

many Federal Government agencies that have not yet received full year funding.

Several outstanding issues need to be resolved in order to complete the final seven appropriations bills, and I am hopeful that the hard work of the Appropriations Committee will not be in vain by resorting to a year-long continuing resolution for the remaining bills.

Congress must act in order to fully fund essential transportation and housing programs, environmental protection efforts, the Appalachian Regional Commission, NASA programs, the Census, FEMA relief programs, and to prevent President Trump from freezing the pay of over 2 million Federal civil servants, by enacting the 1.9 percent cost of living increase for Federal workers that the Senate passed on a broad bipartisan basis.

While I am glad this short-term continuing resolution will provide for an extension to keep the flood insurance program from unnecessarily lapsing, I want to see Congress enact a long-term reauthorization. This year's flooding of Ellicott City shows that we need a long-term solution. That is why I am an original cosponsor of the SAFE act, which provides for a 5-year extension for the program, in addition to important program enhancement as well as the Federal Flood Risk Management Act that ensures that federally owned or funded buildings, housing, and infrastructure, be made more weather-resistant and resilient so that we can protect our communities and our investment of Federal tax dollars.

As a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I look forward to working with my colleagues over the next 2 weeks to complete the committee's fiscal year 2019 work.

#### BLUE WATER NAVY VIETNAM VETERANS ACT OF 2017

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the November 29, 2018, letter from the Congressional Budget Office regarding H.R. 299, the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2017, be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

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

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,  
U.S. CONGRESS,  
Washington, DC, November 29, 2018.

Hon. MIKE ENZI,  
Chairman, Committee on the Budget,  
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: On May 15, 2018, the Congressional Budget Office transmitted an estimate of the budgetary effects of H.R. 299, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify presumptions relating to the exposure of certain veterans who served in the vicinity of the Republic of Vietnam, and for other purposes, as ordered reported by the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs on May 8, 2018. Among other things, the act would provide disability compensation to more of the veterans who served in the territorial seas of Vietnam during the Vietnam

War under the assumption that they had been exposed to Agent Orange, a blend of herbicides used by the Department of Defense to remove dense tropical foliage. CBO estimated that those provisions would increase direct spending by about \$900 million over the 2019–2028 period.

The bill that was passed by the House amended the earlier version to expand the nautical area in which veterans would be presumed to have been exposed to Agent Orange. That change would increase CBO's estimate of the costs of the legislation by about \$250 million to account for the additional veterans that would be affected.

Since the original estimate was prepared in May, CBO has obtained new information that would affect future estimates of similar legislation. In total, we expect that accounting for this new information would increase the estimate of the legislation's effect on direct spending by at least \$1 billion over 10 years.

First, CBO now expects that more veterans would be affected by enactment of the bill than previously estimated. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) already presumes that veterans who served aboard certain U.S. Navy ships on the dates they were near the coast of Vietnam were exposed to Agent Orange. Using information about the crew size of those listed ships, CBO estimated that about two-thirds of veterans who served in the geographic area covered by the bill would obtain compensation under current law. Thus, in its estimate for H.R. 299, CBO projected that only one-third of veterans in the covered population would be newly eligible for disability compensation under that bill.

We have since learned from additional discussions with VA that there is considerably more uncertainty than we originally anticipated about the number of veterans that, under current law, VA would presume to have been exposed because of service aboard those vessels. Specifically, there is a greater likelihood that less than two-thirds of veterans who served in the geographic area covered by the bill would obtain compensation under current law.

To account for that uncertainty CBO would, in future estimates expect that half of affected beneficiaries would obtain benefits under current law, and thus would not be affected by enactment of H.R. 299. That estimate is in the middle of the range of possible outcomes. Using that updated estimate would mean that fewer veterans would be expected to receive benefits under current law and more would get benefits as a result of H.R. 299. The increase in the number of affected veterans would result in additional retroactive payments to veterans whose disability claims previously have been denied by VA and also would increase the number of recurring disability payments.

In addition, on the basis of new information from VA, CBO also would increase its estimate of the number of surviving spouses of deceased veterans who would receive compensation because the cause of those veterans' deaths would be presumed to have been caused by exposure to Agent Orange.

Finally, CBO would estimate that spending subject to appropriation would increase for additional personnel to process disability claims. Such spending would allow VA to handle new claims more quickly. Although H.R. 299 would not require VA to hire more personnel to process these additional claims, the department has indicated that it would need to do so in order to avoid a lengthy backlog.

CBO will incorporate this new information into its future estimates of the budgetary effects of such legislation.

If you wish further details on this estimate, we will be pleased to provide them. The CBO staff contact is Logan Smith.

Sincerely,

KEITH HALL,  
Director.

#### REMEMBERING LYUDMILA ALEXEYEVA

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, today I wish to pay tribute to Lyudmila Alexeyeva, a true giant for human rights in Russia and around the world. Ms. Alexeyeva passed away over the weekend in Moscow and left behind children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, but that was just her immediate family. Lyudmila's leadership and fearlessness inspired a generation of human rights and democracy activists in Russia; she was the grandmother of human rights in the country, and her stalwart leadership in the face of repression will truly be missed. Today is International Human Rights Day, a fitting moment to pay tribute to this incredible leader.

In thinking about Lyudmila's legacy, three words come to mind: vision, tenacity, and courage.

Starting from her days drafting a Samizdat journal called the Chronicle of Current Events that scrutinized the Khrushchev regime, Lyudmila had the vision of a Soviet Union in which all of its citizens played a role in ensuring accountable governance and democratic principles. She saw the opportunity to fulfill this vision in the 1975 Helsinki Accords, especially those tenets which enshrined the critical notion that signatory countries' respect for human rights inside their borders was integral to security in the transatlantic region. The Brezhnev government at the time had no intention of honoring those elements of Helsinki, but Lyudmila worked together with her compatriots to set up the Moscow Helsinki Group to monitor implementation of the Accords. The Moscow Helsinki Group inspired the proliferation of sister organizations in other countries whose governments had committed to Helsinki principles, including here in Congress with the Commission for Security and Cooperation in Europe. This platform inside of the Soviet Union and across the transatlantic space was critically important to build those bonds of international solidarity among so many likeminded democrats and human rights defenders. She was indeed a true visionary for open, democratic societies, and the bonds she built with and among activists who shared that vision stand strong to this day.

Second, tenacity—Lyudmila faced so many obstacles during the Soviet period and the Putin era. After starting Moscow Helsinki, the pressure from the Soviet regime grew so great that she had to seek exile in the United States for 16 years. During that time, she became an American citizen, a proud moment for us here in this country. While in exile, she remained committed to

her vision. She advocated for international support for the plight of dissidents and human rights activists suffering repression in the Soviet Bloc. In the tradition of Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Lyudmila wrote extensively on her country, publishing two important works: "The Thaw Generation. Coming of Age in the Post-Stalin Era" and "Soviet Dissent." She also worked for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty during this period.

Once she was able to return to Russia after the fall of the Soviet Union, Lyudmila dove right back into her work, scrutinizing the human rights record of Boris Yeltsin and resisting the sharp turn away from democracy under Vladimir Putin. As the space for civil society voices contracted inside Russia, Lyudmila was a clear and dogged advocate for freedom, a voice for the universal declaration of human rights and a voice for a better Russia. Despite this closing space, she expended enormous energy on mentoring and organizing a new generation of Russian human rights defenders to carry the torch. During this period, she would travel to Washington and was a true force of nature. She always had a few young activists in tow to make sure they were connected with key policymakers in DC. By doing so, she made clear to us in Washington that not all was lost inside Russia, that a tenacious new generation of activists was willing to take this baton of freedom and run the next leg of the race, and that they deserved our respect, attention, and support.

Finally, courage—Lyudmila did not have to do this work. This calling subjected her and her family to pressure and repression by different regimes over the years. It subjected her to 16 years in exile from her homeland. After so much hard work during the Soviet era, she could have settled into retirement, leaving the toils of civil society development and human rights defense to a new generation, but as repression grew under Putin, Lyudmila would continue the work undaunted. Well into her 70s and 80s, she would continue to organize. She would continue to travel to foreign capitals, only to face increased scrutiny at home. She would attend rallies in Moscow, sometimes in the dead of winter, under great physical threat. She would be arrested. She faced these challenges with remarkable composure and grace. Those images of Lyudmila during a Moscow street protest one New Year's Eve, dressed as a Russian holiday character, the Snow Maiden, in a powder blue coat as she stood up to thuggish Russian Government security forces, was a sight to behold. Her undaunted courage during this later period of her life was a true inspiration to so many of us around the world.

It is tragic that Lyudmila did not live to see her vision for Russia realized. It is tragic that the Russian people have been robbed of the opportunity to live in a democratic country.

It is tragic that the Putin regime continues to impose corruption and repression on a people who deserve so much better. Lyudmila understood what that "better" looks like and had a vision for her country: a governing system with true checks and balances; a country with a responsive government, held accountable to the people; a country where a strong civil society understood that it had a very important role and stake in the country's well-being. In her own way, Lyudmila symbolized that check and balance. She symbolized what a vibrant civil society in Russia could be if only taken to scale. She symbolized a place where Russia lived up to international human rights commitments, not as an answer to a foreign power, but because she saw fulfillment of these commitments as good for the citizenry and the country.

Our world is better because Lyudmila was here. Our world is better due to her vision, courage, and tenacity. We all have an obligation to carry on her work, not only in support for human rights in Russia, but in all those dark corners of the world where people are repressed by their governments. In the coming days, tributes like this will be heard around the world, extolling Lyudmila's many efforts and accomplishments in defense of liberty and human rights.

Lyudmila was a shining example to us all. Let us take this charge and be the embodiment of her life's work.

Rest in peace, Lyudmila.

#### TRIBUTE TO JANAK "HODGE" K. PATEL

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, today, I wish to recognize and honor the extraordinary public service of Janak "Hodge" Kanti Patel, who has been my State director for the past 6 years in the U.S. Senate and my district director for the prior 6 years in the U.S. House of Representatives. Over 22 years in the House and Senate, Hodge has served the people of Indiana with a high level of integrity and professionalism, combined with a strong emphasis on constituent services and community engagement.

A longtime resident of South Bend, IN, Hodge attended St. John the Baptist Roman Catholic Church and School, St. Joseph's High School, Holy Cross College, St. Mary's College, and the University Notre Dame. While at Notre Dame, Hodge interned for then-Third Congressional District U.S. Congressman Tim Roemer and was hired upon graduation as a case manager, where he worked on military, veterans, and immigration case work until he was promoted to the role of field representative in that same office.

In 2001, Hodge joined the staff of U.S. Senator Evan Bayh as his Northeast Indiana Regional Director, where he covered 21 counties and two offices: Fort Wayne and South Bend. Upon my election in 2006 to the U.S. House of Representatives, I invited Hodge to

join my team as district director. In his role, he helped establish three congressional offices and hired a highly dedicated team of nine staff members to help serve the more than 700,000 Hoosiers that I represented for three terms in Congress. Together we worked to establish an expanded VA community based outpatient clinic in downtown South Bend, a full service veterans healthcare clinic for St. Joseph County, as well as organized job fairs, job-seeker workshops, and access to capital events for small businesses across the Second Congressional District. Hodge also helped to organize more than 1 dozen constituent stakeholder advisory groups and oversaw our office's military service academy nominations process.

In 2012, when I was elected to the U.S. Senate, I once again asked Hodge to join me. As my State director, Hodge led my team in Indiana and played a vital role in hiring 20 staff members to help serve Hoosiers and established six Senate offices located in Evansville, Fort Wayne, Hammond, Indianapolis, Jeffersonville, and in my hometown of South Bend.

Over the last 6 years, Hodge oversaw our constituent services team that managed 12,000 cases and recovered \$12.6 million for Hoosiers. He also played an important role in working with our grants director to proactively seek out opportunities where we could enhance nonprofit organizations and local communities in their efforts to serve the public. Additionally, there were more than 100 projects around the state that Hodge and the Indiana State staff team worked on to ensure a favorable outcome. Finally, Hodge was also able to build coalitions and gain a high level of respect among his counterparts in Indiana on both sides of the aisle in both the House and Senate.

I am extremely proud to recognize Hodge Patel's 22 years of tireless commitment to public service on behalf of Hoosiers. I wish Hodge and his four children Harper, Dylan, Elliott and Quinn, as well as his partner, Ali Oesch, the best in their future endeavors outside of public service.

#### MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 4:02 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that pursuant to section 1501(c) of the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018 (Public Law 115-254), and the order of the House of January 3, 2017, the Speaker appoints the following individual on the part of the House of Representatives to the Syria Study Group: Dr. Kimberly E. Kagan of Washington, DC.

#### ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

At 5:39 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following bills:

H.R. 1417. An act to amend the National Law Enforcement Museum Act to allow the