-touch regulatory treatment of internet service providers under the December 2017 FCC order was a return to the Clinton-era environment that allowed the internet to innovate and thrive. Imposing additional, stifling government regulations does not benefit consumers in the long run and, instead, allows FCC bureaucrats to pick winners and losers. That is why I opposed our Democratic colleagues' resolution today.

NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, on a separate note, for the last few days, we have been celebrating National Police Week, when we honor the men and women who help keep our communities safe. They have chosen a difficult and often dangerous life, dedicated to enforcing the law, defending our civil liberties, and protecting our cities and neighborhoods.

Sometimes law enforcement officers intentionally put themselves in harm's way for our benefit, and sometimes they even sacrifice their lives for their fellow citizens. The police in my State are no exception. In fact, according to one FBI report, Texas had more law enforcement officers die in the line of duty in 2017 than any other State.

Because it is National Police Week, I would like to mention two important pieces of legislation that are high priorities for law enforcement groups, and I am happy to be the chief sponsor of both.

The first is called the Justice Served Act. Its companion legislation passed just yesterday in the House. I am grateful to my colleague Representative JOHN CARTER for helping to make sure that happened.

The bill would provide grants for State and local governments to prosecute cold cases. These are older crimes that have languished but are reignited through DNA evidence, including evidence obtained from backlogged rape kits. By making sure that newly tested evidence is used to investigate and prosecute unsolved crimes, the Justice Served Act would ensure that vital criminals are brought to justice instead of remaining free and on our streets. This will give crime victims and their families closure and relief and deliver justice.

Once new DNA evidence is used and the wrongdoers are prosecuted, the crime victims will know that their attackers no longer remain at large. The evidence can also help exonerate those who have been wrongfully accused or even convicted.

Especially this week, I am proud to have the support of the Major County Sheriffs of America, the Fraternal Order of Police, the National Association of Police Organizations, the Major Cities Chiefs, and other law enforcement organizations. I am also grateful to have the support of various organizations that support sexual assault victims, as well as prosecutors' groups.

Finally, I would just like to say that I appreciate my cosponsor, the senior Senator from Minnesota, who has helped this bill continue to move through the legislative process.

Another bill I would like to mention as long as I can—seasonal allergies are getting to me, like so many of us—is the Project Safe Neighborhoods Authorization Act of 2018. We hope to have it hotlined this week because, like the Justice Served Act, it is a high priority for law enforcement groups across the country.

Project Safe Neighborhoods is a nationwide partnership among State, Federal, local law enforcement, and prosecutors that use data-driven, evidence-based, and trauma-informed practices to reduce violent crime.

When I was the attorney general of Texas, then-Governor George W. Bush and I administered a program known as Texas Exile, in which we targeted felons who were carrying firearms as part of their carrying out some crime. We targeted those violent offenders by concentrating resources on the most important cases. This program involved multiple law enforcement agencies and allowed them to collaborate on a ''Smart on Crime'' approach, focusing efforts on high-level offenders who were responsible for tearing communities and families apart.

Multiple jurisdictions in Texas participated in Project Exile, which, again, was focused on the most violent offenders and the ones who were carrying firearms, which they could not legally possess or use. The result was a staggering reduction in crime rates and homicides. Project Exile later became the basis for the Department of Justice's nationwide Project Safe Neighborhoods Program, which has been ongoing for more than a decade. I am happy that soon we will reauthorize it.

Under Project Safe Neighborhoods, Federal, State, and local law enforcement cooperate and focus their enforcement efforts on organized criminal networks and repeat offenders who are driving crime rates in a particular area. One of those regions is Northern Virginia, where a regional task force composed of 13 local, State, and Federal law enforcement agencies has made tremendous strides in eradicating gang violence perpetrated by groups like MS–13. My colleague BARBARA COMSTOCK's district is in that region, and she has been the bill's biggest champion in the House.

Since its inception in 2001, Project Safe Neighborhoods has been deployed by both Democratic and Republican administrations to reduce violent crime. According to a Michigan State University study funded by the Department of Justice in 2013, Project Safe Neighborhoods was associated with a 13.1-percent decrease in violent crimes in cities with high rates of program participation, including double-digit reductions in total firearms, crimes, and homicides in every city examined by the study.

Our bill will reauthorize the program through fiscal year 2021 in amounts consistent with current appropriations levels. Additionally, it will require participating entities to prioritize the investigation and prosecution of individuals with leadership roles in criminal organizations, and it will strengthen innovation and prevention initiatives on the local level.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about two related topics. The first is to recognize and honor the men and women of law enforcement across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and across our country. This week is National Police Week, and it is really an important opportunity for us to let the folks in law enforcement know how grateful we are to them for the service they provide and for the sacrifices they make every single day to keep us safe.

It is also an important occasion to remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice. This week, the names of 129 law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty in 2017 alone were added to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial. Among the fallen were two Pennsylvania officers: Patrolman Brian Shaw of the New Kensington Police Department and Trooper Michael Paul Stewart III of the Pennsylvania State Police.

Given the clear and obvious dangers that our police officers face, it seems to me that we have an obligation to make sure they have the tools they need to protect themselves and the public, so I want to mention two efforts to do exactly that and urge my colleagues to support these efforts.

The first is a Bureau of Prisons gun locker bill. This is legislation that I have introduced with Senator MANCHIN. We call it the Lieutenant Osvaldo Albarati Correctional Officer Self-Protection Act. What it would do is allow Federal prison guards to protect themselves on their commutes to and from work.

Why is this a problem? Because in many cases, the prisons where the prison guards work do not have a secure place to secure firearms, so the guards cannot bring their firearms to work with them nor would they have them to go home. They often are unarmed going to and from work.

Sadly, the fact is, Federal prison guards can often be targets of criminals when they are off duty. Let's be honest here. Some of the prisoners they are guarding get released and are still pretty bad guys.

Unfortunately, the Department of Justice policy essentially makes it impossible for guards to protect themselves when they are going to and from work. Sadly, Lieutenant Albarati, of Puerto Rico, paid for the price for this policy. In 2013, he was driving home from work. He was unarmed. He was shot and killed. Three inmates from the prison where he worked had hired the killer.

What our bill does is very simple. It requires the Federal Bureau of Prisons to provide officers with an onsite storage locker for their personal firearms so that when they get to work, they can secure them in a safe place or allow these prison guards to store their personal firearms in a lockbox that is in their cars. It is pretty simple. It is pretty straightforward.

Yesterday, the House voted on a companion bill, and it passed 378 to 0—378 to 0. Now is the opportunity for the Senate to act. We should act quickly. We should pass this. We should do it through our hotline and get this done. I am sure the President will sign this into law, and we will be providing a tool to enhance the safety of the prison guards who protect our security.

There is another piece of legislation, which is the Lifesaving Gear for Police Act. I have introduced this legislation. What this would do is allow local law enforcement to continue obtaining the surplus defensive Federal gear they need to protect themselves and the public. It is based on a simple principle. The idea is that the police ought to at least have sufficient equipment. They should at least be as well-equipped as criminals and terrorists who attack them and are a threat to

all of us. We should make every effort we can to make sure that law enforcement officers have the chance to go home safely to their families at the end of their shifts.

It was longstanding policy that surplus, leftover, military gear that was defensive in nature, when it was not wanted or in use by the military, would be made available to law enforcement. Unfortunately, in 2015, the Obama administration severely restricted the ability of State and local law enforcement to obtain this surplus, leftover, in-storage gear.

The restrictions by the Obama administration were rationalized on the completely false narrative that the police were a source of unrest and violence, as opposed to the truth that we all know, that they are brave men and women who defend us against unrest and violence. I think the American people know better. They know that the vast, overwhelming majority of people in law enforcement are good, honest, decent, hard-working people who are motivated by their desire to do a good job and protect the public.

Fortunately, President Trump reversed the Obama administration's flawed policy of denying our local police forces this equipment. But that only has the power of an Executive order, and the safety of our law enforcement officers and the public should not be subject to political whims. A new administration will arrive at some point, and when they do, they could reverse this unless we codify it in law. That is what our bill would do. It would ensure that State and local law enforcement can continue to obtain this lifesaving Federal gear, regardless of who occupies the Oval Office or Congress.

So as we mark National Police Week, we should never forget the courage our law enforcement officers exhibit every day in keeping us safe. I would like to say to our country's law enforcement officers, including the more than 25,000 in Pennsylvania, we thank you for your service and your sacrifice.

CHIP RESCISSION

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, the second topic I wish to touch on today is a subject that is apparently misunderstood, and it is certainly wildly mischaracterized. It is the subject of rescissions. It has become a topic of conversation since the President—the administration—has proposed a rescission. A rescission relates to our budget process. It is when money originally authorized by Congress to be spent on a program but actually is not spent—that authorization is revoked, it is rescinded, but it is with respect to money that was never spent.

Now, specifically, I want to discuss how this relates to the Children's Health Insurance Program, which is often referred to by the acronym CHIP—the CHIP program. So if you follow recent media reports and comments by some of our colleagues, and even some industry stakeholders, boy, it sure seems like there is a lot of confusion.

Let me state an unequivocal fact. Since 2011, there have been rescissions from CHIP every single year. This is not new. It has happened every single year since 2011.

Now, is that because Congress decides during the course of each year that they don't really like the CHIP program or they don't like children or they don't want kids to get health insurance? No, that is not why it happens. The reason it happens each and every year is because Congress systematically, intentionally, and willfully authorizes far more money for the CHIP program than it is ever going to actually spend.

We have a chart that illustrates this. We can see the vertical columns. The red bars show how much money Congress has authorized in the years to the left of the dotted line. Those are historical years. To the right of the dotted line is the projected future years. So the red bars are how much money Congress has authorized for the CHIP program. The green line shows how much of that money actually gets spent on the program. We can see that in each and every year the red bar is way above the green line. It has been going on back to 2009; it is every single year, and if we continue on our current path, that will continue to be the case as far as we can see going into the future.

Now, take a particular year; for example, this year, 2018. We expect the Federal Government is going to spend $16 billion on the program. Now, because of the nature of the way this program works and certain features, it is possible we will spend $16.1 billion. It is possible it will end up being $15.99 billion, but we know $16 billion is enough to provide the Federal share of funding for the children enrolled by their States, but, as I say, we don't know it with precise precision right to the last dollar.

So knowing it is going to be about $16 billion, how much money do we think Congress authorized for this program that is going to cost $16 billion? The answer is $25 billion. So $25 billion, when we know for a fact—everybody, including our Democratic colleagues, knows we are not going to spend anything close to that amount of money. As I say, this overfunding is not unique to 2018; it happens each and every year, and it will continue well into the future.

Now, within that $25 billion, I should point out a subset. There is something called the Child Enrollment Contingency Fund. In 2018, $4.3 billion of the $25 billion is designated for this Child Enrollment Contingency Fund. The word ''contingency'' is there because it is meant, theoretically, to be a backstop in case the demand—the utilization—for this program is so great that the allocated money isn't enough, so there will be this contingency fund. That raises a question: Is that a sensible number, $4.3 billion?

Well, let's look at this. Since 2009, there has been a total of $11.4 billion made available in this very category, this contingency fund. That is represented by the blue circle on the chart. How much has actually been needed? The answer is $100 million—one-tenth of $1 billion. Nine-tenths of 1 percent of the amount of money that has been made available has actually been used for this purpose, and $11.4 billion was authorized in the decades since this contingency fund was invented.

During that period of time, all 50 States and the District of Columbia, if they ever needed it, would have been able to access this. That 50, plus 1, over the course of 9 years, is 460 opportunities for a State or the District to come to the Federal Government and say: We need some of that money from the contingency fund—460 times. How many times has it actually occurred over the course of those 9 years? The answer is three, and the amount of money is less than 1 percent of what has been authorized: $108 million used out of $11 billion that has been authorized.

Well, next year, according to State law, despite the fact that no State is even close to consuming the full amount of the main fund, we are going to allow another $4.5 billion to be deposited in this account, when the sum total of all the States' usage for the last 9 years was $100 million, one-tenth of $1 billion.

Look at it another way. If you look at all the CHIP-related accounts—all the Federal money that has been designated for this children's health program since 2009—Congress has willfully and systematically authorized so much in excess of what is needed that actually only 58 percent of the money has gone to the CHIP program because that is all the demand there was for this program.

So this, obviously, raises a question: Why is it that year after year after year, including this year, Congress intentionally authorizes so much more funding than we are ever going to spend on this category, on this program, on the children's health program? I will tell my colleagues why. It is a big budget gimmick. It creates a big opportunity for Congress to lie to the American people and spend more money on other programs under the guise of putting it toward the children's health program.

How does this work? Every year, as I mentioned at the beginning of my comments, after knowingly authorizing way more money than is needed, Congress comes back and says: Oh, you know what, let's do a rescission, but we will take this money out of CHIP, and we will spend it on something else. It could be spent on anything else, whatever the politically favorite cause is of the moment, but buried somewhere in a 1,000-page appropriations bill every

year there has been a rescission, and the money has been shifted to something else. Basically, it becomes a slush fund to be used in the appropriations process and to allow the appropriations to exceed the cap on spending that we all agreed upon.

So that is what happens. Congress willfully creates a number way above what we are going to spend, comes back a little later and says: Oh, my goodness, look at all this leftover money. Well, let's just take it and spend it somewhere else.

It is completely dishonest. It completely misrepresents the CHIP program. It completely misrepresents—in fact, it blatantly violates the spending caps we have established, and it is not trivial. It is not a trivial amount of money. Over the last 8 years, the amount of these rescissions, so it can be spent elsewhere, has added up to 45 billion taxpayer dollars—entirely a gimmick, a device that just allows Congress to lie to the American people about what they are spending.

So that brings us up to last week. The administration comes along and says they have a suggestion for Congress. First of all, let's fully fund the CHIP program. Let's make sure the CHIP program is fully funded. There will be no shortage whatsoever, but let's stop the lying. Let's remove the deception. Let's provide a reasonable amount of excess funding, because I acknowledge at the beginning we don't know right down to the last dollar exactly how much we are going to spend, but let's take aside all of this wild excess.

Let's be honest. Let's rescind now most of the excess funding, which has been going on each and every year separately; let's leave more than enough in the contingency fund. Even though it is extremely unlikely that any of it will be tapped, the administration has proposed $500 million to be left in the contingency fund. Remember, that is the fund that has been used to the tune of $108 million over the last 9 years, but they are saying let's leave $500 million—five times as much as has been spent cumulatively over the last 9 years—and basically send all of this huge, excessive amount back to the Treasury so it is not just spent willy-nilly and irresponsibly.

Now, for some reason, despite the fact that not a single dollar that would have actually been spent on the CHIP program will be spent differently, will not be spent; despite the fact that the CHIP program will not lose a single dollar of actual funding; despite the fact that Congress has been doing this every single year since 2011, as long as it can spend it on something else; despite the fact that 65 Senators, including 40 of my Democratic colleagues, voted to rescind $6.8 billion from CHIP—how long ago? In March of this year, a few weeks ago, including $3.1 billion from the contingency fund. So the vast majority of my Democratic colleagues voted to rescind money from CHIP just earlier this year. Despite that, now we have people up in high dudgeon, wailing and gnashing of the teeth, about how what we are doing would tear CHIP apart—even after what they did in March, by the way—that it is somehow a betrayal, immoral, appalling; it hurts low- and middle-class families.

It would be too generous to suggest this is merely a lapse of memory. Everybody knows what is going on. This is ridiculous.

So I fully support the President's proposal that we fully fund CHIP but stop with the dishonesty in our budgeting. Stop throwing a bunch of money under this category, knowing we are going to go back later and spend it somewhere else. This program shouldn't be pillaged this way to spend money on unrelated things that just allow us to bust the budget cap.

I would go a step further. What the administration has proposed, to their credit, fixes this terrible flaw this year. I would like us to permanently fix it. I have suggested to my colleagues, rather than specifying a dollar amount, since we don't know the precise dollar amount, I would be OK with a provision that says: such sums as will be needed. That would guarantee it would be fully funded, but it would not create this big excess that gets wasted on who knows what.

If the only concern people have is to ensure that the CHIP program will be fully and properly funded, how can they object to that? It would specify, codified in language, that would be exactly what would happen. It would be fully funded, but we have gotten this resistance to that. How could that possibly be? Unless it is that people want to continue this gimmickry, this deception that has been going on for all of these years.

Well, I hope we will be able to work out a long-term solution. I hope we will bring an end to this. I understand my colleagues on the other side want to spend more money. Let's just admit it—admit it, and let's debate it. We have agreed-upon spending caps. I think they are too high, but that is what we agreed upon. We shouldn't be lying to the American people and going through this gimmick yet again.

So I want to state my unequivocal support for the administration's proposal for a rescission package. I would prefer if there were actual spending being cut. This is indirectly going to help reduce excessive spending because it is going after these unobligated funds, it is going after these excessive accounts. It happens in other accounts, but CHIP is the most noteworthy. To me, this is a modest step in the direction of honest budgeting and protecting the taxpayers.

I hope we will be able to have a permanent solution to this soon, but in the meantime, I hope my colleagues will support the administration's rescission package.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

EPA ADMINISTRATOR PRUITT

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I am here today for my 206th ''Time to Wake Up'' speech.

For colleagues who may be having a hard time keeping up with the ethical scandals swirling around Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt, I thought today I would lay them out one by one.

I think we all heard Donald Trump's pledge to drain the swamp and to put an end to government corruption. That hasn't exactly worked out; has it? Instead, swamp creatures abound, and Pruitt, a longtime enemy of the Agency he now runs and a longtime toady of the fossil fuel industry he is supposed to regulate, is absolutely wallowing in the swamp. Indeed, he is so swampy that he now faces more than a dozen Federal and State probes exploring how he has been advancing his own interests and those of his polluter donors. So let's take a look.

Investigation No. 1 is travel expenses. Between March and May of 2017—just that short period—Mr. Pruitt spent 43 out of those 92 days traveling to his home State of Oklahoma. Pruitt appears to have conducted little or no official business on many of these trips. Yet taxpayers still picked up the tab.

Last summer the EPA inspector general opened its inquiry into this use of official resources. That inquiry has actually since been expanded to examine the overall frequency, cost, and extent of the Administrator's travel. Over a 6-month period in 2017, Pruitt is estimated to have racked up nearly $200,000 in travel expenses. This includes a $7,000 business-class flight to Italy and $58,000 spent on military and charter flights. One set of flights to Oklahoma on a chartered private jet cost over $14,000 alone.

Also under scrutiny is a 4-day trip that Mr. Pruitt, his staff, and his security detail took to Morocco in December. I hear it is lovely in Morocco in December, but it cost taxpayers more than $100,000 to indulge Mr. Pruitt. EPA first justified the trip by saying that Pruitt was there to promote the U.S. liquefied natural gas industry. That is actually not in EPA's mission—but never mind. Pruitt himself then testified before the House that he was there to negotiate part of a free-trade agreement. Again, that is not part of EPA's mission. Plus, there is no evidence that Pruitt even conferred with our Trade Representative. You would think that he might have picked up the phone to give himself just a little bit of cover if that was going to be his story. It was eventually reported that Pruitt's Morocco junket was largely arranged by a lobbyist friend who later was paid $40,000 a month—$40,000 a month—retroactively to January 1, to represent the Moroccan Government.

Pruitt's frequent international travel plans are heavily influenced by lobbyists and rightwing donors. His trip to Rome appears to have been largely orchestrated by the head of the Federalist Society, and it included dinner at a five-star hotel with Cardinal George Pell, who has been under investigation for multiple allegations of child sexual assault. The cardinal is a climate denier. So maybe that makes it all OK for Pruitt.

A planned trip to Australia was organized by a consultant and former lobbyist for foreign governments. Another planned trip to Israel appears to have been at least in part scheduled to allow him to promote a water purification company recommended by Republican megadonor Sheldon Adelson. Reports say Pruitt actually gave his staff a bucket list of places he wanted to visit at public expense, and he told them to arrange pretexts for his travels.

A lot of the cost of these trips is Pruitt's security detail. That takes us in to investigation Nos. 2, 3, and 4, which stem from Administrator Pruitt's over-the-top spending on security measures.

The Environmental Protection Agency's inspector general and the House oversight committee are both investigating this spending, including almost $3 million that Pruitt has spent on his 24-hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week, 20-person security detail. This security phalanx accompanies him everywhere—on personal travel home to Oklahoma and on family trips to the Rose Bowl and Disneyland. Pruitt's security detachment is more than three times as large as previous EPA Administrators, none of whom had 24/7 protection. Many of the agents assigned to Pruitt's security team are pulled from EPA's enforcement arm, leaving fewer agents to actually investigate environmental crimes. But they do help him to get to fancy Washington restaurants fast, using lights and sirens to expedite Pruitt's travel to his dinner dates.

Pruitt has also fortified his office. He installed a $43,000 cone-of-silence, supersecret phone booth. He had biometric locks installed on his office doors and had his office swept for bugs—a no-bid job, by the way, that went to a business partner of the guy who was then his top security agent. The Agency even explored spending $70,000 on a bulletproof desk for him.

All he is missing is the secret decoder ring.

The evidence that Pruitt cites to justify all of this security spending, including business-class and first-class plane tickets he claimed were required by security concerns, is remarkably thin. When he testified last month before House appropriators, Pruitt claimed that it was all justified by the Agency's inspector general. Well, on Monday, Senator CARPER and I heard directly from the inspector general, and the story is not as Pruitt testified.

Pruitt wanted 24/7 security starting on his first day as Administrator—not as a result of any threats and not because the inspector general told him that round-the-clock security was justified. The inspector general, in fact, never told him that. It is not the inspector general's job. It looks like Administrator Pruitt misled two House committees when he testified.

Let's move on to investigation No. 5, which involves an inspector general inquiry into a possible violation of anti-lobbying rules. Once you are on the Federal payroll exerting the responsibilities of government, you are not supposed to engage in lobbying. During an April 2017 meeting with the National Mining Association, Pruitt encouraged the group to press President Trump to withdraw from the Paris climate accord. The GAO is also looking into improper lobbying activity after he appeared in a lobbying organization's promotional video, opposing, by the way, the clean water rule. That GAO investigation is investigation No. 6.

Investigation No. 7 concerns an inspector general probe into Pruitt's use of an obscure provision of the Safe Drinking Water Act to circumvent the usual civil service process to hire and promote staff. Pruitt used this loophole to hire lobbyists to oversee EPA functions and to award huge raises to a couple of favorite political aides from his Oklahoma days. He did this even after the White House had rejected those proposed pay increases.

One of Pruitt's closest aides may not have even shown up to work for 3 months. Imagine that—not showing up to work for 3 months despite drawing a nearly $180,000 salary. That is great work, if you can get it. Incredibly—and I mean that literally—Pruitt testified to the House that he didn't know whether this senior aide was coming to work on not. You would think that after 3 months of not seeing this individual at work, you might have a clue. Well, the EPA inspector general can help the Administrator answer that question in the eighth investigation on the list.

Now, every good swamp creature needs a swamp den, and Scott Pruitt found himself just the place, paying $50 a night for a luxury Capitol Hill condo co-owned by the wife of an energy lobbyist. Both the EPA's inspector general and the House oversight committee are investigating whether this below-market value housing arrangement constituted an illicit gift. If you have lost track, these are investigations Nos. 9 and 10.

By the way, when the story broke about his swamp den, Pruitt denied that this lobbyist lobbied EPA. Well, it turns out that Federal lobbying disclosures and internal emails show that this lobbyist did in fact lobby EPA, even meeting with Pruitt himself on behalf of an industry client and also pushing Pruitt to name people favored by his client to EPA science advisory boards.

That brings us to investigation No. 11. Pruitt has systemically tilted EPA's science advisory committees toward his industry donors, replacing academic scientists with industry-tied representatives. The GAO is examining the role that Pruitt's political appointees played in selecting industry-connected members to replace expert scientists on science advisory boards.

Investigation No. 12 is unfolding back home in Oklahoma. The Oklahoma Bar Association is looking into charges that Pruitt lied when he told our Senate Environment and Public Works Committee during his confirmation hearing last year that he had not conducted business using private email addresses as Oklahoma's attorney general. Well, it turns out that it looks like he did. Just last night, news broke that the EPA inspector general is investigating Pruitt's use of private email accounts, including questions of whether the Agency is properly preserving records of the Administrator's private emails and including those records in responses to Freedom of Information Act searches.

That makes the 13th investigation.

So there you have it—a baker's dozen so far of investigations into Pruitt's conduct as EPA Administrator. Those are just the allegations that have ramped up to the level of an official investigation. There are scores of other scandals roiling the EPA. All you have to do is pick up a newspaper, and you will be bombarded by stories of Pruitt's truly swampy behavior. There are thousands of pages of communications between Scott Pruitt and industry when he was attorney general of Oklahoma that the current attorney general of Oklahoma is fighting to prevent the public from seeing. There are millions of dollars of political fundraising by Scott Pruitt from the fossil fuel industry that he has never told us about. If he has withheld disclosures that bear on his conflicts of interest, new investigations could result.

While Scott Pruitt dodges full disclosure of all his swampy industry ties, he has let lobbyists and fossil fuel and chemical industry operatives infiltrate throughout the EPA. The Associated Press found that ''nearly half of the political appointees hired at the Environmental Protection Agency under Trump have strong industry ties.'' Pruitt rolled back an Obama rule controlling methane leaks after he met with oil executives at the Trump hotel in Washington. Pruitt halted environmental protections for an area in southwest Alaska just hours after meeting with the mining executives looking to dig a mine there. Pruitt's EPA protected an emissions rule loophole for a trucking company shortly after Pruitt met with the company's executives. It is government by ''I know a guy,'' with Pruitt as the polluters' guy.

It is impossible not to notice the odor of self-dealing and corruption emanating from the Scott Pruitt EPA. When I talk about Pruitt with Rhode Islanders, they almost always ask me

the same questions: How does he still have a job? Why hasn't the President fired this guy?

One answer goes back to the President himself. When Pruitt's scandals started to snowball last month, oil and gas magnate Harold Hamm, a billionaire patron of Scott Pruitt's, lobbied President Trump to keep him on. Twenty-two polluter front groups, led by the infamous Heartland Institute, so-called, wrote a letter to President Trump lauding Pruitt's what they call ''positive record of reform unmatched by any of Pruitt's predecessors.'' Who is behind those 22 polluter front groups? Guess what. It is those climate denial champions, the Koch brothers, to the tune of at least $87 million in funding.

The test in Trumptown is whether Harold Hamm and Charles and David Koch are happy. And they are. Polluters are free to pollute for free, and climate change gets scrubbed out of official communications. Big-spending polluters are happy, happy, happy, and that is why Scott Pruitt remains as EPA Administrator in the Trump swamp.

It doesn't have to be this way. The words of Woodrow Wilson are still true today about legislative oversight. He said:

> It is the proper duty of a representative body to look diligently into every affair of government and to talk much about what it sees. It is meant to be the eyes and the voice, and to embody the wisdom and will of its constituents.

Our constituents—my constituents, anyway—are not just the big polluters like Harold Hamm and the Koch brothers. The polluters may have billions to spend in politics, which they do, but they have very different interests than the millions of regular Americans who look to EPA to protect the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the climate we must inhabit. Where are the eyes and the voice in the present majority for these millions of Americans? Our silence in the face of this flagrant corruption is deafening.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LEE). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, the Senate will soon be taking up my resolution recognizing this month of May as National Foster Care Month.

For over 20 years, National Foster Care Month has been recognized as a time to raise awareness about the challenges that young people in foster care experience and to celebrate their resilience in the face of these obstacles.

There are over 438,000 children in foster care nationwide. In Iowa alone, over 4,000 kids entered foster care in 2016. Due to the opioid crisis, there are more children entering foster care than many child welfare agencies are equipped to handle. In 2016, over 92,000 kids entered foster care due to parental drug abuse.

I salute all of those who dedicate their time and their resources to helping these young people. This induces social workers, advocates, and alumni of the foster care system, who inform lawmakers and the public and, more importantly, who fight to secure better outcomes for these young people in care. Of course, this also includes foster parents, who open their homes and their hearts to children in need.

Without foster parents, children unable to remain with their biological parents would have nowhere to go. Unfortunately, this is becoming a reality for children across the country, as many States are experiencing a critical shortage of foster parents. In my home State of Iowa, many counties are facing a shortage of foster care homes, causing young people to be housed in shelters instead of with families.

The solution is not simply recruiting more people to serve as foster parents. Between 30 and 50 percent of licensed foster parents choose to stop being foster parents after only 1 year of doing that. That is why this year our resolution also designates the single day of May 31 as ''Foster Parent Appreciation Day.'' It is my hope that communities, child welfare agencies, and other organizations will use this day to recognize the sacrifices foster parents make. Those who do not choose to continue being foster parents often report that their reason is a lack of support and training. At a time when foster parents are needed more than ever, it is important for communities and child welfare agencies to support foster parents and ensure that they are trained to help the kids entrusted to them.

Through my work on the Senate Caucus on Foster Youth, I have had the opportunity to hear firsthand what children in foster care need. I would advise Senators to take advantage of listening to that group of people we call foster youth. They need love, they need permanency, and they need stability and support.

In short, all they need is a family. They often express to me: ''I would like to have a mom and a dad.'' That is why I am pleased that Congress recently passed the Family First Prevention Services Act. This legislation works to keep more families together by allowing Federal reimbursement for services to families before children are put in foster care, not afterward. These services include substance abuse treatment and in-home parenting skill programs. When it is truly in a child's best interest to be removed from their parents, this bill ensures that more kids will be placed with supportive families instead of in group homes.

Of course, there is still work to be done. Far too many children still experience the trauma of neglect and abuse, and far too many youth in foster care age out without meaningful connection to a caring adult.

Moving forward, Congress must continue to listen to the voices of foster youth, foster parents, and other advocates by working to find better solutions and secure better outcomes for youth in foster care.

JUDICIARY COMMITTEE TRANSCRIPT RELEASE

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I want to address an issue that was brought up by the minority leader on the floor this morning. I want to respond to the false statements made by the very misinformed minority leader this morning—and I mean really misinformed.

He criticized the Judiciary Committee's release this morning of about 2,500 pages of information about the infamous Trump Tower meeting with a Russian lawyer and Donald Trump, Jr.

First, he mischaracterized the release as solely a Republican move. That is false. In fact, that is absolutely false. This release was done with the support of the ranking minority member. On January 25 of this year, at the committee meeting where I announced my desire to release the transcripts, the ranking member publicly supported the decision. I have three quotes. She said, ''I am delighted.'' She said she had ''no disagreement.'' She said, ''I am very grateful for your decision to proceed.''

Second, he accused me of deciding not to interview two participants in the meeting. That is false. In fact, it is absolutely false. I would like to have interviewed both Mr. Manafort and Mr. Kushner. An interview of Mr. Manafort was scheduled a day before he was raided. We—meaning Senator FEINSTEIN and this Senator—had subpoenaed Mr. Manafort for a committee hearing set for July 26, 2017. Mr. Manafort instead offered to appear voluntarily for a staff interview the day before the hearing, and the ranking member asked me to withdraw the subpoena. Then the FBI raided his home, and Mr. Manafort indicated he would invoke his Fifth Amendment rights and then consequently declined to answer the committee's questions. However, we did review the transcript of his earlier interview with the Intelligence Committee.

The ranking member refused to participate in a voluntary interview when we had the chance. She said Democrats on the committee objected that the scope would be focused on the Trump Tower meeting. For all I know, the minority leader's office objected as well, but political leadership should not be dictating bipartisan committee oversight.

As for Mr. Kushner, he refused to participate in a voluntary interview after the ranking member unilaterally and

prematurely released another witness transcript. There was no consultation with me at all by the minority on that point. That is the opposite of how this Senator handled this morning's transcript release.

Mr. Kushner's attorney demanded promises of confidentiality that we could not provide. Transparency is too important to keep all this information under wraps. We could keep it all secret for many more months while we fight over trying to force people to testify against their will. But we decided to put out the voluntary testimony now for the sake of transparency, and the ranking member, as I said two or three times, supported that decision.

Third, the minority leader claimed that the release of this information was motivated by the Republicans' desire to ''let the President and his lawyers interfere with the Mueller probe and get a peek at any potential evidence.'' That is false. In fact, it is absolutely false.

Again, the Democrats on the committee did not object to the release, and the ranking member affirmatively supported it. She and her staff were fully consulted and worked cooperatively with us in preparing the release. So the claim that there was some secret plan to help one side or the other in the Mueller probe is absurd. My only motivation was the same as that of the ranking member—transparency for the American people on this controversy. Let the people read it for themselves and draw their own conclusions.

Fourth, the minority leader claimed that ''Republicans are rushing to declare their investigation complete.'' That is false. In fact, it is absolutely false. The minority leader should not try to put words in my mouth. I didn't say that. Anyone who knows me knows that oversight is never done and should never be done. It is our core constitutional duty.

Now as to the Trump Tower meeting, Congress has learned as much as we are likely to learn, unless some new information comes to light. That might happen. We have to be ready for it if it does. Other committees, the press, and the special counsel are all over this as well. So there is no lack of scrutiny. But there is a lack of transparency, and these 2,500 pages or so do more to give the public a picture of what happened than anyone else has done.

I would just ask my friend the minority leader: What have you done to answer the questions our constituents may have had about the Trump Tower meeting? What good-faith efforts have you undertaken to give the American people transparency about the investigation relating not just to the Trump Presidency but Presidential contenders in 2016? Have you done anything to support or assist Republicans in getting to the bottom of questions that concern them and their constituents back home? The answer is, nothing. In fact, the answer is, absolutely nothing—absolutely nothing but speculation and frenzy. It is nothing but pure political frustration for losing the Presidential election in 2016. It also fundamentally misunderstands the role of congressional oversight and congressional investigations. We don't prosecute crimes. We can't indict suspected criminals. Our job is to act as a check on the executive branch.

Do you know who has not come to sit for long, transcribed interviews before the Judiciary Committee staff? Well, the answer to that is current or former Department of Justice and FBI officials—not a single one. Our job is to oversee the Justice Department and to oversee the FBI, but Judiciary Committee Democrats have not been supportive or interested in questioning those officials.

The minority leader seems to believe that it is our job to waste taxpayers' dollars retreading the special counsel's investigation or duplicating the Intelligence Committee's work so he can bludgeon his political opponents. Well, that is not my job. I am going to focus on our constitutional duty to act as a check on the executive branch. I am going to keep digging and keep fighting for answers from the Justice Department and from the FBI.

We will be having a hearing on the controversies in 2016 that undermined Americans' faith in the objectivity of these vital institutions. I have great faith in the inspector general appointed by President Obama and the nonpartisan office he leads. As soon as the inspector general's report is out, we will learn a lot more about what happened before and during the election from an independent and objective source, and we will follow up.

The minority leader was right about one thing—when he said: ''There is much left to investigate. Many witnesses still to be heard.'' I agree. This is not over.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TILLIS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, I come to the floor this afternoon to honor the incredible men and women of our Nation's law enforcement agencies and to recognize the ultimate sacrifice of one of North Dakota's peace officers. Each year, peace officers from all over the country and from countries all over the world come to Washington, DC, to celebrate and to honor the lives of their colleagues who have lost their lives in the line of duty.

I want first to recognize several law enforcement officers that lost their lives in the line of duty last year who do not always get the recognition or the honor they deserve, and those are our Federal and Tribal peace officers. They protect our homeland, they protect our borders and, in the case of Tribal police, they provide safety and security in Indian Country in some of the most remote and difficult places in the Nation.

This year, eight Federal law enforcement officers' names were again etched in the wall: Rickey O'Donald, Federal Bureau of Investigation; Isaac Morales, U.S. Customs and Border Protection; Rogelio Martinez, U.S. Customs and Border Protection; David John Hoefler, U.S. Department of Transportation; Kenneth Doyle, U.S. Marshals Service; Houston James Largo, Navajo Nation; Uga'Shon Curtis Wayne Blackbird, Omaha Nation; and Nathan Bradford Graves, Sac and Fox Nation.

To these Federal and Tribal officers whom we lost last year in the line of duty, may God bless you and may God bless your families.

The men and women who serve as peace officers in our Tribal, Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies selflessly put the lives of those they have taken an oath to protect and serve before their own lives. I am here not only to remember those peace officers whom we have lost but to thank each and every peace officer who puts on that uniform or badge every day to protect our communities.

I wish to recognize briefly a few law enforcement officers I have come to know well during my time in the Senate: the southwest border sheriffs—in particular, Cochise County, AZ, sheriff Mark Dannels and Yuma County sheriff Leon Wilmot—and Macon County, IL, sheriff Howard Buffet. They are not only outstanding law enforcement officials, but they have become great friends, great mentors, and a great source of advice and consent on how we can work better here in Washington, DC, not only on the border but across agencies in law enforcement.

As a former North Dakota attorney general, I have always had a special relationship and appreciation for law enforcement. Serving as the top law enforcement officer in my State will always be one of the most meaningful moments of my professional career. North Dakota has the finest collection of peace officers in the country, and I could not be more proud than to continue to work alongside them as their U.S. Senator.

I am here to thank each and every one of the peace officers who selflessly serve in communities throughout North Dakota and to let you know that I just don't appreciate you during police week. I appreciate you 24/7 because I know you are protecting the people of my great State, and you are doing it at great risk to you and at great sacrifice to your families.

So today I come with a heavy heart. This is now the second police week in a row that I have attended where I am memorializing a North Dakota peace

officer. Today, I am speaking of a North Dakota peace officer who was killed in the line of duty—Rolette County deputy Colt Allery. He lost his life on January 18, 2017, during a high-speed chase that Colt was engaged in with several of his fellow officers that evening after a report and identification of a stolen vehicle. As the stolen vehicle was coming to a forced stop, shots were fired from the car and fired at Colt as he approached. Colt fell, and he never got back up that evening, succumbing to his injuries not far from the small community where he grew up.

He leaves behind five beautiful young children, including a stepdaughter, his fiancee Alexandria, the grandparents who raised him, family, friends, and a community that misses him and still grieves at the loss.

Growing up in St. John, ND, and as an enrolled member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians, Colt never strayed too far from home. He made a commitment to do more than just be part of his community. He decided to serve his community as a peace officer.

Colt started out as a corrections officer for Rolette County. After graduating from the North Dakota Law Enforcement Training Academy, he started working as an officer with the Rolla Police Department. He then went to work serving his fellow Tribal members as a Tribal police officer on Turtle Mountain before he recently moved back to the Rolette County Sheriff's Office.

The loss of this fine young peace officer and young dad was felt across the entire State of North Dakota. The impacts are still felt by his family, the Rolette County Sheriff's Office, and his Tribal community of Turtle Mountain. Colt made the ultimate sacrifice in service to his State and to Rolette County. He lost his life to a gunshot wound inflicted by an individual prepared to take even more lives. The brave action of this peace officer that night prevented that from happening.

Deputy Colt Allery's name is now etched on the wall of the peace officers memorial here in Washington, DC. He is no longer just a North Dakota fallen hero. He is a national fallen hero, as he is recognized with all of his fallen brothers and officers.

Colt Allery's name will now serve as an example, not just to North Dakotans but to people from all over the country and all over the world who visit that memorial every year. He is an example of the best that our State and our country has to offer. He is an example of what it means to have lived and died so that others may be safe. Quite simply, he is an example for everyone of what it means to be an everyday hero.

We must also remember the families of our peace officers, who sacrifice so much, not knowing if their loved ones will return each time they walk out the door. You have sacrificed and lost so much, and no words today will replace the pain of losing a loved one.

We have a proud history in North Dakota of peace officers like Colt serving their State and local communities with distinction. I have had the extreme privilege over the years to work with law enforcement officials in my State who span the spectrum from highway patrol to State and local peace officers, various Federal officers, and certainly our Tribal police. Let me tell you again that these are some of the finest men and women I have ever met or worked with. These are men and women just like Colt who could have chosen a different path. They could have chosen a path that didn't involve putting themselves in harm's way. Instead they chose to take the oath to protect and serve. They chose to selflessly put themselves in harm's way so they could make North Dakota a safer place for each and every person that lives in our great State or even those who may be passing through. They chose to put the needs of others before their own. They chose a more difficult path to tread than most of us would ever be willing to follow.

So I stand here this evening not only to celebrate the life of Colt Allery but to celebrate and thank each and every peace officer working in my great State of North Dakota, working across the country, and, yes, across the world.

To all of our peace officers, especially those back home in North Dakota, I want to say thank you from the bottom of my heart for your sacrifice for your communities and the State of North Dakota. I beg you to stay safe. I beg you to take care of yourselves. Take care of your families. And God bless all of you.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

NOMINATION OF GINA HASPEL

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I just had a very productive and informative meeting with the nominee to be the next CIA Director, Ms. Gina Haspel. I wanted to come down to the floor and say a few words. I was very impressed. I am going to certainly support her when she is voted on, I believe as early as tomorrow.

There has been a lot of discussion about her background. She is the first woman to lead the CIA, first career member of the CIA. That is all important, but I think what is most important is that the American people and this body know that she is very well qualified. She is a very impressive person.

First of all, she has been very highly decorated in her 30-plus year career at the Central Intelligence Agency. Her honors include the Intelligence Medal of Merit, a Presidential Rank Award, the Donovan Award, which is one of the highest awards in the CIA, and the George H.W. Bush Award for Excellence in Counterterrorism. She is thoughtful. She is honest.

In many ways, she has overcome numerous obstacles. Let me talk a little bit about her bio. She is one of five children. Her father served in the Air Force, having joined at the age of 17. She grew up on military bases, like tens of thousands of Americans. Her original goal in life was to be a soldier. She told her dad she wanted to go to West Point. At the time, her father had to break the news to her that West Point was not admitting women. I think West Point lost out on that one. She ended up as a contractor for the military 10th Special Forces Group. Later, she realized that if she couldn't join the military, she was going to join the CIA, and that is what she did.

She has done an outstanding job at the CIA. She began working at the CIA in 1985 during the closing days of the Cold War. She was stationed literally all over the world—in Africa, for example. She recruited and handled agents and survived a coup d'etat. She worked with government partners during the first gulf war. She ran different CIA stations around the world.

She started with the Counterterrorism Center at the CIA on September 11, 2001, and essentially has spent her life since that time focusing on keeping our country safe. She became the Chief of Staff to the Deputy Director of Operations and the Deputy Director for the National Clandestine Service. She is now the Deputy Director of the entire CIA—the first woman to rise from the ranks as an initial member of the Agency to that title. And if confirmed, as I mentioned, she will be the first career CIA official and female to lead the Agency. That is really historic, but again, more important than history and more important than these labels is that she is very qualified.

One thing that has been remarkable throughout this entire debate about her—and there has been a lot of debate in the Intelligence Committee—is the members of the military, members of the national security establishment, both Democrats and Republicans, and members of the Intel Committee who have come out and said: We support Gina Haspel. The list is extremely impressive. Let me give a couple examples: John Brennan, former Obama administration CIA Director; James Clapper, former Obama administration Director of National Intelligence; Senator Saxby Chambliss, former Senate Intelligence Committee vice chair; Representative Porter Goss, former CIA Director and House Intelligence Committee chairman; Gen. Michael Hayden, former Bush administration CIA Director; Senator Bob Kerrey,

Democratic Senator from Nebraska, who was on the Senate Intelligence Committee and was the vice chairman; Henry Kissinger, former Secretary of State; Mike McConnell, former Obama administration Director of National Intelligence; ADM William McRaven, former commander of USSOCOM; Michael Morell, former Obama administration Acting and Deputy CIA Director; Michael Mukasey, former Bush administration Attorney General; Leon Panetta, former Obama administration CIA Director and Secretary of Defense; MIKE ROGERS, Republican Congressman and former House Intel Committee chairman; George Shultz, an incredible statesman and former Secretary of State under President Reagan; and George Tenet, former Clinton and Bush administrations CIA Director.

That is impressive. That is an impressive list. That is the who's who—Democrat and Republican—of who has been in charge of our intelligence services over the last two to three decades, and they are all supporting Ms. Haspel. She is qualified. She has the support of everybody.

I want to briefly talk about essentially where the nomination has been focused. In Washington, a lot of times you can have an issue that comes up, and everybody focuses on it, and you miss the broader picture. The broader picture is that she is very well qualified and has the confidence, literally, of every senior official in the intelligence agencies she has served under, but the focus has been in many ways consumed by her role, which was a very low-level role, in what became known as the enhanced interrogation program that the CIA enacted after 9/11.

It is hard not to say that in the discussion of this, seeing what some of my colleagues have said and what some former Members of the Senate and House have said, there seems to be a lot of amnesia going on here.

I think it is important to take us back to the day that Ms. Haspel started at the CIA's Counterterrorism Center, as I mentioned, on September 11, 2001. For those of us who remember, it was a very frightening time in our country. Almost 3,000 Americans were murdered and almost 8,000 were wounded.

I wasn't here then, but in Washington, DC, whether it was from the President or Members of Congress, there was one demand for the CIA: Find out who did this. Find out who was responsible, and make sure they don't do it again. Find out who did this. Find out who was responsible, and do everything in your power to make sure the United States of America and our citizens don't get attacked again.

That was the No. 1 focus from all the elected leaders in Federal Government to the CIA: Protect us. Find out where the next attack is coming from, and don't let us get hit again.

If what ended up happening during this period of U.S. history—and a lot of people forget about it. A lot of people forget how scared we were. Very few people predicted that we weren't going to get hit again. As a matter of fact, everybody thought we would get hit again, maybe with a weapon of mass destruction.

During the course of this time, the CIA started a program—when they started capturing terrorists who they thought had information—called enhanced interrogation techniques.

There was a lot of worry about getting hit again. I won't go through all the examples, but there are members of the Intel Committee in the Senate and members of the Intel Committee in the House who were briefed on exactly what the CIA was doing—exactly what they were doing with these enhanced interrogation techniques. And that is where the amnesia comes in, because we have seen some Members of this body say: That was horrible. Yet they were briefed. As a matter of fact, there are reports that many Members of Congress said: Do more; find out who did this. That was the order that the CIA and the members of our clandestine services were given.

There are numerous quotes from that time. Let me give one from former Senator John D. Rockefeller, West Virginia, who was the ranking member on the Senate Intel Committee. In 2003, on CNN's ''Late Edition,'' he was talking about how we had captured Khalid Shaikh Mohammed—KSM, as he was known—who was known to be the mastermind of 9/11. It was very clear that at least Senator Rockefeller was saying: Make sure that we get as much info as we can from this guy.

Here is what he said:

> Happily, we don't know where [KSM] is.

Meaning he was offsite, not in the country.

> He's in safekeeping under American protection. He'll be grilled by us. I'm sure we'll be proper with him, but I'm sure we'll be very, very tough with him.
>
> There are presidential memorandums that prescribe and allow certain measures to be taken, but we have to be careful. On the other hand, he does have the information. Getting that information will save American lives. We have no business not getting that information.

This is a year and a half after 9/11, and this is the vice chairman of the Intel Committee saying: Get it. Press it.

The CIA used these techniques, but here is the important thing. At the time they were told to go do this, it was reviewed by the Justice Department, which said: This is legal. You are allowed to use these techniques to try to get additional information. This is legal. Go do this. The Government of the United States is telling you that you have the authority to do it. It is legal.

That is undisputed. As a matter of fact, the enhanced interrogation techniques were actually developed at our military training facilities that we have in different parts of the country, called SERE schools—''Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape'' schools. That is where the techniques were developed.

There was another reason why people at the time thought that this could be legal, because these interrogation techniques and training are actually used on our own military. For years, members of the military had been going to SERE school, and they underwent these interrogations. They underwent waterboarding. It was our own citizens. As a recon marine, I went to SERE school, and these techniques were applied to me, including waterboarding.

The CIA was told: Make sure this doesn't happen. The Members of Congress were briefed. Intel committee members, like Senator Rockefeller, were saying: Do more. The Justice Department comes out and says: This is all legal. Go do it. Make sure we are not attacked again. Oh, by the way, you are using techniques that we use on our marines and soldiers.

And that is what they did.

Gina Haspel was not high up. She had nothing to do with this. She was a GS–15 when this was going on. Yet my colleagues who are looking for reasons to vote against her are using this as an episode, saying: Well, because she was involved at a low level, we are going to vote against her.

Think about that. Members of the clandestine service were going out and risking their lives, being told to do something by the government, being told it was legal to do something by the government, being encouraged by Members of this body and the House to go do it, and now that one of them has risen through the ranks, with a stellar career, we are going to have Members come to the floor and say: No, we are going to consider her not qualified because she was a GS–15 and didn't design the program during this very, very difficult and challenging time in American history. If you don't think that breeds cynicism or if you don't think that breeds distrust between the Congress and the intelligence service, well, it does. It does.

I even had a friend of mine, and I got recalled to Active Duty for a year and a half at the end of 2004. We were staff officers to the CENTCOM commander. So we were in the Middle East most of that time. He was an agency representative, and he actually predicted this was going to happen to me a long time ago. I don't think it is appropriate for my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to somehow use this against Ms. Haspel, a low-level employee, who was told to go do it. Congress is aware. Some Members even said do more—legally justified, used it at SERE school with our military. Now we are going to hold that against this very well-qualified nominee.

Let me just add something because I know it is part of the discussion. In retrospect, over time, many Members look back on that period and say: Well, maybe we shouldn't have done that. Maybe these enhanced interrogation

techniques aren't legal. Maybe that is a bad reflection on our country.

So there was a debate on this. That is fine. That is the way it should be.

As a matter of fact, one of the Senators whom I have the most respect for in this entire body, Senator MCCAIN—who knows a lot about torture and a lot about interrogation and has been a hero and is well respected—led that debate on the Senate floor that said that these enhanced interrogation techniques—waterboarding—aren't what we should be doing in this country. So let's clarify this. Yes, a previous administration said this is legal. We do it to our own soldiers and marines and Navy SEALS, but we are going to look at a higher value on what we believe is right and what Americans should be doing or should not be doing.

So we actually had a debate in 2016 on this floor as part of the National Defense Authorization Act, where Senator MCCAIN led an effort with an amendment that said: From here on out, the techniques that our CIA operatives would be able to use and that should be approved are only those in the Army Field Manual. Those are OK—not the rest of what happened in terms of the enhanced interrogation techniques. Then this body passed that. As a matter of fact, I voted for the McCain amendment out of respect, appreciation, and the arguments that JOHN MCCAIN was making. So we clarified the law.

In many ways, that is how the system is supposed to work. In challenging times with a lot of turmoil, yes, these operatives were pushing the envelope, but it was legal. We should take a step back and say: Maybe that shouldn't be what we should be doing going forward. And we changed the system through debate on the floor, led by Senator MCCAIN.

Let me just end by saying that here is how it is not supposed to work. We have a very dangerous situation, like we had after 9/11. We asked our best and brightest to risk their lives to defend this country, to do really tough operations all around the world. We go tell them to do things. This body is briefed on it. We tell them it is legal, and then later, we said: Do you know what? Now we are going to hold that against you.

Not only is that unfair, but if we continue doing that, how hard do you think it is going to be to get the top people in our country to want to join the CIA or the special forces or the military? We tell them to go do this, to protect your Nation; it is legal. And then 10, 15 years later, we say: No, maybe it wasn't.

I want to thank Ms. Haspel for wanting to serve her country at the highest level, for her example, and all the other members of the CIA's clandestine services, who have been on the frontlines protecting this Nation. I certainly hope my colleagues who are looking at that period of history, looking to hold it against her, recognize the broader context. Not only were she and the other members of the Agency asked to do that kind of work, but they were told it was important to protect the country and that it was legal.

When her nomination comes to the floor tomorrow, I certainly hope my colleagues keep this all in mind, look at her broad qualifications, and vote for her to be the next CIA Director.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that following leader remarks on Thursday, May 17, Senator PAUL or his designee be recognized to make a motion to proceed to S. Con. Res. 36; further, that there be up to 90 minutes of debate on the motion, with 45 minutes under the control of Senator PAUL or his designee and 45 minutes under the control of the Democratic leader or his designee; finally, that following the use or yielding back of that time, the Senate vote in relation to the motion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session for the consideration of the following nomination: Executive Calendar No. 829; that the nomination be confirmed; that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; 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 nomination be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The nomination considered and confirmed is as follows:

IN THE COAST GUARD

The following named officer for appointment as Vice Commandant, United States Coast Guard, and to the grade indicated under title 14, U.S.C., section 47:

To be admiral

Vice Adm. Charles W. Ray

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session for a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

NOTICES OF ORGANIZATIONAL MEETINGS

JOINT COMMITTEE ON PRINTING

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, there will be an organizational meeting of the Joint Committee on Printing in S–219, U.S. Capitol, on Wednesday, May 16, 2018, at 3:30 P.M.

JOINT COMMITTEE OF CONGRESS ON THE LIBRARY

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President there will be an organizational meeting of the Joint Committee of Congress on the Library in S–219, U.S. Capitol, on Wednesday, May 16, 2018, at 3:45 P.M.

NOMINATION OF GINA HASPEL

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today in opposition to the nomination of Gina Haspel to be CIA Director.

Ms. Haspel played a central role in the CIA's rendition, detention, and interrogation program. This was one of the darkest chapters in our Nation's history, and it must not be repeated.

Since her nomination, I and my staff have reviewed thousands of classified documents detailing her role in the program.

The takeaway is this: Ms. Haspel was a strong supporter of the torture program.

While many CIA operatives expressed hesitation or outright opposition to the program, such as John Brennan, Ms. Haspel was not one of them.

As I said last week, this nomination is bigger than one person. This nomination is about reckoning with our history. It is about grappling with our country's mistakes and making clear to the world that we accept responsibility for our mistakes and they will never be repeated.

I was struck by Ms. Haspel's repeated insistence at her hearing that the torture program was ''legal.''

The torture program was illegal at the time based on international treaties the United States is signatory to, including the Convention Against Torture and Geneva Convention.

While the Office of Legal Counsel signed off on waterboarding and other ''enhanced interrogation techniques,'' its flimsy legal analyses were withdrawn in 2003 and 2004 and should never have taken precedence over international law.

The bottom line is this: No one has ever been held accountable for the torture program, and I do not believe those who were intimately involved in it deserve to lead the agency.

What message does it send to the world if we reward people for presiding over what is considered to be one of the darkest chapters in our history?

Of course, supporters of the torture program are constantly trying to rewrite history, so I think it is important to revisit that history here today.

After a 5½ year review of the CIA's detention and interrogation program, the Senate Intelligence Committee released a 500-page declassified executive

summary in December 2014. The summary was backed up by a 6,700-page classified report with nearly 38,000 footnotes citing to CIA and other official records. Every finding and conclusion is thoroughly supported by documentation. The report examined the detention of at least 119 individuals and the use of coercive interrogation techniques—in some cases amounting to torture.

It is also important to note this was a bipartisan report with each key vote during the process of the report having both Democrats and Republicans voting yes. In December 2012, the Intelligence Committee approved the Report by a 9–6 vote, with one Republican voting yes. In April 2014, the committee approved the executive summary and findings and conclusions for declassification and public release by an 11–3 vote, with three Republicans voting yes. The full report remains classified.

In December 2014, copies of the full, 6,700-page classified report were sent to parts of the executive branch, including the CIA, to be used broadly by those personnel with appropriate clearances to ensure that the abuses documented in the Report would never be repeated. This report was intended as an important tool to help educate our intelligence agencies about a dark chapter of our Nation's history.

However, last May, when Ms. Haspel was already the Deputy Director, the CIA returned its only copy of the report at the request of Chairman Burr. The CIA Inspector General, the Director of National Intelligence, and others followed suit and also returned their copies. In fact, only three copies of the report exist outside of the Senate Intelligence Committee; all of the others are gone.

Today, two copies of the full report remain under order by Federal judges, and a third exists because of President Obama's decision in December 2016 to preserve the full report with the National Archives under the Presidential Records Act.

During Ms. Haspel's hearing, she stated multiple times that the CIA's rendition, detention, and interrogation program was ''legal and authorized by the highest legal authority in our country and also the President.''

I find Ms. Haspel's statement to be both misleading and incorrect. While the Office of Legal Counsel wrote several secret legal opinions used to justify the program, I don't believe those actions were ever legal, I am not aware of a single court ruling that affirmed those OLC opinions, and those OLC opinions were in conflict with the multiple international treaties to which the U.S. is a signatory to.

In fact, the Department of Justice conducted an investigation of the facts and circumstances surrounding the drafting of these torture memos and the Department's role in the implementation of interrogation practices by the CIA.

On June 29, 2009, the DOJ's Office of Professional Responsibility, the unit charged with investigating allegations of misconduct, issued its report. That report concluded former Deputy Assistant Attorney General John Yoo and former Assistant Attorney General Jay Bybee committed professional misconduct in the drafting of those seriously deficient legal opinions.

Additionally, Jack Goldsmith, the Assistant Attorney General who led the Office of Legal Counsel in 2003 and 2004, found that their memoranda were ''riddled with error.'' He also concluded that key portions were ''plainly wrong'' and characterized them as a ''one-sided effort to eliminate any hurdles posed by the torture law.''

Moreover, the CIA program certainly didn't meet the bar set by any of the four major international legal conventions prohibiting torture.

First, the Geneva Convention, ratified by the U.S. in 1949, common article 3 provides further protections against torture in times of conflict. It states that those persons no longer taking active part in hostilities, including those who are detained, are prohibited from being subjected to: ''violence of life and person, in particular murder of all kinds, mutilation, cruel treatment and torture'' as well as ''outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment.''

Second, the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, ratified by the U.S. in 1948, states in article 5 that: ''no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.''

Third, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, ratified by the U.S. in 1992, repeats verbatim, the outlawing of torture found in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Additionally article 5 of the International Covenant includes language meant to prevent states from utilizing legal work-arounds to overcome the spirit of the condemnation of torture.

Fourth, the United Nations Convention Against Torture, ratified by the United States in 1994, defines torture in article 1 as: ''any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession. . . .''

I also find it appropriate to note for the record that the committee sought to use pseudonyms created specifically for this report so that the readers could connect the actions of the same CIA officer throughout the report, but without their actual name or other personally identifying information.

To address the CIA's concerns, the committee agreed to reduce the number of CIA personnel listed in pseudonym from a few hundred ultimately down to 14 people who were most intimately involved in the CIA's detention and interrogation program.

The CIA and the White House refused to allow these 14 individuals to be listed in pseudonym. The lack of pseudonyms and, in many cases, even a title of a CIA officer, means that connections between a person's actions and statements cannot be made and that the seniority and positions of authority of individuals in the report are hidden.

In light of Ms. Haspel's nomination to be Director, we have asked repeatedly for pertinent records to be declassified, only to be stonewalled at every turn.

Instead, the CIA, with Ms. Haspel as the Acting Director, has engaged in a selective declassification campaign to bolster Ms. Haspel's nomination, while keeping all potentially damaging material under wraps.

Given the CIA's intransigence on Haspel's records, I am very limited in what I am able to say about her specifically.

However, I am able to revisit what happened at the CIA ''black sites,'' which is detailed extensively in the report's summary.

For example, one detainee, Abd al-Nashiri, was interrogated using CIA's enhanced interrogation techniques, including being waterboarded at least three times. These tactics were not just morally reprehensible; they were ineffective.

The committee found, based on a review of CIA interrogation records, that the use of the CIA's enhanced interrogation techniques on detainees like al-Nashiri was ineffective in obtaining accurate information or gaining detainee cooperation.

Contrary to CIA claims, these so-called enhanced interrogation techniques did not produce intelligence that thwarted terrorist plots or resulted in the capture of terrorists. That intelligence was already available from other sources or from the detainees themselves before they were tortured. In fact, torture often led to false information.

The report also lays out, in excruciating detail, that the program was grossly mismanaged, and the CIA provided Congress and the public with inaccurate information.

Again, while I can't speak in depth about Ms. Haspel, our report makes clear that surprisingly few people were responsible for designing, carrying out, and managing the torture program.

This was not something that involved the entire Agency. It was limited to the Agency's top leadership and staff, including Directors, Deputy Directors for Operations, and senior level management at the Counterterrorism Center, among others.

As we know from the extremely limited information Ms. Haspel has publicly provided, she did hold positions including senior level management at the Counterterrorism Center.

She has declined to answer publically when asked whether she had responsibility, supervision, or approval relevant to the CIA rendition, detention, and interrogation program.

Additionally, because Ms. Haspel as the Acting Director for CIA and the Director of National Intelligence have refused to declassify any additional information, I am unable to publically discuss her exact role in late 2002.

Furthermore, I am also unable to publically discuss the things I know she approved as a senior level supervisor at the Counterterrorism Center from 2003 to 2004 or discuss what she worked on as the chief of staff to the Deputy Director for Operations from 2005 to 2008.

Instead, I can only reference reports by former deputy counsel of the CIA, John Rizzo, that Ms. Haspel was one of ''the staunchest advocates inside the [CIA] for destroying the tapes'' of CIA interrogations conducted under the torture program.

I find the CIA's responses to requests for information about Ms. Haspel to be wholly inadequate. Ms. Haspel is not an undercover operative; she is the acting CIA Director seeking a Cabinet-level position.

It is unacceptable for her or the CIA to hide her behind a wall of secrecy.

I believe Senators and the American public have the right to know whether or not the nominee before us was a senior manager for a program that has been shown to be deeply flawed, as well as a number of other disturbing facts.

Without the full scope of Ms. Haspel's involvement available for public review, I do not see how this body can adequately carry out its constitutionally mandated duty to advise and consent on the president's nominee.

Proponents of Ms. Haspel's nomination have argued that she was just doing her job and following orders.

If confirmed, what would Ms. Haspel do? Would she carry out and enforce the President's directives if they would violate our Constitution and international treaties?

I am also concerned her leadership could create problems for the CIA to perform one of its core functions: cooperating with foreign governments—and European allies in particular.

Specifically, her confirmation could complicate U.S.-German relations. While the German Government has not made a public position on Ms. Haspel's nomination, Germany is strongly opposed to torture and multiple U.S. intelligence actions outlined in the Senate Intelligence torture report have already caused rifts in U.S.-German relations.

Additionally, when Ms. Haspel was promoted to CIA Deputy Director in 2017, the European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights, headquartered in Berlin, petitioned German prosecutors to order an arrest warrant for Haspel due to her participation in the CIA torture program.

While I understand the German Government is unlikely to issue an arrest warrant, Germans still remember that U.S. intelligence officials mistakenly abducted and tortured Khalid al-Masri, a German citizen in 2003.

Mr. Masri, a German citizen, was seized on December 31, 2003, as he entered Macedonia because he was wrongfully believe to be an Al Qaeda terrorist traveling on false German passport.

He was then turned over to the CIA, which rendered, detained, and interrogated him. After 5 months, he was dropped on a roadside in Albania.

This was a grave mistake that even Ms. Haspel acknowledged in a prehearing question whether the CIA ever rendered or detained suspects who were innocent by stating: ''I understand that the CIA's Office of the Inspector General conducted a review of the rendition of Khalid al-Masri and determined that CIA did not meet the standard for rendition under the September 17th, 2001 Memorandum of Notification (MON).''

Even though the CIA acknowledges this mistake, it is incomprehensible that no one has been held accountable for this and other violations.

If Ms. Haspel is confirmed, it would send the wrong message to the country and to the world. It would send the wrong message that America has abdicated its moral authority. It would send the wrong message that we condone behavior that belies the conscience and the values of this nation.

When the Obama administration chose not to prosecute those involved in the CIA's torture program, they claimed we were moving forward, not backward.

To elevate a person with reportedly intimate involvement in a torture program to lead our Central Intelligence Agency would signal to our allies and our enemies that we are looking backward.

This nomination is, in effect, a referendum on whether America condones the use of torture.

If confirmed, this nominee's decisions will affect the lives and safety of all Americans.

Our job is to assess whether the nominee has the strength of character to stand up to her superiors when reckoning with violations of our rule of law and moral values.

Unfortunately, based on Ms. Haspel's record at the CIA, the lack of public transparency regarding her tenure, and the implications for America's reputation at home and abroad, I cannot support this nomination.

NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, National Police Week pays special honor to the law enforcement officers who have lost their lives in the line of duty for the safety and protection of our citizens and communities. I am proud to cosponsor the resolution designating National Police Week as we recognize the service and spirit of all the officers who diligently exhibit what Victor Hugo called ''conscience in the service of justice.''

I am especially grateful for the men and women of Rhode Island's local and State police who put their lives on the line every day to keep our families safe. As a former U.S. Attorney and State attorney general, I have worked closely with some of Rhode Island's finest police officers, and I believe they are among the best in the country. Supporting the vital mission of the police and fostering strong relationships between our communities and law enforcement was a top priority for me in those roles. Here in the Senate, I remain committed to supporting our brave law enforcement officers, their departments, and their families.

I met this week with Colonel James J. Mendonca, chief of the Central Falls Police Department and president of the Rhode Island Police Chiefs Association. Under his leadership, the association is working to make Rhode Island a national leader in gun violence prevention, drunk driving awareness, and community engagement.

Law enforcement officers are the guardians of our communities, often paying the ultimate price for our safety. As we recognize the service and sacrifice of the law enforcement community this National Police Week, I am particularly mindful of the names of some 50 officers from Rhode Island etched onto the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial, including some Federal officers who died while on duty in Rhode Island.

In the words of the old hymn:

Now the laborer's task is o'er;
Now the battle day is past . . .
Father, in Thy gracious keeping
Leave we now thy servant sleeping.

In Rhode Island and across the United States, we remember and honor their vigilance, compassion, and valor.

HMONG VETERANS' SERVICE RECOGNITION ACT

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, as a young man, I lived with my father while he served as U.S. Ambassador to Laos. I came to know it as a heartbreakingly beautiful country, with lovely, kind people, into which our international contest with communism violently intruded.

The goal of the U.S. in Laos at the time was to prevent North Vietnamese forces from using Laos as a supply line for attacks on South Vietnam, along what was known as the Ho Chi Minh Trail, and to prevent Laos itself from falling under Communist domination by the Pathet Lao forces.

So began a covert war in Laos, funded by the CIA, in which at least 35,000 Lao and Hmong perished.

The legendary Hmong military leader, General Vang Pao, operated out of a base at Long Tieng in the mountains of Laos. He told the New York Times in 2008, ''There were three missions that were very important that were given to us and to me. . . . One was stopping the flow of the North Vietnamese troops through the Ho Chi Minh Trail to go to the south through Laos. Second was to rescue any American pilots during the

Vietnam war. Third, to protect the Americans that navigated the B–52s and the jets to bomb North Vietnam.''

After the war, thousands of displaced Hmong refugees were obliged to flee Laos. They fled into Thailand, to countries in Europe, and—in many cases—to the United States. My State of Rhode Island is proud to have had many settle and build their lives in our communities.

The Hmong Veterans' Service Recognition Act passed into law this year, finally allowing naturalized Hmong- and Laotian-American veterans to be buried in U.S. national cemeteries. I am grateful to my fellow Rhode Islander Philip Smith of the Lao Veterans of America for his determined advocacy on behalf of Hmong and Lao veterans.

Twenty-one years ago, the Clinton administration authorized a plaque to be placed at Arlington National Cemetery commemorating the valor of the Lao soldiers who aided American forces during the Vietnam war. It is a fitting honor for those brave combat veterans that they lie beside old comrades-in-arms, a way of keeping the promise inscribed on this memorial plaque, which pledges that the Hmong and Lao veterans' ''patriotic valor and loyalty in the defense of liberty and democracy will never be forgotten.''

After my father retired, he heard that local opposition had arisen to a proposed Lao temple not far from here in Virginia. He went with his military aide and CIA station chief from the Laos days to testify at the local hearing. The military aide was General Richard Trefry, then the commander of White House military operations, who in full military regalia testified that, without the courageous Lao resistance, led by Vang Pao out of the base at Long Tieng, there would be 1,000 more American names on the Vietnam War Memorial.

It is with that sense of abiding gratitude that we remember the bravery of those Hmong troops and their dedication to fight for democracy and to protect the lives of so many young Americans at war in Southeast Asia.

TRIBUTE TO SHARON JACKSON

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I would like to say a few words about Sharon Jackson, a former member of my staff who recently left to pursue another opportunity in public service.

Sharon was part of the original team in my State offices that I hired after being sworn into the Senate in January 2015.

She served as a constituent relations representative, where her compassion and authenticity reassured constituents as she worked to resolve their issues with various Federal agencies. Being an Army veteran herself, Sharon had a unique gift of connecting with veterans and servicemembers while she helped them navigate complex government systems. The difference she made in the lives of so many people is immeasurable.

Sharon provided insight into the issues small businesses face in Alaska. Her past work with National Write Your Congressman and the National Federation of Independent Businesses put her in tune with the passions and concerns of Alaska's small businesses.

She was also a very involved community member in Anchorage and Eagle River, contributing her time and energy to a variety of organizations with the intention of building a better and brighter future for our great State.

Sharon was a true pleasure to have on the team. She loves Alaska, and that always showed in her passionate advocacy on behalf of constituents. She loves her family and is a devoted wife and mother.

We will miss Sharon and the joy she had helping Alaskans. I wish her the best in her future endeavors.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO AMANDA BEDFORD

• Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, this week I have the honor of recognizing Amanda Bedford for her positive impact on the Chouteau County community as the owner of the Wake Cup Cafe.

Amanda grew up on her parent's farm between Fort Benton and Highwood. She always had a passion for the Fort Benton community, knowing 1 day that was where she wanted to open a coffee shop. At 20 years old and with the support of her parents, she made that dream a reality. Fourteen years later, the business has seen tremendous success and growth under Amanda's leadership.

What started as a tiny coffee shop, serving only coffee and a few sandwiches, has since expanded greatly. The current building is the restaurant's third location, with a much larger and more expansive menu. By focusing on fresh, homemade ingredients, Amanda is proud of the delicious food the Wake Cup Cafe brings to Fort Benton.

With the enormous growth the Wake Cup Cafe has seen, Amanda has turned it into a family business. As of 4 years ago, Amanda's sister and brother-in-law have become part owners in the business, allowing them to continue to grow the coffee shop. While the business continues to expand, Amanda remains focused on providing the community with a place to gather with family and friends. As Amanda says, every small town needs a coffee shop. She is proud to be that staple for the Fort Benton community.

I congratulate Amanda Bedford on her wonderful impact to Fort Benton and the greater Chouteau Community. With her passion, dedication, and determination, her community is brought together over their favorite local hangout: the Wake Cup Cafe.•

TRIBUTE TO DENIS O'HAYER

• Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, today I am proud to honor in the RECORD a dedicated Georgian who has elevated media political coverage and served as a true ambassador of the First Amendment.

It is not every day that a politician honors a journalist on the floor of the Senate, but when one who is as accomplished as Denis O'Hayer of Georgia announces his upcoming retirement, it is only right to recognize his 40 years of radio and TV work and achievements.

Denis O'Hayer will retire next month from Atlanta's National Public Radio affiliate, WABE, where he has hosted of a number of programs since he joined the station 2009. Since 2015, Denis has gotten the day started for countless Atlantans who tune in for his news updates on ''Morning Edition.'' The listenership for his program has more than doubled since he took the helm as host. His podcast, ''Political Breakfast,'' is a more recent hit and shows Denis's adaptability and one of the many reasons for his success in the field of broadcast journalism.

Denis began his work in the Atlanta media market in 1978 in radio with WGST and as a host with Public Broadcasting Atlanta after moving to the city from his radio career in Connecticut.

During his distinguished career, Denis has also worked in television as a freelance reporter with CNN and as a political reporter at Atlanta NBC affiliate WXIA–TV for 11 years.

The Atlanta Press Club, which is one of the largest and most active professional journalism associations in the country, has benefitted from Denis's leadership as president.

Denis, his distinguished WABE colleague Rose Scott, and their team earned an Edward R. Murrow award in 2012 for their television broadcast special focused on the fight against child sex trafficking in Atlanta called ''How to Stop the Candy Shop.''

The Georgia Association of Broadcasters named Denis Broadcaster of the Year in 2014, and in 2015, he was named to the Atlanta Press Club Hall of Fame.

Denis is respected by colleagues across the spectrum for the quality of his work, his professionalism, and the fact that he is a consummate gentleman. My staff has always praised Denis, and we have looked for ways to work together whenever possible.

Over the years, in addition to politics both local and national, Denis and I forged a friendship and respect for each other that went beyond work, regularly sharing reports about our families and discussing our shared enjoyment of travel.

I wish Denis the very best of luck in his retirement, and I am thankful that he will continue to contribute to Georgia politics as a commentator in the future. Our political discourse will be better for it.•

TRIBUTE TO SARMAT CHOWDHURY

• Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I recognize the hard work of my Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee intern Sarmat Chowdhury. Sarmat hails from Woodbridge, VA, and is a graduate of George Mason University with a bachelor's degree in international relations and conflict analysis and resolution.

While interning for the Commerce Committee, Sarmat assisted the Subcommittee on Consumer Protection, Product Safety, Insurance, and Data Security. He is a dedicated worker who was always willing to tackle new projects. I extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Sarmat and wish him continued success in the future.•

TRIBUTE TO PETER PETRASKO

• Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I recognize the hard work of my Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee intern Peter Petrasko. Peter hails from Sioux Falls, SD, and is a graduate of Brown University. Peter is planning to attend graduate school in the fall.

While interning for the Commerce Committee, Peter assisted the Subcommittee on Space, Science, and Competitiveness, as well as the Subcommittee on Surface Transportation and Merchant Marine Infrastructure, Safety, and Security. He is a dedicated worker who was always willing to take on new projects. I extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Peter for all of the hard work and wish him continued success in the future.•

TRIBUTE TO JACOB VALDEZ

• Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I recognize the hard work of my Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee law clerk Jacob Valdez. Jacob hails from Tucson, AZ, and is a second-year law student at Arizona State University.

While clerking for the Commerce Committee, Jacob assisted the Subcommittee on Consumer Protection, Product Safety, Insurance, and Data Security. He is a dedicated worker who was committed to getting the most out of his clerkship. I extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Jacob and wish him continued success in the years to come.•

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 9:40 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. 1285. An act to allow the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians, the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon, the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians of Oregon, the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians, the Klamath Tribes, and the Burns Paiute Tribes to lease or transfer certain lands.

The message also announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 613. An act to amend title 18, United States Code, to require that the Director of the Bureau of Prisons ensure that each chief executive officer of a Federal penal or correctional institution provides a secure storage area located outside of the secure perimeter of the Federal penal or correctional institution for firearms carried by certain employees of the Bureau of Prisons, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1417. An act to amend the National Law Enforcement Museum Act to allow the Museum to acquire, receive, possess, collect, ship, transport, import, and display firearms, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4854. An act to amend the DNA Analysis Backlog Elimination Act of 2000 to provide additional resources to State and local prosecutors, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4895. An act to establish the Medgar Evers Home National Monument in the State of Mississippi, and for other purposes.

H.R. 5242. An act to require the Attorney General and the Secretary of Education to conduct a survey of all public schools to determine the number of school resource officers at such schools.

At 5:15 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Clerk of the House of Representatives request the Senate to return to the House the bill (H.R. 4743) to amend the Small Business Act to strengthen the Office of Credit Risk Management within the Small Business Administration, and for other purposes.

MEASURES REFERRED

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

H.R. 613. An act to amend title 18, United States Code, to require that the Director of the Bureau of Prisons ensure that each chief executive officer of a Federal penal or correctional institution provides a secure storage area located outside of the secure perimeter of the Federal penal or correctional institution for firearms carried by certain employees of the Bureau of Prisons, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

H.R. 1417. An act to amend the National Law Enforcement Museum Act to allow the Museum to acquire, receive, possess, collect, ship, transport, import, and display firearms, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

H.R. 4895. An act to establish the Medgar Evers Home National Monument in the State of Mississippi, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 5242. An act to require the Attorney General and the Secretary of Education to conduct a survey of all public schools to determine the number of school resource officers at such schools; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

S. 2850. A bill to amend the White Mountain Apache Tribe Water Rights Quantification Act of 2010 to clarify the use of amounts in the WMAT Settlement Fund.

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–5205. A communication from the Chief Counsel, Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Tariff of Tolls'' (RIN2135–AA44) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 10, 2018; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–5206. A communication from the Census Bureau Federal Register Liaison Officer, Census Bureau, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Foreign Trade Regulations (FTR): Clarification on Collection and Confidentiality of Kimberley Process Certificates'' (RIN0607–AA54) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 2, 2018; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–5207. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a Determination and Certification under Section 40A of the Arms Export Control Act relative to countries not cooperating fully with United States antiterrorism efforts; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–5208. A communication from the Secretary of the Army, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the U.S. Army Audit Agency's review of an audit of the American National Red Cross's Annual Statement; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

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–231. A resolution adopted by the Mayor and City Commission of the City of Miami Beach, Florida, memorializing their support for a statewide ban on hydraulic fracturing, acid fracturing, and any form of extreme well stimulation for the purpose of resource extraction in the State of Florida; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

POM–232. A resolution adopted by the Mayor and City Commission of the City of Delray Beach, Florida, calling on the State of Florida, the Governor of Florida, the President of the United States, and the federal government to pass comprehensive laws to address the growing concerns associated with gun violence in America; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Ms. MURKOWSKI, from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, without amendment:

S. 1692. A bill to authorize the National Emergency Medical Services Memorial Foundation to establish a commemorative

work in the District of Columbia and its environs, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 115–249).

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. CORKER for the Committee on Foreign Relations.

*David B. Cornstein, of New York, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Hungary.

Nominee: David Cornstein.

Post: Ambassador to Hungary.

(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: $ 0.00.
2. Spouse: $ 0.00.
3. Children and Spouses: $ 0.00, Marc & Natasha Cornstein.
4. Parents: Not applicable—deceased.
5. Grandparents: Not applicable—deceased.
6. Brothers and Spouses: Not applicable.
7. Sisters and Spouses: Not applicable.

*Jackie Wolcott, of Virginia, to be Representative of the United States of America to the International Atomic Energy Agency, with the rank of Ambassador.

Nominee: Jackie Wolcott.

Post: Representative of the United States of America with the rank of Ambassador, on the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency, and Representative of the United States of America to the Vienna Office of the United Nations, with the Rank of Ambassador.

(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: None.
2. Spouse:
3. Children and Spouses:
4. Parents: Calvin H. Wolcott—deceased; Levis J. Wolcott—deceased.
5. Grandparents: Guy Weaver—deceased; Doris Weaver—deceased; Oren Wolcott—deceased; Amanda Wolcott—deceased.
6. Brothers and Spouses: Calvin H. Wolcott, spouse Barbara Wolcott: $25, 8/31/15, Carson America; $25, 3/31/15, Carley (Fiorino) for President; $25, 10/29/15, Carley (Fiorino) for President; $25, 10/30/15, Carson America; $25, 3/1/16, Carson America; $100, 11/5/16, Trump Make America Great; $100, 3/31/17, Trump Make America Great; $100, 5/4/17, Handel for Congress.
7. Sisters and Spouses: Victoria A. Hughes, spouse Richard Hughes: none; Michele Jacobs, spouse George Jacobs: none.

*Jackie Wolcott, of Virginia, to be Representative of the United States of America to the Vienna Office of the United Nations, with the rank of Ambassador.

*Francis R. Fannon, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Energy Resources).

*Eliot Pedrosa, of Florida, to be United States Alternate Executive Director of the Inter-American Development Bank.

*Jonathan R. Cohen, of California, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be the Deputy Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, with the rank and status of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, and the Deputy Representative of the United States of America in the Security Council of the United Nations.

*Jonathan R. Cohen, of California, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Representative of the United States of America to the Sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations, during his tenure of service as Deputy Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations.

By Mr. BURR for the Select Committee on Intelligence.

*Gina Haspel, of Kentucky, to be Director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. THUNE:

S. 2853. A bill to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to ensure Internet openness, to prohibit blocking lawful content and nonharmful devices, to prohibit throttling data, to prohibit paid prioritization, to require transparency of network management practices, to provide that broadband shall be considered to be an information service, and to prohibit the Commission or a State commission from relying on section 706 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 as a grant of authority; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. SCOTT (for himself, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, and Mr. PERDUE):

S. 2854. A bill to establish requirements for use of a driver's license or personal identification card by certain financial institutions for opening an account or obtaining a financial product or service, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. CARDIN:

S. 2855. A bill to require the Attorney General to make competitive grants to State, tribal, and local governments to establish and maintain witness protection and assistance programs; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. RUBIO:

S. 2856. A bill to reform the requirements regarding the safety and security of families living in public and federally assisted housing in high-crime areas; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Ms. CANTWELL:

S. 2857. A bill to designate the Nordic Museum in Seattle, Washington, as the ''National Nordic Museum'', and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. COONS (for himself, Mr. RISCH, Ms. SMITH, and Mr. GARDNER):

S. 2858. A bill to amend the Energy Policy Act of 2005 to require the establishment of a small business voucher program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. PETERS (for himself and Mr. GARDNER):

S. 2859. A bill to provide for the use of passenger facility charge revenue to enhance security at airports and to make projects for the installation of security cameras eligible for the airport improvement program; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. DAINES (for himself, Mr. COONS, Mr. CASEY, and Mr. TESTER):

S. 2860. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow first responders to continue to exclude service-connected disability pension payments after reaching the age of retirement; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. DUCKWORTH (for herself and Mr. HOEVEN):

S. 2861. A bill to prosecute, as a Federal crime, the assault or intimidation of a passenger train crew member to the same extent as such actions against aircraft crew members are prosecuted; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. SCHATZ (for himself and Mr. SCOTT):

S. 2862. A bill to require the Comptroller General of the United States to conduct a study regarding the buyout practices of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. BLUNT (for himself, Mr. COONS, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. BOOZMAN, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. ROUNDS, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. COTTON, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. CORNYN, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. TESTER, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. GARDNER, Ms. SMITH, Mr. MORAN, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. ISAKSON, and Mr. WICKER):

S. 2863. A bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint a coin in commemoration of the opening of the National Law Enforcement Museum in the District of Columbia, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mrs. MCCASKILL (for herself and Ms. HEITKAMP):

S. 2864. A bill to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to authorize a Joint Task Force to enhance integration of the Department of Homeland Security's border security operations to detect, interdict, disrupt, and prevent narcotics, such as fentanyl and other synthetic opioids, from entering the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Ms. BALDWIN (for herself, Ms. SMITH, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Mr. DURBIN):

S. 2865. A bill to ensure that certain materials used in carrying out Federal infrastructure aid programs are made in the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself and Mr. CRUZ):

S. 2866. A bill to require the Secretary of the Army to expedite the completion of certain feasibility studies and reports and to amend the Coastal Barrier Resources Act to ensure public safety, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. WICKER:

S. 2867. A bill to improve the Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps programs, to authorize an expansion of their presence in low-income, rural, and underserved areas of the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. GARDNER:

S. 2868. A bill to enhance the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Program to assist law enforcement agencies in protecting law enforcement officers; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. DUCKWORTH (for herself and Mr. CARPER):

S. 2869. A bill to amend the Safe Drinking Water Amendments of 1977 to require the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to report certain hiring to carry out the Safe Drinking Water Act; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. GARDNER (for himself and Mr. BENNET):

S. 2870. A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of the site known as ''Amache'' in the State of Colorado; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself, Mr. TOOMEY, and Mr. MURPHY):

S. 2871. A bill to amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to extend public safety officers' death benefits to fire police officers; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. NELSON, and Mr. CRUZ):

S. Res. 511. A resolution honoring Las Damas de Blanco as the recipient of the 2018 Milton Friedman Prize for Advancing Liberty; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. KING, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. BROWN, Mr. CRAPO, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. PORTMAN, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. PETERS, Mr. MORAN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. CARPER, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. COONS, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. NELSON, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. MANCHIN, Ms. COLLINS, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. DAINES, Mr. KAINE, Mr. JOHNSON, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. DONNELLY, Mrs. CAPITO, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. CORNYN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. LANKFORD, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mrs. ERNST, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. CORKER, Mr. TESTER, Mr. ENZI, Mr. CASEY, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. JONES, Mr. MCCONNELL, Ms. SMITH, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. PERDUE, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. HELLER, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. COTTON, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. LEE, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. REED, Mr. HATCH, Mr. WYDEN, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. RUBIO, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. INHOFE, and Mr. THUNE):

S. Res. 512. A resolution designating the week of May 13 through May 19, 2018, as ''National Police Week''; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Ms. STABENOW, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. WICKER, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. PETERS, Mr. CASEY, Mr. KAINE, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. DAINES, Mr. KING, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. NELSON, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. Res. 513. A resolution recognizing National Foster Care Month as an opportunity to raise awareness about the challenges of children in the foster-care system, and encouraging Congress to implement policy to improve the lives of children in the foster-care system; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. ALEXANDER (for himself, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. WICKER, Mr. BURR, Mr. ISAKSON, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. TILLIS, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. PERDUE, Mr. CARPER, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. COONS, Mr. MCCAIN, and Mr. HATCH):

S. Res. 514. A resolution congratulating the students, parents, teachers, and leaders of charter schools across the United States for making ongoing contributions to education, and supporting the ideals and goals of the 19th annual National Charter Schools Week, celebrated May 7 through May 11, 2018; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 573

At the request of Mr. PETERS, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 573, a bill to establish the National Criminal Justice Commission.

S. 793

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 793, a bill to prohibit sale of shark fins, and for other purposes.

S. 978

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the names of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) and the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) were added as cosponsors of S. 978, a bill to direct the Secretary of Education to establish an award program recognizing excellence exhibited by public school system employees providing services to students in prekindergarten through higher education.

S. 1050

At the request of Ms. DUCKWORTH, the names of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) and the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER) 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. 1086

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1086, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to remove the prohibition on eligibility for TRICARE Reserve Select of members of the reserve components of the Armed Forces who are eligible to enroll in a health benefits plan under chapter 89 of title 5, United States Code.

S. 1092

At the request of Mr. ENZI, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1092, a bill to protect the right of law-abiding citizens to transport knives interstate, notwithstanding a patchwork of local and State prohibitions.

S. 1112

At the request of Ms. HEITKAMP, the names of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY) were added as cosponsors 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. 1328

At the request of Mr. KAINE, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1328, a bill to extend the protections of the Fair Housing Act to persons suffering discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity, and for other purposes.

S. 1400

At the request of Mr. HEINRICH, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1400, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to enhance protections of Native American tangible cultural heritage, and for other purposes.

S. 1806

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1806, a bill to amend the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 and the Head Start Act to promote child care and early learning, and for other purposes.

S. 1830

At the request of Mr. PAUL, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1830, a bill to strengthen employee cost savings suggestions programs within the Federal Government.

S. 1870

At the request of Mr. HOEVEN, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1870, a bill to amend the Victims of Crime Act of 1984 to secure urgent resources vital to Indian victims of crime, and for other purposes.

S. 2076

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the names of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY) were added as cosponsors of S. 2076, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to authorize the expansion of activities related to Alzheimer's disease, cognitive decline, and brain health under the Alzheimer's Disease and Healthy Aging Program, and for other purposes.

S. 2285

At the request of Mrs. MCCASKILL, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) was added as a cosponsor

of S. 2285, a bill to require mailing addresses to correspond with the physical address at which the mail will be delivered.

S. 2303

At the request of Mr. COONS, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2303, a bill to amend title XXVII of the Public Health Service Act to preserve consumer and employer access to licensed independent insurance producers.

S. 2356

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2356, a bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to address staffing and other issues at facilities, including underserved facilities, of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

S. 2358

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the names of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND), the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) and the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) were added as cosponsors of S. 2358, a bill to require a study on women and lung cancer, and for other purposes.

S. 2364

At the request of Mr. BOOZMAN, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2364, a bill to amend the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 2014 to provide to State infrastructure financing authorities additional opportunities to receive loans under that Act to support drinking water and clean water State revolving funds to deliver water infrastructure to communities across the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 2395

At the request of Mr. SCHATZ, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2395, a bill to amend title 54, United States Code, to authorize the provision of technical assistance under the Preserve America Program and to direct the Secretary of the Interior to enter into partnerships with communities adjacent to units of the National Park System to leverage local cultural heritage tourism assets.

S. 2418

At the request of Ms. HASSAN, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2418, a bill to direct the Federal Communications Commission to promulgate regulations that establish a national standard for determining whether mobile and broadband services available in rural areas are reasonably comparable to those services provided in urban areas.

S. 2465

At the request of Mr. SCOTT, the names of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY), the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) and the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2465, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize a sickle cell disease prevention and treatment demonstration program and to provide for sickle cell disease research, surveillance, prevention, and treatment.

S. 2497

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. GARDNER) was added as a cosponsor 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. 2568

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. KAINE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2568, a bill to amend section 5000A of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide an additional religious exemption from the individual health coverage mandate, and for other purposes.

S. 2580

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the names of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) and the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) were added as cosponsors of 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.

S. 2597

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the names of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ), the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) and the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) were added as cosponsors of S. 2597, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize the program of payments to children's hospitals that operate graduate medical education programs, and for other purposes.

S. 2745

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2745, a bill to establish a grant program to provide assistance to prevent and repair damage to structures due to pyrrhotite.

S. 2800

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the names of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER), the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO), the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) and the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2800, a bill to provide for the conservation and development of water and related resources, to authorize the Secretary of the Army to construct various projects for improvements to rivers and harbors of the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 2836

At the request of Mr. JOHNSON, the names of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY) and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. JONES) were added as cosponsors of S. 2836, a bill to assist the Department of Homeland Security in preventing emerging threats from unmanned aircraft and vehicles, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 154

At the request of Mr. JOHNSON, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 154, a resolution promoting awareness of motorcycle profiling and encouraging collaboration and communication with the motorcycle community and law enforcement officials to prevent instances of profiling.

S. RES. 168

At the request of Mr. NELSON, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 168, a resolution supporting respect for human rights and encouraging inclusive governance in Ethiopia.

S. RES. 383

At the request of Ms. DUCKWORTH, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 383, a resolution expressing support for the designation of a ''Women's Health Research Day''.

S. RES. 508

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the names of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER), the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) and the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 508, a resolution supporting the goals of Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome International Awareness Day.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself and Mr. CRUZ):

S. 2866. A bill to require the Secretary of the Army to expedite the completion of certain feasibility studies and reports and to amend the Coastal Barrier Resources Act to ensure public safety, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

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. 2866

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 ''Coastal Texas Protection Act''.

SEC. 2. COASTAL TEXAS PROTECTION AND RESTORATION.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of the Army shall expedite the completion of feasibility studies for

flood damage reduction, hurricane and storm damage reduction, and ecosystem restoration in the coastal areas of Texas that are identified in the interim report due to be published in 2018 that describes the tentatively selected plan developed in accordance with section 4091 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2007 (121 Stat. 1187).

SEC. 3. PUBLIC SAFETY EXCEPTIONS UNDER COASTAL BARRIER RESOURCES ACT.

Section 5(a)(3) of the Coastal Barrier Resources Act (16 U.S.C. 3504(a)(3)) is amended by inserting ‘‘, T-02A, T-03A, T-04 through T-07, T-11,’’ after ‘‘S08’’.

By Mr. DAINES (for himself, Mr. COONS, Mr. CASEY, and Mr. TESTER):

S. 2860. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow first responders to continue to exclude service-connected disability pension payments after reaching the age of retirement; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 2860

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 ‘‘Putting First-Responders First Act’’.

SEC. 2. CONTINUED EXCLUSION OF FIRST RESPONDER SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITY PAYMENTS AFTER AGE OF RETIREMENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 104 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by redesignating subsection (d) as subsection (e) and by inserting after subsection (c) the following new subsection:

‘‘(d) SPECIAL RULE FOR FIRST RESPONDER SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITY PAYMENTS AFTER AGE OF RETIREMENT.—

‘‘(1) IN GENERAL.—In the case of an individual who receives a service-connected disability excludible amount, gross income shall not include such amount of any retirement pension or annuity which—

‘‘(A) is received by such individual with respect to the service to which the service-connected disability excludible amount relates,

‘‘(B) is determined by reference to the individual’s age, length of service, or contributions, and

‘‘(C) does not exceed the service-connected disability excludable amount (determined on an annualized basis under such regulations or other guidance as the Secretary may prescribe).

‘‘(2) SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITY EXCLUDIBLE AMOUNT.—For purposes of this subsection, the term ‘service-connected disability excludible amount’ means an amount received by an individual which ceases upon reaching retirement age and is not includible in gross income under subsection (a)(1) by reason of a service-connected disability as a law enforcement officer (as such term is defined in section 1204 of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968), an employee in fire protection activities (as such term is defined in section 3(y) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938), or an individual who provides out-of-hospital emergency medical care (including emergency medical technician, paramedic, or first-responder).’’.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to taxable years beginning after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 511—HONORING LAS DAMAS DE BLANCO AS THE RECIPIENT OF THE 2018 MILTON FRIEDMAN PRIZE FOR ADVANCING LIBERTY

Mr. RUBIO (for himself, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. NELSON, and Mr. CRUZ) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 511

Whereas Las Damas de Blanco (also known as the ‘‘Ladies in White’’) is a group composed of wives and female relatives of imprisoned political prisoners, prisoners of conscience, and peaceful dissidents in Cuba;

Whereas, in April 2003, during the wave of repression known as the ‘‘Black Spring’’, a group of strong and courageous women formed Las Damas de Blanco in response to the wrongful imprisonment of their family members by the Cuban regime;

Whereas, since the inception of the group, the members of Las Damas de Blanco have attended Sunday mass in the Church of Santa Rita in Havana, Cuba, and then marched peacefully through the streets of Havana holding photos of their jailed relatives and white gladioluses;

Whereas members of Las Damas de Blanco regularly march to advocate for the release of all political prisoners and the freedom of the Cuban people from Cuba’s repressive regime;

Whereas, despite leading peaceful protests, members of Las Damas de Blanco are regularly attacked by Cuban regime security forces and prevented from exercising their fundamental rights of the freedoms of expression and assembly;

Whereas, according to Amnesty International—

(1) Las Damas de Blanco ‘‘remain[s] one of the primary targets of repression by Cuban [G]overnment authorities’’; and

(2) members of Las Damas de Blanco are frequently detained and ‘‘often beaten by law enforcement officials and state security agents dressed as civilians’’ while in detention;

Whereas, according to the Human Rights Watch 2018 World Report, ‘‘detention is often used preemptively to prevent people from participating in peaceful marches or meetings to discuss politics, and detainees are often beaten, threatened, and held incommunicado for hours or days’’;

Whereas the Human Rights Watch 2018 World Report noted that, ‘‘Cuban Police or state security agents continue to routinely harass, rough up, and detain members of Las Damas de Blanco before or after they attend Sunday mass’’;

Whereas, in 2005, Las Damas de Blanco was selected to receive the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought, but the Cuban regime did not allow the members of the group to leave the island to accept the award;

Whereas Laura Inés Pollán Toledo, the founder of Las Damas de Blanco, left a legacy of a peaceful protest against human and civil rights abuses in Cuba;

Whereas Laura Inés Pollán Toledo died on October 14, 2011, and while her death garnered widespread international attention, the Cuban regime remained silent;

Whereas, according to Freedom House, in December 2013, Las Damas de Blanco ‘‘took to the streets to demonstrate against human rights abuses on International Human Rights Day, but were detained before the protest could begin’’;

Whereas, in February 2015, 30 members of Las Damas de Blanco were arrested in an attempt by Cuban officials to bar the women from participating in the #TodosMarchamos march, which sought to advocate for the freedom of political prisoners in Cuba;

Whereas, on March 20, 2016, a few hours before President Barack Obama landed in Cuba for his first visit to the communist country, Cuban authorities arrested more than 50 dissidents protesting the deteriorating state of human rights in Cuba and directly targeted Las Damas de Blanco;

Whereas, while Raul Castro is no longer the head of state of Cuba, grave human rights abuses continue under the newly selected President of Cuba, Miguel Díaz-Canel;

Whereas Las Damas de Blanco has appealed to the United States and other foreign governments in order to bring international attention to the repression of dissent by the Cuban regime and the plight of political prisoners, who are routinely jailed unjustly and without due process;

Whereas, on May 17, 2018, Las Damas de Blanco will receive the prestigious 2018 Milton Friedman Prize for Advancing Liberty for the bravery of the group and the continuing efforts of the group to fight for individual freedom in Cuba;

Whereas the Milton Friedman Prize for Advancing Liberty acknowledges those who have advocated and contributed to advancing human liberty; and

Whereas Berta de los Ángeles Soler Fernández and Leticia Ramos Herrería, members of Las Damas de Blanco, have been prohibited by the government of Díaz-Canel from leaving Cuba to accept the 2018 Milton Friedman Prize for Advancing Liberty in the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) congratulates Las Damas de Blanco on receiving the prestigious 2018 Milton Friedman Prize for Advancing Liberty;

(2) honors the members of Las Damas de Blanco for their courageous efforts to stand up to the Cuban regime and defend human rights and fundamental freedoms, as expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

(3) recognizes all of the valiant leaders of Las Damas de Blanco, including those members who died before being able to see a free Cuba;

(4) expresses solidarity and commitment to the democratic aspirations of the Cuban people; and

(5) calls on the Cuban regime to allow members of Las Damas de Blanco to travel freely both domestically and internationally.

SENATE RESOLUTION 512—DESIGNATING THE WEEK OF MAY 13 THROUGH MAY 19, 2018, AS ‘‘NATIONAL POLICE WEEK’’

Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. KING, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. BROWN, Mr. CRAPO, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. PORTMAN, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. PETERS, Mr. MORAN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. CARPER, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. COONS, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. NELSON, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. MANCHIN, Ms. COLLINS, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. DAINES, Mr. KAINE, Mr. JOHNSON, Ms. BALDWIN,

Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. DONNELLY, Mrs. CAPITO, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. CORNYN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. LANKFORD, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mrs. ERNST, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. CORKER, Mr. TESTER, Mr. ENZI, Mr. CASEY, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. JONES, Mr. MCCONNELL, Ms. SMITH, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. PERDUE, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. HELLER, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. COTTON, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. LEE, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. REED, Mr. HATCH, Mr. WYDEN, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. RUBIO, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. INHOFE, and Mr. THUNE) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 512

Whereas Federal, State, local, and Tribal police officers, sheriffs, and other law enforcement officers across the United States serve with valor, dignity and integrity;

Whereas law enforcement officers are charged with pursuing justice for all individuals and performing their duties with fidelity to the constitutional and civil rights of the public they serve;

Whereas law enforcement officers swear an oath to uphold the public trust despite the fact that through the performance of their duties, they too may become targets for senseless acts of violence;

Whereas, in 1962, President John Fitzgerald Kennedy signed the Joint Resolution entitled ''Joint Resolution to authorize the President to proclaim May 15 of each year as Peace Officers Memorial Day and the calendar week of each year during which such May 15 occurs as Police Week'', approved October 1, 1962 (36 U.S.C. 136) (referred to in this preamble as the ''Joint Resolution''), which authorizes the President of the United States to proclaim May 15 of every year as Peace Officers Memorial Day ''in honor of the Federal, State, and municipal officers who have been killed or disabled in the line of duty'';

Whereas the Joint Resolution also authorizes the President to designate the week in which Peace Officers Memorial Day falls as National Police Week;

Whereas the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial, dedicated on October 15, 1991, is the national monument to honor those law enforcement officers who have died in the line of duty;

Whereas the 37th Annual National Peace Officers Memorial Service, held this year, will honor the 129 law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty in 2017, including Stephen L. Ackerman, Ryan M. Albin, Aaron W. Allan, Damon C. Allen, Colt E. Allery, Shawn T. Anderson, Stephen J. Ballard, Curtis A. Bartlett, Berke M.M. Bates, Matthew S. Baxter, Justin L. Beard, Curtis B. Billue, William T. Bishop, Curtis W. Blackbird, Anthony J. Borostowski, Keith W. Boyer, Timothy A. Braden, Kevin J. Brewer, Julie A. England Bridges, Thomas C. Bunker, Mark J. Burbridge, Michael C. Butler, Meggan L. Callahan, Andrew J. Camilleri, Sr., James E. Chapman, Lucas F. Chellew, James E. Clark, Debra L. Clayton, Sander B. Cohen, Sean F. Cookson, Kenneth M. Copeland, Carl T. Cosper, Jr., Jaimie J.A. Cox, Aaron L. Crook, Henry J. Cullen III, Veronica S. Darden, Joel R. Davis, Benjamin A. De Los Santos-Barbosa, Nathan M. Desjardins, Mark G. Diebold, Steven E. DiSario, Bernard W. Domagala, Kenneth J. Doyle, Donald W. Durr, Floyd East, Jr., David J. Fahey, Jr., Brian S. Falb, Miosotis P. Familia, Jason M. Fann, Steven R. Floyd, Sr., Michael R. Foley, Robert A. French, Jason A. Garner, Randall S. Gibson, Jonathan W.R. Ginka, Nathan B. Graves, Clinton F. Greenwood, Thomas J. Hannon, Jason G. Harris, Charleston V. Hartfield, Kevin M. Haverly, Kristen N. Hearne, Joe W. Heddy, Jr., Devin P. Hodges, David J. Hoefler, Richard S. Howard III, Stephen R. Jenkins, Sr., Robert J. Johnson, Donald O. Kimbrough, Stephen T. Kubinski, Houston J. Largo, Paul Lazinsky, Craig E. Lehner, Justin A. Leo, Norman C. Lewis, Angel L. Lorenzo-Gonzalez, Michael D. Louviere, Kevin C. Mainhart, Elias Martinez, Rogelio Martinez, William A. Mathews, Hector L. Matias-Torres, Steven D. McDonald, Marcus A. McNeil, Gregory M. Meagher, Mark L. Mecham, Roberto Medina-Mariani, Jay R. Memmelaar, Jr., D. Heath Meyer, Gary L. Michael, Jr., Michael P. Middlebrook, Christopher J. Monica, Joshua S. Montaad, Mason P. Moore, Isaac Morales, Miguel I. Moreno, Marvin S. Moyer, Eric W. Mumaw, Raymond A. Murrell, Thomas P. Nipper, Rickey O'Donald, Terrence S. O'Hara, Timothy J. O'Neill, Eric B. Overall, Chad W. Parque, Zackari S. Parrish III, Steve A. Perez, Monty D. Platt, Daniel K. Rebman, Jr., Nicholas A. Rodman, Robert P. Rumfelt, Wendy L. Shannon, Brian D. Shaw, Justin J. Smith, Michael P. Stewart III, Sean M. Suiter, Matthew L. Tarentino, Shana R. Tedder, Jimmy D. Tennyson, Justin M. Terney, David Torres-Chaparro, Andre H. Van Vegten, David J. Wade, Jerry R. Walker, James M. Wallace, Michael T. Walter, Patrick N. Weatherford, Jason T. Weiland, and Elise A. Ybarra; and

Whereas, since the beginning of 2018, more than 50 law enforcement officers from across the United States have made the ultimate sacrifice: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the week of May 13 through May 19, 2018, as ''National Police Week'';

(2) expresses strong support for law enforcement officers across the United States in their efforts to build safer and more secure communities;

(3) recognizes the need to ensure that law enforcement officers have the equipment, training, and resources necessary to protect their health and safety while they are protecting the public;

(4) recognizes the members of the law enforcement community for their selfless acts of bravery;

(5) acknowledges that police officers and other law enforcement personnel who have made the ultimate sacrifice should be remembered and honored;

(6) expresses condolences to the loved ones of each law enforcement officer who has made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty; and

(7) encourages the people of the United States to observe National Police Week with appropriate ceremonies and activities that promote awareness of the vital role law enforcement officers perform safeguarding the public trust for the United States.

SENATE RESOLUTION 513—RECOGNIZING NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT THE CHALLENGES OF CHILDREN IN THE FOSTER-CARE SYSTEM, AND ENCOURAGING CONGRESS TO IMPLEMENT POLICY TO IMPROVE THE LIVES OF CHILDREN IN THE FOSTER-CARE SYSTEM

Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Ms. STABENOW, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. WICKER, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. PETERS, Mr. CASEY, Mr. KAINE, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. DAINES, Mr. KING, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. NELSON, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 513

Whereas National Foster Care Month was established more than 20 years ago to—

(1) bring foster-care issues to the forefront;

(2) highlight the importance of permanency for every child; and

(3) recognize the essential role that foster parents, social workers, and advocates have in the lives of children in foster care throughout the United States;

Whereas all children deserve a safe, loving, and permanent home;

Whereas the primary goal of the foster-care system is to ensure the safety and well-being of children while working to provide a safe, loving, and permanent home for each child;

Whereas there are approximately 438,000 children living in foster care;

Whereas there were approximately 273,539 youth that entered the foster-care system in 2016, while over 65,000 youth were eligible and awaiting adoption at the end of 2016;

Whereas the number of children living in foster care and entering foster care has increased dramatically in recent years;

Whereas over 92,000 children entered foster care in 2016 due to parental drug abuse;

Whereas children of color are more likely to stay in the foster-care system for longer periods of time and are less likely to be reunited with their biological families;

Whereas foster parents are the front-line caregivers for children who cannot safely remain with their biological parents and provide physical care, emotional support, education advocacy, and are the largest single source of families providing permanent homes for children leaving foster care to adoption;

Whereas children in foster care who are placed with relatives, compared to children placed with nonrelatives, have more stability, including fewer changes in placements, have more positive perceptions of their placements, are more likely to be placed with their siblings, and demonstrate fewer behavioral problems;

Whereas some relative caregivers receive less financial assistance and support services than do foster caregivers;

Whereas an increased emphasis on prevention and reunification services is necessary to reduce the number of children that are forced to remain in the foster-care system;

Whereas more than 20,000 youth ''aged out'' of foster care in 2016 without a legal permanent connection to an adult or family;

Whereas children who age out of foster care lack the security or support of a biological or adoptive family and frequently struggle to secure affordable housing, obtain health insurance, pursue higher education, and acquire adequate employment;

Whereas foster care is intended to be a temporary placement, but children remain in the foster-care system for an average of 19 months;

Whereas children in foster care experience an average of 3 different placements, which often leads to disruption of routines and the need to change schools and move away from siblings, extended families, and familiar surroundings;

Whereas youth in foster care are much more likely to face educational instability with 65 percent of former foster children experiencing at least 7 school changes while in care;

Whereas children entering foster care often confront the widespread misperception that children in foster care are disruptive, unruly,

and dangerous, even though placement in foster care is based on the actions of a parent or guardian, not the child;

Whereas recent studies show foster children enrolled in Medicaid were prescribed antipsychotic medications at 3 to 9 times the rate of other children receiving Medicaid;

Whereas due to heavy caseloads and limited resources, the average tenure for a worker in child protection services is just 3 years;

Whereas States, localities, and communities should be encouraged to invest resources in preventative and reunification services and postpermanency programs to ensure that more children in foster care are provided with safe, loving, and permanent placements;

Whereas in 2018, Congress passed the Family First Prevention Services Act, which provided new investments in prevention and family reunification services to help more families stay together and ensure more children are in safe, loving, and permanent homes;

Whereas Federal legislation over the past 3 decades, including the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980 (Public Law 96–272), the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (Public Law 105–89), the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (Public Law 110–351), the Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act (Public Law 112–34), and the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act (Public Law 113–183) provided new investments and services to improve the outcomes of children in the foster-care system;

Whereas May 2018 is an appropriate month to designate as National Foster Care Month to provide an opportunity to acknowledge the accomplishments of the child-welfare workforce, foster parents, advocacy community, and mentors for their dedication, accomplishments, and positive impact they have on the lives of children; and

Whereas much remains to be done to ensure that all children have a safe, loving, nurturing, and permanent family, regardless of age or special needs: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the designation of National Foster Care Month;

(2) recognizes National Foster Care Month as an opportunity to raise awareness about the challenges that children face in the foster-care system;

(3) encourages Congress to implement policy to improve the lives of children in the foster-care system;

(4) acknowledges the unique needs of children in the foster-care system;

(5) recognizes foster youth throughout the United States for their ongoing tenacity, courage, and resilience while facing life challenges;

(6) acknowledges the exceptional alumni of the foster-care system who serve as advocates and role models for youth who remain in care;

(7) honors the commitment and dedication of the individuals who work tirelessly to provide assistance and services to children in the foster-care system;

(8) supports the designation of May 31, 2018 as National Foster Parent Appreciation Day;

(9) recognizes National Foster Parent Appreciation Day as an opportunity to recognize the efforts of foster parents to provide safe and loving care for children in need and raise awareness about the increasing need for foster parents to serve in their communities; and

(10) reaffirms the need to continue working to improve the outcomes of all children in the foster-care system through parts B and E of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.) and other programs designed to—

(A) support vulnerable families;

(B) invest in prevention and reunification services;

(C) promote adoption in cases where reunification is not in the best interests of the child;

(D) adequately serve those children brought into the foster-care system; and

(E) facilitate the successful transition into adulthood for children that ''age out'' of the foster-care system.

SENATE RESOLUTION 514—CONGRATULATING THE STUDENTS, PARENTS, TEACHERS, AND LEADERS OF CHARTER SCHOOLS ACROSS THE UNITED STATES FOR MAKING ONGOING CONTRIBUTIONS TO EDUCATION, AND SUPPORTING THE IDEALS AND GOALS OF THE 19TH ANNUAL NATIONAL CHARTER SCHOOLS WEEK, CELEBRATED MAY 7 THROUGH MAY 11, 2018

Mr. ALEXANDER (for himself, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. WICKER, Mr. BURR, Mr. ISAKSON, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. TILLIS, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. PERDUE, Mr. CARPER, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. COONS, Mr. MCCAIN, and Mr. HATCH) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 514

Whereas charter schools are public schools that do not charge tuition and enroll any student who wants to attend, often through a random lottery when the demand for enrollment is outmatched by the supply of available charter school seats;

Whereas high-performing public charter schools deliver a high-quality public education and challenge all students to reach the students' potential for academic success;

Whereas high-performing public charter schools promote innovation and excellence in public education;

Whereas public charter schools throughout the United States provide millions of families with diverse and innovative educational options for children of the families;

Whereas high-performing public charter schools and charter management organizations are increasing student achievement and attendance rates at institutions of higher education;

Whereas public charter schools are authorized by a designated entity and—

(1) respond to the needs of communities, families, and students in the United States; and

(2) promote the principles of quality, accountability, choice, high-performance, and innovation;

Whereas, in exchange for flexibility and autonomy, public charter schools are held accountable by the authorizers of the charter schools for improving student achievement and for sound financial and operational management;

Whereas public charter schools are required to meet the student achievement accountability requirements under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.) in the same manner as traditional public schools;

Whereas public charter schools often set higher expectations for students, beyond the requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.), to ensure that the charter schools are of high quality and truly accountable to the public;

Whereas 44 States and the District of Columbia have enacted laws authorizing public charter schools;

Whereas, as of the 2017–2018 school year, more than 7,000 public charter schools served nearly 3,200,000 children;

Whereas enrollment in public charter schools grew from 400,000 students in 2001 to 3,200,000 students in 2018, an eightfold increase in 17 years;

Whereas in the United States—

(1) in 208 school districts, more than 10 percent of public school students are enrolled in public charter schools; and

(2) in 19 school districts, at least 30 percent of public school students are enrolled in public charter schools;

Whereas high-performing public charter schools improve the academic achievement of students enrolled in the charter schools and collaborate with traditional public schools to improve public education for all students;

Whereas public charter schools—

(1) give parents the freedom to choose public schools;

(2) routinely measure parental satisfaction levels; and

(3) must prove the ongoing success of the charter schools to parents, policymakers, and the communities served by the charter schools or risk closure;

Whereas a 2015 report from the Center for Research on Education Outcomes at Stanford University found significant improvements for students at urban charter schools, and compared to peers of traditional public schools, each year those students completed the equivalent of 28 more days of learning in reading and 40 more days of learning in math;

Whereas parental demand for high-performing charter schools is high, and there was an estimated 5 percent growth in charter school enrollment between fall 2016 and fall 2017; and

Whereas the 19th annual National Charter Schools Week is celebrated the week of May 7 through May 11, 2018: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) congratulates the students, families, teachers, leaders, and staff of public charter schools across the United States for—

(A) making ongoing contributions to public education;

(B) making impressive strides in closing the academic achievement gap in schools in the United States, particularly in schools with some of the most disadvantaged students in both rural and urban communities; and

(C) improving and strengthening the public school system throughout the United States;

(2) supports the ideals and goals of the 19th annual National Charter Schools Week, a week-long celebration held May 7 through May 11, 2018, in communities throughout the United States; and

(3) encourages the people of the United States to hold appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities for National Charter Schools Week to demonstrate support for public charter schools.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 2243. Mr. HELLER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 36, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year

2019 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2020 through 2028; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2244. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. TILLIS) proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 2772, to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for requirements relating to the reassignment of Department of Veterans Affairs senior executive employees.

SA 2245. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. CORNYN (for himself and Mr. PETERS)) proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 3249, to authorize the Project Safe Neighborhoods Grant Program, and for other purposes.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 2243. Mr. HELLER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 36, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2019 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2020 through 2028; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ___. SENSE OF THE SENATE ON PAY FOR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS IF THE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS ARE NOT COMPLETED IN A TIMELY MANNER.

It is the sense of the Senate that—

(1) both Houses of Congress should approve a concurrent resolution on the budget and all the regular appropriations bills before October 1 of each fiscal year;

(2) if a concurrent resolution on the budget and all the regular appropriations bills are not approved by October 1 of each fiscal year, no funds should be appropriated or otherwise be made available from the Treasury of the United States for the pay of any Member of Congress during any period after October 1 that a concurrent resolution on the budget and all the regular appropriations bills are not completed; and

(3) no retroactive pay should be provided to any Member of Congress for any period for which pay is not made available as described in paragraph (2).

SA 2244. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. TILLIS) proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 2772, to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for requirements relating to the reassignment of Department of Veterans Affairs senior executive employees; as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Department of Veterans Affairs Senior Executive Accountability Act of 2018'' or the ''SEA Act of 2018''.

SEC. 2. SEMIANNUAL REPORTS ON REASSIGNMENT OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS SENIOR EXECUTIVE EMPLOYEES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter I of chapter 7 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''§ 727. Reassignment of senior executives

''(a) APPROVAL OF REASSIGNMENTS.—No individual employed in a senior executive position at the Department may be reassigned to another such position at the Department unless such reassignment is approved in writing and signed by the Secretary.

''(b) SEMIANNUAL REPORTS REQUIRED.—(1) Not later than June 30 and December 31 of each year, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the reassignment of individuals employed in senior executive positions at the Department to other such positions at the Department during the period covered by the report.

''(2) Each report submitted under paragraph (1) shall describe the purpose of each reassignment and the costs associated with such reassignment.

''(3) For purposes of paragraph (2), costs associated with a reassignment may only include the following:

''(A) A salary increase.

''(B) Temporary travel expenses for the individual or the family of the individual.

''(C) Moving expenses.

''(D) A paid incentive.

''(c) SENIOR EXECUTIVE POSITION DEFINED.—In this section, the term 'senior executive position' has the meaning given such term in section 713(d) of this title.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 725 the following new item:

''727. Reassignment of senior executives.''.

SA 2245. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. CORNYN (for himself and Mr. PETERS)) proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 3249, to authorize the Project Safe Neighborhoods Grant Program, and for other purposes; as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Project Safe Neighborhoods Grant Program Authorization Act of 2018''.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

For the purposes of this Act—

(1) the term ''firearms offenses'' means an offense under section 922 or 924 of title 18, United States Code;

(2) the term ''Program'' means the Project Safe Neighborhoods Block Grant Program established under section 3; and

(3) the term ''transnational organized crime group'' has the meaning given such term in section 36(k)(6) of the State Department Basic Authorities Act of 1956 (22 U.S.C. 2708(k)(6)).

SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT.

The Attorney General of the United States is authorized to establish and carry out a program, to be known as the ''Project Safe Neighborhoods Block Grant Program'' within the Office of Justice Programs at the Department of Justice.

SEC. 4. PURPOSE.

(a) PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM.—The purpose of the Program is to foster and improve existing partnerships between Federal, State, and local agencies, including the United States Attorney in each Federal judicial district, entities representing members of the community affected by increased violence, victims' advocates, and researchers to create safer neighborhoods through sustained reductions in violent crimes by—

(1) developing and executing comprehensive strategic plans to reduce violent crimes, including the enforcement of gun laws, and prioritizing efforts focused on identified subsets of individuals or organizations responsible for increasing violence in a particular geographic area;

(2) developing evidence-based and data-driven intervention and prevention initiatives, including juvenile justice projects and activities which may include street-level outreach, conflict mediation, provision of treatment and social services, and the changing of community norms, in order to reduce violence; and

(3) collecting data on outcomes achieved through the Program, including the effect on the violent crime rate, incarceration rate, and recidivism rate of the jurisdiction.

(b) ADDITIONAL PURPOSE AREAS.—In addition to the purpose described in subsection (a), the Attorney General may use funds authorized under this Act for any of the following purposes—

(1) competitive and evidence-based programs to reduce gun crime and gang violence;

(2) the Edward Byrne criminal justice innovation program;

(3) community-based violence prevention initiatives; or

(4) gang and youth violence education, prevention and intervention, and related activities.

SEC. 5. RULES AND REGULATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Attorney General shall issue guidance to create, carry out, and administer the Program in accordance with this section.

(b) FUNDS TO BE DIRECTED TO LOCAL CONTROL.—Amounts made available as grants under the Program shall be, to the greatest extent practicable, locally controlled to address problems that are identified locally.

(c) TASK FORCES.—Thirty percent of the amounts made available as grants under the Program each fiscal year shall be granted to Gang Task Forces in regions experiencing a significant or increased presence of criminal or transnational organizations engaging in high levels of violent crime, firearms offenses, human trafficking, and drug trafficking.

(d) PRIORITY.—Amounts made available as grants under the Program shall be used to prioritize the investigation and prosecution of individuals who have an aggravating or leadership role in a criminal or transnational organization described in subsection (c).

SEC. 6. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated to the Attorney General to carry out the Program $50,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2021.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I have 10 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 COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, May 16, 2018, at 10 a.m. to conduct a hearing on the following nominations: Joseph Ryan Gruters, of Florida, to be a Director of the Amtrak Board of Directors, Jennifer L. Homendy, of Virginia, to be a Member of the National Transportation Safety Board, and Heidi R. King, of California, to be Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Department of Transportation.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, May 16, 2018, at 10 a m. to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, May 16, 2018, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Authorizing the Use of Military Force: S.J. Res 59.''

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

The Committee on Indian Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, May 16, 2018, at 2:30 p.m. to conduct a hearing entitled ''Protecting the Next Generation: Safety and Security at Bureau of Indian Education Schools.''

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

The Committee on Indian Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, May 16, 2018, at 2:30 p.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 Wednesday, May 16, 2018, at 10 a.m. to conduct a hearing entitled ''Cambridge Analytica and the Future of Data Privacy''.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE LIBRARY

The Joint Committee on the Library is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, May 16, 2018, at 3.30 p.m. to conduct a hearing.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON PRINTING

The Joint Committee on Printing is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, May 16, 2018, at 3:45 p m. to conduct a hearing.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, May 10, 2018, at 9:15 a.m. to conduct a closed hearing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON SPACE, SCIENCE, AND COMPETITIVENESS

The Subcommittee on Space, Science, and Competitiveness of the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, May 16, 2018, at 2:30 p.m. to conduct a hearing.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that my legislative fellow Collin Anderson be granted floor privileges until the end of June 2018.

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

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that my intern, Anabel Moreno-Mendez, be granted privileges of the floor for the remainder of the day.

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

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 2850

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk that is due for a second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2850) to amend the White Mountain Apache Tribe Water Rights Quantification Act of 2010 to clarify the use of amounts in the WMAT Settlement Fund.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to further proceedings.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

IMPROVE DATA ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE ACT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 395, S. 2349.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2349) to direct the Director of the Office of Management and Budget to establish an interagency working group to study Federal efforts to collect data on sexual violence and to make recommendations on the harmonization of such efforts, 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. 2349) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 2349

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 ''Improve Data on Sexual Violence Act''.

SEC. 2. INTERAGENCY WORKING GROUP TO STUDY FEDERAL EFFORTS TO COLLECT DATA ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall establish an interagency working group (in this section referred to as the ''Working Group'') to study Federal efforts to collect data on sexual violence and to make recommendations on the harmonization of such efforts.

(b) COMPOSITION.—The Working Group shall be comprised of at least one representative from the following agencies, who shall be selected by the head of that agency:

(1) The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

(2) The Department of Defense.

(3) The Department of Education.

(4) The Department of Health and Human Services.

(5) The Department of Justice.

(c) DUTIES.—The Working Group shall consider the following:

(1) What activity constitutes different acts of sexual violence.

(2) Whether reports that use the same terms for acts of sexual violence are collecting the same data on these acts.

(3) Whether the context which lead to an act of sexual violence should impact how that act is accounted for in reports.

(4) Whether the data collected is presented in a way that allows the general public to understand what acts of sexual violence are included in each measurement.

(5) Steps that agencies that compile reports relating to sexual violence can take to avoid double counting incidents of sexual violence.

(d) REPORT REQUIRED.—Not later than 2 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Working Group shall publish and submit to Congress a report on the following:

(1) The activities of the Working Group.

(2) Recommendations to harmonize Federal efforts to collect data on sexual violence.

(3) Actions Federal agencies can take to implement the recommendations described in paragraph (2).

(4) Recommendations for congressional action to implement the recommendations described in paragraph (2).

(e) TERMINATION.—The Working Group shall terminate 30 days after the date on which the report is submitted pursuant to subsection (d).

(f) DEFINITIONS.—In this Act:

(1) HARMONIZE.—The term ''harmonize'' includes efforts to coordinate sexual violence data collection to produce complementary information, as appropriate, without compromising programmatic needs.

(2) SEXUAL VIOLENCE.—The term ''sexual violence'' includes an unwanted sexual act (including both contact and non-contact) about which the Federal Government collects information.

PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS GRANT PROGRAM AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2017

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 3249 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 (H.R. 3249) to authorize the Project Safe Neighborhoods Grant Program, 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 Cornyn substitute amendment at the desk be considered and agreed to, and the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time.

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

The amendment (No. 2245) in the nature of a substitute was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: In the nature of a substitute)

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Project Safe Neighborhoods Grant Program Authorization Act of 2018''.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

For the purposes of this Act—

(1) the term ''firearms offenses'' means an offense under section 922 or 924 of title 18, United States Code;

(2) the term ''Program'' means the Project Safe Neighborhoods Block Grant Program established under section 3; and

(3) the term ''transnational organized crime group'' has the meaning given such term in section 36(k)(6) of the State Department Basic Authorities Act of 1956 (22 U.S.C. 2708(k)(6)).

SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT.

The Attorney General of the United States is authorized to establish and carry out a program, to be known as the ''Project Safe Neighborhoods Block Grant Program'' within the Office of Justice Programs at the Department of Justice.

SEC. 4. PURPOSE.

(a) PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM.—The purpose of the Program is to foster and improve existing partnerships between Federal, State, and local agencies, including the United States Attorney in each Federal judicial district, entities representing members of the community affected by increased violence, victims' advocates, and researchers to create safer neighborhoods through sustained reductions in violent crimes by—

(1) developing and executing comprehensive strategic plans to reduce violent crimes, including the enforcement of gun laws, and prioritizing efforts focused on identified subsets of individuals or organizations responsible for increasing violence in a particular geographic area;

(2) developing evidence-based and data-driven intervention and prevention initiatives, including juvenile justice projects and activities which may include street-level outreach, conflict mediation, provision of treatment and social services, and the changing of community norms, in order to reduce violence; and

(3) collecting data on outcomes achieved through the Program, including the effect on the violent crime rate, incarceration rate, and recidivism rate of the jurisdiction.

(b) ADDITIONAL PURPOSE AREAS.—In addition to the purpose described in subsection (a), the Attorney General may use funds authorized under this Act for any of the following purposes—

(1) competitive and evidence-based programs to reduce gun crime and gang violence;

(2) the Edward Byrne criminal justice innovation program;

(3) community-based violence prevention initiatives; or

(4) gang and youth violence education, prevention and intervention, and related activities.

SEC. 5. RULES AND REGULATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Attorney General shall issue guidance to create, carry out, and administer the Program in accordance with this section.

(b) FUNDS TO BE DIRECTED TO LOCAL CONTROL.—Amounts made available as grants under the Program shall be, to the greatest extent practicable, locally controlled to address problems that are identified locally.

(c) TASK FORCES.—Thirty percent of the amounts made available as grants under the Program each fiscal year shall be granted to Gang Task Forces in regions experiencing a significant or increased presence of criminal or transnational organizations engaging in high levels of violent crime, firearms offenses, human trafficking, and drug trafficking.

(d) PRIORITY.—Amounts made available as grants under the Program shall be used to prioritize the investigation and prosecution of individuals who have an aggravating or leadership role in a criminal or transnational organization described in subsection (c).

SEC. 6. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated to the Attorney General to carry out the Program $50,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2021.

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

The bill was read the third time.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I know of no further debate on the bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill pass?

The bill (H.R. 3249), as amended, was passed.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

VA SENIOR EXECUTIVE ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Veterans' Affairs be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 2772 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 (H.R. 2772) to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for requirements relating to the reassignment of Department of Veterans Affairs senior executive employees.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the Tillis substitute amendment at the desk be considered and agreed to, the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The amendment (No. 2244) in the nature of a substitute was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: In the nature of a substitute)

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Department of Veterans Affairs Senior Executive Accountability Act of 2018'' or the ''SEA Act of 2018''.

SEC. 2. SEMIANNUAL REPORTS ON REASSIGNMENT OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS SENIOR EXECUTIVE EMPLOYEES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter I of chapter 7 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''§ 727. Reassignment of senior executives

''(a) APPROVAL OF REASSIGNMENTS.—No individual employed in a senior executive position at the Department may be reassigned to another such position at the Department unless such reassignment is approved in writing and signed by the Secretary.

''(b) SEMIANNUAL REPORTS REQUIRED.—(1) Not later than June 30 and December 31 of each year, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the reassignment of individuals employed in senior executive positions at the Department to other such positions at the Department during the period covered by the report.

''(2) Each report submitted under paragraph (1) shall describe the purpose of each reassignment and the costs associated with such reassignment.

''(3) For purposes of paragraph (2), costs associated with a reassignment may only include the following:

''(A) A salary increase.

''(B) Temporary travel expenses for the individual or the family of the individual.

''(C) Moving expenses.

''(D) A paid incentive.

''(c) SENIOR EXECUTIVE POSITION DEFINED.—In this section, the term 'senior executive position' has the meaning given such term in section 713(d) of this title.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 725 the following new item:

''727. Reassignment of senior executives.''.

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

The bill was read the third time.

The bill (H.R. 2772), as amended, was passed.

AUTHORIZING THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO FURNISH ASSISTANCE FOR ADAPTATIONS OF RESIDENCES OF VETERANS IN REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Veterans' Affairs be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 3562 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 (H.R. 3562) to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to furnish assistance for adaptations of residences of veterans in rehabilitation programs under chapter 31 of such title, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The bill (H.R. 3562) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

SMITHSONIAN NATIONAL ZOOLOGICAL PARK CENTRAL PARKING FACILITY AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Rules and Administration be

discharged from further consideration of H.R. 4009 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 (H.R. 4009) to authorize the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution to plan, design, and construct a central parking facility on National Zoological Park property in the District of Columbia.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The bill (H.R. 4009) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

AUTHORIZING USE OF EMANCIPATION HALL

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H. Con. Res. 112, which was received from the House.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the concurrent resolution by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 112) authorizing the use of Emancipation Hall in the Capitol Visitor Center for an event to celebrate the birthday of King Kamehameha I.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the concurrent resolution be agreed to and the motion 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 concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 112) was agreed to.

RESOLUTIONS SUBMITTED TODAY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following Senate resolutions, which were submitted earlier today: S. Res. 512, S. Res. 513, and S. Res. 514.

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

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

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

The resolutions were agreed to.

The preambles were agreed to.

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

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, MAY 17, 2018

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m., Thursday, May 17; further, that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed. Finally, I ask that following leader remarks, Senator PAUL be recognized under the previous order.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 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 6:47 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, May 17, 2018, at 9:30 a.m.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate May 16, 2018:

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

MITCHELL ZAIS, OF SOUTH CAROLINA, TO BE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF EDUCATION.

IN THE COAST GUARD

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT AS VICE COMMANDANT, UNITED STATES COAST GUARD, AND TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 14, U.S.C., SECTION 47:

To be admiral

VICE ADM. CHARLES W. RAY

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

RECOGNIZING PATRICIA SPOONHEIM

HON. GREG GIANFORTE

OF MONTANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a Montana musician known and loved by hundreds of thousands of fans in Montana and across the world.

That's no exaggeration, because she has played in one iconic Montana establishment for 55 years.

Patricia Spoonheim, better known as Piano Pat, began playing keyboards at the Sip 'n Dip Lounge in Great Falls in 1963. Travel publications acclaim the Sip 'n Dip as a ''must see'' in Montana, and Piano Pat is one of the reasons.

Pat was born and raised along Montana's Hi-Line in the 1930s. Even during harsh winters, Pat's mother would drive her over 80 miles roundtrip for piano lessons. She began playing professionally at the age of 14.

Pat worked multiple jobs and played several nights a week to support her family. Now into her 80s, Piano Pat still enjoys what she does. She teaches her grandchildren piano and continues to work nights at the Sip 'n Dip. The one song she says she particularly loves performing is ''Try a Little Tenderness.''

Television networks and national publications have profiled Piano Pat. A cable television channel recently featured her to represent Montana in a series titled ''Her America: 50 Women, 50 States.''

Her music and spirit have entertained countless Montanans and visitors from across the globe. It is my honor to recognize Patricia Spoonheim for entertaining patrons of the Sip 'n Dip and for representing our Montana way of life.

CONGRATULATING ECOLAB, INC. ON WINNING THE WORLD ENVIRONMENT CENTER'S 34TH ANNUAL GOLD MEDAL AWARD

HON. PETER J. ROSKAM

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Ecolab, Inc. on winning the World Environment Center's (WEC) 34th Annual Gold Medal Award. The WEC Gold Medal is one of the most prestigious forms of recognition for commitment to the practice of sustainable development.

This week, Doug Baker, the chairman and CEO of Ecolab, Inc., will receive on behalf of the company the WEC's Gold Medal for International Corporate Achievement in Sustainable Development. Ecolab, Inc. was selected because of its commitment to global water conservation, and its development of tools that demonstrate the value of water and reveal water-related risks so customers can make better informed decisions. Together, these innovations are helping customers improve water and energy use while preserving natural resources. Notably, the company helped customers conserve 171 billion gallons of water in 2017, and aims for 300 billion gallons of water conserved annually by 2030.

Ecolab, Inc. is an international leader in advancing global water stewardship through partnerships aimed at conserving natural resources. Ecolab, Inc. partners with non-governmental organizations, such as the World Wildlife Fund and The Nature Conservancy to help advance water conservation and stewardship initiatives throughout the world. Ecolab, Inc. has also demonstrated international leadership as a founding partner of the Alliance for Water Stewardship's Water Stewardship Standard, a globally consistent and locally adaptable framework to inform decisions and to promote sustainable freshwater use.

Mr. Speaker and distinguished colleagues, please join me in celebrating this special occasion and congratulating Ecolab, Inc. on winning the WEC's Gold Medal for International Corporate Achievement in Sustainable Development.

RECOGNIZING RABBI STEPHEN HART

HON. BRADLEY SCOTT SCHNEIDER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of my friend and a pillar in our community, Rabbi Stephen Hart. Rabbi Hart is retiring from his position as senior Rabbi after 25 years of dedicated and distinguished service to Temple Chai in Long Grove, Illinois.

Stephen Hart was born and raised in Chicago where he attended Sinai Congregation in Hyde Park. He spent his young summers as at Olin Sang Ruby Union Institute camp, building on the Jewish identity establish by his family.

After completing his undergraduate degree at Spertus College, he pursued his Rabbinic ordination from Hebrew Union College. He initially served as a rabbi at North Shore Congregation Israel in Glencoe for six years before joining Temple Chai.

Over the course of his quarter century with Temple Chai, Rabbi Hart has nurtured an inclusive community that celebrates the full cycle of Jewish life and inspires lifelong learning, community service and a love of Israel. He has served his congregation, and indeed our broader local community with distinction, leading by example through his keen understanding of Jewish values and dedication to active outreach and youth engagement.

Rabbi Hart has long been dedicated to community outreach. Early in his career, while at North Shore Congregation Israel, he helped develop the nationally-recognized ''Stepping Stones to a Jewish Me'' program, intended to help children of interfaith marriages understand the faith of their Jewish parent. Rabbi Hart has also been a leader in the national Jewish community, serving on the National Commission on Reform Jewish Outreach of the Central Conference of American Rabbis and the Union for Reform Judaism. Rabbi Hart also serves on the Executive Committee of the Chicago Association of Reform Rabbis.

A resident of Buffalo Grove, Rabbi Hart is married to his wife, Mendy and together are the proud parents of two daughters, Lani and Dena.

I want to thank Rabbi Hart for 25 years of committed service, dedicated leadership, vision and passion. On behalf of Illinois' Tenth Congressional District, I wish Rabbi Hart the very best in his well-deserved retirement with family and friends.

LAKE COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION 50TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, it is with great respect that I take this time to congratulate Lake County Parks and Recreation, as the organization celebrates its 50th anniversary. For half a century, the parks department has enhanced the lives of the residents and visitors of Northwest Indiana. In recognition of this milestone, the organization will be celebrating with numerous programs and events throughout 2018.

On June 1, 1968, Lake County Parks and Recreation was created by the Lake County Council. Back then, the department was working with nothing more than a dirt road running through two-hundred acres of land. However, the group's leaders, members, and volunteers had a vision for Lake County Parks and Recreation to provide a place for residents and guests to enjoy nature, host family gatherings, ride their bikes, accommodate children's activities, and conserve land.

Throughout the years, Lake County Parks and Recreation has surpassed its goals and exceeded its expectations, and it continues to progress. Today, Lake County maintains eleven parks and has preserved thousands of acres of open space, natural areas, historic sites, and trails. Due to the hard work and dedication of its numerous employees, volunteers, and elected officials, the department has exceeded all expectations. With over one million people visiting the park sites yearly, the organization truly adds to the quality of life in Northwest Indiana.

Lake County Parks and Recreation is recognized by the State of Indiana as being a progressive department. The organization provides numerous innovative educational and cultural programs for children and adults. In

addition, through its efforts to restore and manage forested properties, wetlands, and prairies, the department holds storm waters, improves water and air quality, protects endangered species, and helps to maintain natural habitats. Lake County Parks and Recreation has won numerous awards and accolades for its great works, and it is certainly worthy of each and every honor.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in congratulating Lake County Parks and Recreation on its 50th anniversary. For the past fifty years, the leadership, employees, and volunteers of the department have enhanced the lives of countless individuals through their unwavering commitment to the community of Northwest Indiana, and they are worthy of the highest praise.

HONORING THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF SOQUEL

HON. JIMMY PANETTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Mr. PANETTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the Congregational Church of Soquel. Established in May of 1868, the Congregational Church of Soquel has built a legacy of providing a safe and supportive environment for many of my constituents in the 20th Congressional District of California. The church has a history of service and sanctuary, while actively engaging in acts of compassion, justice, and a sense of responsibility.

The Congregational Church of Soquel—also known as the Little White Church in the Vale—has served as a pillar of the Soquel community since it was first organized by Joshua and Narcissa Parrish in 1868. The Church, both as a brick-and-mortar institution and as a family, persevered through many adversities while maintaining a sense of service to the community. The Church has repeatedly served as a shelter and temporary fire station during natural disasters. Even through the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake which devastated much of our community, the Church remained indomitable.

The Church not only provides opportunities for satisfying spiritual needs, but also works to provide tangible solutions to community needs, including hunger and homelessness. Currently, the Church fulfills its mission of addressing food insecurity and homelessness through its partnership with many crucial organizations in my district such as Meals on Wheels, the Second Harvest Food Bank, and the Homeless Services Center. In addition, the church also partners with The Great Chili Cook-Off, which supports the Mid-County Homeless Coalition—Shower Trailer Program. Through these partnerships, local organizations can ensure that many of those in need are provided with emergency food and housing.

The Church not only looks for opportunities to help within our community, but also beyond our country's borders. The Church continues to address food insecurity internationally through its work with the Panamerican Institute in Tijuana, Mexico. There, the Church provides food baskets for families of the Institute and motivates both youth and adults to make improvements in schools and homes in the area. In addition to the church's service in Mexico, they also participate in Solehope, which provides shoes to children in Uganda. In Kenya, the church supports Happy Life Children's Home, which helps to find homes for abandoned children. These missions and services that the church participates in locally and globally show their dedication to uplifting communities.

Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to recognize the dedication and commitment to compassion and justice that the Congregational Church of Soquel provides to the 20th Congressional District. We are fortunate to have an institution like the Congregational Church of Soquel call the central coast of California home. I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating the 150th Anniversary of the Congregational Church of Soquel.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE ASSISTANCE LEAGUE OF GLENDALE'S 75TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Assistance League of Glendale upon its seventy-fifth anniversary.

The Assistance League of Glendale began with a small group of women dedicated to performing selfless acts for the local community and has since developed into a multifaceted philanthropic organization targeted at providing aid to women, men and children in need of guidance, assistance and care. The members work to ensure that the needs of children and seniors in Glendale are met with care and respect, and dedicate thousands of hours to improve the city.

Committed to promoting education and enriching the lives of students, the Assistance League of Glendale provides clothing to elementary school children in need, reading support and books, as well as thousands of dollars in scholarships for students graduating from high schools and college in Glendale.

In addition to its exceptional work for young students, the Assistance League of Glendale provides social programs and meals for seniors, weekly training for developmentally challenged adults to learn vocational skills, and quality pre-owned merchandise as well as clothing at affordable prices.

This volunteer-driven organization continues its mission to assist and uplift as it strives to address the increasing needs of the community with innovative, dynamic and creative philanthropic programs that promote emotional and physical well-being, and over the years has evolved to meet the shifting needs of the community.

The Assistance League of Glendale serves as a brilliant example of the power of volunteerism and what people can do when inspired to connect with others in the spirit of humanitarianism. The time, effort, and care that the organization has given to the community is outstanding, and the residents of Glendale and the greater Los Angeles area have benefited greatly from their work.

I ask all Members to join with me in commending the Assistance League of Glendale for seventy-five years of dedicated, outstanding and invaluable service to the community.

MICHAEL MARTINEZ

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Michael Martinez for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Michael Martinez is a student at Standley Lake High School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Michael Martinez is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Michael Martinez for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

CONGRATULATING GUNNERY SERGEANT JEREMY L. LONG ON HIS RETIREMENT

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, it is an honor for me to rise today in recognition of the forthcoming retirement of Gunnery Sergeant Jeremy L. Long on June 30, 2018.

GySgt Jeremy Long has served the United States Marine Corps with honor and distinction for twenty years. A career of such longevity in support of our national security is, in itself, an accomplishment worthy of recognition. GySgt Long has accomplished extraordinary achievements during his exceptional career that demands more than just recognition of a grateful nation. He has earned the respect of countless fellow Marines that have benefited from his leadership and technical expertise in six different military occupational specialties and the adulation of millions, who he has never met, but who benefited from his service nonetheless.

Jeremy Long's Human Intelligence occupational specialty put him directly into harm's way on multiple deployments into the most dangerous battlefields of his generation. GySgt Long deployed to Iraq three times. First to Mahmudiyyah in 2003, then Husaybah in 2004 and again in 2005 with the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable). Later, he deployed to Afghanistan three more times. First, with the 1st Marine Special Operations Battalion (MSOB) in 2007 to Helmand Province, again in 2009 with the 1st MSOB in 2009 and finally with the Special Operations Task Force-81 in 2012.

GySgt Long has served his country in some of the most dangerous places in the world. He has also dedicated significant effort developing the necessary skills that enabled him to be an enormous asset and enabler for the units he served. For example, he spent 52 weeks learning the Pashtu language, an extremely difficult language to learn. He attended other schools such as the very intense and difficult Survival Evasion Resistance and Escape course (SERE), Technical Surveillance Sciences Course, the Close Quarters Battle courses and Electronic Surveillance courses.

Finally, as a Command Counterintelligence Staff Officer assigned to the Marine Corps Embassy Security Group, he has conducted multiple counterintelligence site visits to Marine Corps Security Guard Detachments in places like Moscow, Russia; Hong Kong, Hong Kong; Freetown, Sierra Leone; and Bridgetown, Barbados.

Over the course of 20 years of dedicated service, GySgt Long has repeatedly demonstrated honor and dedication indicative of a great Marine and American hero. His valiant efforts both across oceans in enemy territory as well as here at home have helped to protect and shape our nation. On behalf of the United States Congress, and the American people we represent, I extend my deep appreciation to Gunnery Sergeant Jeremy L. Long for his service to our country. My best wishes on a happy retirement and continued success.

IN RECOGNITION OF MOUNT OLIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

HON. ROBERT J. WITTMAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 200th Anniversary of Mount Olive Baptist Church. This church is the oldest in the Stafford, Virginia area and has uplifted the community through countless hardships and celebrated through countless joys.

The Mount Olive Baptist Church was established on May 16, 1818, as a rudimentary wood structure under the guidance of Reverend Horace Crutcher. The church began to grow immediately, and established a school in the aftermath of the Civil War.

The church has since launched outreach programs in Zambia, Ghana, and New Zealand, providing food, water, shelter, and medical care to the needy. They also provide bible studies, musical ministries, and youth programs for the Stafford community.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and my colleagues to join me as we recognize the immeasurable good that the Mount Olive Baptist church has done for those in the Stafford community over the last 200 years.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LUIS V. GUTIÉRREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent in the House chamber for Roll Call votes 181, 182, and 183 on Tuesday, May 15, 2018. Had I been present, I would have voted Yea.

BUFFALO BILL DAYS

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Buffalo Bill Days for receiving the Golden Rotary Ethics in Business Award.

The Ethics in Business Award was established by the Golden Rotary to honor for-profit and non-profit businesses. The recipients of this award must maintain integrity, conviction and possess high ethical standards demonstrated by the treatment of customers, employees, community and the environment.

Buffalo Bill Days is a 100 percent volunteer run non-profit organization. They are responsible for putting on the largest community festival in Golden, Colorado. The event dates back to the 1940s and is an event the residents of Golden look forward to every year. Buffalo Bill Days is well known for their responsible management of finances and are a model for how organizations can work and cooperate with one another.

I extend my deepest congratulations to the Buffalo Bill Days for receiving this well-deserved honor by the Golden Rotary. I thank them for their continued commitment to our community.

WELCOMING GUEST CHAPLAIN DR. TED KITCHENS TO THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HON. KAY GRANGER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Ms. GRANGER. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to welcome Dr. Ted Kitchens as our guest chaplain this morning and greatly appreciate him leading us in prayer.

Dr. Kitchens is from the 12th District of Texas, which I proudly represent.

He's served as the Senior Pastor of Christ Chapel Bible Church in Fort Worth for the past 36 years.

Under his leadership, Dr. Kitchens grew his congregation from 116 people to more than 6,000 members per week.

Christ Chapel Bible Church has also grown to become a vital partner with the entire Fort Worth community.

Dr. Kitchens has been married to his wife Lynn for 41 years, and they have two wonderful children, Kassie and Tyler.

I want to thank Pastor Kitchens for all he does to serve our community and for providing us with spiritual guidance on this day.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I missed three votes on May 15, 2018. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 181; YEA on Roll Call No. 182; and YEA on Roll Call No. 183.

CONGRATULATING THE NORTH COUNTRY MISSION OF HOPE ON ITS 20TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. ELISE M. STEFANIK

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and recognize the North Country Mission of Hope on its 20th anniversary.

In 1998, Sister Debbie Blow and a team of dedicated students from Seton Catholic School started a fundraising project to benefit victims of Hurricane Mitch in Nicaragua. What started as a small project grew to yearly mission trips to Nicaragua, ultimately becoming the North Country Mission of Hope. Since then, the North Country Mission of Hope has partnered with countless non-governmental organizations to create a network of support all the way from the North Country to Central America.

While originally established to help hurricane victims, the North Country Mission of Hope has grown to support sustainable programs in education, healthcare, community and ecological development. Its service reaches some of the poorest areas of Nicaragua. Currently, the North Country Mission of Hope coordinates over 850 education sponsorships, nutritional feeding programs at 24 schools, and ships needed supplies at least twice a year. Through its tireless commitment to serving others, the Mission of Hope continuously achieves its goal of fostering hope and empowering relationships with the people of Nicaragua.

On behalf of New York's 21st District, I want to honor the North Country Mission of Hope for its 20 years of service and thank its members for being exceptional ambassadors of the North Country. I look forward to watching the amazing things that the North Country Mission of Hope accomplishes for many years to come.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TOM MARINO

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Mr. MARINO. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to attend votes on May 15, 2018 due to Pennsylvania primary elections. Had I been present, I would have voted as follows: YEA for rollcall vote 181; YEA for rollcall vote 182; and YEA for rollcall vote 183.

LUKAS KNIGHT

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Lukas Knight

for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Lukas Knight is a student at Warren Tech North and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Lukas Knight is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Lukas Knight for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

III CORPS' 100 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE

HON. JOHN R. CARTER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of a grateful nation, I wish III Corps a happy birthday for its first century of brave service. Since its birth in 1918, 'America's Hammer' has never faltered in defending freedom and upholding the U.S. Army's reputation as the world's elite fighting force.

From day one, this historic corps has been comprised of brave men and women who have selflessly devoted themselves to a greater good. When forces of tyranny threaten the world, when the oppressed are in danger of losing hope, when duty calls, the Phantom Warriors of III Corps stand ready. Over the decades, their mission has remained the same: be prepared to rapidly deploy and conduct the full spectrum of military operations to defeat any adversary.

I am proud to stand alongside III Corps as they continue to defend freedom, accomplish any mission, and leave a legacy for future generations to follow. III Corps' 100 years of excellence represents America at its very best.

HONORING AND REMEMBERING THE LIFE OF CHIEF TOM EMERSON

HON. JACK BERGMAN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Mr. BERGMAN. Mr. Speaker, it's my honor today to acknowledge the life of a devoted community leader and loving father and husband, Chief Tom Emerson, who died suddenly at the age of 58 after more than 30 years of service to law enforcement and public safety in Northern Michigan.

A native to the Grand Traverse area, Chief Emerson dedicated his life to public service. For the past seven years, Tom served as the Elk Rapids Police Chief, first joining the department in March 2011. Prior to that, he served with the Grand Traverse County Sheriff's Office, where he retired as a Captain in 2010 after 26 years of service. Chief Emerson was also a firefighter with Grand Traverse Rural Fire and the Elk Rapids Fire Department, where his contributions to the creation of their training facility were instrumental. He was named Firefighter of the Year in January of 2018.

Tom was well-respected as a community leader, selfless public servant, mentor, and friend. Following visitation, Chief Emerson will be laid to rest on Sunday, May 20, in Traverse City.

Mr. Speaker, Chief Emerson's impact on Northern Michigan cannot be overstated. His family and community can take pride in knowing that the state of Michigan is a better place thanks to his life's work. On behalf of Michigan's First Congressional District, I ask you to join me in recognizing an outstanding community leader whose contributions will continue to bless Michiganders for many years to come.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE OUTSTANDING SERVICE OF COACH ROBERT A. GREEN

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, it is my great honor to rise today and recognize the achievements of Coach Robert A. Green, also known as ''Pompey.'' Coach Green, a world-class runner, Army veteran, and Athletic Director at Dillard High School in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, touched countless lives over the course of his distinguished career and represented the best of men, known by all for his generosity, kindness, and caring of his athletes.

Coach Green was born in Fort Myers, Florida and attended Dunbar High School. He was considered the fastest football player in his graduating class of 1949. He attended Allen College in Columbia, South Carolina, on a full football scholarship, where he obtained four Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference Championships in the 100-yard dash and became the first runner from Allen to run in the world famous Penn Relays in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. After school, Coach Green joined the United States Army, receiving numerous awards, medals and commendations for achievements. While serving in the military, he tied the world record for the 100-yard dash at 9.3 seconds.

Coach Green began working at Dillard High School in Fort Lauderdale in 1957. He served as the Track Coach, Department Chair and Athletic Director over a 35-year career. He was the first African American Coach to attend the Broward County Coaches Clinic for Track Coaches, allowing Dillard High School to participate in the County's Integrated Track Meet in 1967.

He is also the founder of the Panther 100 Club. This innovative and vast booster club has donated over $100,000 to the academic and athletic clubs of Dillard High School. These funds have afforded numerous unique opportunities for the children of Dillard High School, including trips to Alaska, New Orleans, and Washington, D.C. Coach Green is a member of the National Negro, Allen University, Florida High School and Dillard High School Halls of Fame. The tracks of Dillard High School and Dunbar High School are named in his honor and his football jersey, No. 4, is retired from use at Dunbar High School.

Mr. Speaker, Coach Robert A. Green is more than deserving of recognition in the annals of American History for his service to our country, and his dedication to the education, mentoring, and the personal development of the youth of Dillard High School. I thank him once again for his years of service.

NICHOLAS KULHANEK

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Nicholas Kulhanek for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Nicholas Kulhanek is a student at Arvada West High School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Nicholas Kulhanek is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Nicholas Kulhanek for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TOM EMMER

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 181; YEA on Roll Call No. 182; and YEA on Roll Call No. 183.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. GLENN THOMPSON

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I was detained in my Congressional District due to the Primary Election. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 181; YEA on Roll Call No. 182; and YEA on Roll Call No. 183.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MARKWAYNE MULLIN

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Mr. MULLIN. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would

have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 181; YEA on Roll Call No. 182; and YEA on Roll Call No. 183.

EXHAUCE KUMESO

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Exhauce Kumeso for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Exhauce Kumeso is a student at Arvada K–8 and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Exhauce Kumeso is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Exhauce Kumeso for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

SHARING STUDENTS' 'MARCH FOR OUR LIVES' REMARKS

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, on May 9, I came to the Floor and spoke about the March For Our Lives on March 24 and the nine extraordinarily poised students in Morristown, New Jersey, who spoke at the rally there, which I attended. I include in the RECORD remarks by Isabella Bosrock. I hope my colleagues will read them and internalize the sense of fear in which our nation's students are living every day—and our responsibility as Members of Congress to do something to address this crisis of gun violence.

MARCH FOR OUR LIVES REMARKS

(By Isabella Bosrock)

My name is Isabella Bosrock, and I am a senior at West Morris Mendham High School. Today you will be hearing from seven incredible high school students from across the district who are here today to say 'enough is enough' and 'never again' to senseless gun violence. Before we begin, I would like to take a moment and thank Mr. Steny Hoyer, a U.S. Representative for Maryland's Fifth Congressional District and the Minority Whip of the House for being here today.

On March 20, a mere four days ago, a seventeen year old boy named Austin Wyatt Rollins walked into Great Mills High School with his dad's hand gun and shot two students, one of which was an ex-girlfriend. Reports say he did this because of a recent break up with the girl he shot. The student resource officer on duty, Blaine Gaskill managed with great bravely to shoot and kill the gunman, avoiding the loss of many more lives.

While this event is incredibly upsetting it is not unlike many things that have happened in the country is the years since Columbine. It is horrible that as adolescents we have become used to the idea that gun violence is a method of dealing with our problems. This pattern of gun violence has been perpetuated by adult lawmakers who refuse to do anything about the bloodshed in their schools.

I bring this up today because Mr. Hoyer is the representative of the district where Great Mills High School is located, yet he is still here at our march today. Let's all thank him for being here today. I also bring this up because I think that it is so important that we make sure we acknowledge every instance of senseless gun violence that occurs within this country. While Parkland was able to get mass media attention, hashtags on social media and 'thoughts and prayers' from everyone around the world, there are so many acts of violence that occur in the U.S. every single day that go completely unnoticed.

Often times we give them attention for a couple of days, maybe a week, then we forget, and other times we fail to acknowledge them at all. In fact there have been eighteen instances of a gun firing at schools in the U.S. since the beginning of 2018, which averages out to about three per week.

This cannot be our reality. However many people do not know this because they never gain the same attention as events like Parkland. These other shootings often resulted in no bloodshed or a few injured. But this doesn't mean that they are any less catastrophic because every single life of those students will be forever changed. Each and every day they walk into the school that almost cost them their lives, and they are forced to face their worst fears. The lives of the students in the eighteen schools will never ever be the same. It is so easy for us to watch these catastrophic events unravel on the news for a week, donate money to the cause, post a hashtag on social media, then move on with our lives. But it is so important in our crazy, ever changing lives to never forget.

We have to make sure that we not only remember to hold the lives of those lost in our hearts, but to make sure that we are holding the people who are accountable, responsible for the lives of innocent people murdered.

It is up to us to change the future, but these changes will only come by reflecting on the past and acknowledging what happened. Forgetting will not do anything but make us complacent and allow more of these massacres to happen.

That being said, I encourage every single one of you today to go out and read about the other school shootings that you may have missed and hold those victims in your memory so that we can use those losses to fuel the fire of change.

HONORING THE INDIAN LAKE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

HON. ELISE M. STEFANIK

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and recognize the Indian Lake Chamber of Commerce.

Since its founding in 1988, the Indian Lake Chamber of Commerce has played a crucial role in promoting economic growth and helping small businesses flourish throughout Hamilton County. The Chamber understands the needs of local businesses and residents in its community, as shown through its work advocating for rural broadband and encouraging tourism in the Adirondacks. By establishing partnerships, shaping public policy, and providing programs and services for businesses in the community, the Chamber enhances the quality of life for all who live in the region.

On behalf of New York's 21st District, I want to commend the Indian Lake Chamber of Commerce on its unwavering commitment to the community. I look forward to watching the Chamber continue to succeed for many years to come.

TRIBUTE TO FRANK LEFFINGWELL

HON. JOHN R. CARTER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I salute the extraordinary career of Frank Leffingwell as he retires from a lifetime of civic involvement. Along with his many contributions to Central Texas, Frank's outstanding work as a councilman for the City of Round Rock, Texas has helped make my hometown a great place to live and work.

Frank's commitment to investing his gifts, talents, and abilities to improve his community is a deeply held creed that speaks to the generosity and activism of a true and devoted public servant. His resume tells the story of a man unafraid to contribute both his time and energies to a multitude of organizations that rely on volunteerism and social engagement to make good communities great.

His tenure on the Round Rock City Council is marked by his tremendous efforts to support his growing town's long-term vitality through economic development. Frank's worked tirelessly to ensure residents have a rich quality of life that includes access to water, energy, and cutting-edge health care while supporting the arts, our first responders, and the most vulnerable. His legacy speaks to the highest values we Texans hold dear.

Frank Leffingwell's retirement is the richly-deserved beginning of an exciting journey. I join his colleagues, family, and friends in honoring his career, commending his commitment to public service, and wishing my friend nothing but the best in the years ahead.

MIGUEL LOPEZ

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Miguel Lopez for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Miguel Lopez is a student at Arvada High School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Miguel Lopez is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Miguel Lopez for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. KYRSTEN SINEMA

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Ms. SINEMA. Mr. Speaker, due to horrible weather, I was unavoidably detained from votes. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 181; YEA on Roll Call No. 182; and YEA on Roll Call No. 183.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TOM COLE

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained. However, had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 181; YEA on Roll Call No. 182; and YEA on Roll Call No. 183.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, May 15, I was unavoidably detained due to weather conditions and was not present for Roll Call votes 181, 182, and 183. Had I been present, I would have voted:

Yea on Roll Call 181, on the motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 613, the Lieutenant Osvaldo Albarati Correctional Officer Self-Protection Act;

Yea on Roll Call 182, on the motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 4854, the Justice Served Act; and

Yea on Roll Call 183, on the motion to suspend the rules and pass H. Res. 285, expressing the sense of the United States House of Representatives that Congress and the President should empower the creation of police and community alliances designed to enhance and improve communication and collaboration between members of the law enforcement community and the public they serve.

KYLE McCLELLAND

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Kyle McClelland for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Kyle McClelland is a student at Sobesky Academy and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Kyle McClelland is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Kyle McClelland for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

RECOGNIZING DR. GOPAL GUTTIKONDA

HON. JOHN R. CARTER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I celebrate and recognize the work of an exceptional citizen, Dr. Gopal Guttikonda, who dedicated himself to helping the residents of Central Texas by founding the Temple Community Clinic. His commitment to public service represents Texas values at their very best and he is a fitting recipient of Leadership Temple's prestigious Distinguished Alumni Award.

During his career, Dr. Guttikonda saw many hard-working Texans who did not have access to proper healthcare due to their ineligibility or lack of financial means. Seeking to ensure the healthcare was available for those in need, he made the selfless decision to create the Temple Community Clinic to improve the quality of life for all citizens in Central Texas.

What started as a 1,300-square foot space in the Jeff Hamilton Community Building grew substantially to what is now a world-class health resource for the underserved population in Central Texas. Elite physicians have volunteered their services to those who had no insurance or the financial means to afford treatment for themselves and their families. Dr. Guttikonda's dream of accessible healthcare has been impacting lives now for twenty-six amazing years.

Dr. Guttikonda's devotion to his community doesn't stop when his shift at the hospital ends. This married father of two, whose great work has been honored by his colleagues on numerous occasions, keeps busy with a variety of civic organizations that work to bring positive change to a variety of areas. His commitment to investing his gifts, talents, and abilities to improve his community is a deeply held creed that speaks to the generosity and activism of a true and devoted public servant.

Dr. Gopal Guttikonda's vision, dedication, and commitment to the health of all has made a real and lasting difference in lives of Central Texans. I'm both proud and humbled by his achievements and wish him continued success in the future. I join his family, colleagues, and friends in saluting his tremendous work as he is richly honored with Leadership Temple's Distinguished Alumni Award.

HONORING ARNOLD A. PISKIN

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Arnold A. Piskin who served in the Army Air Corps during World War II. Mr. Piskin was stationed at Horsham St. Faith, England where he flew 36 missions over France and Germany as a pilot on the B–24J Liberator named 'Howling Banshee.' At the age of 20 he was the youngest member of his crew and flew combat missions in the European Theater of Operations (ETO) as part of the 8th Air Force, 2nd Air Division, 96th Bomb Wing, 458th Bomb Group, and. 753rd Squadron. In addition, they flew one of the 10 original AZON aircraft straight from the United States. Mr. Askin and his crew flew their final 4 missions were in support of the Battle of the Bulge on December 24–28, 1944.

During his 8 months in the European theater he received the Air Medal with 3 Oak Leaf Clusters and the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC). In addition, he received the European-African-Middle Eastern Theater Ribbon with 5 Bronze Stars for Air Offensive Europe, Normandy, Northern France, Germany, Ardennes.

After the war, Mr. Piskin took advantage of the GI bill and earned a BS in Physical Education from New York University (NYU) and later a MS in Social Work from Columbia University. He spent his professional life in Jewish communal work. This included servicing community centers, community organizations, children's camps and fundraising. While at NYU, he met his wife Hannah Korenthal who he has been married to for 68 years. They were blessed with 4 children—Brenda, Jay, Craig, Scott—and 7 grandchildren—Rachel, Adam, Jason, Tori, Todd, Cory, and Julie.

Mr. Speaker, I stand before the House today to pay tribute to Mr. Piskin and thank him for his tremendous service to our country. The freedom we all enjoy today was made possible by men like him.

HONORING DIANE STROMAN ON THE OCCASION OF HER RETIREMENT

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, it is my great pleasure to rise today to join TEAM, Inc. and the communities of Connecticut's Naugatuck Valley in extending my heartfelt congratulations and sincere thanks to Diane Stroman as she celebrates her retirement after twenty-five years of dedicated service. To say that she will be missed by this organization as well as the many local service organizations who have benefitted from her time and energies, is an understatement. Diane's compassion, advocacy, and strength of spirit have changed countless lives and we are fortunate to have had her working on behalf of our communities and their most vulnerable residents.

Diane has dedicated a quarter-century to helping those most in need. In her leadership role at TEAM, Inc, an organization dedicated

to strengthening our community by educating, supporting and empowering individuals and families, she has helped to shape the many programs and services offered to their clients. From Head Start, early education, and heating and energy assistance to child care, housing, financial, employment, and holiday assistance as well as elder services, Diane has helped individuals and families navigate what can be a difficult and complex social service delivery system.

Diane's dedication to community involvement extends far beyond her professional life at TEAM. A board member of the Lower Naugatuck Valley Boys & Girls Club, Ansonia's Elderly Services Commission and the Valley Juvenile Review Board, she also dedicates her personal time to enriching the lives of others. Diane is an original board member of the Valley United Way, Griffin Hospital and BH Care. She was formerly on the Ansonia Board of Education, past president of the Derby-Shelton Rotary Club, and an active member of her church. Diane embodies a spirit of community service that we should all strive to achieve.

I would be remiss if I did not extend a special note of personal thanks to Diane for the assistance and guidance that she has provided to myself and my staff over the years. From providing local data on programs and services to helping to organize events, Diane has always been only a phone call away. I consider myself fortunate to call her a friend and cannot thank her enough for the support and camaraderie she has shown to me.

I am honored to stand today to pay tribute to Diane Stroman for her invaluable professional and personal contributions to our community. Her good work and advocacy has helped hundreds of our most vulnerable families achieve economic and social stability. While her retirement marks the end of an extraordinary career, I have no doubt that Diane will continue to find ways in which to engage and make a difference in the lives of others. I wish her, her children, and grandchildren the very best for many more years of health and happiness as she begins this new chapter.

GRIFFIN McCONNELL

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Griffin McConnell for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Griffin McConnell is a student at North Arvada Middle School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Griffin McConnell is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Griffin McConnell for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

CELEBRATING MRS. KAREN SHELDON

HON. JOHN R. CARTER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate Mrs. Karen Sheldon for her sixteen years of service on the Georgetown, TX Chamber of Commerce. Karen's untiring commitment to making Georgetown a great place to live and work represents Texas values at their best.

After joining the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce in 2002 as Administrative Assistant, it was clear that Karen's hard work and dedication to the Chamber were unmatched. During her tenure, she served in many roles including Director of Development, Vice President, and Executive Vice President before being named Chamber President in 2014. Her time as President was focused on guiding the success and growth of her beloved community through advocacy, education, and civic engagement.

Karen's work in public service wasn't confined to the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce. She has continuously strived to make Georgetown a better city by serving on multiple boards and volunteering with numerous organizations. When she is not working for her community, Karen is a loving sister and proud mother of two daughters.

Retirement is meant to be celebrated and enjoyed. It is not the end of a career, but the beginning of a new adventure. Mrs. Karen Sheldon has left big shoes to fill as she has gone above and beyond the expected duties of a public servant. I thank her for her dedication to her community and proudly join her family, friends, and colleagues in wishing nothing but the best for her richly-deserved retirement.

HONORING AND REMEMBERING THE LIFE OF MR. JOSHUA WUNSCH

HON. JACK BERGMAN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Mr. BERGMAN. Mr. Speaker, it's my honor today to acknowledge the life of a devoted community leader and loving father and husband, Mr. Joshua Wunsch, who passed away at the age of 69 on April 25, 2018, surrounded by his loved ones.

Josh was born in Traverse City on November 7, 1948, to Ellis and Ann (Donald) Wunsch. A third-generation Grand Traverse County farmer, Wunsch, along with his wife Barb, son Isiah, and daughter Adele raised apples, tart cherries, and sweet cherries on their family orchard. Wunsch's passion for the trade was evident in his roles with the Michigan Agricultural Commodities Marketing Association (MACMA) and the Michigan Farm Bureau (MFB). He was first elected to the MACMA board in 1988, becoming Vice President in 1999. There he worked to promote and protect the Michigan apple industry until his retirement in 2011. On the MFB board, Wunsch was District 9 Director from 1988 to 2011, served as MFB Vice President from 2006 to 2009, served on the MACMA Board from 1989 to 2011, and served on its Executive Committee and as Vice President from 1999 to 2011.

In 2012, Wunsch received the MACMA Apple Division Distinguished Service to Agriculture award. In addition to his work with the MACMA and MFB, Josh was a board member of Shoreline Fruit Inc., Sleeping Bear Co-op, Traverse City Cherry, and Cherrco Inc. As a leader in his community and industry, Josh was well-known for his knowledge, expertise, and willingness to mentor others, and his dedication made him one of the most respected growers in Michigan agriculture. When not in his orchards, Josh loved to travel, enjoy Michigan's beautiful outdoors, and spend time with his family.

Mr. Speaker, Joshua Wunsch's impact on Northern Michigan cannot be overstated. His family and community can take pride in knowing that the state of Michigan is a better place thanks to his life's work. On behalf of Michigan's First Congressional District, I ask you to join me in recognizing an outstanding community leader whose contributions will continue to bless Michiganders for many years to come.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. CHERI BUSTOS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Mrs. BUSTOS. Mr. Speaker, due to flight cancellations and bad weather, I was unable to vote on the Legislative Day of May 15, 2018. Had I been present for these roll call votes, I would have cast the following votes: Roll Call 181: Yea; Roll Call 182: Yea; and Roll Call 183: Yea.

RECOGNIZING THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF FERNCARE FREE CLINIC

HON. SANDER M. LEVIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 10th Anniversary of FernCare Free Clinic. FernCare is a nonprofit free healthcare clinic located in the City of Ferndale, MI. The clinic specializes in the treatment of individuals without healthcare coverage and helps eligible, uninsured people obtain coverage through the Federal Marketplace or through Healthy Michigan, a Medicaid plan created thanks to the Affordable Care Act. The clinic is open for medical services four days each month, and provides counseling services twice each month.

In 2008, a group of concerned citizens in Ferndale decided to open a free health care clinic under the direction of Ann Heler, to serve the uninsured members of their community. Two years later, FernCare first opened as a popup clinic at a local community center, requiring volunteers to set up and tear down the operation each day. In 2009, I was honored to support FernCare's successful efforts to obtain a grant through the U.S. Department of Health

and Human Services, which helped to enable them to renovate a property to permanently house the clinic.

Over the last ten years, FernCare has served more than 1,200 patients. FernCare currently maintains the clinical care of over 300 patients a year with a small staff and more than 100 dedicated volunteers. Patients of FernCare receive primary care services including generic and over the counter medication prescription, lab testing, wellness coaching, and counseling services, as well as other vital assistance.

Mr. Speaker, FernCare continues to be an invaluable organization within Michigan's 9th District, providing essential services to those most in need. I often hear from patients and volunteers about the work FernCare does, and their stories are truly inspiring. I encourage my colleagues to join me in celebrating and honoring the 10th Anniversary of FernCare Free Clinic, its Board, led by Ann Heler, for its dedicated leadership, and the staff and volunteers for the irreplaceable service they provide to people in need.

DAVE MURPHY

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Dave Murphy for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Dave Murphy is a student at Drake Middle School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Dave Murphy is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Dave Murphy for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

CELEBRATING THE CAREER OF ROBIN BATTERSHELL

HON. JOHN R. CARTER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the career of devoted educator Robin Battershell as she retires after nearly four decades of incredible service. With her ''can-do'' spirit and high-minded vision, she has made Central Texas a model for innovative, child-focused education.

A native of Robinson, Texas, Robin's resume tells the story of a life devoted to education, starting as a third grade teacher in Houston and culminating with stints as superintendent of both Salado and Temple Independent School Districts. The hallmark of Robin's career is her unwavering devotion to prioritizing children in education. ''If you didn't think about a particular child today, then you have lost the reason you entered education in the first place,'' Robin says, noting it is the job of educators to determine ''where the child needs to go, and do everything in our power to help the child . . .''

As a wife and mother of three, Robin's commitment to her community doesn't stop when the school bell rings at the end of the day. She teaches at both the University of Mary Hardin Baylor and Texas A&M University Central Texas as well as serves on the Board for the Temple Chamber of Commerce and the United Way of Central Texas. Her generous activism speaks to the very best values of our nation.

Robin Battershell's retirement is the richly-deserved beginning of an exciting journey. I salute her work and commitment to ensuring the children of our beloved home state receive the education they deserve. I join her colleagues, family, and friends in honoring her career and wishing her nothing but the best in the years ahead.

RECOGNIZING BROWARD EDUCATION FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

HON. THEODORE E. DEUTCH

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Broward Education Foundation and its 2018 scholarship award recipients. The Broward Education Foundation continuously works to engage the broader community to make the Broward County Public School system one of the best in the State of Florida. These men and women have served Broward County with distinction through their efforts, and they have demonstrated a commitment to improving our public schools in South Florida.

The Broward Education Foundation helps to provide the students of Broward County with an exceptional education, enabling them to reach their greatest potential. The Foundation provides support for innovative teaching, educational materials for Title I schools, and Fiduciary oversight for community members who join in our educational mission by establishing Foundation agency funds.

The Foundation also provides students with scholarships that enable them to pursue higher education. These scholarships are awarded to graduating seniors who have exhausted all other avenues for financial aid, but still fall short of the financial means necessary to attend state or community college, university or vocational school. This year, the Foundation will provide over 200 of these scholarships to Broward County students. Congratulations to all of the 2018 Broward Education Foundation scholarship recipients.

Mr. Speaker, I express my deep appreciation for the Broward Education Foundation's work in our community. Their dedication has transformed the lives of students by providing them with the educational tools necessary to achieve. I them for their work and service.

TRIBUTE TO ANDREW LIVERIS

HON. JOHN R. MOOLENAAR

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Mr. MOOLENAAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Andrew Liveris, the Chairman and CEO of The Dow Chemical Company, upon his retirement from the company.

In his more than forty years with Dow, Mr. Liveris has been a recognized business leader and a leading advocate for manufacturing worldwide. Presidential administrations of both parties have recruited Mr. Liveris to serve as an advisor and have sought his expertise; Mr. Liveris served as co-chair of the steering committee for President Barack Obama's Advanced Manufacturing Partnership and served on President Donald Trump's Manufacturing Jobs Initiative.

As Chairman and CEO, Mr. Liveris has continued The Dow Chemical Company's strong commitment to the Great Lakes Bay Region, proudly opening a new corporate headquarters in Midland. Dow's investment has helped the city grow into a vibrant community.

Leading Dow's collaborations with numerous governments on advanced manufacturing plans and steering the company's investment and industry leadership around the world, Mr. Liveris has exhibited exemplary management at the helm of Dow. Under his leadership, the company weathered challenging economic times and completed a historic, transformational merger, moving the company forward for years to come.

On behalf of the Fourth Congressional District of Michigan, I am honored today to recognize Andrew Liveris upon his retirement from The Dow Chemical Company and extend my appreciation for his commitment to Midland and the Great Lakes Bay Region.

HONORING THE LIFE AND SACRIFICE OF FIREMAN 2ND CLASS LOWELL EARL VALLEY

HON. JACK BERGMAN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Mr. BERGMAN. Mr. Speaker, it's my honor today to acknowledge the life and sacrifice of Fireman 2nd Class Lowell Valley, who died in service to his country during the Pearl Harbor attacks in 1941. I ask that you join with me and the people of Michigan's First District in honoring the heroic sacrifices of our service men and women as Lowell's remains are returned to his home in Michigan after 77 years.

Lowell Earl Valley was born on July 20, 1922, in Ontonagon, Michigan. Following his high school graduation, Lowell enlisted in the U.S. Navy and was assigned to the USS *Oklahoma*. On December 7, 1941, the *Oklahoma* was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, when the ship was attacked by Japanese aircraft. The USS *Oklahoma* sustained multiple torpedo hits, causing it to quickly capsize. The attack on the ship resulted in the deaths of 429 crewmen, including Lowell. Following the attack, 394 of the lost service members were unable to be identified and were laid to rest in the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific,

known as the "Punchbowl," in Honolulu, Hawaii.

In 2015, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency exhumed remains from the Punchbowl, with the goal of returning identified service members to their families. After two years of work, Lowell was identified in January of 2018 by using DNA from his brother Bob and other family members. He is the last of three Upper Peninsula men who were killed in the Pearl Harbor attack to be identified.

Lowell's name is recorded on the Courts of the Missing at the Punchbowl Cemetery, along with the others who are missing from World War II. A rosette will be placed next to his name to indicate he has been accounted for. Following his death Lowell was honored with a Purple Heart, the American Campaign Medal, and the World War II Victory Medal. An interment ceremony for Lowell will be held on July 14, 2018, at the Holy Family Catholic Church in Ontonagon. His remains will be escorted by a full Honor Guard and rifle squad, as well as by Veterans from across the country.

Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to recognize Lowell Valley for making the ultimate sacrifice in defense of his country. On behalf of Michigan's First Congressional District, I ask you to join with me in honoring an American hero as he returns home.

HONORING WILLIAM S. LYONS

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize 1st Lieutenant William S. Lyons, also known as 'Tiger Lyons.' Mr. Lyons was part of the 355th Fighter Group. Mr. Lyons became a flight leader with 63 missions and completed his 300 combat hours in March 1945.

The 355th Fighter Group, which Mr. Lyons served in, had pioneered ground strafing techniques and it was the 355th Fighter Group who destroyed more enemy aircraft by ground strafing than any other Eighth Air Force Group. Based at Steeple Morden from July 1943 to July 1945, the Group flew Thunderbolts and Mustangs as escorts for bombers and in area patrols and fighter sweeps.

For his service he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with 8 Oak Leaf Cluster, 5 European Theater Operation Battle Stars, European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal, World War II Victory Medal, and 2 Presidential Unit Citations.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank Mr. Lyons for his service to the country and to express our gratitude for all that his team did during their war to protect the freedoms we all enjoy today.

JERRY PIFER

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor Jerry Pifer for her hard work and dedication to the people of the 7th Congressional District.

Since I met Jerry in 2003, she has become a great friend and an instrumental member of my team. For more than 10 years, she has worked in my congressional office as part of the constituent services team and handled the issues of healthcare, Medicare/Medicaid, Social Security, labor and postal. Her wealth of experience with labor issues and in customer service made her a tremendous asset to our team and to the constituents we serve. Her relationships with local officials, liaisons at federal agencies, and within the community helped ensure she was always able to help answer questions, direct folks to the appropriate resources, and at times even secure money or benefits that were owed.

Prior to serving in my congressional office, Jerry worked as a Flight Attendant for United Airlines for 30 years. After retiring from United Airlines, she got involved in the Colorado Democratic Party and helped run the Colorado campaign for John Kerry's presidential bid from 2003–2004. From there, she helped make my first congressional campaign a success and went on to help open my first congressional office in 2007.

Jerry has a true gift for working with people, always able to make them feel comfortable and welcome with her good nature and sense of humor. I extend my deepest appreciation to Jerry Pifer for the difference she made in the lives of many people in our community. I will forever be grateful for her service to our team, the district, and the United States of America.

IN RECOGNITION OF AMBASSADOR ROBERTA S. JACOBSON

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the career and service of Roberta S. Jacobson, U.S. Ambassador to Mexico.

Ambassador Jacobson represented the best interests of the United States and showed exceptional poise while dealing with a variety of complex issues as a diplomat. I personally want to thank her for her years of strong leadership, dedication to service, and unyielding commitment to improving relations with Mexico. I would also like to recognize her for being outspoken on countless issues including violence against women, human rights, and journalist safety.

Ambassador Jacobson served in a variety of important roles throughout her career, including Director of the Office of Policy Planning and Coordination in the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Lima, Peru, Director of the Office of Mexican Affairs, and Deputy Assistant Secretary for Canada, Mexico, and NAFTA issues in the Bureau. She would soon serve as Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs where she is noted for leading the U.S. delegation in historic talks with the government of Cuba to normalize relations. Eventually she would be confirmed and sworn in as the first female U.S. ambassador to Mexico.

She received a Bachelor of Arts from Brown University and received her Master of Arts in Law and Diplomacy from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. She would then go on to a long and successful career in the service of our country.

In addition to her diplomatic work, she is the author of several articles including "The Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women" in the United Nations and Human Rights and "Liberation Theology as a Revolutionary Ideology."

For these reasons and more, Ambassador Jacobson will be remembered for her work and leadership, for years to come.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to have the opportunity to recognize the career of Ambassador Jacobson.

RECOGNIZING SERGEANT MAJOR JUAN J. MARTINEZ

HON. JOHN R. CARTER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I'm honored to celebrate and recognize the heroic work of an exceptional citizen of our district, Sergeant Major Juan J. Martinez, USMC, Retired. Throughout his extraordinary military career and beyond, he has dedicated himself to a life of service to both Central Texas and this remarkable country.

SgtMaj Martinez 1972 enlisted in the United States Marine Corps in 1972. Since then he has spent every waking day displaying Marine Corps values of honor, courage, and commitment as he worked his way up to the rank of Sergeant Major in 1997. Throughout his thirty years with the USMC, SgtMaj Martinez displayed outstanding leadership and selflessness, resulting in numerous awards and commendations, including the prestigious Meritorious Service and Marine Corp Commendation Medals.

SgtMaj Martinez's work was not limited to military service alone as he took it upon himself to be a role model and instructor in Texas schools. Central Texas has been blessed to have SgtMaj Martinez teach the MCJROTC at Round Rock High School for the past ten years. His encouragement and passion for the Marine Corps has instilled in our youth a sense of duty and shown them the fruits of a lifetime of service.

SgtMaj Martinez has gone above and beyond the expected duties of a Marine and has led our youth to new heights. We are grateful for each year he has dedicated to our country. He has blessed Central Texas with his hard work, valor, and I am proud here to congratulate him on his retirement after decades of service.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DANIEL WEBSTER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to travel back to Washington due to illness. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 181; YEA on Roll Call No. 182; and YEA on Roll Call No. 183.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LLOYD SMUCKER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Mr. SMUCKER. Mr. Speaker, had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 181; YEA on Roll Call No. 182; and YEA on Roll Call No. 183.

CHRISTOPHER D'URSO: AN EXTRAORDINARY RHODES SCHOLAR

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Christopher D'Urso, a senior at the University of Pennsylvania from Colts Neck, NJ, in my district, who was one of only 32 candidates nationwide selected as a 2018 Rhodes Scholar, for a three-year doctoral program at Oxford University.

Christopher graduated from the University of Pennsylvania this week with a Master's of Public Administration (MPA) and a Certificate in Politics through Penn's Fels Institute of Government—the youngest student to graduate the university with an MPA. He also earned a Bachelor of Arts in International Relations, and was named Valedictorian of the International Relations Senior Class of 2018, with a 4.0 GPA.

This fall, Christopher will begin pursuing a doctorate in Public Policy at Oxford's renowned Blavatnik School of Government as one of only five full-time students worldwide selected to enroll in this program.

Rhodes Scholarships honor young men and women not only for their achievements, but ''for their character, commitment to others and to the common good, and for their potential for leadership in whatever domains their careers may lead.''

Christopher most certainly meets these high standards, as I have seen first-hand his keen intellect, passion for public service, outstanding leadership qualities and commitment to excellence. From 2013 to 2014, he interned in my district office where he assisted our staff with casework matters by helping provide valuable information from government agencies.

As a high school student, his research on loopholes in U.S. country-of-origin labeling laws that pose risks to consumer safety was so well-conducted that in 2014, he testified before the China Commission alongside officials from the USDA and the FDA in a hearing on concerns over food exports from China. He also produced a report with legislative recommendations on the issue.

I know that consumer safety and public service are important issues for Christopher—while at Penn, he founded Penn CASE, a student—led consumer assistance outreach program for local residents. Christopher also worked for the Monmouth County Department of Consumer Affairs for three years, investigating 70 consumer complaints—many of them related to Hurricane Sandy—and helping return over $114,000 to local citizens.

His senior project, a report on ''Translating Justice: An Evaluation of U.S. Efforts to Support Criminal Procedure Reform in Panama,'' was borne out of his recent trip to Panama as part of his MP A capstone project; he interviewed Panamanian and U.S. officials on the country's criminal justice system and evaluated U.S. programs created to help reform the system. Christopher won Penn's Rose Undergraduate Research Award for his work, and he will share his evaluation and recommendations with the U.S. Department of Justice, the State Department, and the Panamanian Embassy.

As Christopher graduates and prepares to attend Oxford in the fall, I wish him all the best in this exciting new step in his life.

TRIBUTE TO MS. ELISA IRENE DELARGE

HON. ROBERT A. BRADY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor my constituent, Ms. Elisa Irene DeLarge, on her graduation from high school and her matriculation to college.

Ms. DeLarge is a soon-to-be graduate of William W. Bodine High School, where she earned a 3.7GPA over four years. Her success in academics is a testament to her hard work, tireless work ethic and devotion to her future. Ms. DeLarge's will continue her academic career by taking courses at The Community College of Philadelphia this summer and attending The University of Michigan this Fall.

In addition to her own academic success, Ms. DeLarge is also committed to aiding future graduates of Philadelphia schools. Ms. DeLarge devotes countless hours to tutoring elementary and middle school students at the Narcissa S. Cruz Recreation Center. This act of selfless mentorship further speaks to Ms. DeLarge's work ethic and morals.

Mr. Speaker, please join me today in congratulating Ms. DeLarge today.

A TRAGIC DAY FOR PALESTINIAN RIGHTS AND AMERICAN LEADERSHIP

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, Monday's events in Jerusalem and Gaza will long be remembered as the day the U.S. formally abandoned its role as mediator and peacemaker in the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. The Trump administration's decision to move the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem was a grave departure from internationally recognized norms regarding the final status of Jerusalem. Monday's opening ceremony of the new U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem will prove to be a historic mistake that will haunt future U.S. presidents long after Donald Trump has departed the White House.

The ceremony marking the Embassy's opening was made for television, as well as the right-wing voters in America and Israel the policy was intended to appeal to. The prospects of peace were discarded and no consideration was given to the existence of millions of Palestinians living under Israeli military occupation or the fact that just miles away from the new Embassy more than 60 Palestinian protesters were being killed by Israeli snipers. The extremist, homophobic, and racist televangelists—John Hagee and Robert Jeffress—were invited by the Trump administration to offer prayers on behalf of the America people at the ceremony. Their presence and prominent roles can only be described as an insult to American and Christian values.

Israel is a nation that enjoys security and military superiority largely as a result of the generosity of American taxpayers. The rights and freedoms enjoyed by Jewish citizens of Israel are not enjoyed by non-Jews who suffer discrimination as second-class citizens. For the millions of Palestinians living under Israeli military occupation there are no human rights, only repression, violence; and the constant pressure of having their land, water, and dignity taken from them.

I believe in the critical role of the U.S. as a global leader for advancing human rights and justice. It should infuriate and illicit outrage among Americans to witness the Trump administration abandoning such leadership in exchange for a payback on political debts to right-wing special interest groups. For the Israelis and Palestinians who still believe that diplomacy, dialogue, and reducing conflict are the only path to peace, I will state clearly that the Trump administration cannot and must not be trusted with the future of your children or your countries.

I include in the RECORD a column by Michelle Goldbert from the New York Times entitled A Grotesque Spectacle in Jerusalem that outlines the day that destroyed U.S. leadership in the Middle East. The more than sixty Palestinian protesters who were killed by Israeli snipers and soldiers have been buried. Their families and friends grieve. For Americans who believe the U.S. is a force to advance human rights, equality, and justice, we also grieve because Monday's spectacle in Jerusalem placed the U.S. on the side of oppression and repression of a people seeking basic human rights, freedom and self-determination. It was a truly grotesque spectacle.

[From the New York Times: May 14, 2018]

(By Michelle Goldberg)

A GROTESQUE SPECTACLE IN JERUSALEM

On Monday, Ivanka Trump, Jared Kushner and other leading lights of the Trumpist right gathered in Israel to celebrate the relocation of the American Embassy to Jerusalem, a gesture widely seen as a slap in the face to Palestinians who envision East Jerusalem as their future capital.

The event was grotesque. It was a consummation of the cynical alliance between hawkish Jews and Zionist evangelicals who believe that the return of Jews to Israel will usher in the apocalypse and the return of Christ, after which Jews who don't convert will burn forever.

Religions like ''Mormonism, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism'' lead people ''to an eternity of separation from God in Hell,'' Robert Jeffress, a Dallas megachurch pastor, once said. He was chosen to give the opening prayer at the embassy ceremony. John Hagee, one of America's most prominent end-times preachers, once said that Hitler was sent by God to drive the Jews to their ancestral homeland. He gave the closing benediction.

This spectacle, geared toward Donald Trump's Christian American base, coincided

with a massacre about 40 miles away. Since March 30, there have been mass protests at the fence separating Gaza and Israel. Gazans, facing an escalating humanitarian crisis due in large part to an Israeli blockade, are demanding the right to return to homes in Israel that their families were forced from at Israel's founding. The demonstrators have been mostly but not entirely peaceful; Gazans have thrown rocks at Israeli soldiers and tried to fly flaming kites into Israel. The Israeli military has responded with live gunfire as well as rubber bullets and tear gas. In clashes on Monday, at least 58 Palestinians were killed and thousands wounded, according to the Gaza Health Ministry.

The juxtaposition of images of dead and wounded Palestinians and Ivanka Trump smiling in Jerusalem like a Zionist Marie Antoinette tell us a lot about America's relationship to Israel right now. It has never been closer, but within that closeness there are seeds of potential estrangement.

Defenders of Israel's actions in Gaza will argue no country would allow a mob to charge its border. They will say that even if Hamas didn't call the protests, it has thrown its support behind them. ''The responsibility for these tragic deaths rests squarely with Hamas,'' a White House spokesman, Raj Shah, said on Monday.

But even if you completely dismiss the Palestinian right of return—which I find harder to do now that Israel's leadership has all but abandoned the possibility of a Palestinian state—it hardly excuses the Israeli military's disproportionate violence. ''What we're seeing is that Israel has used, yet again, excessive and lethal force against protesters who do not pose an imminent threat,'' Magdalena Mughrabi, Amnesty International's deputy director for the Middle East and North Africa, told me by phone from Jerusalem.

Much of the world condemned the killings in Gaza. Yet the United States, Israel's most important patron, has given it a free hand to do with the Palestinians what it will. Indeed, by moving the embassy to Jerusalem in the first place, Trump sent the implicit message that the American government has given up any pretense of neutrality.

Reports of Israel's gratitude to Trump abound. A square near the embassy is being renamed in his honor. Beitar Jerusalem, a soccer team whose fans are notorious for their racism, is now calling itself Beitar ''Trump'' Jerusalem. But if Israelis love Trump, many Americans—and certainly most American Jews—do not. The more Trumpism and Israel are intertwined, the more left-leaning Americans will grow alienated from Zionism.

Even before Trump, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu helped open a partisan divide on Israel in American politics, where previously there had been stultifying unanimity. ''Until these past few years, you'd never heard the word 'occupation' or 'settlements' or talk about Gaza,'' Jeremy Ben-Ami, president of the liberal pro-Israel group J Street, said of American politicians. But Ben-Ami told me that since 2015, when Netanyahu tried to undercut President Barack Obama with a controversial address to Congress opposing the Iran deal, Democrats have felt more emboldened. ''That changed the calculus forever,'' he told me.

The events of Monday may have changed it further, and things could get worse still. Tuesday is Nakba Day, when Palestinians commemorate their dispossession, and the protests at the fence are expected to be even larger. ''People don't feel like they can stay at home after loved ones and neighbors have been killed for peacefully protesting for their rights,'' Abdulrahman Abunahel, a Gaza-based activist with the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement, told me via email.

Trump has empowered what's worst in Israel, and as long as he is president, it may be that Israel can kill Palestinians, demolish their homes and appropriate their land with impunity. But some day, Trump will be gone. With hope for a two-state solution nearly dead, current trends suggest that a Jewish minority will come to rule over a largely disenfranchised Muslim majority in all the land under Israel's control. A rising generation of Americans may see an apartheid state with a Trump Square in its capital and wonder why it's supposed to be our friend.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate of February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Thursday, May 17, 2018 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

MAY 21

5 p.m.
Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on Airland
Closed business meeting to markup those provisions which fall under the subcommittee's jurisdiction of the proposed National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2019.
SR–232A

MAY 22

9:30 a.m.
Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on SeaPower
Closed business meeting to markup those provisions which fall under the subcommittee's jurisdiction of the proposed National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2019.
SR–232A

10 a.m.
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government
To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2019 for the Department of the Treasury.
SD–138

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
Business meeting to consider S. 2098, to modernize and strengthen the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States to more effectively guard against the risk to the national security of the United States posed by certain types of foreign investment.
SD–538

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
Business meeting to consider S. 2848, to improve Department of Transportation controlled substances and alcohol testing, S. 2842, to prohibit the marketing of bogus opioid treatment programs or products, S. 2844, to require the Surface Transportation Board to implement certain recommendations of the Inspector General of the Department of Transportation, S. 2764, to amend and enhance the High Seas Driftnet Fishing Moratorium Protection Act to improve the conservation of sharks, S. 1092, to protect the right of law-abiding citizens to transport knives interstate, notwithstanding a patchwork of local and State prohibitions, S. 2418, to direct the Federal Communications Commission to promulgate regulations that establish a national standard for determining whether mobile and broadband services available in rural areas are reasonably comparable to those services provided in urban areas, the nominations of Heidi R. King, of California, to be Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Department of Transportation, Joseph Ryan Gruters, of Florida, to be a Director of the Amtrak Board of Directors, Jennifer L. Homendy, of Virginia, to be a Member of the National Transportation Safety Board, and routine lists in the Coast Guard.
SD–106

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
To hold hearings to examine the healthcare workforce, focusing on addressing shortages and improving care.
SD–430

10:30 a.m.
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
Business meeting to markup an original bill entitled, ''Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2019''.
SD–192

11 a.m.
Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on Readiness and Management Support
Closed business meeting to markup those provisions which fall under the subcommittee's jurisdiction of the proposed National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2019.
SR–232A

2:15 p.m.
Committee on Foreign Relations
Business meeting to consider S. 2269, to reauthorize the Global Food Security Act of 2016 for 5 additional years, S. Res. 386, urging the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to fulfill its agreement to hold credible elections, comply with constitutional limits on presidential terms, and fulfill its constitutional mandate for a democratic transition of power by taking concrete and measurable steps towards holding elections not later than December 2018 as outlined in the existing election calendar, and allowing for freedom of expression and association, and the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired, or Otherwise Print Disabled,

done at Marrakesh on June 27, 2013 (Marrakesh Treaty) (Treaty Doc.114–06).

S–116

2:30 p.m.
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development
Business meeting to markup an original bill entitled, ''Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2019''.

SD–138

Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on Personnel
Business meeting to markup those provisions which fall under the subcommittee's jurisdiction of the proposed National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2019.

SH–216

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
Subcommittee on Consumer Protection, Product Safety, Insurance, and Data Security
To hold hearings to examine preventing abuse in Olympic and amateur athletics, focusing on ensuring a safe and secure environment for our athletes.

SR–253

Joint Economic Committee
To hold hearings to examine breaking through the regulatory barrier, focusing on what red tape means for the innovation economy.

LHOB–1100

3:30 p.m.
Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on Cybersecurity
Closed business meeting to markup those provisions which fall under the subcommittee's jurisdiction of the proposed National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2019.

SR–232A

4:30 p.m.
Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities
Closed business meeting to markup those provisions which fall under the subcommittee's jurisdiction of the proposed National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2019.

SR–232A

5:15 p.m.
Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on Strategic Forces
Closed business meeting to markup those provisions which fall under the subcommittee's jurisdiction of the proposed National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2019.

SR–232A

MAY 23

9:30 a.m.
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2019 for the Department of Health and Human Services, Indian Health Service.

SD–124

Committee on Armed Services
Closed business meeting to markup the proposed National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2019.

SR–222

10 a.m.
Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
To hold hearings to examine the status of the housing finance system.

SD–538

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
Business meeting to consider S. 2852, to reauthorize certain programs under the Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Reauthorization Act.

SD–430

Committee on the Judiciary
To hold hearings to examine pending nominations.

SD–226

10:30 a.m.
Committee on the Budget
To hold hearings to examine the Government Accountability Office's annual report on additional opportunities to reduce fragmentation, overlap, and duplication in the Federal government.

SD–608

2:30 p.m.
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2019 for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

SD–192

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Emory A. Rounds III, of Maine, to be Director of the Office of Government Ethics, Kelly Higashi, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia, and Frederick M. Nutt, of Virginia, to be Controller, Office of Federal Financial Management, Office of Management and Budget.

SD–342

Committee on the Judiciary
Subcommittee on Border Security and Immigration
To hold hearings to examine the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act and exploited loopholes affecting unaccompanied alien children.

SD–226

MAY 24

9 a.m.
Committee on Finance
To hold hearings to examine rural health care in America, focusing on challenges and opportunities.

SD–215

9:30 a.m.
Committee on Armed Services
Closed business meeting to continue to markup the proposed National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2019.

SR–222

10 a.m.
Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
To hold hearings to examine cybersecurity, focusing on risks to the financial services industry and its preparedness.

SD–538

Committee on Foreign Relations
To hold hearings to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2019 for the Department of State.

SD–419

MAY 25

9:30 a.m.
Committee on Armed Services
Closed business meeting to continue to markup the proposed National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2019.

SR–222

Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S2687–S2733

Measures Introduced: Nineteen bills and four resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 2853–2871, and S. Res. 511–514. **Pages S2724–25**

Measures Reported:

S. 1692, to authorize the National Emergency Medical Services Memorial Foundation to establish a commemorative work in the District of Columbia and its environs. (S. Rept. No. 115–249) **Pages S2723–24**

Measures Passed:

Federal Communications Commission Rule: By 52 yeas to 47 nays (Vote No. 97), Senate passed S.J. Res. 52, providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Federal Communications Commission relating to "Restoring Internet Freedom", after agreeing to the motion to proceed. **Pages S2698–S2709**

During consideration of this measure today, Senate also took the following action:

By 52 yeas to 47 nays (Vote No. 96), Senate agreed to Markey motion to proceed to consideration of the joint resolution. **Page S2698**

Improve Data on Sexual Violence Act: Senate passed S. 2349, to direct the Director of the Office of Management and Budget to establish an interagency working group to study Federal efforts to collect data on sexual violence and to make recommendations on the harmonization of such efforts. **Page S2731**

Project Safe Neighborhoods Grant Program Authorization Act: Committee on the Judiciary was discharged from further consideration of H.R. 3249, to authorize the Project Safe Neighborhoods Grant Program, and the bill was then passed, after agreeing to the following amendment proposed thereto: **Pages S2731–32**

McConnell (for Cornyn/Peters) Amendment No. 2245, in the nature of a substitute. **Pages S2731–32**

SEA Act: Committee on Veterans' Affairs was discharged from further consideration of H.R. 2772, to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for requirements relating to the reassignment of Department of Veterans Affairs senior executive employees, and the bill was then passed, after agreeing to the following amendment proposed thereto: **Page S2732**

McConnell (for Tillis) Amendment No. 2244, in the nature of a substitute. **Page S2732**

Veterans in Rehabilitation Programs: Committee on Veterans' Affairs was discharged from further consideration of H.R. 3562, to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to furnish assistance for adaptations of residences of veterans in rehabilitation programs under chapter 31 of such title, and the bill was then passed. **Page S2732**

Smithsonian National Zoological Park Central Parking Facility Authorization Act: Committee on Rules and Administration was discharged from further consideration of H.R. 4009, to authorize the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution to plan, design, and construct a central parking facility on National Zoological Park property in the District of Columbia, and the bill was then passed. **Pages S2732–33**

Authorizing the Use of Emancipation Hall: Senate agreed to H. Con. Res. 112, authorizing the use of Emancipation Hall in the Capitol Visitor Center for an event to celebrate the birthday of King Kamehameha I. **Page S2733**

National Police Week: Senate agreed to S. Res. 512, designating the week of May 13 through May 19, 2018, as "National Police Week". **Page S2733**

National Foster Care Month: Senate agreed to S. Res. 513, recognizing National Foster Care Month as an opportunity to raise awareness about the challenges of children in the foster-care system, and encouraging Congress to implement policy to improve the lives of children in the foster-care system. **Page S2733**

National Charter Schools Week: Senate agreed to S. Res. 514, congratulating the students, parents, teachers, and leaders of charter schools across the

United States for making ongoing contributions to education, and supporting the ideals and goals of the 19th annual National Charter Schools Week, celebrated May 7 through May 11, 2018. **Page S2733**

Budget Resolution—Agreement: A unanimous-consent-time agreement was reached providing that following Leader remarks on Thursday, May 17, 2018, Senator Paul, or his designee, be recognized to make a motion to proceed to consideration of S. Con. Res. 36, a concurrent resolution setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2019 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2020 through 2028; that there be up to 90 minutes of debate on the motion, with 45 minutes under the control of Senator Paul, or his designee, and 45 minutes under the control of the Democratic Leader, or his designee; and that following the use or yielding back of that time, Senate vote in relation to the motion. **Page S2719**

Nominations Confirmed: Senate confirmed the following nominations:

By 50 yeas to 48 nays (Vote No. EX. 98), Mitchell Zais, of South Carolina, to be Deputy Secretary of Education. **Pages S2687–98, S2709–10, S2733**

1 Coast Guard nomination in the rank of admiral. **Pages S2719, S2733**

Messages from the House: **Page S2723**

Measures Referred: **Page S2723**

Measures Placed on the Calendar: **Pages S2723, S2731**

Executive Communications: **Page S2723**

Petitions and Memorials: **Page S2723**

Executive Reports of Committees: **Page S2724**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S2725–26**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S2726–29**

Additional Statements: **Pages S2722–23**

Amendments Submitted: **Pages S2729–30**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Pages S2730–31**

Privileges of the Floor: **Page S2731**

Record Votes: Three record votes were taken today. (Total—98) **Pages S2698, S2709–10**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 9:30 a.m. and adjourned at 6:47 p.m., until 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, May 17, 2018. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S2733.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

APPROPRIATIONS: EPA

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies concluded a hearing to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2019 for the Environmental Protection Agency, after receiving testimony from Scott Pruitt, Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency.

APPROPRIATIONS: FBI

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies concluded open and closed hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2019 for the Federal Bureau of Investigation, after receiving testimony from Christopher A. Wray, Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of Justice.

ROLE OF DHS IN STOPPING FLOW OF DRUGS

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Department of Homeland Security concluded a hearing to examine the role of the Department of Homeland Security in stopping the flow of opioids, methamphetamines, and other dangerous drugs, after receiving testimony from Todd Owen, Executive Assistant Commissioner, Customs and Border Protection, Office of Field Operations, Derek Benner, Acting Executive Associate Director, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Homeland Security Investigations, and Andre L. Hentz, Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Science and Technology, Science and Technology Directorate, all of the Department of Homeland Security.

RAILROAD SAFETY

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies concluded a hearing to examine railroad safety initiatives, after receiving testimony from Ronald L. Batory, Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration, Department of Transportation; Stephen J. Gardner, Amtrak, Washington, D.C.; Arthur Leahy, Southern California Regional Rail Authority (Metrolink), Los Angeles, California; and Patricia Quinn, Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority, Portland, Maine.

NOMINATIONS

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nominations of Joseph Ryan Gruters, of Florida, to

be a Director of the Amtrak Board of Directors, who was introduced by Representative Ronney; Jennifer L. Homendy, of Virginia, to be a Member of the National Transportation Safety Board, who was introduced by Senator Blumenthal, and Heidi R. King, of California, to be Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Department of Transportation, after the nominees testified and answered questions in their own behalf.

INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Subcommittee on Space, Science, and Competiveness concluded a hearing to examine the future of the International Space Station; focusing on Administration perspectives, after receiving testimony from William H. Gerstenmaier, Associate Administrator for Human Exploration and Operations, and Paul K. Martin, Inspector General, both of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Foreign Relations: Committee ordered favorably reported the nominations of Francis R. Fannon, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary (Energy Resources), Jonathan R. Cohen, of California, to be the Deputy Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, with the rank and status of Ambassador, and the Deputy Representative of the United States of America in the Security Council of the United Nations, and to be Representative of the United States of America to the Sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations, during his tenure of service as Deputy Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, and David B. Cornstein, of New York, to be Ambassador to Hungary, all of the Department of State, Eliot Pedrosa, of Florida, to be United States Alternate Executive Director of the Inter-American Development Bank, and Jackie Wolcott, of Virginia, to be Representative of the United States of America to the International Atomic Energy Agency, with the rank of Ambassador, and to be Representative of the United States of America to the Vienna Office of the United Nations, with the rank of Ambassador.

AUTHORIZATION OF THE USE OF MILITARY FORCE

Committee on Foreign Relations: Committee concluded a hearing to examine S.J. Res. 59, to authorize the use of military force against the Taliban, al Qaeda, the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, and designated associated forces, and to provide an updated, transparent, and sustainable statutory basis for counterterrorism operations, after receiving testimony from John B. Bellinger III, Council on Foreign Relations, and Rita M. Siemion, Human Rights First, both of Washington, D.C.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Indian Affairs: Committee ordered favorably reported the following business items:

S. 1400, to amend title 18, United States Code, to enhance protections of Native American tangible cultural heritage; and

S. 2804, to provide for the reform and continuation of agricultural and other programs of the Department of Agriculture for Indian Country.

SAFETY AND SECURITY AT BUREAU OF INDIAN EDUCATION SCHOOLS

Committee on Indian Affairs: Committee concluded an oversight hearing to examine safety and security at Bureau of Indian Education schools, after receiving testimony from Tony Dearman, Director, Bureau of Indian Education, Department of the Interior; Cecelia Firethunder, Oglala Lakota Nation Education Coalition, Pine Ridge, South Dakota; and Gary J. Lujan, Santa Fe Indian School, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

CAMBRIDGE ANALYTICA

Committee on the Judiciary: Committee concluded a hearing to examine Cambridge Analytica and the future of data privacy, after receiving testimony from Eitan Hersh, Tufts University, Medford, Massachusetts; Mark A. Jamison, American Enterprise Institute, Gainesville, Florida; and Christopher Wylie, London, United Kingdom.

BUSINESS MEETING

Select Committee on Intelligence: Committee ordered favorably reported the nomination of Gina Haspel, of Kentucky, to be Director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

INTELLIGENCE

Select Committee on Intelligence: Committee held closed hearings on intelligence matters, receiving testimony from officials of the intelligence community.

Committee recessed subject to the call.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 24 public bills, H.R. 5833–5856; and 4 resolutions, H. Con. Res. 121; and H. Res. 897–899 were introduced. **Pages H4137–38**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages H4139–40**

Report Filed: A report was filed today as follows:

H. Res. 900, providing for further consideration of the bill (H.R. 2) to provide for the reform and continuation of agricultural and other programs of the Department of Agriculture through fiscal year 2023, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 115–679). **Page H4137**

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Higgins (LA) to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. **Page H3981**

Recess: The House recessed at 10:59 a.m. and reconvened at 12 noon. **Page H3987**

Guest Chaplain: The prayer was offered by the Guest Chaplain, Dr. Ted Kitchens, Christ Chapel Bible Church, Fort Worth, TX. **Page H3987**

Journal: The House agreed to the Speaker's approval of the Journal by voice vote. **Pages H3987, H4058**

Committee Resignation: Read a letter from Representative Banks (IN) wherein he resigned from the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology. **Page H3990**

Committee Resignation: Read a letter from Representative Rutherford wherein he resigned from the Committee on Homeland Security and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. **Page H3990**

Committee Resignation: Read a letter from Representative Wenstrup wherein he resigned from the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Committee on Armed Services. **Pages H3990–91**

Committee Elections: The House agreed to H. Res. 897, electing Members to certain standing committees of the House of Representatives. **Page H3991**

Suspension—Proceedings Resumed: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measure. Consideration began Tuesday, May 15th.

Black Hills National Cemetery Boundary Expansion Act: S. 35, to transfer administrative jurisdiction over certain Bureau of Land Management land from the Secretary of the Interior to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for inclusion in the Black Hills National Cemetery, by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 407 yeas with none voting "nay", Roll No. 187. **Page H4008**

Requesting the Senate to return to the House of Representatives the bill H.R. 4743: The House agreed to H. Res. 899, requesting the Senate to return to the House of Representatives the bill H.R. 4743. **Page H4008**

Unanimous Consent Agreement: Agreed by unanimous consent that the question of adopting the amendment to H.R. 5698 may be subject to postponement as though under clause 8 of rule 20. **Page H4009**

Protect and Serve Act of 2018: The House passed H.R. 5698, to amend title 18, United States Code, to punish criminal offenses targeting law enforcement officers, by a yea-and-nay vote of 382 yeas to 35 nays, Roll No. 188. **Pages H4009–14, H4057**

Agreed to:

Goodlatte amendment (No. 1 printed in part A of H. Rept. 115–677) that adds clarifying language so only those who cause injury to a law enforcement officer with intent, not by accident, can be charged under the statute; it also amends the definition of law enforcement officer to assure correctional officers are covered by the definition. **Page H4014**

H. Res. 891, the rule providing for consideration of the bills (H.R. 5698), (S. 2372), and (H.R. 2) was agreed to by a recorded vote of 229 ayes to 185 noes, Roll No. 186, after the previous question was ordered by a yea-and-nay vote of 230 yeas to 184 nays, Roll No. 185. **Pages H3991–H4007**

A point of order was raised against the consideration of H. Res. 891 and it was agreed to proceed with consideration of the resolution by a yea-and-nay vote of 223 yeas to 181 nays, Roll No. 184. **Pages H3991–94**

Veterans Cemetery Benefit Correction Act: The House passed S. 2372, to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide outer burial receptacles for remains buried in National Parks, by a recorded vote of 347 ayes to 70 noes, Roll No. 189. **Pages H4014–46, H4057–58**

Pursuant to the Rule, an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of H.R. 5674 as reported by the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, as modified by the amendment printed in part B of H. Rept. 115–677, shall be considered as adopted. **Page H4014**

H. Res. 891, the rule providing for consideration of the bills (H.R. 5698), (S. 2372), and (H.R. 2) was agreed to by a recorded vote of 229 ayes to 185

noes, Roll No. 186, after the previous question was ordered by a yea-and-nay vote of 230 yeas to 184 nays, Roll No. 185. **Pages H3991–H4007**

A point of order was raised against the consideration of H. Res. 891 and it was agreed to proceed with consideration of the resolution by a yea-and-nay vote of 223 yeas to 181 nays, Roll No. 184. **Pages H3991–94**

Directing the Secretary of the Senate to make a correction in the enrollment of the bill S. 2372: The House agreed to H. Con. Res. 121, directing the Secretary of the Senate to make a correction in the enrollment of the bill S. 2372. **Page H4058**

Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018: The House considered H.R. 2, to provide for the reform and continuation of agricultural and other programs of the Department of Agriculture through fiscal year 2023. Consideration is expected to resume tomorrow, May 17th. **Pages H4046–50, H4050–57, H4058–4129**

Pursuant to the Rule, it shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Agriculture now printed in the bill. **Page H4058**

Agreed to:

King (IA) amendment (No. 1 printed in part C of H. Rept. 115–677) that allows Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) to go into contracts with drainage districts to provide irrigation or water efficiency; **Pages H4123–24**

Gibbs amendment (No. 2 printed in part C of H. Rept. 115–677) that expresses a sense of Congress encouraging partnerships at the watershed level between nonpoint sources and regulated point sources to advance the goals of the Water Pollution Control Act; **Page H4124**

Rogers (AL) amendment (No. 4 printed in part C of H. Rept. 115–677) that amends the Nutrition title to allow SNAP users to purchase a multivitamin with their SNAP benefits; **Pages H4124–25**

Bergman amendment (No. 5 printed in part C of H. Rept. 115–677) that directs GAO to study the agricultural credit needs of farms, ranches, and related agricultural businesses that are owned or operated by Indian tribes on tribal lands or enrolled members of Indian tribes on Indian allotments; if needs are not being met, report shall include legislative and other recommendations that would result in a system under which the needs are met in an equitable and effective manner; **Page H4125**

Arrington amendment (No. 6 printed in part C of H. Rept. 115–677) that modifies the Community Facilities Direct Loan and Guarantee Loan Program and the Business and Industry Guaranteed Loan Program to permit rural hospitals to refinance existing debt; **Pages H4125–26**

Jones amendment (No. 7 printed in part C of H. Rept. 115–677) that removes the first 1,500 individuals residing on military bases from calculation into population thresholds set for 'rural areas'; **Pages H4126–27**

Latta amendment (No. 8 printed in part C of H. Rept. 115–677) that requires the Federal Communications Commission, in consultation with the United States Department of Agriculture, to establish a task force for reviewing the connectivity and technology needs of precision agriculture in the United States; and **Pages H4127–28**

Thompson (PA) amendment (No. 9 printed in part C of H. Rept. 115–677) that adds Chronic Wasting Disease to Sec. 7208, High-Priority Research and Extension Initiatives. **Pages H4128–29**

H. Res. 891, the rule providing for consideration of the bills (H.R. 5698), (S. 2372), and (H.R. 2) was agreed to by a recorded vote of 229 ayes to 185 noes, Roll No. 186, after the previous question was ordered by a yea-and-nay vote of 230 yeas to 184 nays, Roll No. 185. **Pages H3991–H4007**

A point of order was raised against the consideration of H. Res. 891 and it was agreed to proceed with consideration of the resolution by a yea-and-nay vote of 223 yeas to 181 nays, Roll No. 184. **Pages H3991–94**

Recess: The House recessed at 8:31 p.m. and reconvened at 9:40 p.m. **Page H4136**

Senate Referrals: S.J. Res. 52 was held at the desk.

Senate Message: Message received from the Senate today appears on page H4050.

Quorum Calls—Votes: Four yea-and-nay votes and two recorded votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H3993–94, H4006–07, H4007, H4008, H4057, and H4057–58. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 9:41 p.m.

Committee Meetings

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on Appropriations: Full Committee held a markup on the FY 2019 Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill; and the FY 2019 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill. The FY 2019 Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill; and the FY 2019 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and

Related Agencies Appropriations Bill were ordered reported, as amended.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURE

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies held a markup on the FY 2019 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill. The FY 2019 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill was forwarded to the full Committee, without amendment.

ENHANCING RETIREMENT SECURITY: EXAMINING PROPOSALS TO SIMPLIFY AND MODERNIZE RETIREMENT PLAN ADMINISTRATION

Committee on Education and the Workforce: Subcommittee on Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions held a hearing entitled ''Enhancing Retirement Security: Examining Proposals to Simplify and Modernize Retirement Plan Administration''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS, GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS, AND NATIONAL SECURITY

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Communications and Technology held a hearing entitled ''Telecommunications, Global Competitiveness, and National Security''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

LEGISLATION ADDRESSING NEW SOURCE REVIEW PERMITTING REFORM

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Environment held a hearing entitled ''Legislation Addressing New Source Review Permitting Reform''. Testimony was heard from William Wehrum, Assistant Administrator, Office of Air and Radiation, Environmental Protection Agency; Sean Alteri, Director, Division of Air Equality, Kentucky Department of Environmental Protection; Paul Baldauf, Assistant Commissioner, Air Quality, Energy, and Sustainability, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection; and public witnesses.

OVERSIGHT OF THE SEC'S DIVISION OF ENFORCEMENT

Committee on Financial Services: Subcommittee on Capital Markets, Securities, and Investment held a hearing entitled ''Oversight of the SEC's Division of Enforcement''. Testimony was heard from Stephanie Avakian, Co-Director, Division of Enforcement, Securities and Exchange Commission; and Steven Peikin, Co-Director, Division of Enforcement, Securities and Exchange Commission.

IMPLEMENTATION OF FINCEN'S CUSTOMER DUE DILIGENCE RULE

Committee on Financial Services: Subcommittee on Terrorism and Illicit Finance held a hearing entitled ''Implementation of FinCEN's Customer Due Diligence Rule''. Testimony was heard from Kenneth A. Blanco, Director, Financial Crimes Enforcement Network.

THE U.S. CAPITOL VISITOR CENTER—TEN YEARS OF SERVING CONGRESS AND THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Committee on House Administration: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''The U.S. Capitol Visitor Center—Ten Years of Serving Congress and the American People''. Testimony was heard from Beth Plemmons, CEO for Visitor Services, U.S. Capitol Visitor Center.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on Natural Resources: Full Committee held a markup on H.R. 224, the ''Polar Bear Conservation and Fairness Act''; H.R. 857, the ''California Off-Road Recreation and Conservation Act''; H.R. 3045, the ''Eastern Legacy Extension Act''; H.R. 3186, the ''Every Kid Outdoors Act''; H.R. 3916, the ''FISH Act''; and H.R. 4419, the ''Bureau of Reclamation and Bureau of Indian Affairs Water Project Streamlining Act''. H.R. 224 was ordered reported, without amendment. H.R. 857, H.R. 3045, H.R. 3186, H.R. 3916, and H.R. 4419 were ordered reported, as amended.

WORKFORCE FOR THE 21ST CENTURY: ANALYZING THE PRESIDENT'S MANAGEMENT AGENDA

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''Workforce for the 21st Century: Analyzing the President's Management Agenda''. Testimony was heard from Margaret Weichert, Deputy Director for Management, Office of Management and Budget; Jeff Pon, Director, Office of Personnel Management; and public witnesses.

AGRICULTURE AND NUTRITION ACT OF 2018

Committee on Rules: Full Committee held a hearing on H.R. 2, the ''Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018'' [Amendment Consideration]. The Committee granted, by record vote of 8–3, a structured rule providing for further consideration of H.R. 2. The rule provides for no additional general debate. The rule makes in order only those further amendments printed in the Rules Committee report. Each such

amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question. The rule waives all points of order against the amendments printed in the report. The rule provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions. Testimony was heard from Representatives Comer, Faso, Marino, Barr, Grothman, Estes of Kansas, Russell, Graves of Louisiana, and Blumenauer.

USING TECHNOLOGY TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''Using Technology to Address Climate Change''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY 101: HOW SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS CAN UTILIZE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY PROTECTIONS IN THEIR BUSINESSES

Committee on Small Business: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''Intellectual Property 101: How Small Business Owners Can Utilize Intellectual Property Protections in Their Businesses''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

MEMBER DAY: TESTIMONY AND PROPOSALS ON THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''Member Day: Testimony and Proposals on the Department of Veterans Affairs''. Testimony was heard from Chairman Chabot, and Representatives Mast, Rouzer, Hill, Mullin, Suozzi, Walorski, Westerman, Plaskett, Carter of Georgia, DeFazio, Renacci, Murphy of Florida, Kildee, Stivers, Ruiz, Heck of Washington, Schneider, Michelle Lujan Grisham of New Mexico, Johnson of Louisiana, DeSantis, Hartzler, Titus, Biggs, Sablan, Kihuen, O'Halleran, Carbajal, Vargas, Flores, Carter of Texas, Rohrabacher, Welch, Moulton, Shea-Porter, Zeldin, Brat, Ted Lieu of California, Rosen, Gianforte, McMorris Rodgers, Richmond, Bishop of Georgia, Bordallo, Eddie Bernice Johnson of Texas, Taylor, Napolitano, Lofgren, Crawford, Kennedy, Mimi Walters of California, Gabbard, Tonko, Smith of Washington, McKinley, and Hultgren.

TAX REFORM: GROWING OUR ECONOMY AND CREATING JOBS

Committee on Ways and Means: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''Tax Reform: Growing Our Economy and Creating Jobs''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on Ways and Means: Full Committee held a markup on H.R. 5774, the ''Combatting Opioid Abuse for Care in Hospitals Act''; H.R. 5775, the ''Providing Reliable Options for Patients and Educational Resources Act''; H.R. 5776, the ''Medicare and Opioid Safe Treatment Act''; H.R. 5773, the ''Preventing Addiction for Susceptible Seniors Act''; H.R. 5676, the ''SENIOR Communities Protection Act''; H.R. 5723, the ''Expanding Oversight of Opioid Prescribing and Payment Act''; and H.R. 5788 to provide for the processing by U.S. Customs and Border Protection of certain international mail shipments and to require the provision of advance electronic information on international mail shipments of mail, and for other purposes. H.R. 5774, H.R. 5775, H.R. 5776, H.R. 5773, H.R. 5676, H.R. 5723, and H.R. 5788 were ordered reported, without amendment.

Joint Meetings

BUSINESS MEETING

Joint Committee on the Library: Committee concluded an organizational business meeting.

BUSINESS MEETING

Joint Committee on Printing: Committee concluded an organizational business meeting.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR THURSDAY, MAY 17, 2018

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Department of Defense, to hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2019 for the Department of the Air Force, 10 a.m., SD–192.

Subcommittee on Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies, to hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2019 for the National Institutes of Health, 10 a.m., SD–124.

Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government, to hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2019 for the Federal Communications Commission and the Federal Trade Commission, 10 a.m., SD–138.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: business meeting to consider S. 436, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to retire coal preference right lease applications for which the Secretary has made an affirmative commercial quantities determination, to substitute certain land selections of the Navajo Nation, to designate certain wilderness areas, S. 440, to establish a procedure for the conveyance of certain Federal property around the Dickinson Reservoir in the State of North Dakota, S. 612, and H.R. 1547, bills to provide for the unencumbering of title to non-Federal land owned by the city of Tucson, Arizona, for purposes of economic development by conveyance of the Federal reversionary interest to the City, S. 930, to require the Administrator of the Western Area Power Administration to establish a pilot project to provide increased transparency for customers, S. 966, to establish a program to accurately document vehicles that were significant in the history of the United States, S. 1029, to amend the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act of 1978 to exempt certain small hydroelectric power projects that are applying for relicensing under the Federal Power Act from the licensing requirements of that Act, S. 1030, to require the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to submit to Congress a report on certain hydropower projects, S. 1142, to extend the deadline for commencement of construction of certain hydroelectric projects, S. 1219, to provide for stability of title to certain land in the State of Louisiana, S. 1403, to amend the Public Lands Corps Act of 1993 to establish the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps to place youth and veterans in national service positions to conserve, restore, and enhance the great outdoors of the United States, S. 1459, to establish Fort Sumter and Fort Moultrie National Park in the State of South Carolina, S. 1548, to designate certain land administered by the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service in the State of Oregon as wilderness and national recreation areas and to make additional wild and scenic river designations in the State of Oregon, S. 1573, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to place signage on Federal land along the trail known as the "American Discovery Trail", S. 1645, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of P.S. 103 in West Baltimore, Maryland, S. 1646, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of President Station in Baltimore, Maryland, S. 2074, to establish a procedure for the conveyance of certain Federal property around the Jamestown Reservoir in the State of North Dakota, S. 2102, and H.R. 4266, bills to clarify the boundary of Acadia National Park, S. 2218, and H.R. 4609, bills to provide for the conveyance of a Forest Service site in Dolores County, Colorado, to be used for a fire station, S. 2238, to amend the Ohio & Erie Canal National Heritage Canalway Act of 1996 to repeal the funding limitation, H.R. 497, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to convey certain Federal lands in San Bernardino County, California, to the San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District, and to accept in return certain non-Federal lands, H.R. 965, to redesignate the Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site as the "Saint-Gaudens National Historical Park", H.R. 995, to direct the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior to modernize terms in certain regulations, H.R. 1900, to designate the Veterans Memorial and Museum in Columbus, Ohio, as the National Veterans Memorial and Museum, H.R. 2582, to authorize the State of Utah to select certain lands that are available for disposal under the Pony Express Resource Management Plan to be used for the support and benefit of State institutions, H.R. 2768, to designate certain mountain peaks in the State of Colorado as "Fowler Peak" and "Boskoff Peak", H.R. 2786, to amend the Federal Power Act with respect to the criteria and process to qualify as a qualifying conduit hydropower facility, H.R. 2897, to authorize the Mayor of the District of Columbia and the Director of the National Park Service to enter into cooperative management agreements for the operation, maintenance, and management of units of the National Park System in the District of Columbia, and an original bill to designate a National Nordic Museum in Washington State, 10 a.m., SD–366.

Committee on Environment and Public Works: to hold hearings to examine S. 2800, to provide for the conservation and development of water and related resources, to authorize the Secretary of the Army to construct various projects for improvements to rivers and harbors of the United States, 10:15 a.m., SD–406.

Committee on the Judiciary: business meeting to consider S. 2645, to establish a demonstration program under which the Drug Enforcement Administration provides grants to certain States to enable those States to increase participation in drug take-back programs, S. 2535, to amend the Controlled Substances Act to strengthen Drug Enforcement Administration discretion in setting opioid quotas, S. 2789, to prevent substance abuse and reduce demand for illicit narcotics, S. 207, to amend the Controlled Substances Act relating to controlled substance analogues, an original bill entitled, "Using Data to Prevent Opioid Diversion Act of 2018", an original bill entitled, "Preventing Drug Diversion Act of 2018", and the nominations of Andrew S. Oldham, of Texas, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit, Alan D. Albright, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Texas, Thomas S. Kleeh, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of West Virginia, Peter J. Phipps, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Pennsylvania, Michael J. Truncale, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Texas, Wendy Vitter, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Louisiana, and Erica H. MacDonald, to be United States Attorney for the District of Minnesota, Department of Justice, 10 a.m., SD–226.

House

Committee on Appropriations, Full Committee, markup on the FY 2019 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, 10 a.m., 2118 Rayburn.

Committee on Education and the Workforce, Full Committee, hearing entitled "Protecting Privacy, Promoting Data Security: Exploring How Schools and States Keep Data Safe", 10 a.m., 2175 Rayburn.

Committee on Energy and Commerce, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 3692, the ''Addiction Treatment Access Improvement Act of 2017''; H.R. 4684, the ''Ensuring Access to Quality Sober Living Act of 2018''; H.R. 5329, the ''Poison Center Network Enhancement Act of 2018''; H.R. 5580, the ''STOP Fentanyl Deaths Act of 2018''; H.R. 5587, the ''Peer Support Communities of Recovery Act''; H.R. 5795, the ''Overdose Prevention and Patient Safety Act''; H.R. 5807, the ''Substance Use Disorder Coordination, Access, Recovery Enhancement Act of 2018''; H.R. 5812, the ''Creating Opportunities that Necessitate New and Enhanced Connections That Improve Opioid Navigation Strategies Act''; H.R. 5590, the ''Opioid Addiction Action Plan Act''; H.R. 5603, the ''Access to Telehealth Services for Opioid Use Disorder''; H.R. 5605, the ''Advancing High Quality Treatment for Opioid Use Disorders in Medicare Act''; H.R. 5798, the ''Opioid Screening and Chronic Pain Management Alternatives for Seniors Act''; H.R. 5804, the ''Post-Surgical Injections as an Opioid Alternative Act''; H.R. 5809, the ''Postoperative Opioid Prevention Act of 2018''; H.R. 5715, the ''Strengthening Partnerships to Prevent Opioid Abuse Act''; H.R. 5716, the ''Commit to Opioid Medical Prescriber Accountability and Safety for Seniors Act''; H.R. 5796, the ''Responsible Education Achieves Care and Healthy Outcomes for Users' Treatment Act of 2018''; H.R. 1925, the ''At-Risk Youth Medicaid Protection Act of 2017''; H.R. 3192, the ''CHIP Mental Health Parity Act''; H.R. 4005, the ''Medicaid Reentry Act''; H.R. 4998, the ''Health Insurance for Former Foster Youth Act''; H.R. 5477, the ''Rural Development of Opioid Capacity Services Act''; H.R. 5583, the ''Requiring Medicaid Programs to Report on All Core Behavioral Health Measures''; H.R. 5789, to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to provide for Medicaid coverage protections for pregnant and postpartum women while receiving inpatient treatment for a substance use disorder; H.R. 5797, the ''IMD CARE Act''; H.R. 5799, the ''Medicaid DRUG Improvement Act''; H.R. 5800, the ''Medicaid IMD ADDITIONAL INFO Act''; H.R. 5801, the ''Medicaid PARTNERSHIP Act''; H.R. 5808, the ''Medicaid Pharmaceutical Home Act of 2018''; H.R. 5810, the ''Medicaid Health HOME Act''; H.R. 5228, the ''Stop Counterfeit Drugs by Regulating and Enhancing Enforcement Now Act''; H.R. 5752, the ''Stop Illicit Drug Importation Act of 2018''; H.R. 5806, the ''21st Century Tools for Pain and Addiction Treatments''; and H.R. 5811, to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act with respect to postapproval study requirements for certain controlled substances, and for other purposes, 10 a.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Committee on Financial Services, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, hearing entitled ''Community Development Block Grant—Disaster Recovery Program—Stakeholder Perspectives'', 10 a.m., 2128 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Housing and Insurance, hearing entitled ''An Overview of Homelessness in America'', 2 p.m., 2128 Rayburn.

Committee on Foreign Affairs, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 5626, the ''Intercountry Adoption Information Act of 2018''; H.R. 5754, the ''Cambodia Democracy Act''; H.R. 5819, the ''BURMA Act of 2018''; H.R. 1911, the ''Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism Act of 2017''; H.R. 2259, the ''Sam Farr Peace Corps Enhancement Act''; H.R. 4989, the ''Protecting Diplomats from Surveillance Through Consumer Devices Act''; and H.R. 3030, the ''Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act of 2017'', 10:30 a.m., 2167 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations, hearing entitled ''Global Health Supply Chain Management: Lessons Learned and Ways Forward'', 1 p.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Committee on Homeland Security, Subcommittee on Transportation and Protective Security, hearing entitled ''Assessing the TSA Checkpoint: The PreCheck Program and Airport Wait Times'', 10 a.m., HVC–210.

Committee on the Judiciary, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 2561, the ''POLICE Act of 2017'', 11 a.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Water, Power and Oceans, hearing entitled ''Federal Impediments to Commerce and Innovative Injurious Species Management'', 10 a.m., 1324 Longworth.

Subcommittee on Federal Lands, hearing on H.R. 2365, the ''Desert Community Lands Act''; H.R. 3777, the ''Juab County Conveyance Act of 2017''; H.R. 4824, the ''Rural Broadband Permitting Efficiency Act of 2018''; and H.R. 5023, the ''Civil War Defenses of Washington National Historical Park Act'', 2 p.m., 1324 Longworth.

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''A Sustainable Solution to the Evolving Opioid Crisis: Revitalizing the Office of National Drug Control Policy'', 11 a.m., 2154 Rayburn.

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''America's Human Presence in Low-Earth Orbit'', 10 a.m., 2318 Rayburn.

Committee on Small Business, Subcommittee on Contracting and Workforce, hearing entitled ''Hotline Truths II: Audit Reveals Inconsistencies in Defense Subcontracting'', 10 a.m., 2360 Rayburn.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Subcommittee on Health; and Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, joint hearing entitled ''VA Research: Focusing on Funding, Findings, and Partnerships'', 10 a.m., 334 Cannon.

Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity, hearing entitled ''A Review of VA's Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program'', 2 p.m., 334 Cannon.

Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Social Security, hearing entitled ''Securing Americans' Identities: The Future of the Social Security Number'', 10 a.m., 1100 Longworth.

Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''China's Worldwide Military Expansion'', 9 a.m., 2212 Rayburn.

Joint Meetings

Joint Economic Committee: to hold hearings to examine the promise of Opportunity Zones, 10 a.m., SH–216.

Joint Select Committee on Solvency of Multiemployer Pension Plans: to hold hearings to examine the structure and financial outlook of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, 10 a.m., SD–215.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

9:30 a.m., Thursday, May 17

Senate Chamber

Program for Thursday: Senator Paul will be recognized to make a motion to proceed to consideration of S. Con. Res. 36, Budget Resolution, and after up to 90 minutes of debate, Senate will vote in relation to the motion.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

10 a.m., Thursday, May 17

House Chamber

Program for Thursday: Continue Consideration of H.R. 2—Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018 (Subject to a Rule).

Extensions of Remarks, as inserted in this issue

HOUSE

Bergman, Jack, Mich., E660, E663, E664
Brady, Robert A., Pa., E666
Bustos, Cheri, Ill., E663
Carter, John R., Tex., E660, E661, E662, E663, E664, E665
Cole, Tom, Okla., E662
Cuellar, Henry, Tex., E665
DeLauro, Rosa L., Conn., E662
Deutch, Theodore E., Fla., E664
Emmer, Tom, Minn., E660
Gianforte, Greg, Mont., E657
Granger, Kay, Tex., E659
Graves, Sam, Mo., E662, E665
Gutiérrez, Luis V., Ill., E659
Hastings, Alcee L., Fla., E660
Hoyer, Steny H., Md., E661
Levin, Sander M., Mich., E663
Lujan Grisham, Michelle, N.M., E659
Marino, Tom, Pa., E659
McCollum, Betty, Minn., E666
Moolenaar, John R., Mich., E664
Mullin, Markwayne, Okla., E660
Olson, Pete, Tex., E658
Panetta, Jimmy, Calif., E658
Perlmutter, Ed, Colo., E658, E659, E659, E660, E661, E661, E662, E663, E664, E665
Roskam, Peter J., Ill., E657
Roybal-Allard, Lucille, Calif., E662
Schiff, Adam B., Calif., E658
Schneider, Bradley Scott, Ill., E657
Sinema, Kyrsten, Ariz., E662
Smith, Christopher H., N.J., E666
Smucker, Lloyd, Pa., E666
Stefanik, Elise M., N.Y., E659, E661
Thompson, Glenn, Pa., E660
Visclosky, Peter J., Ind., E657
Webster, Daniel, Fla., E665
Wittman, Robert J., Va., E659

Congressional Record

The *Congressional Record* (USPS 087–390). The Periodicals postage is paid at Washington, D.C. The public proceedings of each House of Congress, as reported by the Official Reporters thereof, are printed pursuant to directions of the Joint Committee on Printing as authorized by appropriate provisions of Title 44, United States Code, and published for each day that one or both Houses are in session, excepting very infrequent instances when two or more unusually small consecutive issues are printed one time. ¶Public access to the *Congressional Record* is available online through the U.S. Government Publishing Office, at *www.govinfo.gov*, free of charge to the user. The information is updated online each day the *Congressional Record* is published. For more information, contact the GPO Customer Contact Center, U.S. Government Publishing Office. Phone 202–512–1800, or 866–512–1800 (toll-free). E-Mail, *contactcenter@gpo.gov*. ¶To place an order for any of these products, visit the U.S. Government Online Bookstore at: bookstore.gpo.gov. Mail orders to: Superintendent of Documents, P.O. Box 979050, St. Louis, MO 63197–9000, or phone orders to 866–512–1800 (toll-free), 202–512–1800 (D.C. area), or fax to 202–512–2104. Remit check or money order, made payable to the Superintendent of Documents, or use VISA, MasterCard, Discover, American Express, or GPO Deposit Account. ¶Following each session of Congress, the daily *Congressional Record* is revised, printed, permanently bound and sold by the Superintendent of Documents in individual parts or by sets. ¶With the exception of copyrighted articles, there are no restrictions on the republication of material from the *Congressional Record*.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Superintendent of Documents, *Congressional Record*, U.S. Government Publishing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402, along with the entire mailing label from the last issue received.