



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 116th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 165

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 16, 2019

No. 9

Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal Savior, You have been with this Nation from its birth. Use our lawmakers to protect and preserve it against all enemies, foreign and domestic.

Give our Senators kind hearts and humble spirits; help them to aspire to become instruments of Your purposes. Lord, guide them to find in each problem and perplexity the prelude to greater understanding and usefulness. May they seek daily to maintain their ethical, moral, and spiritual fitness.

And, Lord, sustain those who are suffering most because of this partial government shutdown.

We pray in Your Holy 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. CRAMER). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

DISAPPROVING THE PRESIDENT'S PROPOSAL TO TAKE AN ACTION RELATING TO THE APPLICATION OF CERTAIN SANCTIONS WITH RESPECT TO THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION—Resumed

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S.J. Res. 2, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (S.J. Res. 2) disapproving the President's proposal to take an action relating to the application of certain sanctions with respect to the Russian Federation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 12:30 p.m. will be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President I ask unanimous consent that the time on the quorum call be equally divided between the two sides.

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

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, one dollar—one dollar—that is the amount that the Speaker of the House said she would be willing to invest in physical barriers at our southern border—one dollar. Talk about serious, good-faith negotiations. Talk about taking borders seriously.

The men and women on the ground have been unambiguous about the cri-

sis they are facing: the entry of criminal aliens and gang members into our country, the drugs that go on to infect our communities, the ongoing humanitarian crises that are fueled by our government's mixed signals and our inability to enforce our own laws.

According to Speaker PELOSI, these urgent issues are worth about 33 cents each—33 cents. As we all know, that is because the Speaker has recently defined a brandnew dogma for the Democratic Party: Actually enforcing our immigration laws with the help of physical barriers is “an immorality”—an immorality.

That is quite the indictment of her fellow Democrats' past positions. Recent years have seen Democrats vote for billions—billions—of dollars in physical walls and fencing. Recent years have seen a Democratic administration build the same steel barriers—the very same steel barriers—that this President now wants to expand.

But these days, it seems that Democrats are happy to take their cues from the gentelady from San Francisco and her extreme, fringe position that walls have now become immoral. Really?

Yesterday, President Trump issued yet another bipartisan invitation for Members of Congress to meet at the White House and actually negotiate. Yet, again, only Republicans came to the table.

For the American people, who deserve both a functioning government as well as a secure border, that really is not a promising sign. For Federal workers who are now stretching every dollar until Democrats lose interest in dead-end political games, the Speaker's \$1 punchline is not very entertaining.

So for everyone's sake, I hope our Democratic colleagues will reverse course and work seriously with this White House to reach an agreement that can become law and fulfill our promises to our country.

In the meantime, as the White House made clear just yesterday, cherry-picking continuing resolutions that fail to

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



Printed on recycled paper.

S233

address the border crisis will not receive the President's signature. They are not going to.

The only way out of this impasse is a bipartisan agreement, and as the Democratic leader and I have both stated here on the floor, only an all-corners bipartisan agreement will receive a vote here in the Senate.

S.J. RES. 2

Mr. President, on another matter, before the Senate today is a resolution from the Democratic leader that would overrule career civil servants at the Treasury Department and fire from the hip on one of the top foreign policy concerns of the United States.

This is the pending business, despite the fact that the Democratic leader had previously proclaimed he would not let the Senate address any business—any—during this partial government shutdown. Apparently there is an exception to that.

Remember, that was the reason the Democratic leader gave for leading a Democratic filibuster of a bipartisan package that would have reaffirmed our commitment to defend our allies in Israel, stand alongside Jordan, and unlock justice for the victims of Assad's rogue regime.

On one day, they insist we shouldn't do any business; on another, it is time to bring up an unrelated resolution of their own. At the end of the last Congress, they said they would support bipartisan legislation to shore up our allies in the Middle East and deliver justice for victims of unspeakable violence in Syria. Now they are filibustering the bill and have voted against it three times—three times against this potential bill that benefits our allies Israel and Jordan and deals with the victims of cruelty in Syria.

These twists and turns are pretty hard to follow, confusing, until you remember the one key to our Democratic colleagues' thinking these days—political spite for the President comes first, ahead of everything else.

You see, the administration isn't opposed to these bipartisan, urgent bills to back Israel, Jordan, and the Syrian people. President Trump, we expect, would sign these bills. We might actually make a law, which is what people see us here to do, presumably.

Naturally, the Democratic leader isn't interested. Democrats in Congress don't think working with the President to accomplish things suits their political brand these days.

The Democratic leader's new resolution, which he has been happy to prioritize ahead of Israel and the Syrian people, offers him a chance to make a political splash. It overrules the careful actions of career civil servants at Treasury and blows up a nuanced decision the current law actually requires. Current law actually requires what they do.

Supporting Israel? It is not too interesting to my friends across the aisle, but picking a political fight with the President, boy, they are up for that one every day.

This is the key to understanding this unusual moment. This is the central principle. Democrats have made a marketing decision to obstruct President Trump at all costs, even if it hurts substantive priorities they used to support. That is why we are in day 26 of this partial government shutdown, with Democrats refusing to even show up and negotiate on funds for border security, which they used to brag about supporting. That is why Senate Democrats have decided that aid for Israel and help for the people of Syria are not worthy of this body's time but are happy to spend more time trying to blow up a highly technical Treasury Department decision that current law actually requires.

Let me say that again. They are happy to spend floor time trying to blow up a highly technical Treasury Department decision that current law actually requires. Political obstruction is their top priority. Everything else follows from that.

NOMINATION OF WILLIAM BARR

Mr. President, on a final matter, even in the midst of this political climate, the President's nominee for Attorney General delivered an impressive performance during the first day of his hearings before the Judiciary Committee. Senators were reminded exactly why he won bipartisan admiration for this body in 1991 and was confirmed as President Bush 41's Attorney General with no opposition—none.

Now, as Mr. Barr himself acknowledged in his testimony yesterday, times have changed, but the core principles that our Nation's Attorney General must uphold haven't changed. As the nominee testified yesterday, "the American people have to know that there are places in the government where the rule of law—not politics—holds sway . . . the Department of Justice must be such a place."

Those are the words of the right man for this job. His testimony made clear what he sees as key priorities for the Department of Justice: building on past progress in preventing violent crime, enforcing and improving our Nation's immigration laws, and protecting the integrity of our electoral system.

He stated definitively where his loyalties lie: with "the rule of law, the Constitution, and the American people. That is how it should be. That is how it must be. And, if you confirm me, that is how it will be."

Experience, integrity, and total commitment—the President has made an outstanding choice. The Judiciary Committee continues its hearings today. I look forward to their continuing review of this nomination and, then, to its being reported here to the floor. The American people deserve the very best. That is just what Attorney General Bill Barr will be.

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. 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 PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I just heard Leader MCCONNELL, my good friend, rail on and on. First, he doesn't agree with NANCY PELOSI on the wall. That is a surprise. Second, he doesn't like the fact that we want to get a vote to open up the government before we move forward on S. 1. We know that. His arguments are getting kind of old and stale.

I will say to the leader, very simply—you may disagree with us: Open the government. Open the government. You can do it, Leader MCCONNELL. All your blaming and flailing isn't going to open the government. We all know Donald Trump is the obstacle here. You know it. I know it. We all know it. The only way to help all the folks who need help is to open the government.

There are a good number of Republicans on your side who have advocated that already. To hold the government hostage, you are losing the argument. You are losing it with the public. An overwhelming majority of Americans think the government should not be shut down over a wall. Even a substantial number of people who support the wall say: Don't shut down the government to get the wall.

We have problems on the border. A lot of Americans don't think it is a crisis that demands hurting our economy and our government.

Leader MCCONNELL, we know you disagree with Leader PELOSI and me on what should be border security. We know you think we should pass S. 1 before we open up the government. Leader, you—you—can open the government. That is what the American people want, and I dare say that is what most of your colleagues want, at least if they talk to you privately.

It seems that every day the Trump shutdown drags on, we read another story about a new way it is hurting our economy. Eight hundred thousand public servants have been without pay, including thousands of veterans who work for the Federal Government. Each one of those Americans has a different story about how the shutdown is hurting them and their families. As nine essential Cabinet Departments remain shuttered, we are learning that the effects of the shutdown are even more widespread and continue to worsen. Yesterday, President Trump's own White House Council of Economic Advisers doubled their projections of how much economic growth is being lost each week during the shutdown.

Let me repeat that. The Trump administration's own economic advisers have just said that the Trump shutdown will substantially hurt our economy—twice as much as they originally

predicted. Growth is down. Economic and consumer confidence is down. Billions of dollars have been pulled out of our economy. Some of the leading financial leaders in the country are now saying we might even go into contraction in the first part of this year if this shutdown continues.

Do you think, Leader MCCONNELL, that is benefiting Donald Trump? Do you think, Leader MCCONNELL, that is benefiting the Republican Party, who the Americans know own the shutdown? No. Let's open the government and then debate our differences on border security and whatever else.

Why is our country suffering self-inflicted damage? Because President Trump is using the American government as leverage in an attempt to extract taxpayer money for a border wall he promised Mexico would pay for.

He says: You know, I hear Rush Limbaugh and Sean Hannity: He promised this in the campaign.

No, he didn't. He promised a wall that Mexico would pay for. He never said once, that I can recall, in the campaign: But if Mexico doesn't pay for it, we will pay for it.

Of course people voted for it—or some, not that many. This is ridiculous. The President makes a campaign promise. He twists the campaign promise around and now shuts down the government so he can show he is keeping not the promise he made but a different one. It would sound ridiculous and absurd if it weren't the reality.

The fact of the matter is that eight Cabinet Departments not named Homeland Security have absolutely nothing—nothing—to do with our disagreements over border security. That is why Democrats have offered, and continue to offer, to reopen the government while we debate border security.

Again, three words for Leader MCCONNELL again: Open the government.

Three words to my Republican colleagues: Open the government.

Three words to President Trump: Open the government.

Then, we can have all the discussion and debating, as we are supposed to do, on these issues where we don't agree.

Democrats have made entirely reasonable proposals. We proposed to open the government by passing Republican spending bills from the last Congress so there would be no controversy. These are not bills the Democrats put together. These are bills the Republicans put together with some Democratic input. Leader MCCONNELL voted for every one of them—every one of them.

As for this idea that he will not move unless Trump agrees, that may have made sense in the first week or two. It makes no sense now because President Trump is adamant, all over the lot, and seems unwilling and unable to tie himself out of his own knots to get the government open. Someone should step in. On our side, we are willing to step in. Where is Leader MCCONNELL? Where are the Republicans?

The American people support passing our bills—bills that we have asked unanimous consent for by wide margins—two to one, including nearly 40 percent of Republicans. Forty percent of Republicans support passing our bills and then debating.

So, Mr. President, even your prized base—a good chunk of it, about a third—is turning away from you on this issue.

When will the President and my Republican colleagues wake up to the hardship being inflicted on so many people across the country? It is time that the Senate act on House-passed bills to open the government.

The President, we know, is inflexible. He is “proud,” as he said, to have shut down the government. He is, amazingly—never seen a President like this—impervious to the pain and suffering of Federal workers and the American people. He makes stuff up: Oh, the Federal workers want the wall. Who? Two people who are on FOX News all the time who are part of a Border Patrol union? That is it, not the average worker.

The President has refused all entreaties to open up the government by Democrats and Republicans, like my friend Senator GRAHAM—one of the President's biggest allies in this Chamber.

His deputies are hardly even empowered to negotiate with the Hill since President Trump retracts their offers almost as soon as they are made. Everyone—everyone—can see how fruitless it is to try and negotiate with this President at the moment.

My friend Leader MCCONNELL is the one who can break the impasse. He has declared before that “he is the guy who gets us out of shutdowns.” He was proud of that. I wish he were still proud of it.

I think we are all ready for that, Leader MCCONNELL, because so long as Leader MCCONNELL hides behind the President and the President's absurd and destructive shutdown strategy, the Senate will be unable to vote on broadly popular legislation to reopen the government.

The longer Leader MCCONNELL allows this to continue, the more he and Republican Senators will be tied to the President and the President's disgraceful tactic of government by extortion.

RUSSIA

Mr. President, last night, the Senate voted to proceed to the resolution to disapprove the Treasury Department's plans to relax sanctions on Russia, and 11 Republicans—I am proud of that, proud of them—joined with every Democrat to advance the resolution, which will face a cloture vote today. Two or three more Republican votes will ensure cloture is invoked and the passage of the resolution achieved. So I would like to make a direct appeal to my Republican friends who are wondering about this.

This resolution is about a very simple thing. Do you believe America

should take a tough line on Putin or do you think we should go easy on Putin and his cronies? From where I am standing, that is an easy choice.

The past half decade has seen Putin expand his malign activities around the world, from invading Ukraine and Georgia to annexing Crimea, to propping up the brutal Assad regime in Syria, to directing nerve agent attacks on foreign soil.

Russian intelligence has tried to destabilize Western democracies at every opportunity—France, England, many other European countries, and most obviously here in the United States. As proof positive, they go online, they try to sow dissension in America, this beautiful country.

As Leader MCCONNELL said yesterday—confusingly, before voting against the resolution—“We have long seen Vladimir Putin for the KGB thug that he is.” Those are strong words but accurate.

In the face of this global assault on Western democracies, of course we have seen that the Trump administration has been shamefully and suspiciously weak on President Putin. The President has avoided criticizing Putin at every turn. When asked about President Putin's brutal tactics against his opponents, President Trump demurs.

When this body, near unanimously, passed the Russian sanction legislation, President Trump contemplated vetoing it.

When President Putin told President Trump he didn't interfere in our 2016 elections, the President reportedly said: I believe you.

Last weekend, we learned that President Trump has expressed a desire to withdraw from NATO this summer—the past summer is when he expressed the desire. That is Putin's dream—Putin's dream. All the advice of our military and diplomatic leaders were against it. Somehow, the President wants to do it, and who benefits the most? Putin. Who loses the most? The West.

Now, with this proposed sanctions relief, we have another example of President Trump trying to lighten the burden on Putin's oligarchs. We should not allow it.

For a very long time, the Republican Party predicated its foreign policy on taking a tougher line against Russia and Putin. In so many campaigns for President, we Democrats were accused of not being tough enough on the Russians. I have always felt we have to be tough on the Russians, but it seems acquiescence to the President, a fear of breaking with the President, has held back too many of my Republican colleagues from supporting this resolution.

The resolution, just to repeat, is sort of—I know Treasury made an effort, although I don't have much faith in the strength. I think the Secretary of Treasury is an intelligent man, but he never stands up to Trump, and I don't have any faith in his strength in standing up this time. So if Trump wanted a

weakened resolution because maybe Putin or the Russians wanted it, that is what we have here.

Forty-five percent control is not—45 percent ownership, which is what this does, takes Deripaska out of this? Forget it. Then add to his 45 percent the 7 percent the in-laws own, that the large percentage that Russian banks—controlled by Putin—own, the control is just as tight as it was before. The people who were put in charge have close relationships with Russia. This is not a strong resolution. It is slightly less than a joke—slightly less than a joke.

So I hope some of our colleagues will come around. This is all about America, the West, the stability of our Nation, and if Putin thinks he can manipulate our country and manipulate the President and too many of my colleagues who have always been strong against Russia go along, what is he going to do next? What is he going to do next? What is he going to do next, and what will President Trump do?

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority whip.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, to quote the great Yogi Berra, "It's *deja vu* all over again."

It is the 26th day of the shutdown, and for the 26th day in a row, Democrats are refusing to seriously engage with the President to get the government reopened. Democrats have spent a lot of time talking about their desire to get the hundreds of thousands of furloughed Federal workers back to work, but their actions contradict their words.

The only way for the government to reopen is for both sides to come to the table and compromise. The Democrats are absolutely refusing to consider any concession. Their position is, my way or the highway. Unfortunately, that is not the way things work in the real world. When you have two groups with diametrically opposed positions, both sides have to give a little if they are ever going to get anything done.

The White House has a strongly held position on this issue, but it has also made it clear that it is willing to be flexible and to negotiate with Democrats. The Democrats don't share that willingness, and their refusal to negotiate is victimizing the very workers they claim they want to protect.

Senate Democrats' latest attempt to distract from Democrats' refusal to negotiate is to push for votes on House-passed legislation on reopening the government, but as Democrats know very well, these votes would be meaningless because this is not legislation the President is going to sign.

Indeed, before Christmas, the Democratic leader in the Senate stated: "The President must publicly support and say he will sign an agreement before it gets a vote in either Chamber"; that from the Democratic leader as recently as just a few weeks ago.

Well, there is no point in spending time taking up a bill that hasn't re-

ceived agreement from all parties. We know that, and the Democrats know that as well, but apparently they are willing to flip-flop on this issue if they think it will suit their political purposes. Kind of like how they were for a border fence before they were against it. That is right.

In 2006, the Democratic leader and the ranking member of the Senate Judiciary Committee voted for legislation to authorize a border fence. They were joined in that vote by then-Senator Biden, then-Senator Clinton, and then-Senator Obama. In 2013, every Senate Democrat—every Senate Democrat—supported legislation requiring the completion of a 700-mile fence along our southern border. In 2009, the Democratic leader praised border fencing as a border security accomplishment.

So what has changed? The need to secure our borders hasn't changed. The effectiveness of barriers hasn't changed. That has been well documented.

The House majority leader, STENY HOYER, was asked about the Democrats' flip-flop, whether there is any real difference between what they supported previously and what they are opposing now. Here is what he said: "I don't have an answer that I think is a really good answer."

Well, that is an honest reply. Democrats don't have a good answer because there is no real difference between what they supported a few years ago and what they are opposing now. Democrats have flip-flopped on the issue because they are afraid to oppose the radical far-left wing of their party and because they are committed to obstructing this President no matter what.

If Democrats weren't hurting anybody, their refusal to play ball wouldn't be a problem, but every single day that they refuse to engage in serious negotiations is a day that families aren't getting paid, national priorities aren't getting funded, and important border security is being postponed.

That is where we are. I urge my colleagues to rethink their obstruction and to work with the President to get the government reopened and Federal workers back to work and funding for that critical and important priority of ensuring that we have a secure southern border.

MARCH FOR LIFE

Mr. President, this Friday, as they do every year, individuals from every corner of the United States will come to Washington, DC, to participate in the national March for Life.

As usual, South Dakotans will be among them. Tens of thousands of individuals will march from the National Mall to the Supreme Court to bear witness to a simple truth; that unborn babies are human beings and that they deserve to be protected.

It can be easy sometimes for human beings to turn their backs on injustice. Maybe because we don't want to get involved, we are reluctant to speak out.

It is particularly easy to turn our backs in the case of abortion because the injustice of abortion is hidden. It happens out of the public view behind closed doors, but we must not forget that every day in the United States, unborn babies are being killed.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which compiles data on the number of U.S. abortions, reports that there were more than 638,000 legal abortions in 2015—638,000. That is roughly equivalent to three-quarters of the population of South Dakota. That is an incredible number of lives lost, an incredible amount of joy lost, an incredible amount of love lost, and it is all too easy to forget because we don't see it happening. We can't forget. We can't forget injustice. We can't let fear or discomfort stop us from speaking up for those who cannot speak for themselves.

Fortunately, there are tens of thousands of men and women and young people around this country who are committed to speaking up for the unborn and who travel to Washington, DC, every year to remind us of the truth about abortion, to remind us that abortion is the destruction of an innocent human life, that every abortion kills an innocent human being with her own DNA and her own, distinct identity.

I can think of few greater things than to defend the defenseless, to stand up for those who cannot stand up for themselves, and I am grateful for all those who will march through the streets of Washington, DC, on Friday to speak up for the innocent unborn. I thank them for reminding us of this great injustice, and I join them in praying that one day every child will be safe from abortion.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, this coming Friday, tens of thousands of Americans will take to the snowy streets of Washington, DC, to exercise their fundamental rights on behalf of millions of others who cannot. They will come from every State in the Union, including the State of Utah, to march to the U.S. Supreme Court. Fittingly, they will be marching down Constitution Avenue in the name of justice and in defense of the innocent.

The March for Life is a spectacular tradition in American politics, a mass demonstration of joy. Despite its size and the diversity of its participants—sometimes north of 100,000 souls, born and unborn—the march is typically ignored by the mainstream media.

The marchers also know that the Supreme Court, rightly, is not supposed to be swayed by public opinion one way or another. Yet they march January after January after January, cheerfully, prayerfully, happily, peacefully, bundled up against the cold, with babies in their strollers, and wearing smiles on their faces.

I have been, and I can confirm that the March for Life is the happiest protest you can see because they march not principally in outrage over the lives lost to the scourge of abortion but in abiding hope for the lives yet to be saved.

The March for Life is often seen as the pro-life movement's response to the Supreme Court's 1973 decision in *Roe v. Wade*. In truth, it is a continuation of the march of human dignity and equality that has defined American history since we first declared "that all men are Created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life"—yes, life—"Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness."

Raised from the crib on the Declaration of Independence, Americans can sometimes take its lofty and inspiring words for granted, but these truths, however self-evident, remain as revolutionary today as they were when they were penned in 1776.

From the dawn of time, powerful men have dehumanized women, the poor, the sick, the disabled, the young and the old, those who thought differently, looked differently, loved differently, or worshipped differently.

Whether enforced by tribal taboos, corrupted science, or judicial fiat, these experiments in dehumanization are the darkest chapters in human history—including the original sin of our Republic, the monstrous evil of slavery.

The story of American history is the story of our Nation standing up to oppression, of our coming to the defense of the vulnerable in our laws and with our very lives. From Independence Hall to the Bill of Rights, from the abolition of slavery to universal suffrage, to the civil rights movement, to the triumph over nazism, fascism, and communism, the American people have fought through prejudice and pride to assert and to defend the equal dignity of every single member of the human family.

For all the powerful forces arrayed against it, the right to life remains a part of who we are—a common heritage and, I believe history will prove, a common destiny. That is precisely why the march grows every single year not only here in Washington but in solidarity marches in State capitals all around the country.

In Salt Lake City on Friday, Utah will host its annual March for Life at the Utah State Capitol building. The same group of people will also be organizing the annual diaper drive for the Pregnancy Resource Center, a non-profit organization that provides free healthcare services to pregnant mothers in need. They know that to love is to serve, and to be pro-life is to be pro every life and not just some lives. Our duty to justice and equality extends beyond the unborn child in the womb; it extends to her mother and to her father, to her siblings and her friends, her neighborhood, her church, and her school—to her whole life.

Abortion is evil, but so is indifference. Human dignity impels us to transcend both, not merely by changing laws but by changing hearts, starting, of course, with our own. It is not enough to restore a legal regime of life; we must also endeavor to forge a new culture of life that is broader and runs deeper than the law.

Those of us who call ourselves pro-life have a particular duty to exercise the very right we fight to win back for the unborn: the right to live, the right to grow, to strive every day to become more fully the person God made us to be. A culture of life can be built only one hopeful soul at a time, one by one. We have a long way to go, of course, but the work is well underway. To see what it looks like, stop by the march.

The struggle for life is just the latest battle in America's long, noble crusade for justice, for equality, for freedom and liberty, and, of course, for dignity. It is another fight worth having, another fight most worthy of our heritage, another fight worthy of our children. One day soon, we are going to win this fight. We are going to win this fight, too, just as we have won others. Until that day, America will continue to march.

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. LEAHY. 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. LEAHY. Mr. President—and I welcome the distinguished Presiding Officer, who has probably presided before, but this is the first time I have been on the floor and have seen him preside. I realize he cannot respond, but I welcome him to the Senate.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. President, for 26 days, President Trump has held funding for our Federal Government hostage, using it as leverage to force Congress to provide \$5.7 billion to build his ill-conceived, expensive, and unfortunately totally ineffective wall on the southern border. We knew this was coming because for months during the campaign, he riled up his base with chants of "Build the wall. Build the wall." He invented a crisis at the southern border and then told supporters that only he could solve it. He gave his word over and over again that Mexico would pay for the wall so American taxpayers would not have to.

That was over 2 years ago, and I think he is feeling the pressure now as he shuts himself in the White House. Having failed to convince both Republicans and Democrats in Congress that the campaign slogan was actually good policy and having failed, as we all knew, to get Mexico to pay for the wall, he turns to a negotiation tactic that he seems to have mastered—bul-

lying. He has shut down the government of the most powerful Nation in the world, making us a laughing stock around the rest of the world, and he says he will keep us shut down until he gets what he wants. It is the height of irresponsibility. It certainly destroys our effectiveness in other parts of the world.

He is the President of this country. We all—Democrats and Republicans—accept that he is the President. But that also means he is supposed to lead the Nation, not run it into the ground like so many of his businesses that had to declare bankruptcy. But he sits in the White House tweeting and watching television all day, ignoring the damaging effect his actions are having on millions of Americans of whatever political persuasion around the country.

The shutdown not only hurts our Federal workers, it is hurting America's economy. The President's own Chair of the White House Council of Economic Advisers estimates that gross domestic product will slow by .1 percent for every 2 weeks the government is shut down. Today, there are reports that this estimate is too low and that the impact could be .1 percent for every week the government is shuttered.

Those are numbers, but let me tell you a story and give an example. Small businesses employ more than 59 million people in this country. Small businesses in this country are one of the main drivers of economic growth, but every day the government is closed is a day small businesses can't get Small Business Administration-backed loans to invest and grow their companies.

Last week, I heard from a woman who runs a small sign company in Essex Junction, VT. Essex Junction is in Chittenden County outside of Burlington, VT. It is a beautiful community. It survives by small businesses that expand. She is trying to grow her business, and she is trying to acquire another one, but the SBA backs the space she is trying to purchase, and so she can't bring the sale to finality during the shutdown. As a result, the seller is threatening to just move on. He can't get an answer from the SBA. And, of course, that would throw her expansion plans into jeopardy.

We have many excellent craft breweries in Vermont. They bring in a lot of revenue. They hire a lot of people. They are a key part of our tourism. I heard from one of the head brewers from one of these major craft breweries. He depends upon the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau to approve his license applications, formulas, and the labels he puts on his beer. He has been brewing the beer and it is ready to be labeled, but the office is closed due to the government shutdown. They are not processing applications. He wrote:

I am one of the millions of voters whose livelihood depends on the government operating. . . . Every day that passes without the

ATTB up and running is another potential day of lost sales.

Farmers across the country and in Vermont are also feeling the pain of the shutdown. Just a few weeks ago, we passed the bipartisan farm bill. I was one of the conferees on that bill. I praised Senator PAT ROBERTS, Republican from Kansas, and DEBBIE STABENOW, Democrat from Michigan. They put together this bipartisan bill, and the President took credit when he signed it.

Well, it is a 5-year farm bill, and now the President, right after signing the farm bill, has shut the U.S. Department of Agriculture field offices that help farmers implement the law. Farmers need information now as the new planting and growing season looms. How long will it affect operations heading into the planting year? Most of the staff are on furlough. If you are a farmer in the Midwest and you are preparing your crops, you can't say: Well, you know, we can wait a few months—maybe past the growing season—to find out what the rules are going to be, and then we will plant. The decisions have to be made now.

It also means that farmers can't apply for much needed loans. They need these loans because the drop in commodity prices brought on by the President's tariffs has hit many farmers hard. They need loans to help pay their bills. Many banks are not willing to lend on them, so they have to rely on the Department of Agriculture as a lender of last resort.

Guess what happens in these multiple whammies. Offices that issue these loans are closed due to the shutdown. They need the loans because of the President's tariffs and the President's shutdown, but these offices can't give them the loans.

For those farmers who have better credit, who can access other lending options, many of their loans are also delayed by the shutdown since the lenders are unable to confirm that the farmer has other outstanding loans from the USDA. They could just connect to the USDA office to ask, but it is closed.

Just this week at the Farm Bureau convention, the President loudly proclaimed that he is providing assistance to the Market Facilitation Program to have farmers mitigate the financial losses caused by the Trump tariffs. But as of December 28, there is no one left in the USDA accounting offices to process any new applications for these much needed payments.

I recently heard from a dairy farmer in what we call the Northeast Kingdom in Vermont. She milks 80 cows, and she is proud of her operation, but she has been hit hard by the President's trade policies, which have led to retaliatory tariffs against U.S. dairy exports, and she is now behind in her electric bill. The electric company is threatening to turn off the power to her home, to her barn, to her milk parlor, to her milking machines. She received one install-

ment from the American Facilitation Program to help mitigate the effects of the Trump tariffs, but she hasn't received the second installment because of the Trump shutdown. The second installment is needed to help pay her bills.

She says that she will be in much better shape when the new Dairy Margin Coverage Program from the new farm bill is implemented. Again, I applaud Senator PAT ROBERTS and Senator DEBBIE STABENOW for ushering that through in an almost unanimous vote. Unfortunately, no work is being done to get the program up and running because of the government shutdown. She is frustrated. She is worried about her future. She is looking for help. She is an honest, hard-working person, and she is stymied. I don't blame her.

Implementation of the farm bill, which I spent more than a year working on—I was on the committee conference working hard to deliver for our Nation's farmers on a wide range of key priorities, especially our struggling dairy farmers. It is now on hold during the shutdown with nearly every USDA Agency furloughed. This is life in the age of the Trump shutdown.

The President says that shutting down the government, paralyzing our country, is necessary to address a growing crisis on our southern border. The only crisis we have in our country right now is the one caused by the Trump shutdown. The crisis we face is not at our southern border but at kitchen tables, on family farms, and in small businesses across the country as families hurt by the Trump shutdown try to figure out how to make ends meet.

The President talks of hordes of illegal immigrants rushing across our borders, but border apprehensions have dropped 75 percent since 2000, and the majority of people apprehended at borders today are families—women and children—fleeing violence in their own country. They deserve our compassion, not vitriol.

More people are in this country illegally as a result of visa overstays than from illegal border crossings. This wall does nothing to address that. To address our complex immigration issues, we need comprehensive legislation based on facts, not bumper sticker slogans.

We all support strong border security—every Democrat, every Republican does. By working on a bipartisan basis in the last fiscal year, Democrats and Republicans supported \$21.1 billion for border security and immigration enforcement. This followed a similar investment we made in fiscal year 2017.

As vice chairman of the Appropriations Committee, I know that we invested in our ports of entry, including the purchase of nonintrusive inspection equipment to detect illegal and illicit contraband. We invested in aircraft to monitor our sprawling border from above and quickly respond to emer-

gencies. We invested in video surveillance, radar systems to detect movement in remote locations. These are smart uses of taxpayer dollars. A 30-foot wall that Mexico will not pay for is not a good solution.

This shutdown is not about border security. If this were about border security, we would be done with it today. The Trump shutdown is the President trying to distract America from his failures as a leader and shore up the support of his base. It is shameful.

It is clear that President Trump will not do the right thing on his own, so it is time for Senate Republicans to step up. Just yesterday morning, Democrats asked unanimous consent to take up two bills that would get this government back open—a six-bill minibuss that has bipartisan support, including four bills that passed the Republican-controlled Senate 92 to 6—virtually every Republican voted for it—and a continuing resolution for the Homeland Security Department through February 8. Even though virtually every Republican has voted for this, the Republican leader objected to going forward.

If they continue to object to opening the government, this shutdown is as much on them as it is on the President. We have bipartisan bills before us that could reopen the government. We could vote on them today, and they would pass with veto-proof margins.

Leader MCCONNELL, bring up these bills. Let's vote to end this national nightmare.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. MCSALLY). The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I come to the floor today with a number of my colleagues on the 26th day of this deeply damaging and completely unnecessary Trump shutdown. We are here today to lift up the voices and stories of the people who are being hurt by President Trump and his Senate Republican allies and to once again call on Republican leaders here in the Senate to finally allow a vote and work with us to end this manufactured crisis. While President Trump is very focused on his political game, actual people, their families, and their communities are paying the price.

People we represent—moms and dads, workers, small business owners, people who did not do anything wrong, who just want to work, do their job, serve their communities—all of them have been pulled into President Trump's chaos and dysfunction, and it needs to end.

I am very proud to kick off another effort here in the Senate by those who want to make sure that President Trump and Senate Republican leaders

don't forget whom this is about and understand who is being impacted by their refusal to act.

I want to start with a few from my home State of Washington, where there are nearly 13,000 workers who have been caught up in this Trump shutdown.

Lauren is a furloughed FAA employee who shared her story with me through my website. She told me she supports her family with one income, and now that paycheck has been frozen. She said she has been losing sleep trying to figure out how to cut her own expenses and pay her bills since the Federal Government isn't meeting its obligation to pay her.

I heard from Adam, also from my home State, who is buying his first home with his fiance. What should be a very exciting time is now filled with unnecessary stress because Federal loans through USDA and FHA are held up. As if closing a home isn't stressful enough, now they don't know when or even if a loan is going to come through. As Adam described to me, home buyers are now caught in the middle, and that is just wrong.

One Federal employee I met with while I was home last week is a scientist at one of the impacted Agencies, and he told me about the stress that he and his family have endured since the start of the shutdown, having to cover their childcare expenses and mortgage while he is not being paid—expenses that total up to \$1,700 each month. Right now, he said he is able to tap into his family emergency fund to make ends meet, but he doesn't think they can hang on much longer.

I am not the only one, by the way, who is hearing from people in Washington State about how President Trump's unnecessary shutdown is impacting their lives. These stories are everywhere.

Earlier this week, the wife of a furloughed TSA employee with a 6-year-old daughter told the Seattle Times about how the shutdown has thrown her family into an economic tailspin. Their family is currently living off of money she makes from babysitting and with the help from her retired father, who has taken now a minimum-wage job to help with the family's finances. She worries how they are ever going to make it if this shutdown continues.

This is a small number of the countless stories coming out of my State and from around the country about how President Trump's reckless government shutdown is hurting real people. They are people in every one of our States in the country. They are people on every side of the border debate. They are people who heard President Trump say he would be "proud" to shut down the government. They are people who simply do not understand why they are being asked to bear the burden, to pay the price because President Trump and Republican leaders here in the Senate have boxed themselves into a political corner.

They are people who are getting angrier and angrier, more and more desperate with every day that goes by, who are going to make their voices heard, and we are going to make their voices heard. We are fighting by their side to end this shutdown. I am going to keep making sure they have a voice in the Senate.

I am proud to be with a number of my Democratic colleagues today. We are going to lift up their stories until President Trump and Republicans here in the Senate agree to end this crisis they started.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Ms. HARRIS. We are now 26 days into the longest government shutdown in American history, and 800,000 workers—800,000 Americans—are going without pay. Half of them are working anyway.

Let's be very clear about how we got into this mess. The Senate unanimously passed a bill to open the government right before the holidays. The vote was 100 to 0. There was such jubilation on this floor that, literally, Members of the Senate were singing Christmas carols.

Yet 2 weeks ago, the House, doing its job, then passed a bill to reopen the government. They sent six bills over to the Senate. This body needs to hold a vote on that legislation and send it to the President and ask him to sign it.

The real obstacle to ending this shutdown is in the White House. The President is holding the American people hostage over his vanity project on the southern border and peddling his usual propaganda to distract from a crisis of his own making.

The President has said that "most of the workers not getting paid are Democrats," as if that is true or if that should matter. He has said that "many of the people that we're talking about . . . agree with what we're doing." It has been said that the workers have said to "stay out until you get the funding for the wall."

Well, that is contrary to what we have been hearing and what I have been hearing. Last week, for example, I heard from a woman by the name of Trisha. Trisha and her husband are both air traffic controllers with nearly 40 years of Federal service combined. Trisha's husband served in the Navy. He now has to work long hours of overtime to compensate for the workers who are absent because they have been furloughed, and he is not being paid.

Trisha's job was deemed non-essential, so she is also not being paid. Neither parent in this family is being paid. They have three young children, and this is on top of the fact that Trisha and her family have already endured hardship these past few months as victims of the Thomas fire.

As she wrote me:

On December 5th of last year, our home was completely destroyed in the Thomas fire and we have used every resource available to us to work towards rebuilding our home.

While their home is being rebuilt, Trisha's family moved into a rental home, and they are currently evacuated from that rental home due to the flood and mudslide risks that are currently an issue in California.

Trisha said:

We have small children that we are most concerned about (with the uncertainty of our careers as Federal employees and the incredibly long road ahead in rebuilding our home but most importantly our livelihood).

She writes:

We will continue to stand with our NATCA Brothers and Sisters in ensuring the safety of the National Airspace System, but without the support staff working, it is a daunting task.

Trisha's message is one of nearly 20,000 phone calls, emails, and letters my office has received since the shutdown started 26 days ago—all pleading with us to reopen the U.S. Government.

They are 2 of the 42,300 workers who are currently being furloughed in California. I don't know which of them are Democrats or Republicans, and it doesn't matter. What matters is the people who are being hurt and the critical government functions that are going undone. They are the TSA agents who protect our flights and the air traffic controllers who help to land our planes. They are park rangers and FBI agents and Coast Guard members. They inspect our food and provide loans to our farmers. They conduct lifesaving research. Right now, though, they are being told to pay their bills by babysitting or selling their belongings on craigslist.

These Americans need their government to do its job. They don't need a wall. They need paychecks. Congress is a coequal branch of government. We don't need a permission slip before we can vote on a bill.

On behalf of Trisha and hundreds of thousands of Americans like her, let's take up the legislation that we have already approved. Let's send it to the President, and let's end this pointless shutdown as soon as possible—right away, now.

I yield back my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I thank Senator MURRAY, Senator HARRIS, and my colleagues who are on the floor.

I point out that we are now on day 26 of this outrageous and dangerous partial shutdown that was totally avoidable. It has been caused by one person—President Trump—and is now being assisted by the Republican leadership in this body by its not allowing the U.S. Senate, which is a coequal branch of government, to take up legislation that would reopen government—legislation that has previously passed this body and would, clearly, pass on a vote if the majority leader would allow us to have that vote. We could then reopen the government.

The unanimous consent request that I offered yesterday with my colleague

from Maryland, Senator VAN HOLLEN, would allow the appropriations bills that have nothing to do with this current dispute with the President to be fully functional, and it would allow for a continuing resolution for the Department of Homeland Security. We could then work, as we should work, to deal with border security and immigration issues. Yet the majority leader objected to the Senate's taking up that legislation, and the shutdown continues.

There are 800,000-plus citizens who work for the Federal Government who are being denied the ability to either get paychecks for the work that they do or are being furloughed without pay. In each one of those cases, there is a hardship that is having an impact that goes well beyond just the 800,000.

There are businesses in Baltimore that are wondering whether they can keep their doors open because they depend on Federal workers to come in and use their services. Whether it is a laundry, a cleaner, a restaurant, or a supply store, they know their sales depend on people having checks to pay their bills. The Federal workforce does not. So it is affecting secondary employment. There have also been a lot of layoffs by those who depend on the contract services of the Federal Government.

There are many individual stories, and Senator VAN HOLLEN and I have traveled throughout our State and have met with government workers. We have heard the account of one person who was supposed to close on a new home, his first home. He is not going to be able to do that because he doesn't have a paycheck that shows the wages necessary in order to support the mortgage because his most recent paycheck is zero.

We have heard from a person in my office who is an air traffic controller. Her husband is also an air traffic controller. They are responsible for relatives who are dependent on them. One needs a medical procedure, but they are not going to be able to move forward with that medical procedure because they don't have the out-of-pocket costs that are going to be necessary to pay for that. The list goes on and on and on of hardship—of people wondering whether their credit scores are going to be affected, which could affect their employment because they are going to be late in paying their mortgage payments. That is assuming they get paychecks in the next couple of months because, then, their homes could well be foreclosed on.

I could put a face on each one of these 800,000, but let me just share an account by Lamar Cobb, who is a lead transportation security officer at BWI Marshall Airport. I was there earlier this week, meeting with the government workers who are keeping our airports and our air traffic safe. These are dedicated people who are working without pay. He came forward.

One of the reporters there asked: Can you give us an individual hardship that you have actually confronted?

He explained that he has a 10-year-old daughter whom he describes as his heart and pride and joy. He had to take her out of cheerleading because he could not pay for it while he works at BWI without receiving a paycheck. Then he said something that, I think, really hit us all. He said at the press conference: It may not seem like the end of the world, but to a 10-year-old, it is pretty close.

These are the circumstances in which we are putting our fellow citizens by saying: Work without pay or be furloughed without pay.

It makes no sense at all. We should never have had the shutdown. We could end it now by the Senate's carrying out its constitutional responsibility as a coequal branch of government. Let's vote on the legislation that can reopen government. Let's do what we are responsible to do—let's end this shutdown.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Ms. BALDWIN. Madam President, I rise to address the Trump shutdown and the real consequences that have occurred since 800,000 Federal workers, including nearly 3,000 Wisconsinites, have been furloughed or forced to work without pay.

The President said this week that his administration is setting records. It is true that he now holds the record for the longest government shutdown in our Nation's history, but every day that it continues, the Trump shutdown is causing real pain for hard-working people in my State.

I recently read the heartbreaking story of Mallory Lorge. Mallory lives in River Falls, WI, and works for the Department of the Interior. On Friday, Mallory, along with thousands of other Federal workers, did not receive a paycheck. Mallory has type 1 diabetes. Without her paycheck, she can't afford her \$300 copay to get the insulin she needs to manage her diabetes and stay alive. Mallory said she is rationing the two vials of insulin she has left. Her blood sugar rose to a high level last week, but she said she felt forced to ignore it. Instead, she said, I just went to bed and hoped I would wake up.

Think about that for a minute. Because President Trump and the Republicans in Congress refuse to support bipartisan legislation to end this shutdown and reopen the government, Mallory can't afford to get the insulin she needs to live. The House has done its job in passing bipartisan legislation to end the shutdown. Now it is time for Senate Majority Leader MCCONNELL to stop blocking a vote in the Senate so that we can fund the government.

We are 26 days into the Trump shutdown. It is not just hurting Federal workers and contractors. It is also hurting small businesses and entrepreneurs across the country. In Wis-

consin, we make things—cheese, brats, and, yes, beer. Milwaukee is often called Brew City, but thanks to the government shutdown, there are craft brewers across our State that can't make or sell new beer.

Russ Klisch is the President of Lakefront Brewery in Milwaukee. Lakefront has been making beer in Wisconsin for more than 30 years. The Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau approves licenses for new beers and new breweries as well as labels for beers that are sent out of State, but the Agency is not currently serving craft brewers due to the Trump shutdown.

Lakefront Brewery has plans to introduce a brand-new beer in mid-February, but those plans are now on hold. This government shutdown threatens to cut its beer sales and hurt its ability to grow its business and support the economy. Other breweries across Wisconsin are impacted as well.

Mosinee Brewing Company opened its doors just last November, but it can't get approval to start making and selling its new beer until the government reopens. New "Made in Wisconsin" beer is also on hold until we reopen the government.

President Trump and Majority Leader MCCONNELL can and should end this shutdown today and ensure that Federal workers like Mallory can finally get paid and so that small business owners like Russ can keep growing their businesses.

We should vote in the Senate today on House-passed legislation, and the President should sign it so we can finally end this useless shutdown that is preventing our country from moving forward.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, I join my colleagues this morning to share the stories of the people in New Hampshire who are currently enduring hardships because of this Trump shutdown—a shutdown that has been termed by a number of my colleagues as the longest government shutdown in U.S. history.

I have here a picture of Andre and his wife Maria and their three beautiful children, from Derry, NH. Andre is an air traffic controller who works at the Boston Terminal Radar Approach Control facility in Merrimack, NH. It is sounds like it would be in Boston, but it is not. It is in New Hampshire, where we have hundreds of air traffic controllers and FAA personnel.

Andre works at the center to keep the airways safe for passengers who are flying over the Granite State. He also represents and talks to a number of other air traffic controllers in the New England region to hear what they have to say.

With what he is hearing right now regarding the shutdown, Andre writes:

Air traffic controllers have remained on the job, dedicated to the safety of every flight, but we don't know when we will receive our next paycheck. My colleagues and

I have suffered the sudden loss of our income due to the government shutdown. It's going to be hard for me to meet all of my financial obligations.

What I am most impressed by with regard to the Federal workers with whom I have met is their dedication to their jobs. All of those air traffic controllers understand that the safety of the skies in the United States depends on them, and they are there. They are not getting paid. They are experiencing hardships like Andre is talking about, but they are there and are doing everything they can to make sure that the American public can fly safely.

In addition to Andre's story, I have heard from nearly 100 other air traffic controllers in New Hampshire who are all calling for an end to the shutdown—air traffic controllers who are protecting our safety and who are working without pay.

I want to read an excerpt from a letter that I received from Jamie in Auburn, NH, because I think it so exemplifies where we are and how the American people are feeling about this government shutdown.

Jamie writes:

Dear Senator Shaheen, there are many stories to be told regarding the effects of the government shutdown on Federal employees—the stress of financial uncertainty, the inability to take necessary time from work to care for our families, and the continued degradation of FAA resources. . . . These are but a few examples shared amongst us, but there is something that tears at the very fabric of who we are. We take deep pride in serving our country and providing the safest and most efficient air traffic control system in the world. We do so with an unwavering sense of duty and a deep understanding of the trust bestowed on us by the American people. To be used as pawns in a political chess match not only disrespects us as dedicated Federal employees, but it serves to weaken our democracy. A government that must hold hostage the livelihood of its citizens is the very definition of a failed democracy.

Sadly, that is what President Donald Trump is doing. He is holding hostage hundreds of thousands of Federal workers, and he is being enabled in this effort by the Republican leadership in this Senate who is unwilling to bring forward the bills that would open the government today. We could pass them today.

These are just two examples that I think articulate the very real impact this shutdown is having on many hard-working Americans and their families.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD these letters that I have received from air traffic controllers.

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

DEAR SENATOR: I'm writing to you today because of the effects of the government shutdown on my profession and family. My coworkers and I have remained on the job dedicated to the safety of every flight despite the concern of when our next paycheck will come. The government shutdown has affected me professionally and personally.

My husband and I are both air traffic controllers and we have 6-month-old twins. We

go to work normally like any other day and we pay for childcare. It is going to be hard to meet all of my family's financial obligations without knowing when our next paychecks will be. My family has no income while the government remains shutdown.

The shutdown affects us all in many ways, but the other major way it is effecting me is professionally. This government shutdown is setting back air traffic control staffing numbers.

The FAA Academy is closed during the shutdown which is where all of our new trainees train initially.

There are controllers being forced to retire because of age, but with the shutdown new replacements cannot be trained. We are at a 30-year low in staffing and every day the FAA Academy is closed the more set back staffing becomes. New trainees that are unable to train due to the Academy closure may lead to fewer new hires for 2019. Many controllers are working 6-day work weeks and these new hires will help.

This career has been all I wanted to do since I was little. Like my coworkers I perform my duties professionally and to the highest safety standards despite not knowing when my next paycheck is. We will all continue to do so, but with financial concerns until the shutdown ends. Please End the government shutdown. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Kristen (Milford, NH).

DEAR SENATOR SHAHEEN: I write today to urge you to end the current partial government shutdown caused by a lapse in annual appropriations. As a federal air traffic controller and constituent, I want you to know how the shutdown is affecting me.

Since air traffic control specialists perform life and safety excepted activities as defined by the Antideficiency Act, controllers like me have remained on the job, dedicated to the safety of every flight, since the beginning of the partial shutdown on December 22nd. However, my family will be placed under significant financial stress if the shutdown lasts beyond the current pay period. We don't know when we will receive our next paycheck.

The Federal Aviation Administration has closed its training academy in Oklahoma City, where new controllers arrive to begin their careers, as I did ten years ago this week. Classes have been cancelled, which will invariably lead to fewer new hires in 2019. Stopping the hiring and training pipeline exacerbates the current controller staffing crisis. The number of fully certified air traffic controllers is now at a 30-year low.

Please do whatever you can to end the government shutdown without delay.

Sincerely,

Aaron (Milford, NH).

DEAR SENATOR SHAHEEN: There are many stories to be told regarding the effects of the government shutdown on federal employees. The stress of financial uncertainty, the inability to take necessary time from work to care for our families, and the continued degradation of FAA resources. . . . These are but a few examples shared amongst us. But, this is something that tears at the very fabric of who we are. We take deep pride in serving our country, providing the safest and most efficient air traffic control system in the world. We do so with an unwavering sense of duty and a deep understanding of the trust bestowed upon us by the American people. To be used as pawns in a political chess match not only disrespects us as dedicated federal employees but it serves to weaken our democracy. A government that must hold hostage the livelihood of its citizens is the very definition of a failed democracy.

The Congress, Senate, and The White House has once again tarnished what was once considered the beacon of democracy. . . . The image of the United States of America.

Yes, I and my family need this government open. I need to be paid for my continued dedication. . . . for my work. . . . But, the American people need the practice of government shutdowns to end. The way for political agendas to be advanced is through diplomatic compromise not party-lined standoffs.

Please free my family, my colleagues, and the American people from this governmental siege of our livelihoods and open our government. Restore the faith of the American people.

Sincerely,

Jamie (Auburn, NH).

DEAR SENATOR SHAHEEN: I am writing to you today because of the partial government shutdown that is causing 800,000 federal employees to go without the certainty of their paychecks. This uncertainty is adding undue stress to ourselves and our jobs because of financial obligations.

As an air traffic controller and constituent, I want you to know how the partial government shutdown is affecting me. For the last TWO weeks, other controllers and I have remained on the job, dedicated to the safety of every flight. Even without knowing when we will get paid, or even if we will get paid.

As my husband and I do not know when or if I will receive my paycheck, we are having to stretch every last penny to meet all our financial obligations. If this shutdown continues for much longer, we do not know how or if some of our bills will be paid.

We ask you to end this shutdown immediately!

Sincerely,

Caitlin (Amherst, NH).

DEAR SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN: As an air traffic controller and constituent, I want you to know how the partial government shutdown is affecting me. For the last two weeks, air traffic controllers have remained on the job, dedicated to the safety of every flight. Yet, we don't know when we will receive our next paycheck. My colleagues and I have suffered the sudden loss of our income due to the government shutdown. I am a college graduate and have numerous student loans to pay as well as trying to provide for my family.

Please, we as air traffic controllers beg, end the government shutdown.

Very Respectfully,

Adam (Hudson, NH).

DEAR SENATOR SHAHEEN: As an air traffic controller and constituent, I want you to know how the partial government shutdown is affecting me. For the last couple weeks, air traffic controllers have remained on the job, dedicated to the safety of every flight. Yet, we don't know when our next paycheck will come. This has placed an immense amount of stress and financial burden on me and my family. We are having to make choices on whether or not to pay certain bills or buy groceries.

Please end the government shutdown immediately!

Sincerely,

Joshua (New Boston, NH).

DEAR SENATOR SHAHEEN: I am writing to let you know that the government shutdown is negatively impacting me, my wife and family.

As the shutdown continues my wife and I are having to make some difficult financial decisions. We have two daughters, one just out of college and the other in her senior

year at UVM. Along with all of our regular monthly bills we have student loan payments and tuition due.

Not knowing when to expect our next paycheck is causing undue stress on me, my wife and family.

I would like to see you help end the shutdown as soon as possible!

Ronald (Brookline, NH).

DEAR JEANNE SHAHEEN: First, thank you for all that you do for our state and country. I am writing you today with regard to the government shutdown. As an air traffic controller trainee, my job security is something I have to worry about until I certify. Unfortunately, the shutdown has me worrying about my income and financial obligations as well. Morale is notably down at work, and the staffing only gets worse as the more senior controllers approach retirement. Anything you can do to assist in the swift cease of this shutdown would be greatly appreciated by air traffic controllers nationwide. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Andre (Nashua, NH).

DEAR JEANNE SHAHEEN: I'm writing to you in regards to the government shutdown. If this shutdown continues it will put a huge financial burden on my family. At this time I am the sole provider for my household. My husband is a small business owner in New Hampshire and is currently not collecting income to keep his business going. We have two children. A two-year-old boy and a five-month-old daughter. Since there is currently no paid maternity leave I had to live off of my savings while out with my new born, which is why I have no money saved up to cover all of our expenses during this shutdown. Going into debt because I can't pay for the childcare I use (while still working) is not an option. Please find a way to stop this shut down.

Lanna (Nashua, NH).

DEAR SENATOR SHAHEEN: Please, put an end to the government shutdown. I soon will have used my entire savings to pay my current bills. I now, don't have the down payment for a house that I was ready to buy. I've had to pass up on a vacation this month, skiing in NH, in fear that I won't get paid.

Please Senator Shaheen, put an end to this government shut down. After 30 years of service in the USAF and FAA, this is a slap in the face.

James (Manchester, NH).

THE HONORABLE JEANNE SHAHEEN: Please—end the shutdown!

I am a 30-year controller, and I don't think I will be employed at the end of January.

The financial impact of the shutdown is a burden that I should not have to deal with at this stage in my career.

Staffing is the worst it has ever been and a continued shutdown will have negative effects on the air traffic system for years!

Please work to end the shutdown!!!

Maurice (Derry, NH).

DEAR HONORABLE SHAHEEN: I am writing to you today to inform you of the impact the partial government shutdown is having on me, as an air traffic controller, and my family. For the last two weeks, I have worked air traffic, not knowing when I'd be paid next. I am dedicated to the safety of every flight. This sudden loss of income as well as paid leave is impacting my life multiple ways. First, I missed paid time off that was prescheduled, around the holiday with my family. With one child, a patient at Mass General, and another at Boston Children's

Hospital, I have had to miss out on paid/earned sick leave for both their appointments. Lastly, as a support for the training department, I am seeing a direct impact on future controllers.

Please end the government shutdown immediately!

Sincerely,

Kristine (Nashua, NH).

DEAR SENATOR SHAHEEN As an air traffic controller and constituent, I want you to know how the partial government shutdown has affected me. As an air traffic controller I work a job that is 24/7, 365 days a year.

We plan and bid our vacations 15 months in advance. However, because I am an excepted employee engaged in life-saving activities, my vacation time during Christmas and New Year's was canceled. I had to work over the holidays and missed this time spent with family. This combined with uncertainty of when my next paycheck will come is adding stress that is not needed.

PLEASE END THE GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN IMMEDIATELY!

Sincerely,

Seth (Hollis, NH).

Mrs. SHAHEEN. I know every Member of the Senate has heard from constituents who are facing significant hardships as a result of the shutdown. I know every Member wants this shutdown to end. Unfortunately, President Trump doesn't seem to want this shutdown to end.

The House has already passed appropriations bills that would reopen the government. This appropriations legislation is not partisan. In fact, they are bills that have already had bipartisan support in the Senate. So I urge President Trump, Majority Leader MCCONNELL, and our Republican colleagues to take up these bills to reopen the government. I believe we should reopen the government. Let's do our jobs so the rest of America can do theirs.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that Democrats control the time until 12 noon, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 3 minutes each, and the Republicans control the time from 12 noon to 12:30 p.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I rise to give voice to the more than 5,000 Federal employees across New Jersey who aren't getting paid due to President Trump's pointless government shutdown. Make no mistake. This shutdown is the result of a Presidential temper tantrum.

Democrats have voted for border security funding, for new technology to scan vehicles for drugs, for more port-of-entry infrastructure personnel, and for new drones to detect unauthorized crossings. Yet President Trump is holding 800,000 Federal workers hostage all because he wants \$5.7 billion for a border wall that he promised Mexico would pay for.

We have long known that something is broken inside this President that makes him incapable of caring about anyone other than himself. Clearly, he does not see Federal workers as real people with real bills to pay—people like Emily Nering of Basking Ridge, NJ.

Emily has worked at the EPA's Edison field office for 8 years. She coordinates water quality research and is in the midst of a major survey of the New Jersey-New York Harbor, and she assisted in emergency efforts to deliver clean drinking water to Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands after Hurricane Maria. She said:

I took an oath of office too. I want to get back to doing the important work that the EPA conducts and to continue to serve this great nation. I saved up to contribute to an IRA this year and to start saving for a down payment on a home, but those funds will now be used to help me pay rent and other bills, pushing my financial and life goals further out of reach. . . . I urge the President and Congress to put us back to work so we can continue to serve the American people!

In recent days, I have heard from Coast Guard members, TSA agents, IRS workers—patriots who have built their careers on serving their fellow Americans. Their work is important, and they deserve to be paid. If President Trump wants to discuss issues like border security and comprehensive immigration reform, then he should end the shutdown, reopen all of those elements of the government that have nothing to do with his desired border wall, release his hostages, and reopen the government, but if he continues to bury his head in the sand, then it is time for the Senate to act.

We could likely pass legislation to reopen the government with a veto-proof majority if only the majority leader would hold a vote. Let's do the right thing for Federal employees like Emily. Let's vote and end this shutdown now.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Madam President, on Friday, the day that thousands of Federal workers in Nevada and across the country missed their first paycheck of the Trump shutdown, I was in Reno meeting with two dozen affected workers and families who work for our Federal Government. These hard-working Nevadans who serve the American people in the U.S. Coast Guard, the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Geological Survey, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Forest Service, and government contractors told me about the struggles they are having, their fears, and the very human consequences of the President's decision to hold our government hostage.

These Nevadans shared how their finances and their whole lives have been thrown into chaos by this reckless shutdown. Person after person told me that without the promise of a paycheck, they are struggling to pay their

mortgage or rent, keep up with their other bills, and even put food on the table for their families. Some are even cashing out their savings while others consider taking out high-interest payday loans, risking their good credit just to stay afloat.

It is not just Federal workers who were suffering. Entire families have had the rug pulled out from under them because of this reckless shutdown.

While I was in Reno, I had the opportunity to meet Brianna. She talked to me about her family. She is a stay-at-home mom. She has two beautiful daughters—as you can see—and her husband works in the Coast Guard. He is a coastguardsman. Right now, he is reporting to work without pay for the duration of this shutdown.

Brianna told me that without their sole source of income, her family would struggle to make ends meet. She told me they are weighing the decision to pull her oldest daughter out of school and to move in with her parents until the shutdown is over. That is outrageous.

I can't tell you how many letters and emails I have also received in the office. This is one from a veteran in Reno. He said:

I applaud you for standing up to Trump and not wasting taxpayer money on a stupid wall that he promised Mexico would pay for. However, as a Federal employee who is also a disabled vet, I am asking that you support legislation to assure that we do not lose pay and benefits because of this shutdown. We are currently scheduled to receive our normal pay on December 31, but after that, we have no more checks coming until the shutdown is over. Despite what others on the Hill have said, many Federal employees depend on those checks and face real economic impacts when the government shuts down. We are tired of being demonized by the right as parasites and bureaucrats, and it is ridiculous that the President wants to freeze our pay and stop all of our pay raises. The Federal Government is the largest employer of veterans, and we continue supporting our country throughout our Federal service.

No family or individual in the United States of America should have their life upended like this. So we ask that the Federal Government reopen and that the majority leader bring the bill to the floor so we can open this government on behalf of Federal workers not only in Nevada but across the country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Thank you, Madam President.

I join my colleagues today in calling for a simple, commonsense solution to one of the most vexing, unnecessary, and avoidable crises in recent history.

The present paralysis of Agencies' essential governmental functions is intolerable and unacceptable. It is shameful and embarrassing to every Member of this body, but it should be most shameful and embarrassing to the Chief Executive of the United States, who is singularly responsible for it by insisting on a wall and agreement to it

as a condition for reopening the government.

President Trump is singlehandedly blocking progress toward providing the American people with the services and the essential public functions they need and deserve.

The impact is on the consumers of those functions. We are all consumers. We all fly and depend on the air traffic controllers and the TSA. We all eat food and depend on inspections by the FDA. We all consume drugs, and the approvals of essential pharmaceutical medicines are vital to all of us. We all need and deserve the protection provided by the U.S. Coast Guard, whose brave men and women are receiving no pay—none.

Many of those 800,000 workers going without pay are also working without pay. I have sponsored a measure that will enable them to avoid foreclosures and repossessions of their cars and other financial crises through measures similar to the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act. I have sponsored and supported calls for providing them with unemployment compensation. The ones who work need the compensation and the benefits to put food on the table and make sure they stay in their homes.

These 800,000 workers are experiencing real pain. They are real people with real lives going through financial hardships.

On Monday, I met with many of them at Bradley International Airport in Windsor Locks. I heard them share their personal stories about how the shutdown is causing them real harm. I also heard about their dedication to doing their job and how the air controllers and—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time is expired.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. The TSA are overtired and need that help.

I ask unanimous consent for 1 more minute.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I respect the rights of the Senator. We have a number of Senators and a limited amount of time. So if he could finish quickly, we would all appreciate it. Thank you.

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

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Let me just finish by citing Adrian Pellot, one of those workers whom I met on Monday. Adrian is a behavior detection officer. He has done it for more than a decade. He is one of those workers going without pay. I will just leave you with this thought. He told me:

We have no income right now. We're bleeding money. Just day-to-day things. Food. I still have to pay the bills.

So do all of those 800,000 workers.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, let me tell you about the impact the

Trump shutdown is having on one couple from my home State of Vermont.

Kelly and Ricky Klein own Groennfell Meadery in Colchester, VT. In fact, this is Kelly with her very pretty little daughter, Nora.

Groennfell Meadery is part of a growing industry in Vermont. We are a small State. We have the most craft breweries per capita in the Nation, and they create jobs. They support small businesses. They bring people to Vermont from all over the country. Business has been good. Kelly and Ricky have been planning an expansion. Recently, they were approved for a \$1.3 million Small Business Administration loan. They were going to buy three new stainless steel fermenter tanks. They were going to move to a bigger facility, double their production, hire additional people, and bought additional supplies in anticipation of it. What happened? Their loan from the SBA is now on hold because of the Trump shutdown. It is not clear if it will ever come through. So instead of expanding, they have to use their own money. They have to use their stockpiles of mead. They have to take out a loan to make payroll. They are really hurting, but they told me one thing, even in this difficult time.

Even in this difficult time, they said they were more concerned for people who have lost paychecks and lifesaving benefits and with others in their industry who have been harder hit. It is a sense of community and empathy. I wish President Trump had that same sense of empathy and caring that they do.

We have to end this shutdown. I call on the majority leader—the Republican leader—to bring up the bills, which we have already passed by an overwhelming majority, that would reopen this government. Democrats and Republicans have voted for them. All we need is for the Republican leader to bring them up.

Stop the shutdown. Let people go back to their businesses.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. UDALL. Madam President, I rise today to talk about a New Mexico family who is severely impacted by the shutdown, and I think there are probably hundreds of thousands of families like this across the country.

This is Leah Teresa Ornelas, her husband Ervie, and their sons Ian and Zachary. They are all from Carlsbad, NM. Zachary, their youngest—in the middle—had a brain tumor and has undergone two surgeries. Zachary is now disabled and requires constant care. Ervie, his stepfather, reduced his work as a daycare teacher by 75 percent to take care of Zachary. Leah is a public nurse, and her paycheck goes to their high insurance costs and medical bills. The family moved back in together to save on expenses. Their older son, Ian, is now the main provider for the family. Ian works for the Department of

the Interior, has been furloughed for 26 days, and has now missed a paycheck.

The Ornelas family is scared to death that Ian will miss another check and another check. They simply cannot make it without Ian being paid. The Ornelas family has made tremendous sacrifices as a family. They can make no more adjustments, as the President callously advised.

This Trump shutdown must end now. The President and Senate majority must do the right thing for the Ornelas family—and for hundreds of thousands of families across the Nation—and open our government now.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, as my colleagues have said, it has now been 26 days since President Trump shut down the government and began holding Federal workers and their families hostage to force funding for an expensive, ineffective, and unpopular border wall.

That is 26 days of working without pay for hundreds of TSA and Customs and Border Patrol officers in my State of Michigan and across the country. That is 26 days of our Federal workers wondering how they will pay their mortgage and keep their lights on. That is 26 days of grocery stores, restaurants, and other local businesses watching their sales dry up.

This shutdown is also hard on Michigan farmers, including Jessica Youngblood, whom I want to take a moment to talk about.

She and her husband David, who is a veteran, are raising their three young children on their farm in Macomb County. Like many farmers, Jessica is also a small business owner; the Youngbloods are launching a winery. For 3 years, they have poured all of their time and they have poured all their money into their 25 acres of wine grapes. I have had the opportunity to walk with Jessica and her children through the rows of grapevines, and I have seen how hard they are working as a family every single day.

This year, they finally had grapes to harvest so that they could launch their small business. They planned to open their winery on their farm and start selling their wine on Memorial Day weekend. Unfortunately, the government shutdown threw a huge roadblock in front of this homegrown Michigan business.

The Tax and Trade Bureau at the Department of the Treasury approves their labels—when they are open. Jessica needs to bottle her wine in March, but that can't happen without labels being approved and printed. As Jessica said:

We are 100% dependent on the grapes we grow on our family vineyard. . . . We are farmers! We need the government to open so we can run our business.

It is time to end this shutdown. Let Jessica and her family benefit from all of their hard work. So I say: Leader

MCCONNELL, open the government so that the Youngblood family can open their small business.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. TESTER. Madam President, approximately 635,000 veterans work for the Federal Government, and the hardships of the shutdown on these men and women are multifold.

First, furloughed veterans who are Federal workers are missing paychecks. They are having a hard time paying their mortgages and paying their bills overall. Veterans with VA-guaranteed home loans are at risk of being evicted by mortgage companies because they can't make their payments.

Second, veterans are not getting the benefits they have earned from several Federal Departments, other than the VA. For instance, Native American veterans, who already face unique challenges with healthcare, are unable to rely on the Indian Health Service to provide their healthcare because it is closed down. Homeless veterans rely on the Department of Housing and Urban Development's housing vouchers, which are not going out because of the shutdown.

That is not all. Other benefits and protections are at risk. The VA is currently implementing major reform bills like the Appeals and Modernization Act and the VA MISSION Act. To roll out these new initiatives, the Federal Register must publish new rules and regulations. Guess what. The Federal Register isn't operational because of the shutdown, so the implementation of these wide-sweeping, bipartisan VA reforms is shut down.

On top of this, we know that those stationed at the borders and at airports—many of whom are veterans—are among those hurting the most because of this President's shutdown.

There are many more veterans suffering. Colin, from Billings, wrote me and said: "I am a federal employee and a veteran, and this standoff is placing a great deal of stress on me and my family."

His wife is pregnant, he has a 2-year-old son, and he has no paycheck. He spent his career in public service. After he got out of the service, he could have made a lot more money in the private sector.

Unfortunately, because of the fact that the President and Leader MCCONNELL will not bring the bills to the floor, we are in a shutdown. This is the human cost of the President's shutdown. These are men and women who have volunteered to serve our Nation and put themselves in harm's way and continue serving our Nation as civilians, and this is how the President says thank you—putting them out of a job, out of a paycheck, and out of the benefits that they have earned. He belittles the financial hardship that his actions are causing, and he turns their service in the military and as civilians into a political football.

The President has turned his back on the veterans of this Nation. It is time to put these men and women back to work. I call, and continue to call, on the majority to put an end to this real crisis—because they can—and reopen the government.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. KAINÉ. Madam President, I stand to tell the story of a great Virginian named Vidisha. This is a picture of Vidisha and her son Ayan, who came to a Federal employee roundtable that I did last Friday morning.

I have told stories on the floor about Virginians who are affected personally—worrying about missing mortgage payments, having to reschedule medical appointments, having to draw money out of an IRA and pay a tax penalty because of the shutdown. But I thought it was interesting that Vidisha came in and talked just a little bit about her own anxiety and the anxiety of everybody she works with. But what she really wanted to talk about was how the shutdown hurts the American public.

She works for probably the smallest Agency in the Federal Government, the Chemical Safety Board, with 40 employees and a budget of \$11 million or \$12 million. This is a small Agency, and they have one job: Investigate chemical spills—not to find fault, not to help a lawyer, but investigate chemical spills so that they can determine what went wrong, to prevent future chemical spills that are going to hurt Americans. Because of the shutdown, she and her colleagues—those 40—are not doing that job.

President Trump tweeted last weekend that the reason he is forcing the shutdown is he promised to protect the safety and security of the American public. He is hurting the safety and security of the American public.

Vidisha said that during the shutdown there has been a major chemical spill in Houston, TX. Normally, the investigators would be on it immediately to do the investigation, to give recommendations, and to reduce the risk of a spill at that facility or any other. But because of the shutdown, Vidisha and her staff are not investigating. How does this protect the safety and security of the American public—by leaving a major chemical spill with potentially life-threatening consequences uninvestigated and unresponded to?

This President's claim that he is helping the safety and security of the American people is a flat-out lie. You are hurting the security of the American people when you disable people like Vidisha and her colleagues from investigating chemical spills, from interdicting drugs if you are a Coast Guard, ATF, or DEA agent, or from doing law enforcement investigations if you are an FBI agent.

The President is hurting the security of this country. It is time to reopen government and put the security of Americans first.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Mr. SCHATZ. Madam President, I have a simple request for my Republican colleagues, and that is this: Open the government. Open the government. There have been too many people suffering for too long for this to go on any further.

One of those people is named Scott Pekalib. He lives in Hilo, HI, and works for the U.S. Geological Survey. He has had a rough few months.

In October, his husband Jay went into the hospital for a routine surgery that went horribly wrong. He went into cardiac arrest and was in an induced coma for several days. He had to be flown to another island to receive the care that was necessary. Scott and Jay spent all of their savings to get through this ordeal. After paying for medicine, hotels, and airfare, they were living paycheck to paycheck.

Now, because of this government shutdown, Scott's paycheck reads zero. He doesn't know how he is going to buy gas to take his husband to the doctor or how they are going to pay the bills that are due. Scott is making impossible choices between buying the prescription drugs he needs and the ones that his husband needs. All of this pain and suffering is because the Senate will not vote to reopen the government.

So I ask my Republican friends to call for a vote, and if the President vetoes the bill, let's act like a separate, coequal branch of government and override that veto. That is our prerogative in the United States, and that is our obligation in the U.S. Senate—to do what is best for the Nation, for the health, safety, and economic security of all of our constituents.

Let's reopen the government.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, we have heard from a number of our colleagues today about personal stories that are happening to real live people in their home States—people who have not received a paycheck and are facing fear about what they are going to do in the coming days.

We have a responsibility—and I think I speak on behalf of Republicans and Democrats both here. We need to open government. We have disagreements all the time in Congress over different issues. Certainly, we cannot put these people's lives at risk and leave them as pawns in our States. Open up government, and then have a discussion about the issues we disagree on.

I know the Senator from Minnesota expected to be here, but I also see on the floor the Senator from Georgia, who would like to speak. I ask unanimous consent that the Senator from Georgia be allowed to speak and the Senator from Minnesota, when she returns.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. (Mr. LANKFORD). Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ISAKSON. Madam President, I thank the Senator from Washington very much for her courtesy. I will be brief, and I will be very succinct. In fact, I will be responding to some of the things that Senator SCHATZ from Hawaii and others have said on the floor.

I am going to respond to myself. I made a speech here only yesterday, about 2:30, in which I talked about the frustration that I have and that most Georgians have with the fact that the government is shut down, and I talked about who is losing.

We are losing. The government loses more money when it shuts down than it makes any other time. Shutting down is a losing proposition all the way around, and we are exemplifying the best way to lose because we are not doing anything to solve the problem.

I have a solution I am going to propose, specifically, right now. I am not going to put my name on it to be the lead name. I don't care who gets the credit. I am ready for some solutions. I am going to talk about some very serious things right now and some very difficult things, but we are in a serious, difficult problem. We have serious problems, and we need serious people to solve them.

In the United States today, at our ports, our airports, and our highways—every way you can cross the border to come into the United States of America—we charge fees for all kinds of things, and we have for years. We have trust funds, like Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund and things like that. People come across our borders all the time. In Smuggler's Gulch in San Diego, they come in on an eight-lane highway, flooding into America in the morning to go to work and flooding out of America in the afternoon to go home to bed, and we charge for that.

A constituent of mine called me last night, a gentleman I know very well, who is a very successful businessperson. He said: JOHNNY, you all are fighting over this border wall or how you fund it or who gets credit for it. I saw your speech. Have you ever thought of this?

I listened. I listened, I thought, and I said: You know, I haven't.

I got my staff to get me the information, and it all works. It makes sense, and I think it would make sense to the American people. I think it would make sense to the President of the United States, the Democratic Party, and the Republican Party as well. If we all start tonight, even, and decide whether we want to sign it or not, we can do it together. Who gets the credit for it stops, and we fight over something that makes more sense fighting over than having a border that leaks and an immigration program that doesn't work.

Here is the idea. We establish a fee in the United States of America through our ports, through our airports, through all the different ways you come here. You create a trust fund for

that money to go into, and it is designated for the security of our borders—our Canadian border and our Mexican border.

That is it. They charge. Someone entering the country pays. If it is a bus that comes in 10 times a day, you know they don't pay 10 times the amount that somebody comes in once a day. We will figure that out, but create a mechanism.

If you use the current mechanisms that are being used to collect moneys today in our Departments, we would raise \$2.5 billion a year doing that. Did you hear me? \$2.5 billion. If we had \$2.5 billion, we wouldn't have a problem anymore.

You could argue over what you build. That doesn't matter when we have security. Security is what we want. This Senate and House can get together at the White House, we get in a room, and we say: What do we want to charge? To whom do we want to give the responsibility? What is the goal?

The goal is to secure the border—a mechanism to fund securing the border—and to get off this argument of who is right, whether it is Democrats or Republicans. We are just arguing about something that doesn't matter. What matters is the American people. What matters is how their Representatives are handling their problems. What matters is what you and I are doing to get this whole argument that is going on and put it aside.

I am here to tell you, I am throwing an idea out that I think is a good idea. A very smart man gave it to me. I didn't think of it. I thought about it all last night. I couldn't think of anything wrong with it. I am sure somebody will be able to come up with something that is wrong with it.

It pays for it. We decide where the money goes, and it goes for security. We don't argue over what type of security because that is not the issue. The issue is we want it secure.

What we have had is that we have had a couple of leaders who argued about how you secure it, not whether or not you can secure it. You can always argue about how. I like pink better than purple, but I don't let that stop me from buying a black shirt if it is the only shirt I can get.

It is time we decide what it is we want. We want security. We want to put the government back to work. We want the American people to get the benefits they deserve, and we want a mechanism to do it—that is, a simple mechanism to do it. We already do it everywhere. We do the passenger facility charge.

The distinguished speaker sitting in the Chair today knows that. He flies here every week and pays \$7.50, I think, per ticket here and per ticket out. It pays for the security of airports. We do this all over the place. Let's do it here.

When you ask anybody what is probably the biggest problem in America, they say the biggest problem is that the American Senate and the American

House will not sit down and get the work done.

After that, we haven't even opened the door to see if we can find a solution. This opens the door to a solution. I am telling you, as a representative from the State of Georgia, representing 10.5 million people in this Senate, we can solve our problem today—not tomorrow, but today—with the action of our Finance Committee and our leadership and the President of the United States, by not deciding who gets credit or who gets blame but deciding it is time enough for funding games to be over with. It is time for us to get down to business.

We all took an oath a few months ago when we were sworn in, saying that is what we wanted to do, and now we are avoiding it every single day.

I will not take any more time. I know the Senator from Texas is here, and the lovely Senator from Minnesota is here, and they are two very good representatives in the Senate of the United States of America.

Don't forget about this idea. I am going to talk about it a lot. I don't want it to be the Isakson amendment or the Isakson idea. I want it to be our idea, America's idea. I want to fund it with Americans' money, to solve America's borders and get our immigration system solved and get us off of dead center and talking about nothing and mainly down center lane.

I want to end with what Zell Miller told me. Zell was a Senator at one time. He beat me for Governor of Georgia in 1990. In our last debate in that Senate race—it was a pretty good race. I had gotten pretty close. In fact, if my grandchildren had been old enough, it would have almost been won by me, if I could embellish the stories a little more.

At the end of the story, we had a minute each to close our speech. I closed my remarks with a 1-minute statement. I thought it was pretty good. Zell leaned back, with that twang of Zell's and said: You know, ladies and gentlemen, if you see a turtle sitting on a fence post on a country road, there is one thing you know for sure: He did not get there by himself.

I know for sure right now we are going nowhere because we are not talking about the problem. I know for sure that it is time for us to do the simple thing; that is, to solve it. It is not the hard thing, and that is to think of other reasons why we can't solve it. I, for one, will do everything I can do to let the people I am representing here know I am doing everything I can to get it open. I don't care what we have done. I am not going to call anybody a name. I am not going to do anything like that. I am not going to claim it for my idea. I hope nobody will steal it and claim it for theirs and cause us problems.

Let's just get to work. There is no problem we can't solve that we don't want to, and there is no problem we can solve if we don't want to solve it.

God bless you, Mr. President, for presiding today, and God bless the United States of America.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I appreciate the sentiment of the Senator from Georgia, and I remember earlier last year when we were both part of discussions to try to resolve an earlier shutdown issue and an earlier issue related to immigration reform. We put together a bipartisan bill involving the Dreamers, and we got some broad support on our side. Unfortunately, the White House, in the end, was not supportive of that agreement, even though the Senator from Georgia had worked so hard.

I think we can't rule out, as much as we have tried and will continue to try, to come up with bipartisan solutions like the majority and the minority leader did in December that we all supported and would have prevented this shutdown. We can't take out the element of the fact that a number of times we have been gut-punched, basically, when we have tried to do that. That doesn't mean that the discussion shouldn't continue, and I appreciate his good work on that.

I want to discuss one Minnesotan, Kathleen DeMaster, who has been affected by this and her family. She works for the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Minneapolis. She is currently furloughed. This is Kathleen and her daughter. She says:

My situation is becoming desperate. . . . I accepted my position with the federal government only a few months ago because it is a fantastic way for me to better myself and my career. I am passionate about public service and have enjoyed my job very much since I started. While accepting this position improved my situation, I have lived paycheck to paycheck. . . . This has not changed unfortunately. I am a single mother and a homeowner. And while I am college educated . . . I have struggled to get where I am now. It has never been easy, and unfortunately, this has only made life more difficult. My funds are exhausted. At this point in time, I don't have the money to pay for my mortgage or for childcare for my daughter. The money I will receive for unemployment insurance will not cover everything I need [it to].

Unfortunately this has put me in an untenable situation. Do I risk losing my home or do I risk having my daughter lose her daycare and being unable to work when I am recalled?

In other words, she can maybe lose the daycare because she is at home now, but she is not going to be able to have the daycare when she goes back to work, when she can.

These are the choices I (and many others, I am sure) are facing right now.

This may be a story you have heard before, but I felt it needs to be shared until it is heard by the right ears.

These are this woman's words—"the right ears."

I am at a loss for what else to do, and I'm terrified for what it means for my daughter and myself.

Kathleen is doing everything she can do to provide for her daughter. She re-

cently started picking up shifts with Instacart, the grocery delivery service, just to make ends meet. If this shutdown drags on—in her words—she is simply at a loss about how she and her daughter will get by.

In my State there are 6,100 other Federal workers with these stories. They are not being paid, and each of these workers has a face and a name. It is time to end the shutdown and reopen the government.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

TRIBUTE TO JOYCE SIBLEY

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I rise today to give tribute to a great American, a great Texan, and a 32-year veteran of this institution who has dedicated her career to serving the needs of her fellow citizens. Her name is Joyce Sibley.

She has led my team of caseworkers in Texas for the last 6 years, and she is now retiring. Joyce started working in the U.S. Senate in 1971, working for John Tower of Texas, answering the phones at his Austin office.

Since then, Joyce has become a living legend among Texas caseworkers because she simply doesn't take no for an answer, and she always goes the extra mile and more to help someone in need. Indeed, her work has extended so many extra miles beyond our State boundaries that it is difficult to comprehend.

"To move mountains" is a figurative expression, but when I say Joyce has moved battleships, I mean it literally. During the Albanian civil war of 1997, Joyce got the 6th Fleet to come ashore and help rescue nearly 100 Americans on a beach, including several Texans.

The office of my predecessor, Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison, was in communication with the Texans throughout that scary night in which the American evacuees were huddled at the Port of Durres in Albania, having been sent there by the U.S. embassy. The Albanian Task Force at the State Department reported that everyone had been evacuated, but the Americans still trapped there disagreed and started calling offices in Houston and Austin.

Joyce and her team had to give up on the State Department's part and, instead, they transferred a cell phone call from that beach in Albania directly to a Pentagon duty officer who contacted the Texans and connected them with the 6th Fleet. Together, they coordinated a Zodiac evacuation in the early morning hours.

Joyce was instrumental in organizing their escape.

There was another occasion, when a soldier was wrongfully convicted of counterfeiting in South Korea, after copying and printing Korean currency in order to test the quality of his new printer. There was no intent and no evidence of any attempt to distribute fake Korean currency.

After being convicted and imprisoned for months, largely abandoned by his command, the Texas office asked the

Korean Government to take another look at the case, and the conviction was reversed. The airman returned to serve with distinction in San Antonio, thanks in part to the amazing case-work skills of Joyce Sibley.

Likewise, when the earthquake hit Haiti, there were several Texans buried in the rubble at one of the local hotels. Joyce and others stayed in touch with the family members, set up regular briefings with the State Department, and kept the family closely informed until all were found and accounted for.

The Haitian Government even arrested a group of Texas missionaries and charged them with kidnapping for providing relief and housing to orphaned Haitian children. A few tense weeks followed, but they were all freed once Joyce helped to turn up the heat.

There are too many stories to list about Joyce's helping families with heartbreaking international adoption situations in Romania, Russia, Haiti, China, Korea, Guatemala, and Ethiopia.

Here is one of my favorite stories. Last fall, a heart surgeon contacted our office on a Thursday evening. He had been traveling out of the country. When he was coming back to Houston, he realized he had lost his passport. He was supposed to travel to Houston overnight and go straight to the hospital to perform several surgeries. Joyce, working with other members of our staff, was able to get a government official to meet his plane to confirm his identity and to get him through customs at 6 a.m. on Friday morning.

He called me when he was on the way to the hospital and said that thanks to our office, thanks to Joyce, he was able to make it there on time to perform lifesaving surgeries.

There are quite literally thousands of Texans whose lives have been made better by Joyce's decision to stay in Texas and to devote her professional time to helping families who needed help, often in times of great stress. Dealing with the Federal Government, the often maddening leviathan of Federal bureaucracy, Joyce was an expert at getting that leviathan to move and helping Texans who were frustrated and needed relief.

Whether it has been handling an international crisis or ensuring that a veteran gets his or her paycheck, Joyce has been tireless on behalf of Texans in need of help and guidance. The hallmark of a great caseworker is knowing the system, having great contacts at the multitude of Federal Agencies, and pushing back whenever she heard the word "no." Instead, she would ask, isn't there something else we could do to help this soldier, to help this veteran, to help this Texan? So many times, thinking of the "something else we can do" was exactly what was needed.

Joyce has been an irreplaceable asset to the U.S. Senate and to the people of Texas. The good news is that everyone who has worked with her has her spirit

in their blood now, has been trained directly, hands-on, by Joyce. It is in their DNA now to go that extra mile and to try to get to yes, no matter the obstacles, when they are looking out for and fighting for Texans. That is her legacy—a team inspired by her leadership. And I know that legacy will endure.

Joyce starts a new adventure at the end of this month as she begins her well-earned retirement. My team will be a little bit poorer for having lost her, but the Senate, the people of Texas, and thousands of families she has assisted over the course of nearly five decades are much richer for having had her on their team.

Thank you, Joyce, for your work, your passion, your patriotism, and most of all, your shining heart. It has been a pleasure, an honor, and a privilege to serve the people of Texas alongside you. God bless.

I yield the floor.

Mr. President, 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.

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

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

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on S.J. Res. 2, a joint resolution disapproving the President's proposal to take an action relating to the application of certain sanctions with respect to the Russian Federation.

John Thune, Mike Crapo, Tom Cotton, Todd Young, John Cornyn, Jerry Moran, John Boozman, Deb Fischer, John Hoeven, Susan M. Collins, Cory Gardner, Dan Sullivan, Marco Rubio, Richard Burr, John Barrasso, Pat Roberts, Roger F. Wicker, Thom Tillis, Shelley Moore Capito, Mitch McConnell.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on S.J. Res 2, a joint resolution disapproving the President's proposal to take an action relating to the application of certain sanctions with respect to the Russian Federation, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROMNEY). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber wishing to vote or to change their vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 57, nays 42, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 6 Leg.]

YEAS—57

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Murray
Bennet	Harris	Peters
Blumenthal	Hassan	Reed
Booker	Hawley	Rosen
Boozman	Heinrich	Rubio
Brown	Hirono	Sasse
Cantwell	Jones	Schatz
Cardin	Kaine	Schumer
Carper	Kennedy	Shaheen
Casey	King	Sinema
Collins	Klobuchar	Smith
Coons	Leahy	Stabenow
Cortez Masto	Manchin	Tester
Cotton	Markey	Udall
Daines	McSally	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Menendez	Warner
Durbin	Merkley	Warren
Feinstein	Moran	Whitehouse
Gardner	Murphy	Wyden

NAYS—42

Alexander	Fischer	Portman
Barrasso	Graham	Risch
Blackburn	Grassley	Roberts
Blunt	Hoeven	Romney
Braun	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Burr	Inhofe	Scott (FL)
Capito	Isakson	Scott (SC)
Cassidy	Johnson	Shelby
Cornyn	Lankford	Sullivan
Cramer	Lee	Thune
Crapo	McConnell	Tillis
Cruz	Murkowski	Toomey
Enzi	Paul	Wicker
Ernst	Perdue	Young

NOT VOTING—1

Sanders

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 57, the nays are 42.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is rejected.

Under the previous order, cloture not having been invoked, S.J. Res. 2 is returned to the calendar.

The Chair recognizes the majority leader.

NO TAXPAYER FUNDING FOR ABORTION AND ABORTION INSURANCE FULL DISCLOSURE ACT OF 2019—Motion to Proceed

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 11, S. 109.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to the consideration of S. 109, a bill to prohibit taxpayer funded abortions.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk on the motion to proceed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the

Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 11, S. 109, a bill to prohibit taxpayer funded abortions.

Mitch McConnell, Mike Crapo, Mike Rounds, James M. Inhofe, John Barasso, David Perdue, John Kennedy, John Thune, Thom Tillis, James E. Risch, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Pat Roberts, John Boozman, James Lankford, Michael B. Enzi, Roger F. Wicker, John Cornyn.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call be waived.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Wyoming.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, following the September 11, 2001, attacks on the United States, the National Institutes of Health, which is the Nation's medical research Agency in Bethesda, MD, needed to secure its campus. The NIH's grounds were always open to the public before that. Anybody could walk or drive through the 300-acre campus and could do it freely, but in its facing heightened threats, officials planned to restrict public access and to build a wall. It was completed in 2005. The wall, with the black metal perimeter fence with guarded checkpoints, became the centerpiece of NIH's new perimeter security system. Signs were posted that said "No Trespassing."

On its website, NIH states that the purpose of this border barrier is "to ensure the safety of our patients, employees, guests and facilities."

NIH wasn't alone in building a barrier after the attacks in 2001. Across the street, the National Naval Medical Center, now known as Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, also walled off its 243-acre campus. These walls have worked. Both NIH and Walter Reed remain safe and secure.

Now we need to deal with a security crisis at our southern border. President Trump has requested \$5.7 billion—it is about one one-thousandth of the Federal spending. The President wants to build more physical barriers—a proven border security solution. Thirty percent of the border already has a secure barrier.

Congressional leaders from both parties have supported a border wall in the past. In 2006, Senate Democrats, including then-Senator Barack Obama, Senator Hillary Clinton, Senator Joe Biden, and Senator CHUCK SCHUMER voted to construct a physical barrier on our southern border. But Democrat leaders now refuse to back the President's border security effort, prolonging the partial government shutdown that is going on today.

Meanwhile, the Democrats and media fact-checkers are out in force to attack President Trump. They insist there is no border crisis. The facts are that this January 10 Investor's Business Daily editorial says: "Yes, There Is A Crisis At The Border—The Numbers Show It."

First, in terms of how the numbers show it is that illegal crossings are climbing, last year, Border Patrol stopped more than one-half million people trying to enter the country illegally—more than 100,000 in October and November alone this past year. That is a huge increase from the same 2 months in 2017.

Second, apprehensions don't account for all illegal crossers. The Homeland Security Department estimates that about 20 percent of our crossers enter, which means about 104,000 illegal immigrants entered in 2018 alone.

Third, the U.S. illegal immigrant population right now is massive. Currently, over 12 million illegal immigrants reside here, comparable to the entire population of countries like Chile, the Netherlands, and Syria.

Fourth, illegal crime levels are higher than expected. The Center for Immigration Studies has found that noncitizens accounted for more than 20 percent of Federal convictions, although they represent only 8.4 percent of the population.

Fifth, Presidents Reagan through Obama have acknowledged the crisis. In 2005, then-Senator Barack Obama said: "We simply cannot allow people to pour into the United States undetected, undocumented, unchecked." In 2014, President Obama described the border situation as a crisis, but he failed to fix it.

Even President Obama's last Border Patrol Chief, Mark Morgan, supports President Trump. He was actually on television just today. Trump didn't keep him in the job, but Morgan says that building the wall is key to solving the security crisis, and the President should, as he says, "stay the course."

Still, Democrats refuse to negotiate with this President, so we can't reopen those Federal Agencies that have been closed for more than 3 weeks.

Here is the Homeland Security Department's latest assessment of the southern border situation. They say that each month, 60,000 illegal immigrants reach the border. Drug smuggling spiked in 2018, with a 38-percent increase in methamphetamine, a 22-percent increase in heroin, and a 73-percent increase in fentanyl. We also saw a huge surge in arrests of dangerous criminals, including 17,000 adults with criminal records and 6,000 MS-13 and other gang members.

In 2018, 60,000 unaccompanied children and 161,000 families reached the border—a dramatic increase from 2017. Many were victimized on their journey.

Border Patrol areas that have enhanced or expanded physical barriers have actually seen a dramatic decrease in illegal traffic. That is why the President has requested additional funds to construct more barriers.

The facts are the facts. We have a national security and humanitarian crisis at the southern border. The problem is the rise in illegal entries. We need to solve it. Walls work.

The question is this: Do U.S. citizens living in at-risk border communities

deserve the same protection as NIH patients and the staff in Bethesda, MD?

All Americans want a healthy immigration system that enforces the law and keeps families together. Democrats shouldn't be playing politics with border security. It is time to work together to secure the border, reopen the government, and protect the American people.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, today is the 26th day of the longest government shutdown in American history.

Weeks ago, the Senate voted unanimously to keep the government open. The House has now passed multiple bipartisan bills to end the shutdown, but President Trump refuses to come to the negotiating table, and Leader MCCONNELL refuses to let the Senate vote on these bipartisan bills. As a result, over 800,000 people across this country have been sent home or are working without pay.

Senate Democrats are here to share the stories of people whose lives are being upended. I want to thank Senator MURRAY for organizing these speeches and Leader SCHUMER for leading our efforts to reopen the government.

I am speaking today on behalf of 8,200 Federal workers in Massachusetts who have been affected, including TSA workers at Logan airport, servicemembers, air traffic controllers, healthcare providers, and staff at our national parks.

Janelle, one of my constituents, works at Native American Lifelines of Boston, an urban Indian health program. This program does crucial work helping to meet the health, dental, and behavioral health needs for Native people in the Boston metropolitan area. It is a contract site with the Indian Health Service, an Agency whose funding has been cut off by the shutdown.

Janelle loves her job, and she cares deeply about the people she serves. She doesn't want them to go hungry. She doesn't want them to miss their appointments. She doesn't want them to be unable to fill their prescriptions, but she worries about what will happen if the government doesn't open up soon. A prolonged shutdown would be a major hardship for Janelle, but it could mean a health emergency, even life or death, for her clients.

Don, another constituent, is helping Coast Guard families in Massachusetts make ends meet. His organization, the Massachusetts Military Support Foundation, has distributed over 5,200 pounds of food since the start of the shutdown. He knows that if the shutdown continues, he will have to start draining his organization's budget, and that could mean he will not be able to help military families afford food supplies come September.

Janelle's and Don's stories are just two examples of how President Trump

is holding Massachusetts families hostage while he demands a border wall.

Let's be perfectly clear about what the President is doing. The shutdown is not about border security. It is not about protecting anyone. It doesn't make us any safer that President Trump has padlocked the doors at the Department of Homeland Security or that he is asking our Coast Guard, our FBI agents, our airport security, and even our Border Patrol agents to work without pay.

No, this shutdown is a manufactured crisis that the President is using to fan the flames of racism and bigotry—all so he can distract the American people from demanding a government that works for them.

This isn't a new playbook. It is one the Republicans and the President have been using for years. Over and over again, they try to pit White working people against Black and Brown people, gay people against straight people, young people against older people, people born in the United States against people who came here in search of a better life—pit them all against each other so they don't band together, so they don't demand real change.

Here is the deal: The American people are onto this twisted strategy. They know that this government works just great for the rich and the powerful but not for everyone else.

Across this country, people are insisting on a government that is not just open for business but a government that actually works for them—a government that expands healthcare coverage instead of ripping it away from grandparents and newborns, a government that tackles the skyrocketing cost of prescription drugs instead of selling out to giant drug companies that put profits ahead of patients, a government that ends the stranglehold that money has on Washington instead of stacking the government with public officials who are more interested in lining their own pockets than serving the public. I could go on and on with this list.

I came to the U.S. Senate 6 years ago to fight for working families and to tackle these problems head-on, to end a rigged system that created two sets of rules—one that applies to the rich and the powerful and one for everybody else.

Republicans are trying to divide Americans in order to stop us from getting to work ending this rigged system, but we are onto their game. The President and Republicans must end this shutdown now so that hundreds of thousands of Federal workers can get their paychecks and get back to work. If they don't, hard-working people like Janelle, Don, and thousands more across Massachusetts will continue paying the price.

Thank you.

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. 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.

TAXES

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, tax filing season is just around the corner. This has never been anyone's favorite time of the year, paying taxes, but the uncertainty created by the current partial government shutdown has understandably created a bit more angst than in a usual tax filing season.

The Treasury Department and IRS have been proactive in taking steps to minimize the burden of the shutdown on taxpayers. They recently announced that tax season will start as planned, on January 28. The IRS has confirmed that taxpayers can expect refunds to be sent out as usual should this shutdown drag on. Of course, this is the right conclusion, legally, and the right call for the taxpayers, as I had an opportunity to tell IRS Commissioner Rettig when we spoke recently.

Congress has explicitly provided for a permanent appropriation for the IRS to pay tax refunds. This makes common sense. A tax refund represents the taxpayer's money—not Congress's, not the government's but the taxpayers'—despite what some people in Congress seem to think; that this money belongs to the government. It should be returned then in a timely fashion and, thank God for their decision, that is going to be the case.

With around 75 percent of individuals receiving a tax refund on an annual basis, many have come to look to their refund to make important purchases, whether that is to replace an old water heater, make a downpayment on a reliable vehicle to get them to work, or just to make ends meet generally. It would be wrong for the government to impose undue financial strains on families across the country because Congress and the President can't get their act together.

As we continue to work through our differences, the least we can do is return to taxpayers their own money.

This tax season, of course, is a little different, not only because of the shutdown but also because it is the first tax filing season under the tax reforms and tax cuts enacted in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. A lot of work has gone on to get us here. Treasury and the IRS have been working diligently and swiftly to ensure taxpayers have the information they need. In a little over a year, they have put out 16 proposed regulations, 2 final regulations, 45 notices, 21 revenue procedures, and updated countless forms, publications, and other guidance—all of this geared toward implementing the law and addressing taxpayer questions.

Right out of the gate, Treasury and IRS went to work updating the annual withholding tables so taxpayers could immediately begin seeing the benefits

of lower taxes in their paychecks. Of course, whether a taxpayer had less or more withheld from their paycheck is not the final word on whether one received a tax cut.

Also, due to changes in withholding, a smaller or larger refund than usual may not tell the whole story. I encourage taxpayers to compare their 2019 tax return with that of the previous year to see the difference. At the end of the day, the vast majority of taxpayers will see that less of their hard-earned money is going to the government.

A chief priority for the new withholding tables was, of course, accuracy. Extensive analysis was done to help taxpayers get the right amount withheld from their paycheck—not too much, not too little. However, as we all know, no withholding table will ever be perfect. Every taxpayer may be affected a little differently under the new law based on their personal circumstances. The IRS continues to consider whether future improvements to the withholding structure may be necessary, which I support and will be monitoring as chairman of the Finance Committee.

The IRS has also embarked on an extensive campaign to alert taxpayers to check and update their withholding. This included establishing an online withholding calculator to help taxpayers determine what, if any, adjustments to their withholding may be necessary.

That said, there are still going to be some taxpayers who may discover that they were underwithheld due to changes in the law and owe taxes at the end of the year. A subset of these taxpayers could be subject to a penalty for underpayment.

The ranking member of the Finance Committee, Senator WYDEN, raised this concern in a letter to Commissioner Rettig on January 3, requesting that penalty relief be granted. I generally agree with the ranking member and have encouraged the IRS to be lenient on penalties, especially with this first time through a filing season under the new tax law. If a taxpayer has underwithheld as a result of the changes in the law, and not through the fault of their own, the IRS should consider what actions the Agency can take to provide penalty relief, but the issue of underwithholding due to the passage of tax reform should not be exaggerated. Yes, as the ranking member claims in his letter to the Commissioner, it is estimated that as many as 30 million taxpayers may have had taxes underwithheld from their paychecks, but what hasn't been said is that 30 million is actually only about a 3-percentage point increase from how many taxpayers would be underwithheld under the old law.

Moreover, just because a taxpayer was underwithheld during the year does not automatically mean they will be subject to a penalty tax. Safe harbors have long been in place to protect taxpayers whose withholding is slightly off from being penalized.

It is quite possible that some issues will arise this filing season that we did not anticipate and will need to be fixed as we go forward. We already identified a number of those issues, which I am hoping my Democratic colleagues will allow us to fix to further help as many more constituents as possible.

That doesn't detract from the fact that we have delivered real tax relief to middle-income families, small business owners, and the family farmer, nor does it undermine the fact that we modernized our outdated international tax system and improved America's business competitiveness in the global economy. Of course, that is going to benefit the American worker.

These efforts have contributed to a strong and growing economy. The unemployment rate is at a half century low. Wages are rising at the fastest rate in nearly a decade. Workers, employers, and small business owners are all more optimistic than ever.

Unfortunately, I hear increasing calls from the new House majority pledging to erase the progress made with the tax cuts and reforms that we enacted 13 months ago. At least one new Democratic Member has suggested bringing back top tax rates as high as 70 percent to pay for a wish list of far-left, Big Government programs. Such a confiscatory tax rate targeted at a relatively small number of wealthy taxpayers would barely make a dent in the cost of programs they wish to implement.

Policymakers across the globe abandoned such punitive tax rates over the past several decades for their negative effect on economic growth, investment, and incentives to work. While tax rates at 70 percent or higher may have been fairly common in the 1960s, today, not a single OECD country boasts such high rates. How soon people forget about the prolonged economic stagnation and high unemployment of the 1970s when we last had tax rates as high as 70 percent.

I am going to detract here to show a chart. How soon we forget that just raising tax rates doesn't automatically bring in more money. For the benefit of my colleagues and for the benefit of the public watching on C-SPAN, I should have had this blown up. I doubt it is going to do much good for me to just hold up a small sheet of paper.

This goes back to the year 1955, ending in 2017. The blue line shows the marginal tax rates over a period of about 60 years. You can see high tax rates in the 1960s, going down, up, generally down, generally down, staying pretty low in recent years. You can see that the red line is the amount of money that comes in from taxes, whether you have high tax rates or low tax rates, which kind of tells me that the taxpayers are a lot smarter than the Congress of the United States because when you talk about high marginal tax rates, they want you to believe more money is going to come in. They are probably going to take the position that if you lower tax rates,

less money is going to come in. But you see, in the 1950s top rate was 90 percent. Can you imagine Americans being dumb enough to work hard to only keep 10 percent of their income? No. What you do is you change people's behavior. They decide, I am going to work only so much. Why should I work harder and give more money to the Federal Government? You see, higher tax rates don't do what a lot of people want you to believe they are going to do.

I would like to give a little history on this, because you kind of think that if we have lower marginal tax rates, and Republicans are the ones who want lower tax rates, that you would give Republicans a lot of credit for reducing these marginal tax rates. I can remember the work of Senator Bill Bradley of New Jersey—probably at least a moderate Democrat. He was probably as responsible as anybody in the 1980s for reducing these marginal tax rates, because Republicans didn't have guts enough to do it, and we might not be where we are right now. So it is not just Republican thinking that got these marginal tax rates down. It is not just Republican thinking that has kept this red line where it has been for 60 years, at approximately 16 to 20 percent of gross national product—the amount of the economy that is coming into the Federal Government.

I hope the talk of such confiscatory taxation truly is a talk of a few rogue Members and not representative of things to come. I wish to think there will be opportunities for us to work together in a bipartisan way.

I am firmly in the camp that the tax reform and tax cuts enacted by the last Congress represent important revisions to our tax laws, but I also understand that no major piece of legislation is entirely perfect. To the extent there is legitimate interest in improving tax laws, as chairman of the Finance Committee, I am going to be all ears.

When it comes to making modifications to tax reform, our first order of business should be focused on examining how the law affects individuals, families, and the businesses in our States that provide the jobs and benefits they rely on. When necessary, we should work together to take action and ensure that the law is fulfilling its potential. A key part of this discussion should be enacting technical corrections to the tax law—revisions to ensure that the bill does what Members thought it did when they voted on it. Some of these are related to just poor drafting, honest mistakes that were made.

I also hope that there will be plenty of opportunity to work on a bipartisan basis on tax issues involving everything from education, to renewable and alternative energy, to consumer-directed healthcare options.

However, I fear opportunities to work together could be put at risk should my colleagues become fixated on tearing apart tax reform, hiking taxes, and,

of course, going after the President's tax returns.

I want to put my Democratic colleagues on notice that I have no intention of undoing structural changes implemented as part of the tax reform. This would include the lower tax rates and family benefits, such as the increased child tax credit and standard deductions.

I am also not interested in eliminating the cap on the deductibility of State and local taxes, backtracking on our move toward a more territorial tax system, or raising tax rates on pass-through business owners and farmers or corporations, all of which provide critical jobs and contribute to economic growth across the Nation.

For the first time in probably about 30 years, our businesses are competitive with the rest of the world. When we have a 35-percent tax rate—as we did for decades—on corporations, and the world average is about 23 percent, how can we expect American corporations to compete? We are now at 21 percent. It wasn't long after we went to 21 that we read about China maybe feeling they were uncompetitive and were going to have to lower their tax rates. Other countries are thinking about doing it as well. Just like with the Reagan tax cuts of the 1980s, the United States is plowing ahead, setting a standard for the rest of the world.

Lower tax rates, with businesses and individuals making decisions on where they earn their money, how much they are going to spend, and how much they are going to save, is a heck of a lot better than 535 Members of Congress making that decision. When we make decisions about stuff like this, they are political decisions. When most of the individual taxpayers and the corporations of America make decisions, it is strictly economic and does much more economic good.

Another one that I don't want to mess with is efforts to weaponize the authority of tax-writing committees to access tax returns for political purposes. Such an action would be unprecedented.

I am optimistic that we can continue to make progress helping Americans improve their lives by keeping more of their hard-earned wages, taking the chance of starting a new business or continuing to expand an existing one—in short, building an opportunity economy. I invite my colleagues to join me.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I come to the floor to join my colleagues who were speaking earlier today about the many U.S. citizens who are Federal employees who are impacted by the shutdown. Coast Guard PO2 Amy-Erin Hamilton, stationed in Seattle, WA, is one of those individuals. She is the mother of three children: Sienna, age 10; Tucker, age 9; and Annabella, age 5. Amy-Erin is married to Dan Hamilton, who is also an Active-Duty member.

Amy-Erin is a shining example of the service and leadership we see in our Coast Guard today. In December, she was given a meritorious advancement, which is rare and an incredible honor. Despite this, though, she is working without pay and has had to seek outside income to support that family I just mentioned.

This is the 26th day of a Federal Government shutdown. Yesterday, 55,000 Coast Guard personnel did not receive their midmonth paychecks. The Coast Guard Commandant issued a letter to the workforce explaining what was happening, explaining that this is the first time that a branch of our military has not been paid during a government shutdown.

There are 41,000 Active-Duty members, 6,200 Reservist members, 8,500 civilians, and 50,500 Coast Guard retirees. That is the U.S. Coast Guard family. Thirty-one percent of the Coast Guard families do not have enough emergency savings to make it through the shutdown. A junior enlisted Coast Guard member with less than 2 years of service makes only \$23,200 a year in base pay. That is below the poverty level. Coast Guard members are currently being deployed overseas—they could be in a combat zone—and these members are not receiving pay.

I hope our colleagues will take into consideration this issue with our Coast Guard families. They are working hard to provide great care for us throughout our country and overseas. When I think about the fact that a Coast Guard member could be deployed overseas in an area that has seen combat, an unstable region of the world, and that they are not even receiving the childcare subsidy and support to make sure their families are taken care of while they are gone taking care of us, that is just wrong.

So I come here to join my colleagues who were here earlier today on the floor giving examples of Americans throughout the United States who are working hard for us. It is time we go to get them their paycheck and continue to support them so they can support us.

I know my colleague from Connecticut is here and would like to speak as well, and I thank him for allowing me to fit in this time to talk on behalf of the Coast Guard families.

I hope the Commandant's letter can now be seen as an example of why we need to act. We need to act to give these Coast Guard families their pay and to make sure we are addressing the shutdown and reopening government.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PERDUE). The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I am honored to follow the Senator, our neighbor from across the country. We share a common interest and commitment to one of the great military services in this country, the U.S. Coast Guard.

Connecticut is proud to be the home of the Coast Guard Academy and nu-

merous Active-Duty-serving Coast Guard men and women. Not only are we proud of them, but we are deeply mindful of the debt we owe them. It is a debt that is immeasurable in dollars and cents. It is a debt we owe them for the safety and security they provide this country and the blood they have shed in defense of the country.

Failing to pay them is a moral failure, and that is why I am proud to be joining the Senator from Washington as well as Senator THUNE in a measure to provide payment for the Coast Guard, and I hope we will meet this obligation as soon as possible.

We also have an obligation to other Federal workers because they are suffering and sacrificing during this shutdown, now 26 days long.

One of them, among the workers I met just last Monday, is Adrian Pellot. He served in the Air Force. He has worked as a behavior detection officer for more than a decade. He is also one of the TSA workers at Bradley not receiving pay.

He said to me:

We have no income right now. We are bleeding money. Just day-to-day things. Food. I still have to pay the bills. The electric company, the cell phone company—they don't care. They are brutal. To feel like we are poker chips or leverage is very, very infuriating. We are people—we have lives—not just a number to throw around. I want the government to reopen.

Nothing I say here expresses more eloquently and powerfully the obligation we are failing to meet.

I will be proposing legislation to provide workers like Adrian unemployment benefit compensation. States like Connecticut now must seek approval from the Department of Labor of the United States to provide unemployment compensation for workers who are on the job but unpaid.

The workers who are furloughed and unpaid can receive that compensation. The folks showing up to work, keeping us safe in the skies, assuring that our security is met at the TSA lines, are unpaid, and they are uncompensated out of the State workers' compensation system, and they should be.

That is why I will propose legislation for fundamental fairness and necessary benefits for workers like Adrian and his partner, Sarah Small, who has been a TSA officer for over 11 years. She currently works part time at Bradley as a TSA officer, and she is in nursing school.

She said to me: "It's more nerve-racking because of the fact that if this shutdown lasts any longer, one of us is going to have to find something."

They are just two examples of thousands across the country. My colleagues, every one of you has an Adrian Pellot or a Sarah Small or a Coast Guard service man and woman or someone like them who are working without unemployment compensation, having to pay bills, mortgages, put food on the table. They are unable to do it because the government is shut down.

Let us reopen the government. Let us meet our obligation. Let us do our job, and the man down the street on Pennsylvania Avenue in the White House ought to be doing his job too.

In the meantime, let's help them meet their bills and save them from debts much as we do servicemembers with their relief fund; another legislative measure I will be advocating and advancing. We owe it to them. We owe it to the country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

MARCH FOR LIFE

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, I am pleased to be joined on the floor by Senator BLUNT, Senator WICKER, and Senator FISCHER to speak about the importance of protecting and celebrating life.

This Friday, Americans from every State in our Nation, from our tiny rural towns to our bustling urban cities, will gather in our Nation's Capital to participate in the 46th annual March for Life.

Each year, I am amazed and inspired by the immeasurable strength, compassion, and support demonstrated by the pro-life community, as hundreds of thousands of its members come to Washington, DC, and tirelessly work to protect the most vulnerable in our society—the unborn.

As members of the Senate Values Action Team, throughout the year, we are blessed with the opportunity to work with and hear from so many who are committed to protecting human life at all stages.

I thank my colleagues for sharing this message of life today, and at this time I would like to yield to the Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I want to thank Senator ERNST for yielding and for her leadership in these issues.

All of us here today are here at a time when thousands of people from around the country, including hundreds from Missouri, will be here to participate in the annual March for Life. They see it, as we do, that an unborn child is not a potential person, but it is a person with potential, a whole living, distinct human being.

Polling reflects that the American people understand that in a significant way. It is not a celebration but a powerful reminder that we value life as people come here this time of year. More Americans are coming all the time to support life. We just had a meeting with someone who was going through the recent Knights of Columbus and Marist poll. Three in four Americans say abortion should be limited to, at most, the first 3 months of pregnancy. These numbers continue to move in the direction of understanding that life begins at conception, and more and more people believe that life deserves to be protected just like any life would.

A majority of Americans oppose using taxpayer dollars to pay for any

abortion at any time. Seventy-five percent of Americans oppose using taxpayer dollars to fund abortion overseas. This includes 64 percent of self-identified, pro-choice Democrats who say they are not for spending taxpayer dollars to fund abortions overseas. Fifty-six percent of Democrats and 80 percent of Independents comprise that as well as, as I said before, 64 percent of pro-choice individuals collectively say they are not for that.

Preventing taxpayer funding for abortion has been longstanding law and has had a bipartisan consensus until just recently. Now, this is an important issue that the country disagrees on, but the one thing we reached agreement on is, those people who think there is nothing wrong with abortion shouldn't force the tax dollars of people who believe it is the most fundamentally wrong thing you can do to be used for abortion.

So the Hyde amendment prevents taxpayer funding of abortions or abortion coverage in various Federal healthcare programs, including Medicaid and Medicare and the Children's Health Insurance Program. All of those programs are, in effect, walled off from Federal support if abortion is involved.

A bill I initially passed as chairman of the Labor, Health and Human Services Appropriations Committee, renewed again this year the Hyde amendment, as it has been renewed every year since 1976 and signed into law in every year since 1976 by Republicans and Democrats in the White House.

Recent calls to appeal the amendment, however, in the Democratic Party platform and from a number of my friends on the other side of the aisle, are just simply out of touch with where a majority of Americans are and where 100 percent of the people coming here for the March for Life are.

Instead, far from being repealed, the Hyde amendment, in my view, needs to be made permanent, and it needs to be applied across the entire Federal spending spectrum, as it was initially anticipated. I am proud to be an original cosponsor of the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act, which would do just exactly that.

I also want to take a moment to recognize the efforts of what has become one of the most pro-life administrations in our Nation's history.

One of the first Executive orders President Trump signed was to reinstate and expand the Mexico City policy. In fact, he wanted to expand it to the point that he even wanted to retitling it to the Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance policy. The policy prevents Federal tax dollars from funding foreign NGOs—foreign nongovernmental organizations—that perform or promote abortion.

I also want to call attention to the efforts the administration has taken proposing regulations that would first of all prevent title X family planning grantees from colocating with abortion clinics or from promoting or referring

clients for abortions. None of that money was ever to be used for those purposes, but it is pretty hard when you are in the same facility, funded by the same overall group, not to suggest there is some connection.

President Trump and his administration have said that would not be allowed. They have passed regulations to further protect the right of conscience. In a famous letter written in the last year of his Presidency, President Jefferson said that the right of conscience—the right to fervently believe what you believe is the right thing—should be the right we hold the most dear, and the President is trying to be sure that applies in every possible case to Federal law as well.

They also voted to separate payment requirements from abortion coverage in ObamaCare and have really continued to do exactly what the President said he would do in these areas.

I know we all also want to encourage those who are participating in the March for Life on Friday. Every human life matters. The advocacy of people who come here year after year or perhaps are coming for the very first time makes a difference.

So for the efforts of the thousands who defy the weather—and the anniversary of the decision just happens to be in what almost always turns out to be the worst weather we have in Washington during the year, but that doesn't seem to deter those who are marching here or those who are speaking to those who come here to defy the weather and to March for Life.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. WICKER. On the Senator from Iowa's time, let me join her and the Senator from Missouri, and I associate myself with their remarks and their support, not only for the March for Life, which will occur on Friday, but also for the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act, which I am proud to be the principal cosponsor of and which will, we hope, have a vote on the Senate floor by tomorrow afternoon.

I was a pretty young staffer for then-Congressman Trent Lott in 1981 when I first became aware that there was such a thing as the March for Life. I can assure you that it will be much more massive this year than it was back in those early days when Americans were struggling with what *Roe v. Wade* meant and when they weren't quite so sure about what the science was about this practice of abortion.

As each year passes, as more and more parents see that sonogram, as more and more grandparents—and I am a grandparent to six now; I am buddy to six beautiful grandchildren—see the sonograms early on and we see the feet and we see the heartbeat and we see the faces of these children, we realize as Americans—and more and more Americans are coming to the realization—that this is a living human that deserves protection.

Senator BLUNT was accurate in saying we have good polling. Polling is

coming around to our way. Even if some people consider themselves to be pro-choice, when you delve down into the figures and ask them the questions, it turns out they are not quite so pro-abortion as we might think.

When we ask the question that the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion bill goes to centrally—Do you support taxpayer funding for abortion?—the polls show that 24 percent oppose and 30 percent strongly oppose. A majority, or 54 percent of Americans—some of whom would actually check the box and say they are pro-choice—say no, we shouldn't go so far as to provide taxpayer funding for abortions. That is what this legislation, which tomorrow afternoon will be considered on the floor of the Senate, would do.

When asked another question: Should abortions be banned after 20 weeks, with the exception of risking the life of the mother? And 59 percent of Americans say yes, they strongly support that or support banning abortions after the 20th week.

So I would say that the March for Life is working, year after year, step after step, and I hope we get a good vote on the floor of the Senate tomorrow.

Do I think this is going to sail through the House of Representatives and be sent by NANCY PELOSI's House to the President for signature? Probably not, but we make the case. We warmly welcome these marchers for life each and every year, and we appreciate what they have done to move the needle of public opinion and to protect those innocent people who have no way of protecting themselves.

I see that we are joined by my distinguished colleague, the senior Senator from Nebraska, and perhaps she might have some remarks to say.

I will yield the floor at this point.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I rise today in support of the thousands of people who will travel to our Nation's Capital this week to join us in the March for Life. Marching proudly among them will be many, many Nebraskans—families, neighbors, student organizations, and church groups. They are going to brave the snow and freezing temperatures to march along the National Mall as part of a peaceful rally that draws attention to pro-life and pro-women policies.

Since I first started my career in public service, I have supported commonsense pro-life measures that protect women and unborn children. All too often, women are faced with unplanned pregnancies, and they experience condemnation instead of compassion. These women shoulder despair, pain, and judgment when they should receive comfort, assistance, and reassurance. These mothers should always know that they have support as they face challenging years ahead.

In the Senate, I am proud to pledge my support for several pro-life bills.

This afternoon, I would like to highlight a few of them.

Once again, I am cosponsoring the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act. This legislation would prohibit abortions after 20 weeks unless it is necessary to save the life of the mother or the pregnancy is a result of rape or incest. Twenty weeks, as advances in science and medical technology tell us, is the point at which an unborn child is capable of feeling pain.

When I served in the Nebraska Legislature, we passed the first ban on abortions after 20 weeks. Republicans and Democrats, pro-choice and pro-life Senators, voted in its favor because it is sound policy. We should enact this commonsense legislation at the Federal level as well.

I am also a cosponsor of the Protect Funding for Women's Health Care Act. This bill would prevent the Federal funding of Planned Parenthood or any of its affiliates. In 2016, Planned Parenthood received nearly \$544 million from the Federal Government. I believe that Congress must redirect this funding to where it belongs, and that is to our community health centers.

In Nebraska we have seven community health centers, with 44 clinic sites all across our State. I have had the opportunity to visit these sites, and I have seen firsthand the high-quality, compassionate care they provide to women in need. Our patients in Nebraska would be better served if this Federal funding were directed toward these centers and also these clinics, which serve all Nebraskans—all Nebraskans everywhere in our State—not Planned Parenthood.

The Protect Funding for Women's Health Care Act is another commonsense solution that will protect life and help provide comprehensive healthcare for women. Finally, I will once again support the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion and Abortion Insurance Full Disclosure Act, introduced by the senior Senator from Mississippi. Since the 1970s, the Hyde amendment has prohibited Federal funds for abortions, but it requires a yearly passage through Congress. This measure would permanently establish in statute the protections of the Hyde amendment. These are a few of the important pro-life policies that I am working on in the Senate.

Again, I want to welcome all of the Nebraskans who are traveling over 1,000 miles to take part in the March for Life. It is great to see the pro-life movement building such momentum. More and more young people are joining the cause and standing tall for this timeless value, and I want to thank each and every one of them for their courage and for taking a stand for what they believe in and for what science tells us.

They march not with anger or condemnation, but with love and hope. They will be living out the direction of Mother Teresa, when at the 1994 National Prayer Breakfast she said:

A sign of care for the weakest of the weak—the unborn child—must go out to the

world. . . . then really you will be true to what the founders of this country stood for.

So to all of the Nebraskans and to all Americans who will gather here in Washington for the March for Life, please know that I support your every step.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

(The remarks of Ms. ERNST pertaining to the submission of S. 141 are printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

Ms. ERNST. 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. SASSE. 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. SASSE. Mr. President, I am going to speak again shortly from the floor, but, very briefly, I want to associate myself with the comments of my senior Senator, DEB FISCHER from Nebraska, who just spoke and welcomed Nebraska's pro-life students to the Capitol over the next 3 days. It is wonderful to be associated with a movement that is fundamentally about love and is about the dignity of every baby. So I join my senior Senator in welcoming Nebraska's pro-life students to the Capitol and to Washington, DC, for the March for Life on Friday.

I thank the President.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). Without objection, it is so ordered.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I was just over in the Russell Senate Office Building, and a group of freshmen from the House intercepted me and handed me this piece of paper, this document, and asked that it be made part of the RECORD of the Senate, and I have come to do that.

Let me explain that these freshmen House Members want to see the Senate engaged in debate on how to end this shutdown of our government. They see in their home districts across this country tremendous damage occurring in all kinds of fashions—damage to security; damage to the economy; damage to families trying to get a home mortgage, and they can't get their FHA approval; damage to farmers who are seeking that loan that is necessary to prepare for the next farming season; damage in the preparation for next summer's forest fires.

I have been hearing about this from my home State. In Oregon, we just had

a training for fighting fires canceled. We have prescribed burns that need to be done during the winter that are being canceled. We have thinning, which makes the forest more fire-resilient, that is being canceled. We have the reduction of fuels on the forest floor that add to the intensity of fires—the removal of those—being canceled. These just add more to the list of so many ways that folks are being affected across the country.

I am going to share this letter with the Presiding Officer and our colleagues. It says:

Dear Senator McConnell:

We write as Members of the Freshman Class of the 116th Congress, an historic group that has the distinction of being the first Congress to be seated in the midst of a partial government shutdown.

We as a legislative branch have the power to end this shutdown now. In December, the Senate unanimously passed legislation that would have kept the government open. In January, the House then passed those same bipartisan bills and sent them to the Senate. If the Senate were to pass these bills, we would be able to reopen the government and then proceed to debate about immigration reform and border security.

However, it is impossible to have a meaningful policy discussion while the executive holds public servants hostage. We respectfully request that you allow the Congress to work its will and allow a vote on this bipartisan legislation to end this shutdown so that we can end this manufactured crisis and allow our devoted federal workers to get back to work for the American people.

Sincerely Susie Lee, Member of Congress; Abby Finkenauer, Member of Congress; Mikie Sherrill, Member of Congress; Mike Levin; Jahana Hayes; Lori Trahan; Katie Hill; Ayanna Pressley; David Trone; Ed Case; Gill Cisneros; Rashida Tlaib; Kendra Horn; Angie Craig; Joe Cunningham; Chris Pappas; Andy Levin; Susan Wild; Sylvia Garcia; Katie Porter; Debbie Mucarsel-Powell; Ilhan Omar; Madeline Dean; Haley Stevens; Greg Stanton; Josh Harder; Lucy McBath; Abigail Spanberger; Chrissy Houlahan; Donna Shalala; Lauren Underwood; Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez; Veronica Escobar; TJ Cox; Dean Phillips; Jahana Hayes; and then a few more people who have added their names in script that I may not be able to read accurately.

In total, there are an estimated 46 signatures on this letter addressed to Senate Majority Leader MITCH MCCONNELL.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the letter be printed in the RECORD.

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

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,

Washington, DC, January 16, 2019.

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

DEAR SENATOR MCCONNELL: We write as Members of the Freshman Class of the 116th Congress, an historic group that has the distinction of being the first Congress to be seated in the midst of a partial government shutdown.

We as the legislative branch have the power to end this shutdown now. In December, the Senate unanimously passed legislation that would have kept the government open. In January, the House then passed

those same bipartisan bills and sent them to the Senate. If the Senate were to pass these bills, we would be able to re-open the government and then proceed to a debate about immigration reform and border security.

However, it is impossible to have a meaningful policy discussion while the executive holds public servants hostage. We respectfully request that you allow the Congress to work its will and allow a vote on this bipartisan legislation to end the shutdown so that we can end this manufactured crisis and allow our devoted federal workers to get back to work for the American people.

Sincerely,

Susie Lee, Abby Finkenauer, Mikie Sherrill, Mike Levin, Jahana Hayes, Lori Trahan, Katie Hill, Ed Case, Gil Cisneros, Rashida Tlaib, Kendra Horn, Angie Craig, Chris Pappas, Andy Levin, Susan Wild, Sylvia Garcia, Katie Porter, Ilhan Omar, Madeleine Dean, Josh Harder, Debra A. Haaland, Lucy McBath, Abigail Spanberger, Chrissy Houlahan, Donna Shalala, Lauren Underwood, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Veronica Escobar, TJ Cox, Dean Phillips, Elaine G. Luria, Tom Malinowski, Steven Horsford, Sharice Davids, Joe Neguse, Cynthia Axne.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, the freshmen of the House are speaking a lot of common sense in this letter. They are saying: Here we are, looking at bills that the Senate passed under Republican leadership and that the House has passed under Democratic leadership. That is the foundation for going forward. Let not the Senate leadership be the obstruction to common sense. Let not this Chamber sit empty, sit quiet, and sit without votes on these bills to put our government back to work.

They want to see the Senate have the courage to take positions, to be here and argue, to say yes or no, but we don't say yes or no if there is no bill before us, and that must confound these 46 freshmen, who kind of expected that after more than 200 years of organizing, we would have a Senate that could actually operate as a legislative body, not sit here vacant and quiet in the midst of a national catastrophe—a catastrophe of the Trump shutdown affecting so many families.

There are 800,000 families of Federal workers, hundreds of thousands more families of contractors, millions of Americans who simply want a core government service so that they can proceed with their lives—a business permit, a home mortgage, an agricultural loan, work being done to prevent forest fires, and a compromise to our national security in terms of our Coast Guard and our TSA agents. It makes no common sense for us to sit here without action.

I praise the House freshmen for bringing a fresh, intense, commonsense view to the conversation on Capitol Hill. Let their words be heard in this Chamber.

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

NOMINATION OF WILLIAM BARR

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to discuss the nomi-

nation of William Barr to be Attorney General.

Today, I want to make clear that I will be opposed to this nomination for several reasons. I am just going to outline some of my key concerns that really haven't been addressed much over the last few weeks.

I am specifically concerned about his view that the President of the United States is effectively royalty, in his book, and he seems to believe that the President is unaccountable to the laws of our Nation or to the normal constraints imposed by the Congress. Today, I am going to focus on what I consider to be Mr. Barr's dangerous views on surveillance and his contempt for surveillance laws and the Fourth Amendment.

It is my view this is not a partisan issue. There has been, for some years, a bipartisan coalition in the Senate that has battled to protect the privacy and constitutional rights of Americans, but Mr. Barr's views, after I have laid them out today, ought to frighten every Member of this Senate. What Mr. Barr has said is that whether the Congress supports broader or narrower surveillance authorities and regardless of whether Congress votes for more checks and balances and oversight, it really doesn't matter. He has made the judgment, based on the proposition which he has stated very clearly, that the President can essentially do what he wants.

This nominee, in my view, poses a unique threat to the rule of law and the Fourth Amendment. His long-held views, which presumably he would put in practice if confirmed, threaten the very notion that Congress or the courts have any say in who in America gets spied on. If he is confirmed as Attorney General, he could take us back—and not just 12 years to an era of warrantless wiretapping. As Mr. Barr himself has made clear, he would be taking us back 40 years, to an era before the Church Committee, when neither Congress nor the courts had any role at all in checking or overseeing an abusive, out-of-control government.

Before the reforms of the 1970s, as has now been well documented, the government committed one horrific abuse after another. It spied on hundreds of thousands of innocent Americans. It spied on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. It spied on activists. It spied on Congress. When these abuses finally came to light, Congress acted by passing the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, which established a secret court to issue warrants against spies and terrorists.

Unfortunately, as we now know, the government violated the law when it implemented its warrantless wiretapping program in 2001. The program included warrantless collection of the content of private communications, including through warrantless targeting of phone numbers and email addresses of people in our country. The program also included the bulk collection of

phone and email records of enormous numbers of innocent, law-abiding Americans. All of this occurred in secret, without warrants or any judicial oversight at all, and almost no one—no one in the Congress, nor even most members of the Intelligence Committee—knew anything about it.

The secrecy didn't even end when the bulk phone and email record programs were moved under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. The Obama administration, just like the Bush administration, kept this abusive program and the secret legal interpretations behind it from the American people, even lying about it in public testimony.

How did these abusive and illegal programs get their start? With secret determinations made at the Department of Justice that the law didn't matter and that the President can do what he wants.

That brings us to Mr. Barr. His dangerous views on Executive power have long been consistent—consistent—throughout his career, from his writings at the Department of Justice in the late 1980s to the present, but in October of 2003, he laid out in public testimony his position that, in Mr. Barr's view, the President is not accountable to surveillance laws and that the President enjoys huge loopholes in the Fourth Amendment.

October of 2003 was shortly after Congress had passed the PATRIOT Act, legislation that many in Congress have come to view as granting too much authority with too little oversight, but from Mr. Barr's perspective, the PATRIOT Act was too limiting and too constraining, and that wasn't even the most troubling part of his testimony. Right up front, he asked himself the question of whether the law was adequate to fight terrorism. Here is what he said. He said he wasn't worried about the law, and this is a direct quote: "The critical legal powers are granted directly by the Constitution itself, not by Congressional enactments." In other words, Mr. Barr's view of surveillance is that the laws passed by Congress do not matter. If the President wants to violate them, it is Mr. Barr's position that he can just go out and say he has constitutional authority and do it.

Here is a direct quote from Mr. Barr's testimony. Talking about laws going back to the 1970s, he said: "Numerous statutes were passed, such as [the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act], that purported to supplant Presidential discretion with Congressionally crafted schemes whereby judges become the arbiter of national security decisions."

I am going to unpack that sentence for a minute. From Mr. Barr's perspective, decades of laws passed by the U.S. Congress are nothing but schemes—schemes. He is talking about the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, a fundamental framework of checks and balances that Congress has relied on

for four decades to ensure congressional and judicial oversight of surveillance. He is talking about every modification of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, from the PATRIOT Act to what is called section 702, reauthorized last year, to the USA Freedom Act, which was intended to stop the collection of millions of innocent Americans' phone records. Whatever you think of these statutes, they are how Congress determines the extent of the government's surveillance powers and exercises its responsibility to protect the rights of Americans. Mr. Barr notwithstanding, these duly enacted laws of Congress are not mere schemes.

Worse still, it is Mr. Barr's contention that all of these laws only purport to have any effect. The President, says Mr. Barr, has the discretion to ignore them. By definition, if you are saying that the President can just ignore the laws, in effect, that is a position that is in favor of tyranny. This is as dangerous a position as I have heard in congressional testimony. It is very similar to the language that was concocted in the Department of Justice to justify warrantless wiretapping—and these are the views coming from the man who might be Attorney General of the United States.

Mr. Barr is correct that the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act gives judges some say in when the government can spy on Americans. It is a secret system, one that greatly advantages the government and almost always precludes challenges from those who are spied on. The Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act has been abused through secret interpretations of law, but the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act does involve judges considering the Fourth Amendment rights of Americans, and that is what Mr. Barr objects to.

Based on his own testimony, it is clear to me that Mr. Barr has fundamental problems with the Fourth Amendment or at least its application to anything the President might unilaterally decide involves national security. He believes that if the government determines there is a threat, there is no need to ask a judge for a warrant.

The Fourth Amendment protects the rights of the people to be secure against unreasonable searches and seizures unless there is a probable cause warrant. That is what the Constitution says. Mr. Barr, however, has found two very big loopholes in the Fourth Amendment.

First, he insists that if the government decides a foreigner in the United States is "apparently acting as a terrorist," then he or she is not one of the "people," and the government can just throw out the Fourth Amendment.

Second, Mr. Barr argues that so long as the government says there is a threat, a warrantless search is not unreasonable, and the warrant requirement under the Fourth Amendment simply doesn't apply.

At the core of Mr. Barr's philosophy is that no one—not Congress and certainly not judges—has any business assessing the government's assertion about threats.

Here is another quote from Mr. Barr: These are "assessments judges are not competent to make or responsible for making under the Constitution."

For 40 years, judges of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act Court have been making these determinations, but, from Mr. Barr's perspective, the courts are not competent to decide who gets spied on; only the President gets that power.

Some might ask whether Mr. Barr has had a change of heart, particularly since Congress has passed additional surveillance authority in the year since his testimony. I hope we see in the days ahead where he stands, whether he now believes that spying on Americans and people in the United States has to be consistent with the laws passed by Congress, but his 2003 testimony suggests that even new, sweeping, bipartisan laws that have passed wouldn't satisfy him.

A little over a decade ago, Congress created section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. That allows for warrantless spying on foreigners overseas. I have said our country faces real threats from foreigners overseas, so I stipulate that is something that is important to the safety of the law-abiding people whom we all represent. I have had serious concerns about the number of innocent Americans whose communications are being swept up under section 702 collection, but at least the targets of the surveillance are overseas.

Mr. Barr would go further in his testimony, calling for the warrantless targeting of people inside the United States. According to Mr. Barr, there are individuals right here in the United States who have no Fourth Amendment rights. This is an important issue today, and it will become more important in the days ahead.

I have already stipulated that I think there are serious threats to our country overseas. What troubles me is, as telecommunication systems around the world become more globally interconnected, more and more innocent Americans are going to get swept up in these searches. To me, when you are talking—as Mr. Barr seems to be doing—that there are individuals in our country who have no Fourth Amendment rights, that is why I think all Senators should be troubled about these positions he has long espoused.

There is also the matter of collecting business records, sensitive information about Americans that are in possession of a third party. Here, we are talking about your purchases, who you are communicating with, where you are located at any time of the day.

Mr. Barr believes that the Fourth Amendment doesn't apply to any records held by a company or other third party, no matter how sensitive

that information is. This view has actually been rejected recently by the U.S. Supreme Court. What Mr. Barr has been saying is actually out of sync even with the current thinking of the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court most recently held that the Fourth Amendment does apply to the government's collection of location data from wireless carriers.

Apparently, yesterday Mr. Barr said he had not read that Supreme Court decision. Colleagues. I think that ought to be really troubling to the Members of this body. We are talking about location data. Location data can be a personal safety and national security nightmare.

We saw what happened just last week. In 2018, the wireless companies all made promises to me that they wouldn't make available precise location data to hedge funds, bail bondsmen—all kinds of bottom feeders just looking to make a buck. What happened was, in 2018, those wireless companies said they wouldn't make that data available any longer to these location trackers and bail bondsmen and the like, and then last week, a bounty hunter got 300 bucks and found out those 2018 promises to me meant nothing. So last week, the wireless companies promised again that they wouldn't make location data available to all of these financially interested parties. I appreciate their saying it, but I will tell you, I will believe it when I see it, because we got a promise in 2018 that they would be serious about protecting location data, and we saw last week that they weren't.

We have the Supreme Court now making it clear that the Fourth Amendment applies to the government's collection of location data from wireless carriers, but the person who is up for nomination, Mr. Barr, has not been willing to or doesn't find it important enough to even read the Supreme Court decision on this case.

The government's collection of business records is authorized by section 215 of FISA, which was part of the PATRIOT Act. There are serious concerns about 215. It was abused for years to carry out a secret program that swept up the phone records of millions of innocent, law-abiding Americans. Even after the USA FREEDOM Act, which was intended to end bulk collection, it has been used to collect hundreds of millions of phone records. All the government needs to collect these records is to show the FISA Court that the records are relevant to an investigation. There is no requirement for a probable cause warrant.

This important law sunsets this year, so the Congress will have a debate about whether these authorities are too broad, whether there is a need for more checks and balances. I see my colleague from Texas, who also serves on the Intelligence Committee. We are going to have a debate on it. That is the way it ought to be.

Today, we are talking about what I consider to be dangerous views espoused by Mr. Barr. What Mr. Barr believes is that the government shouldn't have any court oversight at all when it comes to collecting the records on Americans. He thinks the government should just unilaterally issue a subpoena and collect those records and that there would be no oversight whatever. The foundation of Mr. Barr's beliefs when it comes to surveillance is that the President can do whatever he wants if he believes national security is at stake.

I am going to close by simply talking for an additional minute or two about what it will mean if Mr. Barr is confirmed as Donald Trump's Attorney General.

Right now, the President is openly considering a declaration that he, Donald Trump, has emergency powers to override the will of the Congress, and he is doing this while relying on a baseless assertion that there is a national security crisis.

Until he was fact-checked, he was making very far-fetched claims about terrorists coming over the border. He also regularly calls journalists "enemies of the people" and calls for investigations of his political enemies.

I would oppose the nomination of anyone with William Barr's views on Executive power regardless of who was President, but the kinds of threats I am talking about are too serious to ignore.

Donald Trump has openly said and said specifically how much he would enjoy unchecked surveillance power. During the 2016 campaign, when the Russians were hacking his opponents, the President of the United States, our current President, said: "honestly, I wish I had that power. I'd love to have that power."

If Donald Trump decides that national security is at stake and William Barr is the Attorney General, it would be Mr. Barr who might give him that power—power he could use with no oversight from the courts and without regard to what Mr. Barr has dismissed as "the schemes"—our laws—of Congress.

In case anyone thinks Mr. Barr would himself serve as a check on the President, he has also written that that is not the Attorney General's job. Just last year, he wrote that all Executive power rests in one and only one person—the President—and that the President doesn't have to convince his Attorney General that his orders are legal.

Let me be clear. The issues I have raised with respect to Mr. Barr's views on surveillance are not kind of conjecture or possible theories. What I have been talking about this afternoon are the views outlined in Mr. Barr's own testimony. I hope every Member of this body will take the time to read Mr. Barr's testimony and consider what is at stake.

There are Members in both political parties in this Chamber who have long

been concerned about the expansive surveillance authorities under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act and the possible abuse of that law. Those concerns are, in my view, small potatoes compared to what Mr. Barr has proposed, which is that the law need not constrain the President whatsoever. For example, some Members of this body have expressed concern about Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act warrants in connection with the Russia investigation and whether all relevant information has been provided to the FISA Court. Consider a world in which the government doesn't need a warrant and doesn't have to justify its surveillance to any court. Consider the possibility of abuse in that world. That is the world Mr. Barr has testified he wants.

I also would appeal to my colleagues with whom I have had some pretty vigorous debates over the years about surveillance and who may have no concerns about the current framework of our laws. We can have our disagreements about how to write the law. Here in the Senate, we do agree that the laws passed by the Congress mean something. They are binding, and they are not, as Mr. Barr has stated, "schemes" that the President can just ignore whenever he feels like it.

This nominee has been more than clear about where he stands. He believes that the President alone decides when there is a threat and that when he does, he doesn't have to worry about Congress, judges, or the laws, or the Constitution. In my view, that is a prescription for trouble, a prescription for more abuses—abuses that Congress may or may not even be told about. But we have been warned. We have been warned by Mr. Barr's testimony.

I also would like to note that I have concerns about Mr. Barr that relate to classified matters, and I am currently seeking declassification of those matters and hope that this will be resolved prior to any votes on the nominee.

I see colleagues are waiting.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, yesterday the Senate Judiciary Committee began to hear witnesses on the nomination of Bill Barr to be the next Attorney General of the United States. We heard first, of course, from Mr. Barr himself all day yesterday and today from additional witnesses.

By any standard, Mr. Barr is an exceptionally qualified individual, in part because 27 years ago, he was Attorney General, nominated and confirmed unanimously—nominated by President George Herbert Walker Bush. Under his leadership at the time, the Department of Justice focused on some of the most important law enforcement challenges facing our country at that time. They worked to fight violent crime and combat the drug epidemic, both of which continue to do great harm to communities across the country still today.

As significant as the work done under his leadership was, I was more impressed with the fact that after 27 years, he was willing to take on the task of becoming Attorney General once again. He said he was sort of semiretired. He and his wife were looking forward to spending more time with their children and grandchildren. But he answered the call to public service, and I am grateful that he did. He knows that our Nation needs a strong law-and-order Attorney General at the Department of Justice.

When he spoke at his confirmation hearing more than 2½ decades ago, he said:

The Attorney General must ensure that the administration of justice—the enforcement of the law—is above and away from politics. Nothing could be more destructive of our system of government, the rule of law, or the Department of Justice as an institution, than any toleration of political interference with the enforcement of the law.

He repeated that commitment yesterday, and I think the need for that sort of strong statement is more important today than ever.

I believe Attorney General Barr will be a good Attorney General, assuming what is one of the most challenging positions in the Cabinet because you are a political appointee but you are also the chief law enforcement officer in the country. That sometimes can be difficult to navigate.

As the nominee noted, doing the job and doing it well sometimes requires being prepared to burn your political capital in order to preserve the rule of law. I believe this is the most fundamental quality of a good Attorney General, and having a leader at the helm of the Department of Justice with the right temperament and a fundamental understanding of this responsibility is critical now and forever. In recent years, we witnessed some Attorneys General carrying out actions that repeatedly toed that political line, sometimes crossed it.

Under the Obama administration, the Department of Justice began to veer increasingly away from the impartial administration of law and toward politics. That shift undoubtedly occurred at the hands of President Obama's Attorneys General who were in the driver's seat during his administration, Eric Holder and Loretta Lynch.

Both Holder's and Lynch's conduct has come under a great deal of scrutiny—even now, after they have left—and for good reason.

For example, under then-Attorney General Holder, there was something called Operation Fast and Furious in which the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms and the Department of Justice purposefully allowed the illegal sale of firearms in Mexico in the hopes of being able to track them. Unfortunately, there were a number of casualties, including Border Patrolman Brian Terry, who was killed with one of those firearms in 2010. Attorney General Holder never accepted responsibility

for Brian Terry's death or ever admitted that allowing these guns to walk into Mexico, into the hands of some criminal organizations, was a terrible mistake.

Under his watch, the IRS targeting controversy occurred in which politically aligned groups applying for tax-exempt status faced official oppression based upon their political affiliation.

Then, of course, more recently, let's not forget then-Attorney General Lynch's handling of the Clinton email scandal—something even James Comey, the FBI Director, objected to—along with her famous so-called tarmac meeting with former President Bill Clinton when his wife was under an active FBI investigation. The conduct of both Holder and Lynch undermined the public's confidence in the impartial administration of justice and law at the Justice Department.

Under the leadership of my friend and our former colleague, Jeff Sessions, the Department of Justice has begun to right the ship and again separate politics from the impartial administration of the law, and I am confident that Mr. Barr will continue to do the same.

During his confirmation hearing, Mr. Barr reaffirmed that politicians should not interfere with criminal investigations, and he likewise committed not to interfere with the special counsel's investigation. He assured us that his allegiance will be to the rule of law, to the Constitution, and to the American people, and that, above all else, he will work to protect the professionalism and integrity of the Department of Justice and the thousands of dedicated public servants who work there.

Not only is Mr. Barr exceptionally qualified for the job, he is prepared on day one to step in and lead with distinction.

The Senate unanimously confirmed his nomination to three different positions at the Department of Justice, and I hope we can work expeditiously to get this fine man to the Department of Justice once again.

I thank Mr. Barr and his entire family for agreeing to bring his talents and his temperament to the Department of Justice at a time when those qualities are so desperately needed, and I look forward to voting yes on his nomination.

REMEMBERING HERB KELLEHER

Mr. President, on another matter, I want to share a few words about the passing of one of the airline industry's most unconventional and most successful executives. That would be Herb Kelleher, who cofounded Southwest Airlines.

Herb was born in 1931 in New Jersey, and his young life and early career kept him on the east coast. He graduated from Wesleyan University and New York University School of Law and served as a law clerk for 2 years at the New Jersey Supreme Court and then joined a law firm in Newark. But as fate intervened in this promising

young lawyer's career, he met his wife Joan, a native Texan, and they decided to move to the Lone Star State, something he later referred to as the greatest business decision he ever made.

Building America's largest domestic airline carrier was never on Herb's to-do list. In the late 1960s, he was an attorney in San Antonio, when one day his client approached him with an idea about a low-fare airline serving three Texas cities. Tired of spending so much time in the car traveling between San Antonio and Houston and Dallas, he believed they could make point-to-point intrastate travel faster and much cheaper by flying, and also cheaper than other airlines.

Getting their innovative idea off the ground wasn't easy. These men who founded Southwest Airlines slogged through years of legal battles before the airline operated its first flight. Their vision not only led to the creation of a budget airline but also drove down the cost of their competitors, as competition will do.

To maintain their edge, Southwest tried some interesting ideas along the way. After another airline ran an ad calling Southwest a cheap carrier, Herb responded by filming a commercial where he wore a brown paper bag over his head and promised that the airline would gladly provide one to any customer too embarrassed to be seen flying on Southwest Airline.

At one point, to compete with the low fares of other airlines, Southwest started a program to keep customers, and they said: You can either pay the lowest fare or pay full fare and get a full premium bottle of liquor in the process. Well, apparently it worked, and for a short time, I am told, Southwest was the largest liquor distributor in the State of Texas.

I think one of the most distinctly Herb Kelleher stories is of a battle called "The Malice in Dallas."

In 1992, Southwest Airlines and another company realized their slogans—"Plane Smart" and "Just Plane Smart"—were similar. Rather than settling the matter in court, they settled it by holding a public arm wrestling match.

The 61-year-old, with the cigarette fixed between his teeth, gave his much younger competitor a run for his money, but he couldn't pull off a win. At the end of the match, the two men made donations to each other's chosen charities. They agreed to share the slogan and called it a day.

Each of these stories has Herb Kelleher written all over it. He was known for his gregarious personality, his incredible work ethic, and his penchant for the nontraditional, not to mention his affinity for Wild Turkey.

I first met Herb when I represented him in a lawsuit early in my legal career in San Antonio. He had a larger-than-life personality, and it was a pleasure to know him.

We can all learn a lesson from Herb about the importance of working hard,

treating people with respect, and not being afraid to have a little bit of fun along the way. His entrepreneurial spirit was credited with democratizing the skies by disrupting the airline industry, and I believe he was one of the most consequential leaders in American aviation, and we have all benefited from that.

So I join Herb's wife Joan, his children, his grandchildren, his many friends, and, of course, his beloved Southwest Airlines family in mourning the loss of this larger-than-life figure.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

MENTHOL CIGARETTES

Mr. BARR. Mr. President, I also mourn Herb's loss. It is odd that I would be here to protect his ability to have that cigarette in his mouth as he was negotiating.

I rise today to discuss the recent announcement by the Food and Drug Administration to move forward with a ban on menthol cigarettes. This announcement, to say the least, is surprising. In an administration claiming to decrease regulation on the American people, this announcement works completely counter to that goal—increasing regulation and decreasing the choices for adult consumers in America.

Making matters worse, the announcement comes from an Agency that the American people trust. They trust them to make decisions based upon the most sound and reliable science available. Unfortunately, the FDA has not provided a sound scientific argument to move forward with the ban on one type of product that Americans consume understanding fully the risk.

On November 30, 2018, I raised this concern with the Food and Drug Administration. As a part of their announcement, the FDA claimed that their regulatory actions are based on information released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, or CDC.

When I asked for the data supporting this menthol decision, I was informed that this data would be made available later this year. I also asked the FDA to explain to me whether the Agency has determined that menthol cigarettes make more children try smoking or whether these products make it more difficult for children to stop smoking.

I pause here because I am sure the Presiding Officer is remembering that it is illegal for people under 18 to purchase tobacco products.

The FDA simply informed me that the information I requested would be part of a proposed rule available for stakeholder comment.

Now, I think you would agree that it is highly unusual for a science-based Agency to refuse to provide the data informing its regulatory decisions to a seated Member of the U.S. Congress. This should set off alarm bells. Any product regulated by the FDA might

fall into this category of “no Member of Congress being able to know.”

Well, it may seem odd, but the FDA regulates 25 cents of every dollar of the U.S. economy—no wonder it takes so long and costs so much for new drugs and devices to come to market.

As a result, I did my own research. The chart behind me, with 2017 data from the CDC, shows that children’s use of traditional menthol cigarettes has decreased 3 percent since 2011. Let me say that again. Since 2011, usage by youth in America of menthol cigarettes has reduced from 5.8 percent to 2.5 percent.

This data runs counter to the need for increased regulation and decreased choices for consumers and calls into question the FDA’s own decision.

In 2009, Congress debated the regulation of tobacco products. I was here for the entire debate and was an active participant in the dialogue. I alone provided over 16 hours of remarks on the Senate floor so that my colleagues understood my concerns with this type of legislation and to ensure, quite frankly, that the voice of North Carolinians was clearly and deeply understood in the U.S. Senate.

One issue discussed during that debate was actually the banning of flavors in cigarettes, including menthol. Congress struggled to come to a consensus on this issue, offering many iterations at the time of the legislation, taking different approaches to the ban of any, all, or none of the flavors available in cigarettes at the time.

Ultimately, the decision was made for the FDA to thoroughly study the effects of menthol cigarettes.

The Agency issued its report in 2011 and commissioned a third-party entity to study the science behind menthol cigarettes, for which a report was issued in 2013.

Now, what resulted from the results of that study?

For the remainder of President Obama’s terms in office, which ended in 2016, their FDA never attempted to move a menthol ban. Why? Because the results of that information—that scientific data—did not substantiate what, in fact, that would accomplish.

In the 5 years since the publication of these studies, the science has not changed to justify the ban of an entire product category by the FDA.

Each year, the CDC issues the latest data from the National Youth Tobacco Survey. This survey asks about 20,000 children about their tobacco use, and it has been conducted since 1999. This survey covers details of middle and high schoolers’ use and exposure to a variety of tobacco products, and it includes specifics on the use of different product categories, like traditional cigarettes and e-cigarettes, as well as data on the percentage of survey participants who tried menthol.

The CDC data shows that there has been a 12-point decrease in the percentage of children trying traditional cigarettes since 2011.

Let me state that again.

The CDC’s own data shows that there has been a 12-percent reduction in the percentage of children trying traditional cigarettes since 2011.

Now, this is good news. The use of cigarettes among children is decreasing, showing that our education and our public health efforts are, in fact, working.

As I mentioned before, the survey shows that the use of menthol cigarettes by children has also declined, decreasing 3 percent since 2011.

Even the FDA’s own data shows the decline in children’s use of traditional cigarettes.

Now, this chart I have basically shows that traditional cigarettes have fallen 12 percent since 2011, compared to the latest survey data of 2017. It is probably difficult for some to see, but the red arrow pointing down certainly indicates a decrease. The red arrow pointing up shows an increase. Now, that should be alarming, and it is an area that we will talk about in a second.

But the solution here is simple. Data released by the CDC and the FDA provide a clear marker that the FDA’s focus should be on areas where children’s use is increasing rather than in areas where we are already making significant progress.

I might pause and say that if a product is illegal for somebody under 18, I don’t know how you ban a product and believe that it wasn’t already banned if it was illegal.

The FDA’s decision does not pass the commonsense test. It is time for the FDA to focus on the things where there is an increase for children. I give them examples: marijuana, opioids, fentanyl, meth. We have debated it on the floor of the Senate. While we are looking at one thing and the FDA has got us focused on it, look at how many children’s lives are devastated in this country—again, with illegal products.

One can only conclude by what we are doing, which is banning menthol, that we are emulating Canada. Several years ago they banned menthol, and last year they legalized marijuana. That may be the route we are on. I am not sure. Nothing surprises me anymore in Washington.

June of this year will mark the 10th anniversary of the Tobacco Control Act, which provided the FDA regulatory authority over tobacco products. The law gave the FDA broad authority to regulate these products and was intended to provide a path forward for innovative products—tobacco products, as well—placing hope in advancements in research and development to provide new options for American consumers that are down the continuum of risk for those individuals who choose, potentially replacing their use of combustible cigarettes with electronic ones.

The FDA does not have a single governing regulation for the review and the approval of the products Congress

put under its regulatory watch. Almost a decade after enactment and more than \$5 billion later, the FDA has failed to issue one foundational regulation governing the viable review of any tobacco product.

Let me state that again. Almost a decade after enactment and \$5 billion later, the FDA has failed to issue a foundational regulation governing the viable review of any tobacco product. This failure would be unacceptable from any other regulated industry. The Center for Tobacco Products receives hundreds of millions of user-fee dollars each year and is still falling behind the other product review centers at the FDA. The FDA has a responsibility to develop clear rules of the road for innovation and potentially less harmful tobacco products—some of the very products that are under scrutiny today because they are in regulatory limbo 10 years later. The Agency has had ample time to act and, instead, focused its efforts and resources on banning a legally marketed product without the data to support their own actions.

I urge my colleagues to take a serious look at the FDA’s decision to ban menthol cigarettes. The FDA chose to decrease choices for the American consumer while their counterpart, the CDC, continues to show a decline in children’s use of menthol cigarettes. These two Agencies should, in fact, be in alignment, using the CDC’s highly regarded public health data to fully inform the FDA’s approach to regulate these products. The information it released on November 18, 2018, shows a steep increase in the use of all tobacco products. However, the FDA has not provided the data to show that traditional cigarettes have contributed to this increase from 2017 to 2018 in any way or that menthol played a part in this increase. If it had—I will take you back to the original chart—we would see a significant change in the trend line of menthol usage of youth.

I would bet my colleagues today that when you get to 2018, you will continue to see a decline in menthol. It begs the question of whether the leadership at FDA is making decisions with any regard for years of public health data, coming at the cost of choices for the American people.

This argument comes down to whether you believe Americans have a right to choose. As long as I am an elected official, I will advocate for adult consumers to have these choices.

I realize this is the floor of great debate, and I am not scared to have a debate on whether tobacco is a legal product. As long as it is a legal product, why would we encumber the consumer with choice when, in fact, we see a trend line like this as it relates to youth?

So I say to the FDA and I say to my colleagues: Don’t hide behind our children and tell us that is the reason, because the data doesn’t support it. The data says that what we are doing in education, what we are doing as parents is convincing the next generation

that this is not a product they want to use. But when you ban menthol cigarettes, you take many adults who choose to purchase and to use a legal product with full understanding of the risk and tell them: No, we are going to eliminate the choice of this product.

That is wrong. It is wrong for Congress to do; it is wrong for a regulatory Agency to do; and it is a blemish on this administration to announce that they are reducing regulation when, in fact, they are going out and instituting some of the most onerous regulations on America's consumers, the American people who choose.

I urge my colleagues to become educated on this. I will give them an opportunity on multiple occasions for the balance of this year to hear more about this industry.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. BLACKBURN). The assistant Democratic leader.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, last Saturday was a historic day in Springfield, IL, my hometown. It was the biggest snowfall in one day in our city's history. I spent that Saturday not shaking hands with my constituents but shaking hands with my shovel, trying to shovel snow away. It was a historic day in Springfield but, sadly, it was a historic day for America too.

Saturday marked the longest shutdown of the U.S. Government in the history of the United States. As of today, the shutdown has continued for 26 days. Day by day, the harmful effects of this government shutdown are getting worse. Alarming, the President seems not to really understand or appreciate the real-life impact this shutdown is having on many Americans.

In all, more than 8,000 Federal workers in my home State of Illinois are going without a paycheck during this shutdown—8,000 people who are concerned about paying their bills, as most working families are. These are hard-working Americans.

I want to show you a photo of one of them. He happens to be a friend of mine. His name is Toby Hauck. This is Toby here. Toby is a veteran of the U.S. Air Force. His job in Aurora, IL, is to make sure that my plane, when it arrives at O'Hare, lands safely. Toby Hauck is an air traffic controller. Air traffic controllers have some of the most important and most stressful Federal jobs in America, and this shutdown is a kick in the gut to Toby Hauck and all of these air traffic controllers.

Many air traffic controllers, like Toby, are already working 6 days a week. I am not happy to report that. Pushing them to the limits of physical exhaustion isn't in the best interest of safety when it comes to our aircraft, but because of staffing shortages, that is what they are faced with, working 6 days a week. The shutdown is making staff shortages in the air traffic control

facilities across the United States even worse.

The shutdown has closed down the FAA academy where new air traffic controllers are trained and has stopped training in each facility to implement new procedures and new equipment.

Toby's father and grandfather, incidentally, served in the U.S. military, as he did. This picture depicts his great son and Toby's granddaughter. I wanted to bring another point home. Toby's son is deploying overseas this month. Toby and his wife will be looking after their 2½-year-old granddaughter during the 10-month deployment. Toby's lack of a paycheck since December 31 of last year adds stress to an already hectic life.

Toby says:

Veterans are very proud of our heritage and what we have done for the country. And those of us who continue to serve the Federal Government as Federal employees continue that pride throughout their careers.

Toby says:

We are hardworking, proud American employees doing a job for the American public that is essential as an air traffic controller. It's not acceptable as a veteran, as a federal employee, as an air traffic controller to use my profession and my livelihood as a political football.

Toby doesn't stand alone as a veteran working for the Federal Government. Veterans are some of the hardest hit Federal employees of the Trump shutdown. Today as many as 250,000 Federal workers and Federal contractors are going without pay during the shutdown. According to the Office of Personnel Management, as of the end of fiscal year 2016, veterans represented 31 percent of the Federal workforce. This is more than a 5-percent increase since 2009, when President Obama encouraged veterans to apply for employment with the Federal Government to boost the hiring of men and women who served our country in uniform.

In Illinois, we have 50,000 Federal workers, and almost 28 percent of them are veterans. More than one-quarter of all veterans working in the Federal Government also have a Department of Veterans Affairs disability rating.

For example, if SNAP, the food stamp program, runs out, 38 million Americans could lose their food stamp benefits. That includes veterans living in households that participate in SNAP. You don't think about that very often, do you? Do you mean there are veterans on food stamps? The figure has averaged about 1.4 million veterans a year between 2015 and 2017, according to the Census Bureau. Illinois is home to nearly 50,000 veterans who are beneficiaries of food stamps and HUD rental assistance programs on an annual basis as well. So the very programs that are going to be hampered, slowed down, and stopped because of the Trump shutdown affect veterans across my State of Illinois and across the Nation. About 1,150 contracts under the project-based rental assistance program have lapsed, with hundreds more

scheduled to expire because of this shutdown. People are suffering around the country.

Federal workers are suffering. Their workers are suffering and veterans are suffering because of this Trump shutdown. More than 380,000 Federal workers have been furloughed; 450,000 or more are being forced to work without pay. These are hard-working Americans like the TSA officers I met last week at O'Hare and met just a few days ago when I flew to St. Louis Lambert Airport. They go to work every single day, and their job is to make sure that dangerous people don't get on the airplanes with you, your children, and your family. They can't afford to have their paychecks held hostage by a manufactured crisis.

These families of Federal workers have bills to pay. A worker at the Environmental Protection Agency, Cynthia Colquitt, is going without a paycheck after serving 26 years as a Federal employee. How hard is it? She is a single mom, and she says, quite honestly: I get by paycheck to paycheck. She has never missed a mortgage payment; she is very serious about those things. But now she is worried the shutdown will impact her credit rating if she doesn't have a paycheck to pay her bills on time.

Shutdowns not only hurt our Federal workers, but the impact is also felt by small businesses around the country that rely on the business of Federal workers and the government. This shutdown is hurting our economy and only adding to economic uncertainty. Remember what happened in December? If you happen to have a retirement account with investments in stocks, you noticed that December was a pretty horrible month. There was an 8.7-percent drop in the stock market in December—the worst December for the stock market since 1931, during the Great Depression.

The CEO of JPMorgan Chase is now warning that if this shutdown lasts another several weeks, it could reduce our Nation's quarterly growth to zero. The victims of the shutdown will not be the Federal employees; it will affect the entire economy because the input into the economy—the things they buy and pay for—will be diminished.

Just why are we in this mess? Well, as the President said several weeks ago on camera in the Oval Office, it is his shutdown and he is very proud of it. He said that he was going to hold the hard-earned paychecks of Americans hostage in an attempt to fulfill his campaign promise to build a wall on the southern border of the United States, a concrete wall, as he described it, "from sea to shining sea," which, incidentally, he promised would be paid for by the Mexicans.

Let me say that again. All of the pain of this shutdown is caused because the President made a campaign promise to build this almighty wall. Well, we know something about walls. They don't work very well. We know it

might have been a great response several hundred years ago to build a wall—not so much today. There are better ways to make America safe, other than building a wall. Yet the President said: It is my wall or a shutdown.

If we have a debate about border security, I want to be a part of it, but we shouldn't do it while holding the Government of the United States hostage. Every day of the government shutdown is another day that President Trump is harming innocent Americans, preventing hundreds of thousands of Americans from getting their paychecks and millions more from getting access to vital Federal services.

We should reopen this government and we ought to do it this afternoon and we can. One phone call from the President to Senator MITCH MCCONNELL, Republican leader of the Senate, is all it takes. NANCY PELOSI, the new Speaker of the House, has already passed the spending bills to open the government. She did it last week. She sent them over here. They are sitting at the desk up here. We are not touching them because Senator MCCONNELL said: I am not going to solve this problem until the President gives me permission. A little reminder to my colleague Senator MCCONNELL, under the Constitution, we are a separate branch of government. We don't wait for a permission slip from the President of the United States to do the job we were elected to do.

Today we had a vote earlier, and I looked at the other side of the aisle and talked to a number of my Republican colleagues. I wasn't a bit surprised to find so many of them fed up with this government shutdown. They want it to end today, and so do I. Then we can sit down and negotiate border security and do it the right way, not with a gun at our head—I should say, a gun to the head of 800,000 Federal employees. Let's reopen the government and then continue to negotiate. House Democrats have given us the bills we need to do that. Now it is up to Senator MCCONNELL. Will he come forward through that door onto the floor, call these bills, and end this shutdown before 5 p.m. today?

He could. He has the power to do it. He can pass the spending bills. He warns us that President Trump may not sign these bills. Well, Senator MCCONNELL has been around the Senate for decades. He has been around so long that I am sure he is familiar with our Constitution. Do you know what? If the President vetoed these spending bills, we have the constitutional authority and opportunity to override his veto—to come up with 67 votes in the Senate, two-thirds in the House to override any Presidential veto. I think the votes are there, and I think that is the reason Senator MCCONNELL is afraid to call the bills.

It is time for the Senate to act. Let's not wait for a permission slip from President Trump. Let's do what we

were elected to do. Let's spare Toby Hauck and 800,000 Federal employees, including many veterans, the hardships their families are facing.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

NATIONAL DEFENSE

Mrs. FISCHER. Madam President, I rise to discuss the state of our national defense. First, I want to recognize the brave Americans who were killed in a suicide attack in Syria today. Our deepest sympathies are with the families of those killed and the injured. We are so grateful to these Americans for their service and for their sacrifice.

As I enter my seventh year on the Senate Armed Services Committee, I can't help but reflect on our past successes. I am proud of what we have accomplished by working together to fulfill the first responsibility of our Federal Government to provide for the common defense. Together, we have continued the committee's long-standing bipartisan tradition of working to strengthen our military, and we have been effective on a variety of fronts.

We have provided our brave men and women in uniform with the resources they need to carry out the missions we give them every year through the National Defense Authorization Act.

Importantly, for the last 2 years, Congress and the administration have worked together to rebuild the Department of Defense and reorient it to today's threats. As the administration's National Defense Strategy correctly identifies, the primary challenge to U.S. interests today comes not from terrorist groups but from Russia and China.

In recognition of this fact, Congress increased funding to restore readiness and expand force structure from near-historic lows. While progress has been made, significant challenges remain.

The bipartisan support for increased defense spending must continue, and Congress must ensure our service men and women have the necessary training and equipment for the great power competition that defines the current geopolitical landscape. As part of this effort to ensure our military is prepared for the new threat environment, we must continue modernizing our nuclear forces.

Once again, this Congress I will chair the Armed Services Committee's Subcommittee on Strategic Forces, and this issue will be my top priority. Since the end of World War II, our nuclear deterrent has formed the bedrock of our Nation's security. With Russia and China increasingly seeking to challenge U.S. interests and to reshape the geopolitical landscape in their favor, the unique role our nuclear forces play in deterring conflict and preventing war is becoming increasingly important.

Meanwhile, our warheads and delivery systems age toward obsolescence, as does the infrastructure that main-

tains our deterrent. Many of these systems have aged far beyond their designed lifetimes. They cannot be sustained indefinitely. Put simply, as our nuclear deterrent becomes more important to our Nation's defense, the need for nuclear modernization only grows.

This conclusion is echoed in the administration's National Defense Strategy, its Nuclear Posture Review, and the bipartisan National Defense Strategy Commission, which described nuclear modernization as a "critical imperative."

The previous administration, under President Obama, also recognized the need for modernization and began an effort to recapitalize our nuclear forces. Right now, major programs are underway to replace our legacy systems. This includes the B-21 bomber, which will replace the B-52 and B-2 bombers, and the long-range standoff weapon, which will replace the existing nuclear-armed, air-launched cruise missile. The ground-based strategic deterrent is replacing the Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missile. Finally, the Columbia-class submarine will replace the Ohio-class submarines that are currently in service.

The command and control networks on which our nuclear forces rely are also in need of replacement, as is the scientific infrastructure that maintains our stockpile of aging warheads.

In some cases, such as with the production of plutonium pits—essentially the cores of our nuclear weapons—we must reconstitute lost capabilities. Adding to the challenge, as a result of decisions to delay and defer funding, there is no margin for error in the schedule.

This is the position we find ourselves in. Our existing platforms are simultaneously aging out just as their replacements are scheduled to be ready. Something General Selva, the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, refers to as just-in-time modernization. That means any delay, any error, could put at risk our ability to field an effective nuclear deterrent in the future. We cannot allow that to happen. In the face of growing threats, our deterrent must remain strong.

As chairman of the Strategic Forces Subcommittee, I understand I carry the solemn responsibility to make sure the nuclear forces that have deterred conflict, safeguarded our livelihoods, and preserved our Nation's power for decades continues to protect the next generation of Americans. While U.S. Strategic Command is located in Sarpy County, NE, it is a national asset with a global mission—over 180,000 soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, and civilians are working every day around the world in support of the command's mission.

During this Congress, I am looking forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle on this key priority and continuing our work in providing for a strong national defense.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, we are 26 days into President Trump's completely unnecessary government shutdown—26 days of pain and uncertainty; 26 days of missed paychecks and missed bills—26 days, the longest in our country's history.

I have heard from so many constituents in my home State of Washington who have been impacted by this shutdown. These are heart-wrenching stories of workers who do not know how much longer they can make it without a paycheck. Members of our U.S. Coast Guard—the very men and women who stand ready 24/7 to make harrowing rescues and keep our country safe—didn't get paid yesterday. They did not get paid yesterday, marking the first time ever that servicemembers have not been paid because of a shutdown.

There are small business owners who don't know when their SBA loans will come through; people who are dedicated to our national parks—our national treasures—who are in despair as they hear about trash piling up and irreparable damage being done; people waiting in lines at airports; people worried about food inspections; worried about losing their homes or their cars or their jobs. Entire families, entire communities are impacted, uncertain, and scared.

In my home State of Washington and in every State in this country, I have come to the floor time and again to share these stories, along with many of my Democratic colleagues. We have called on Republican leaders to stand with us, stand with their constituents, and schedule a vote to end the shutdown. All it would take is a vote. We know it would pass, and we can move it through the House and send it to the President.

S. 109

What have Republican leaders done, instead of scheduling a vote to help workers and families and small business owners and our economy; what have they done, instead of standing with their constituents to reopen this government and end this madness? Well, they have done what they have always done when they don't know what else to do. They scheduled a vote to attack women and their healthcare.

I almost couldn't believe it when I heard it. This government is shut down. People are hurting. They want solutions. They want the government to open, and Republicans are going to vote to effectively ban abortion coverage. That is the business on the floor.

Instead of voting to pay Federal workers, they are trying to tell women what kind of health insurance they can or can't have. Instead of working to make sure our airports are secure, they want to undermine women's access to the healthcare they choose. Instead of ending the chaos and dysfunction and getting our country back on track,

they want to chip away again at every woman's constitutionally protected right to make her own healthcare decisions. Instead of working with us to end the shutdown and then having a debate on border security or anything else they want to talk about, they are planning a vote that will not do anything but tell women across the country what they already know: Republicans in Washington, DC, think they know better than you about your healthcare.

Let me be clear. They don't.

This is disgusting. Women and men across the country are not going to stand for it. We can vote right now to open the government. We can vote right now to help our workers and our families. We can vote right now to end governing by Presidential tantrum. If Republicans don't do this—if they choose, as they have, to attack women and to throw their healthcare under the bus instead of doing their basic jobs—then the people across this country are going to see exactly where they stand—not with them, not with their families, not with their constituents, and certainly not with women.

I urge the Republicans to end this madness—to pull this anti-women health vote—and to, instead, schedule a vote to reopen the government. That is what we should be focused on. That is what Americans want us to do. We need to end this. Let's reopen the government, not attack women one more time.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRAMER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

MARCH FOR LIFE

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, more than 100,000 people and families will join together in the March for Life in Washington that is going to take place tomorrow. They will brave the cold—there is supposed to be sleet and bad weather—for one simple reason, to give voice to the voiceless, the unborn, our most vulnerable among us but are still deserving of the right to life.

Jeremiah 1:5 says:

Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,

Before you were born I sanctified you.

To everyone who comes to the March for Life, know that we hear you, and we are standing with you, just as we have in the past.

This is not a new topic, not for me to speak on either. Twenty-five years ago, I came down to tell a story. At that time, I was in the House. This has been going on for a long period of time. I came down here to tell the story of Hannah Rosa Rodriguez. This is a quote from 1992:

Mr. Chairman, there is a big misconception regarding abortion and the issue of women and their right to protect their bodies. It is not that right that I object to but the right that is given them to kill an unborn fetus—an unborn child.

I want to share with you a story that my colleague CHRIS SMITH told me some time ago on this floor. That was 1992.

Ana Rosa Rodriguez is an abortion survivor. This is another group of people we haven't talked about very much on the floor. At birth, she was a healthy 3-pound baby girl, except for her injury; she was missing an arm. Ana survived a botched abortion.

Her mother attempted to get an abortion in her 32nd week of pregnancy when she was perfectly healthy—8 weeks past what New York State law legally allows. In the unsuccessful abortion attempt, the baby's right arm was ripped off. However, they failed to kill Ana Rosa. She lived. Pro-life supporters agree that nightmare situations like the Rodriguez case are probably not common, but abortion-related deaths and serious injuries occur more frequently than most people are aware.

It is amazing that we can pay so much attention to issues such as human rights abroad and can allow the violent destruction of over 26 million children here at home. We are fortunate that Ana was not one of those children. She survived.

That was 1992, but today we still don't have Federal protections for the babies who survive the brutal abortion process. I am working with Senator SASSE, who is leading the effort this year to reintroduce the Born Alive Abortion Survivor Act, which would ensure that a baby who survives an abortion will receive the same treatment as any child naturally born premature at the same age, without prescribing any particular form of treatment. That is just morally right, and I don't see how anyone could vote against something like that. We will find out.

Just a few years later, in 1997, I was on the floor of this body, the U.S. Senate, with my good friend former Senator Rick Santorum, to try to pass the partial birth abortion ban and end the horrific practice of late-term abortions. I remember how active Senator Rick Santorum was at that time, a real leader in the pro-life cause. I spoke then, 1997, on the floor:

I thank the Senator from Pennsylvania for yielding time. I think he made one of the best presentations I have heard on the floor of this body. I want to say that, when he deals with the facts, he is dealing with the facts but, you know, we are also dealing today with perceptions.

I tried to make a list of those things I have heard over and over. There is a lot of redundancy on this floor, but there are some things that have not been stated. I would like to share a couple of those with you.

I am going to do something that is a little unusual because I am going to read some Scriptures to you. It is not totally unprecedented in this body. In fact, I have done it many, many times. The distinguished Senator from West Virginia does it quite often.

I was talking about Bob Byrd. We remember Bob Byrd. He is deceased now, but this was 1997, and he read Scriptures every day on the floor of this Senate.

So I would like to read a couple of Scriptures, just for those who care. Anyone who does not, just don't listen.

First of all, I have used this a number of times. Jeremiah 1:35 says: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I sanctified you." The 139th Psalm, no matter which interpretation you use, makes it very clear when life begins. Life begins at conception.

Then I was, not too long ago, at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. I had been to the museum in Jerusalem, and I found the same thing was printed on the last brick as you are going through. This is Deuteronomy 30:19. It said: "I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live."

Last, I am also concerned that something that is as dramatic and as significant as this issue is going to go unnoticed; that maybe there are Senators out there who are not really into this issue, and they might want to vote the party line or they might want to say, well, maybe there aren't as many of these procedures out there, so they just really are not knowledgeable on the subject. So I will read Proverbs 24:11-12:

Rescue those who are unjustly sentenced to death; don't stand back and let them die. Don't try to disclaim responsibility by saying you didn't know about it. For God, who knows all hearts, knows yours, and He knows you knew.

That is pretty specific.

Mr. President, I was listening to the Senator from Massachusetts who said it does not do any good if we pass this because the President is going to veto it anyway.

That was actually in 1997. The President, if you remember, at that time, I advised the chairman, was Bill Clinton.

But I suggest to you that the President may not veto it, and if he does veto it, maybe some people will come over who were not here a year ago on this side of the aisle.

See, this was 1997. It was pretty close back then. It could have gone either way.

One individual at the time was Ron Fitzsimmons, who just last year insisted that the number of partial birth abortions were a relative handful now admits: "I lied through my teeth." He was lying. So if the President is predicating his decision to veto this ban on the basis of what was told to him by

Ron Fitzsimmons, there is every reason to believe he could turn around on the issue. I suggest also that we are talking now not just about a procedure but a culture.

I have a very good friend by the name of Charles Colson. We all remember Chuck Colson. He is the guy who started the Campus Crusade for Christ. He gave these remarks upon winning the prestigious Templeton Prize for a contribution to religion. Listen very carefully. He puts it all together, not isolating one procedure or one issue. He said:

Courts [like to] strike down even perfunctory prayers, and we are surprised that schools, bristling with barbed wire, look more like prisons than prisons do. Universities reject the very idea of truth, and we are shocked when their best and their brightest loot and betray.

Celebrities mock the traditional family, even revile it as a form of slavery, and we are appalled at the tragedy of broken homes and millions of unwed mothers. The media celebrate sex without responsibility, and we are horrified by plagues. Our lawmakers justify the taking of innocent lives in sterile clinics, and we are terrorized by the disregard for life in blood-soaked streets.

I think that puts into context what we are now approaching—that it is not just a normal type of abortion.

I have a great deal of respect for one of the most intellectual Members of this body. Keep in mind that this is 1997. His name is Patrick Moynihan—a very good man. He is from New York. Not many people know that he actually lived in his early years as my neighbor in Tulsa, OK. Again, at that time, nobody knew it until I mentioned it.

He was a self-proclaimed pro-choice Senator. He said: "And now we have testimony that it is not just too close to infanticide; it is infanticide, and one would be too many."

That is Patrick Moynihan. He is thought of and respected as one of the great liberal scholars of this body.

This is where we get the numbers game. I heard it said on the floor many times that we are talking about maybe 1 percent or that maybe talking about those who are in the ninth month may be an infinitesimal number, but in fact, one is too many. It was said on the floor that we may be only talking about 200 lives being taken during the normal delivery process. That is when a baby is given a natural birth and, yet, they take the life by using this barbaric procedure. We have all kinds of documentation that it is being done in the ninth month and during the normal birth process. They say only 200—only 200 lives are taken.

I agree with Patrick Moynihan. I am totally in a different philosophy than he is, but one is too many.

I am from Oklahoma, and some of you remember that we lost 168 lives in the Murrah Federal Office Building bombing. This was the largest domestic terrorist attack in American history. Did anybody say that is only 168 lives that were lost in Oklahoma City? No,

the entire Nation came with compassion and mourned with us.

One life—I agree with Senator Moynihan—is too many.

One other issue that has not been discussed in this debate this year—keep in mind that is 1997—is that of pain. Rather than go into it—I do not think anyone refutes the fact that a small baby, if that baby is certainly past the second trimester, feels pain every bit as much as anybody who is in here, as any Member of the U.S. Senate would feel pain.

There was a study conducted in London, and I have the results here, but I think everyone understands that this is something that is very real—that these babies do feel pain.

My junior Senator gave an excellent speech on the floor, and he talked about all of these issues in a different way, but he is doing it currently, and we are talking about now quite a number of years ago.

I have a picture of a good friend of mine with me. His name is Jase—James Edward Rapert.

Back when people our age were having babies—I am talking about myself now. Kay and I have been married 59 years. We have 20 kids and grandkids. We know a little bit about this. Back at that time when they were having babies, they wouldn't even let you in the hospital, let alone the delivery room.

When my daughter Molly called up and said, "Daddy, the time is here; could you come over," I went over to the hospital, and she said: Would you like to come into the delivery room?

I said: Yes, I would.

I saw for the first time what many of you in this room have seen and many of the women have experienced firsthand. I was there when this little guy was born. It is hard to describe to some of the men here who have not been through that experience of seeing this wonderful life begin, and I can remember when, in that room where the delivery took place, it occurred to me that when baby Jase, my grandson, was born, that is the moment when they could have used this procedure inflicting all of the pain you have heard described so many times: going into the cranium with the scissors, opening the scissors, sucking the brains out, and the skull collapses.

That is pain, and there are individuals who want to keep a procedure like this legal. If you did that to a dog, they would picket in front of your office. Somehow, we have developed a culture that puts a greater value on the lives of critters than human life. I watched baby Jase being born. I suggest to those of you who are concerned about choice that this is really the choice. It is either that choice or this choice, and these choices we are facing today.

This is something on which I agree with the Senator from Pennsylvania. I was talking at that time about Rick Santorum.

We should not be having to talk about it. To think that 100 years from

now they may look back and talk about that barbaric society that killed their own young, and here we are just trying to save a few lives from a very painful death. Nonetheless, that is the issue we are faced with today.

I gave that speech in 1997 and again in 1998 and year after year until we won the battle and finally ended the practice of partial-birth abortion in 2003—a ban that was upheld by the Supreme Court in 2007. There is still much more that needs to be done to end abortion on demand culture.

President Trump gets this. He was the first sitting President to speak at March for Life, and his administration has made real progress to advance the pro-life agenda. He has reinstated the Mexico City policy. We remember what that was. It was the one that bans taxpayer money from funding abortions abroad and directed the Justice Department to formally investigate Planned Parenthood.

President Trump also directed the Department of Health and Human Services to expand religious and conscience exemptions to protect individuals' religious liberty.

I am working in Congress to end the practice of abortion on demand that strips opportunity away from unborn babies and deprives them of the right to life.

This week I have joined my colleagues in introducing five common-sense bills—this is taking place right now, as we speak—in addition to the Born Alive Abortion Survivors Act, by Senator SASSE, which I mentioned earlier in this presentation. The No Taxpayer Funding of Abortion Act, working with Senator WICKER, would establish a governmentwide statutory prohibition on taxpayer subsidies for abortion and abortion coverage—simple enough. I am pleased that Majority Leader MCCONNELL has set up a procedural vote for this bill today.

There is the Life at Conception Act, which Senator PAUL has, which would recognize that life begins at conception.

The Title X Abortion Provider Prohibition Act, led by Senator BLACKBURN—one of our brand-new freshman Senators—would prohibit title X family planning funds. Those are taxpayer funds now being used to subsidize abortions.

You might be wondering how that is different from the one just talked about. Here is how. Every year, Planned Parenthood receives nearly \$60 million from the American taxpayer through title X family planning program. The program is intended to assist low-income women with family planning services. Unfortunately, this money is being used to subsidize massive organizations that engage in abortion activities, such as Planned Parenthood, and we need to stop that.

The Protect Funding for Women's Health Care Act, led by Senator ERNST, would prohibit all Federal funding of Planned Parenthood.

I also cosponsored the Child Interstate Abortion Notification Act, led by Senator RUBIO, which would prohibit individuals from taking minors across State lines where they have lax laws just to have an abortion, stopping their States from having the jurisdiction.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, I am cosponsoring Senator GRAHAM's Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act, which would prohibit abortions from being performed on unborn babies after 20 weeks, when we know they can feel pain. Only five countries allow abortions after 20 weeks, including the United States and North Korea, and that is unacceptable.

I wish to acknowledge a very important day. Religious Freedom Day is today. It is clear that our Founding Fathers recognized and enshrined the importance of religious liberty—one of our most precious and foundational religious freedoms, which allowed them to live their lives according to the teachings of the Bible.

I have long been a strong advocate of the basic human right to freely worship, and I am glad we can take a moment today to recognize that.

Anyway, all from speeches from 1992 and 1997—it is as true today as it was then. We are ready to start saving lives instead of taking the most vulnerable little lives, and we are ready now.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, a few minutes ago, I got off the phone with Jasmine Tool, who is an Oregonian living with an inoperable brain tumor. As the shutdown lingers on, I want to share her story because she has been bearing the unthinkable consequences of her illness.

I am going to start today by asking: How can a country as rich and good and strong as the United States of America let Jasmine Tool suffer this way?

She is a 34-year-old mother of two young children. She lives in Lake County, a rural community in south central Oregon. She is a public servant, an employee of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. She has been living with an inoperable brain tumor. The cancer has caused related debilitating conditions. She is in and out of hospital emergency rooms. Her digestive system is impaired. With the invaluable care provided by a home health worker, she takes in liquids and nutritional infusions through tubing that is plugged into her abdomen.

Because she lives in a rural area, her treatment can require long-distance travel. That is hard to deal with when you are suffering from the flu. Just imagine how hard it is with a brain tumor, a broken digestive tract, and feeding tubes attached to your body that prevent you from eating or drinking normally.

She is confronting this health challenge with remarkable bravery, and I

don't believe there is a single Member of the U.S. Senate who would wish Jasmine's struggle on their very worst enemy.

Then comes the government shutdown.

Jasmine was due to travel to Nevada this month for treatment related to her tumor, but last week, as she was prepared to go, she was informed that her health insurance had lapsed. Initially, she thought it might be—we all know with insurance—kind of a recent hiccup or recent problem, something that could be corrected quickly.

This week, she learned that it lapsed in October—October, months ago—and her insurance company told her that only her employer could fix it.

Jasmine's employer is shut down. Nobody is answering the phones. Right now, Jasmine Tool is suffering—this mother of two—and is unable to determine what caused the lapse in her coverage or what can be done to get it fixed.

The most immediate threat is this: Jasmine was told that her home health assistant cannot continue to help her if she doesn't have insurance. That means that within days this 30-year-old mom will not be able to get the infusions she needs to stay alive.

Now, if that isn't enough, Jasmine has been failed by the government on multiple occasions. Shortly after she went on medical leave in early 2017, she began the process of applying for disability—disability retirement. She worked with the appropriate human resources official to prepare the paperwork to send to the Office of Personnel Management. She thought, as anybody would, that the process was underway and she would hear back soon about the results of her application.

She just learned recently that the official who prepared the documents retired without sending them in. For a year and a half, while Jasmine fought cancer and was just hoping to get some positive news, her disability paperwork sat in an unused office—just sat there collecting dust.

She had to travel to that office against her doctor's orders to finalize the paperwork once more and prevent a loss of benefits. But the Office of Personnel Management—that is shut down too. Jasmine hasn't been able to learn where her benefits stand.

It is too cruel already that thousands and thousands of American workers are going without paychecks. This shutdown is making victims of those who do public service. But consider what it is doing to this young mother of two, a woman who is currently fighting for her life right now.

Because of this shutdown, she can't figure out how to restore her health insurance. She can't get the status of her disability application. She could be cut off—I just talked to her—from her nutritional supplements in a matter of days. That means Jasmine could starve. That is what she just told me.

So I have been talking to people who have suffered from health challenges

for a long time—director of the Grey Panthers about 7 years at home. I listened to Jasmine and I just said: How can it be that there is no outbreak of conscience here—no outbreak of conscience here in this Senate? How can a country as rich and powerful as ours fail Jasmine in such a shameful way?

Our country is going to spend \$3.5 trillion on healthcare—\$3.5 trillion on healthcare—this year. It is not a lack of money that is causing this nightmare for Jasmine Tool in rural Oregon.

With the government reopened, things would be different. Things would be very different for Jasmine. There would be somebody on the other end of the phone line to tell Jasmine what happened to her insurance, and because of the professionalism of those in these positions, I think they could tell her how to renew that insurance. There would be somebody to tell her what is happening with her disability application. Jasmine could bring back her home health aide and get the infusions she needs to survive.

So I am asking the Senate, how can this be allowed to continue? How can this be allowed to continue? The Senate passed a bipartisan government funding bill by voice vote just 2 weeks ago in the previous Congress.

I see Senator COLLINS. She has a longstanding interest in these healthcare issues. Senator SASSE also, I know from our conversations, has a heart and cares about people.

The House passed this legislation. The pathway out of this shutdown is right in front of us if the majority leader would decide when to bring up the legislation again, and we could do it tonight. Jasmine Tool could get the lifesaving healthcare that she needs, based on our conversation, by week's end, so she will not starve.

Otherwise, unless the majority leader calls it up, it seems to me the White House has no plan to end this shutdown. So I just think it has to end right here—right here in the U.S. Senate, where all of us say: This cannot go on any longer.

I just spoke to a young mom in rural Oregon who is in a fight for her life, a fight for her survival.

Colleagues who are here, I am sure Jasmine is not the only such case in America. Jasmine Tool—my guess is, there are plenty of others in communities across the country. Jasmine Tool does not have the luxury of time.

I am going to go back to my office. My staff here, my staff folks in Oregon—we are just going to be pulling out all the stops now because it really is a matter of hours to get Jasmine the help she needs. We do it recognizing that there is only one immediate solution: The shutdown must end, and it must end now.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, government shutdowns are never the answer. No matter how difficult the problem,

we should never resort to shutting down government. It harms too many innocent Federal employees—in this case, 800,000 Federal employees and their families—and it hampers the ability of American citizens to deal with their government.

At the same time, we do have a problem at our southern border. We do need to strengthen our border security and fix our broken immigration system. We need to address the issue of the Dreamers population, those young children brought to this country through no decision of their own who are now, often, young adults and who are going to school or working or otherwise serving in the military or contributing to our country.

The outlines of a compromise are evident, but in order to get there, I believe we need to assure the President that we will seriously consider his supplemental request for border security, a request that includes not just funding for additional physical barriers to supplement the more than 600 miles of physical barriers—walls, fences—that were built during two previous administrations but also includes \$800 million to meet the humanitarian needs of those who are crossing the border. It also includes additional funding for Border Patrol agents and for Immigration and Customs and Border Enforcement.

This simply cannot continue. We need to come together in good faith, reopen government for a limited period of time at least, and negotiate a package that will strengthen security on our borders, and that is what I would urge the President, his administration, and my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to do.

In the meantime, we also need to get back to the work of the Senate. That, too, is important, and today I rise to introduce a bill that would help Americans who are struggling with high healthcare expenses. The tax deduction for certain unreimbursed, out-of-pocket medical expenses affects many taxpayers significantly.

Regrettably, the threshold to claim this important tax deduction rose from 7.5 percent to 10 percent of income at the end of 2018, ending its value for many American taxpayers who simply will no longer qualify.

Today, I reintroduce legislation, which I have sponsored with my colleague Senator CANTWELL, that would reinstate and make permanent the lower income threshold for the medical expense deduction. Our bill, the Medical Expense Savings Act, would once again allow taxpayers to deduct unreimbursed healthcare costs that exceed 7.5 percent of their income.

For those who suffer from preexisting medical conditions, have chronic illnesses, experience unexpected sickness or injuries, or require long term care, out-of-pocket healthcare expenses can quickly become an unbearable burden. Too many Americans are forced to choose between medical services and

other equally necessary expenditures or they find themselves going deeply in debt.

The Affordable Care Act increased the income threshold for taxpayers to deduct their medical expenses from 7.5 percent to 10 percent. I very much opposed that provision of the ACA. For individuals under 65, the increase went into effect in 2013, but for those over 65, individuals would have been exposed to this higher threshold for the first time in 2017. Fortunately, we were able to remedy that for those over age 65.

When the ACA increase was phased in, many individuals struggling with serious health conditions saw their financial health worsen. For example, a 2016 study estimates that parents, including many with limited means, already provide nearly \$36 billion annually in uncompensated medical care at home to children with special healthcare needs, such as muscular dystrophy and cystic fibrosis.

A 2016 survey of cancer survivors showed that one-third go into debt, and of those, more than half incurred more than \$10,000 in unreimbursed expenses.

For seniors with significant long-term care needs, the deduction helps with the cost of home health or personal care services or, when needed, the cost of a long-term care facility, such as a nursing home. The deduction can also be used for other expenses that Medicare generally does not cover, including dental treatment, vision care, and certain transportation costs. Seniors can also use the medical expense deduction for expenses like wheelchair ramps, installing railings and support bars in bathrooms, and lowering or modifying kitchen cabinets and equipment and other home modifications made for medical reasons. These improvements can allow seniors with medical conditions or disabilities to live at home in the safety, comfort, and familiarity of their own home.

Some seniors find that their savings become rapidly depleted. They may spend down their financial resources in order to receive the services and support they require through the Medicaid Program. According to Genworth's 2018 Cost of Care Survey, home health aide services can cost \$50,000 annually, while a private room at a nursing home can cost nearly \$100,000. By retaining a lower threshold for the medical expense tax deduction, some families would be able to continue to pay these essential costs themselves.

Some erroneously believe that this deduction only benefits the wealthy, when, in fact, it is mainly lower and middle-income Americans who have been hurt. According to AARP, nearly 70 percent of taxpayers taking the deduction in 2014 reported income of \$75,000 or less, and nearly half reported incomes of \$50,000 or less. In Maine, according to AARP, almost 36,000 of our residents claimed this deduction in 2014, and nearly 19,000 of these individuals reported an income of \$50,000 or less.

That is why, during the tax reform debate in 2017, I introduced a successful amendment that rolled back the income threshold to 7.5 percent for taxpayers to deduct their medical expenses in 2017 and 2018. My amendment expanded upon the efforts of Senators ROB PORTMAN and SHERROD BROWN, who had worked to prevent this increase from going into effect for individuals over 65. As I said, my amendment was incorporated into the new tax law, and thus, for 2017 and for 2018, the threshold for deducting these out-of-pocket medical costs was 7.5 percent of income. But at the end of last year, that expired.

The AARP and 44 other consumer groups have strongly endorsed the effort undertaken by Senator CANTWELL and me, stating that “it provides important tax relief which helps offset the costs of acute and chronic medical conditions for older Americans, children, pregnant women, disabled individuals, and other adults as well as the costs associated with long-term care and assisted living.”

This is a step we can take to reinstate an expired tax deduction that will make a real difference to people who are struggling with high out-of-pocket medical costs.

I urge my colleagues to support our legislation that will help our families cope with high medical costs by making sure that this important deduction remains available for future tax years.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a letter from AARP dated January 15, 2019, endorsing the Collins-Cantwell legislation.

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

AARP,

Washington, January 15, 2019.

Hon. SUSAN COLLINS,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.
Hon. MARIA CANTWELL,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATORS COLLINS AND CANTWELL: On behalf of our members and all Americans age 50 and older, AARP is writing to thank you for introducing the Medical Expense Savings Act (S. 110), legislation to permanently extend the 7.5 percent income threshold for the medical expense deduction AARP, with its more than 38 million members in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. territories, represents individuals seeking financial stability while managing their health care and every effort should be made to keep the threshold for the deduction as low as possible to help protect those with high medical costs.

The medical expense deduction provides important tax relief that helps offset the cost of acute and chronic medical conditions for older Americans, children, and individuals with disabilities. For many, the medical expense deduction can help offset high out-of-pocket expenses—expenses that qualify include money paid for diagnosis, treatment, equipment, long-term care services, and long-term care insurance premiums.

The tax filers who claim the medical expense deduction have historically been age 50 or older and living with a chronic condition or illness. The average Medicare beneficiary spends about \$5,680 out of pocket on medical

care. The medical expense deduction makes health care more affordable for people with significant out-of-pocket expenses.

Furthermore, older Americans often face high costs for long-term services and supports—which are generally not covered by Medicare—as well as hospitalizations and prescription drugs. The median cost for a private room in a nursing home is over \$97,000 annually, while the median cost for even more cost-effective home-based care is still over \$30,000 per year (for 20 hours of care a week). In 2013, roughly 25.8 million beneficiaries in traditional Medicare spent at least 10 percent of their income on out-of-pocket health care expenses. Tax relief in this area can provide needed resources, especially important to middle income seniors with high long-term care and medical costs.

The medical expense deduction is a critical tool in managing health care cost for Americans with high out-of-pocket expenses. For these reasons, we are pleased to endorse this legislation and look forward to working on a bipartisan basis with you to enact this legislation into law. If you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact me or Jasmine Vasquez.

Sincerely,

JOYCE A. ROGERS,
Senior Vice President,
Government Affairs.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE THAT DISQUALIFYING A NOMINEE TO FEDERAL OFFICE ON THE BASIS OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS VIOLATES THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. SASSE. Mr. President, I rise today to offer a very basic resolution. I want Senators to unanimously reaffirm our oath of office to a Constitution that explicitly rejects religious bigotry.

It is useful to regularly remind ourselves that Americans are First Amendment people. Each of the five freedoms in the First Amendment—speech, press, religion, assembly, and protest—defines who we are. In America, we talk, we read, we argue, and we march and worship without fear. Because of this fundamental celebration of human dignity and human freedom, America is big enough to welcome a whole bunch of meaty and messy fights on everything from whom you vote for to whom you call God.

Just as the First Amendment prohibits the government from dictating anyone's religious beliefs, so, too, the Constitution explicitly rejects religious tests for Federal office. Our Constitution explicitly rejects religious tests for Federal office. This isn't a Republican belief; this isn't a Democratic belief; this is an American belief. But, tragically, over the last couple of years, some strange things have been happening in this body, and we seem to be forgetting some of those basic 101 American civics truths.

I want to tell you a story. Brian Buescher from my State was recently

nominated by the President to be a Federal judge for the District of Nebraska. This is an honor for him and his family, a celebration of his brain, work ethic, and his integrity. By the way, Brian is also Catholic and an active member of the Knights of Columbus.

The Knights of Columbus, for those of you who don't know, is the largest Catholic fraternal service organization in the world. The Knights' 1.6 million members of the organization raise millions of dollars for charity every year, and they contribute millions of hours of volunteer service.

Like a lot of guys back in Nebraska, Brian joined the Knights of Columbus to give back and to also be involved in a bunch of fish fries. This is not the stuff of headlines, but it is the stuff of basic neighborliness.

This is where the story gets weird because at Brian's confirmation hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee a few weeks ago, one of my colleagues on the Judiciary Committee called the Knights of Columbus “an extremist organization.” Huh? It got worse. Brian then got a letter from a Member of this body asking him if he would resign his membership in the Knights of Columbus if he were confirmed to the Federal bench to “avoid the appearance of bias.”

This is nuts. We are talking about the largest Catholic fraternal organization in the world being called an extremist organization and a nominee for the Federal bench being asked to resign from this organization so that he can serve without the appearance of bias. The clear implication here was that Brian's religious beliefs and his religious affiliations—in this case, an affiliation with a Catholic organization that invests countless hours and millions of dollars annually serving special needs kids—Brian was supposedly therefore potentially unfit for Federal service. This is the same kind of garbage that was thrown at a Member of this body, John F. Kennedy, 60 years ago when he was campaigning for the Presidency.

So today I have introduced a resolution—a 101-level, basic resolution—that simply reaffirms the belief of this body in American religious liberty. The resolution simply says that it is the sense of the Senate that disqualifying a nominee for the Federal bench or any Federal office on the basis of his Catholic beliefs or membership in the Knights of Columbus violates the no religious test clause of the Constitution. It seems obvious on its face.

In this resolution, we are simply reaffirming with President Kennedy and with countless other Americans across 230 years—Protestant, Catholic, Jew, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Agnostic, Atheist and others—we are simply reaffirming the idea that America is big enough for disagreements. Stated differently, we are saying that we believe the U.S. Government is not in the business of trying to resolve debates about

Heaven and Hell; rather, the business of the U.S. Government is to preserve peace and order so that you and your neighbors can precisely wrestle about things such as Heaven and Hell or sports loyalties or dietary preferences. America can handle principled pluralism and honest, serious debate.

This resolution ought to have the support of every single Member of this body. After all, each of us took an oath to defend this very idea when we first came here. This is what America is actually about.

The text of the resolution before us states:

Expressing the sense of the Senate that disqualifying a nominee to Federal office on the basis of membership in the Knights of Columbus violates the Constitution of the United States.

Whereas, throughout the history of the United States, the religious liberty protected by both the First Amendment and the No Religious Test Clause of the Constitution of the United States has been at the heart of the American experiment;

Whereas, in 1960, the presidential candidacy of John F. Kennedy was met with significant anti-Catholic bigotry;

Whereas, then-Senator Kennedy responded to the bigotry with these timeless words: "For while this year it may be a Catholic against whom the finger of suspicion is pointed, in other years it has been, and may someday be again, a Jew or a Quaker or a Unitarian or a Baptist. . . . Today I may be the victim, but tomorrow it may be you, until the whole fabric of our harmonious society is ripped at a time of great national peril.";

Whereas the Knights of Columbus (in this preamble referred to as the "Knights") constitute the largest Catholic fraternal service organization in the world;

Whereas the Knights have a proud tradition of standing against the forces of prejudice and oppression, such as the Ku Klux Klan and Nazi Germany;

Whereas the Knights are founded on the principles of charity, unity, fraternity, and patriotism; and

Whereas, in 2017, the Knights made more than \$185,000,000 in charitable contributions and volunteered more than 75,600,000 service hours: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that disqualifying a nominee to Federal office on the basis of membership in the Knights of Columbus violates clause 3 of article VI of the Constitution of the United States, which establishes that Senators "shall be bound by Oath or Affirmation, to support th[e] Constitution" and "no religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States."

Period. Full stop.

If a Senator has a problem with this resolution, they are probably in the wrong line of work because this is what America is. This is a super basic point. No religious tests. If someone has a problem with this resolution, what other parts of the Constitution are they against? Freedom of the press? Women's right to vote? Freedom of speech?

This isn't hard. There are no religious tests for serving on the Federal bench. We in this body should rebuke these anti-Catholic attacks.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the

consideration of S. Res. 19, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 19) expressing the sense of the Senate that disqualifying a nominee to Federal office on the basis of membership in the Knights of Columbus violates the Constitution of the United States.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. SASSE. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 19) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

Mr. SASSE. I thank the Members of this body for reaffirming basic constitutional 101 stuff today. I will report back to Brian Buescher, the nominee for the Federal Bench for the District of Nebraska, that he can ignore those questions he received about whether he would resign his membership in the Knights of Columbus before this body proceeds to vote on his confirmation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in 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.

REMEMBERING TOM WEISNER

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, Aurora, IL, is blessed with a long history of visionary leadership. The first public school district in my State was founded in Aurora in 1851. Aurora was a center of abolitionist activism before the Civil War.

In 1881, Aurora, of Chicago's northwest suburbs, became one of the first cities in America to line its streets with electric lights, and people began to call it a City of Lights—Paris on the Plains.

Sadly, last month, 2 days after Christmas, one of Aurora's brightest lights was extinguished. Former Aurora mayor Tom Weisner died after a long, brave, and public struggle with cancer. He was 69 years old.

Tom Weisner spent his earliest years in nearby Batavia, IL. He came to Aurora in the 1960s to attend Marmion Military Academy. It was during his time at Marmion that Tom met his future wife, Marilyn Hogan, who was then a student at Marmion's "sister school," Aurora Madonna High School.

What a great pair. As a young couple in the 1980s, Tom and Marilyn served together in the Peace Corps, helping rainforest dwellers in the highlands of Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands. They were married for 46 years.

After finishing their Peace Corps service in 1986, Tom and Marilyn returned to Aurora, and Tom was hired by the city's then-mayor, David Pierce, to be Aurora's director of emergency services. Over the next 18 years, he headed a number of city agencies, including the departments of motor vehicles, public property, and community services and organizational development.

"It was in his three terms as Aurora's mayor, from 2005 to 2016, that Tom Weisner left his greatest mark. His keen understanding of organizational efficiency, his commitment to public service, and his passion for children, for a vibrant, sustainable economy, for the arts and environment, and many other concerns helped to make Aurora a better place to live, own a business, and raise a family.

There is one statistic that says a lot about the kind of leader Tom Weisner was: In his 11 years as mayor, Aurora rehabilitated 11 bridges. At a time when government at all levels is struggling and often failing to maintain basic public infrastructure, Aurora repaired 11 bridges in 11 years. The strengthened bridges helped spur a rebirth of Aurora's downtown.

The Fox River is one of Aurora's greatest economic and cultural assets. Mayor Weisner authorized the city's first long-term plan for the river. He oversaw the removal of a dam on the Fox River, which opened up space for bike paths and new commercial ventures, and he helped organize a regional coalition of communities to improve the southern portion of the Fox River.

Tom Weisner championed new conservation and sustainability policies that made Aurora a greener city. At the same time, he supported changes that made it easier and faster to obtain city building and other permits.

He oversaw the construction of a new police headquarters, with new tools and more resources, and crime in Aurora decreased.

Children were a special concern of Mayor Weisner. Under his leadership, Aurora created a new program called SPARK to help children from birth to age 5 to prepare for kindergarten. SPARK stands for "Strong, Prepared, and Ready for Kindergarten." It is a collaboration involving Aurora's public schools and public library, the local United Way, and other groups. Nearly 5,500 children and their families have benefited from its services.

Next year, a new Paramount School of Performing Arts will open and offer young people a chance to study under some of the best teaching artists and professionals in the country. Tom helped raise money to make this happen.

The DuPage Mayors and Managers Conference honored Tom in 2015 as its Governmental Leader of the Year. The American Public Works Association awarded him its Exemplary Service Award in 2017, the year after Tom retired.

Tom Weisner's public achievements are even more remarkable, given the private pain that he and Marilyn endured during his years as mayor. In 2006, they lost the younger of their two sons, Thaddeus, to complications of cerebral palsy. The following year, Tom was first diagnosed with colon cancer. He continued to serve the people of Aurora through two surgeries and long bouts of treatment. When his cancer became public, he used his own health challenges as a public service reminder, urging people to get colonoscopies and early treatment.

In 2013, Aurora welcomed RiverEdge Park, a tremendous new waterfront open space and concert venue. Years earlier, when the Great Recession threatened to derail the project, Mayor Weisner helped ensure that it continued. In 2016, the Aurora city council voted unanimously to rename the park in Tom Weisner's honor. It is a fitting tribute to a leader who loved few things more than enjoying music in his city's parks, dressed in a brightly printed Tommy Bahama shirt and sandals.

Loretta and I offer our condolences to Tom's wife Marilyn, their son Anthony, their two granddaughters, and to Tom's many friends.

He ran the race, he fought the good fight. Now he is gone, but the light that Mayor Tom Weisner helped to bring to Aurora will continue to shine for a long while.

TRIBUTE TO RON POWELL

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I want to take a moment to thank a leader who has worked for nearly 60 years to create a strong economy built on pride, progressive values, and shared prosperity for all Americans.

Ronald Powell is the legendary president of Local 881 of the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union. He is also a vice president on the UFCW International Union and a vice president of the Illinois State AFL-CIO. He is retiring this month after an astonishing 58 years as a proud union member and leader.

You may not be familiar with the initials UFCW, but you almost surely benefit from the good work of its members. The men and women of the UFCW include grocery store workers and bakery clerks, hospital and nursing home employees—even barbers and beauty shop employees.

When Ron Powell joined the United Retail Workers union, a forerunner to Local 881, in 1961, the union had fewer than 5,000 members. Fifty-eight years later, UFCW Local 881 represents more than 34,000 working men and women in Illinois, northwest Indiana, and parts

of Missouri and Kentucky. The growth of Local 881 in an age when the labor movement is under relentless attack and many unions are losing members is a testament to Ron Powell's leadership and his commitment to dignity and fairness for working people.

Ron Powell became president of UFCW Local 881 in 1983, just 2 years after the local was chartered. Strength, vision, and compassion are the hallmarks of his service. Illinois' working families and our State's economy have both benefited from his progressive and innovative leadership.

In addition, under Ron Powell's leadership, Local 881 Ron has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, with the hope to find a cure. It has also raised funds for the Jackson Park Hospital in Chicago and for the Little City Foundation, which helps Chicago-area children with developmental disabilities.

My old friend, Senator Paul Wellstone, liked to sum up his definition of good economic policy by saying, "We all do better when we all do better."

Ron Powell believes in that same, proven plan for economic growth and justice. Working families in my, State of Illinois and far beyond are better off because of his decades of service on their behalf. I am honored to join those families in honoring Ron Powell on his distinguished career, and as a former member of UFCW's early unions, I wish him the very best as he begins the next chapter in his remarkable life.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS RULES OF PROCEDURE

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, in accordance with rule XXVI.2 of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I submit for publication in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD the rules of procedure for the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, as unanimously adopted by the committee on January 16, 2019.

I ask unanimous consent that the text of the Rules of Procedure be printed in the RECORD.

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

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS LAMAR ALEXANDER, CHAIRMAN RULES OF PROCEDURE (AS AGREED TO JANUARY 16, 2019)

Rule 1.—Subject to the provisions of rule XXVI, paragraph 5, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, regular meetings of the committee shall be held on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month, at 10:00 a.m., in room SD-430, Dirksen Senate Office Building. The chairman may, upon proper notice, call such additional meetings as he may deem necessary.

Rule 2.—The chairman of the committee or of a subcommittee, or if the chairman is not present, the ranking majority member present, shall preside at all meetings. The

chairman may designate the ranking minority member to preside at hearings of the committee or subcommittee.

Rule 3.—Meetings of the committee or a subcommittee, including meetings to conduct hearings, shall be open to the public except as otherwise specifically provided in subsections (b) and (d) of rule 26.5 of the Standing Rules of the Senate.

Rule 4.—(a) Subject to paragraph (b), one-third of the membership of the committee, actually present, shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of transacting business. Any quorum of the committee which is composed of less than a majority of the members of the committee shall include at least one member of the majority and one member of the minority.

(b) A majority of the members of a subcommittee, actually present, shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of transacting business: provided, no measure or matter shall be ordered reported unless such majority shall include at least one member of the minority who is a member of the subcommittee. If, at any subcommittee meeting, a measure or matter cannot be ordered reported because of the absence of such a minority member, the measure or matter shall lay over for a day. If the presence of a member of the minority is not then obtained, a majority of the members of the subcommittee, actually present, may order such measure or matter reported.

(c) No measure or matter shall be ordered reported from the committee or a subcommittee unless a majority of the committee or subcommittee is physically present.

Rule 5.—With the approval of the chairman of the committee or subcommittee, one member thereof may conduct public hearings other than taking sworn testimony.

Rule 6.—Proxy voting shall be allowed on all measures and matters before the committee or a subcommittee if the absent member has been informed of the matter on which he is being recorded and has affirmatively requested that he be so recorded. While proxies may be voted on a motion to report a measure or matter from the committee, such a motion shall also require the concurrence of a majority of the members who are actually present at the time such action is taken.

The committee may poll any matters of committee business as a matter of unanimous consent; provided that every member is polled and every poll consists of the following two questions:

(1) Do you agree or disagree to poll the proposal; and

(2) Do you favor or oppose the proposal.

Rule 7.—There shall be prepared and kept a complete transcript or electronic recording adequate to fully record the proceedings of each committee or subcommittee meeting or conference whether or not such meetings or any part thereof is closed pursuant to the specific provisions of subsections (b) and (d) of rule 26.5 of the Standing Rules of the Senate, unless a majority of said members vote to forgo such a record. Such records shall contain the vote cast by each member of the committee or subcommittee on any question on which a "yea and nay" vote is demanded, and shall be available for inspection by any committee member. The clerk of the committee, or the clerk's designee, shall have the responsibility to make appropriate arrangements to implement this rule.

Rule 8.—The committee and each subcommittee shall undertake, consistent with the provisions of rule XXVI, paragraph 4, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, to issue public announcement of any hearing or executive session it intends to hold at least one week prior to the commencement of such

hearing or executive session. In the case of an executive session, the text of any bill or joint resolution to be considered must be provided to the chairman for prompt electronic distribution to the members of the committee.

Rule 9.—The committee or a subcommittee shall require all witnesses heard before it to file written statements of their proposed testimony at least 24 hours before a hearing, unless the chairman and the ranking minority member determine that there is good cause for failure to so file, and to limit their oral presentation to brief summaries of their arguments. Testimony may be filed electronically. The presiding officer at any hearing is authorized to limit the time of each witness appearing before the committee or a subcommittee. The committee or a subcommittee shall, as far as practicable, utilize testimony previously taken on bills and measures similar to those before it for consideration.

Rule 10.—Should a subcommittee fail to report back to the full committee on any measure within a reasonable time, the chairman may withdraw the measure from such subcommittee and report that fact to the full committee for further disposition.

Rule 11.—No subcommittee may schedule a meeting or hearing at a time designated for a hearing or meeting of the full committee. No more than one subcommittee executive meeting may be held at the same time.

Rule 12.—It shall be the duty of the chairman in accordance with section 133(c) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946, as amended, to report or cause to be reported to the Senate, any measure or recommendation approved by the committee and to take or cause to be taken, necessary steps to bring the matter to a vote in the Senate.

Rule 13.—Whenever a meeting of the committee or subcommittee is closed pursuant to the provisions of subsection (b) or (d) of rule 26.5 of the Standing Rules of the Senate, no person other than members of the committee, members of the staff of the committee, and designated assistants to members of the committee shall be permitted to attend such closed session, except by special dispensation of the committee or subcommittee or the chairman thereof.

Rule 14.—The chairman of the committee or a subcommittee shall be empowered to adjourn any meeting of the committee or a subcommittee if a quorum is not present within fifteen minutes of the time schedule for such meeting.

Rule 15.—Whenever a bill or joint resolution shall be before the committee or a subcommittee for final consideration, the clerk shall distribute to each member of the committee or subcommittee a document, prepared by the sponsor of the bill or joint resolution. If the bill or joint resolution has no underlying statutory language, the document shall consist of a detailed summary of the purpose and impact of each section. If the bill or joint resolution repeals or amends any statute or part thereof, the document shall consist of a detailed summary of the underlying statute and the proposed changes in each section of the underlying law and either a print of the statute or the part or section thereof to be amended or replaced showing by stricken-through type, the part or parts to be omitted and, in italics, the matter proposed to be added, along with a summary of the proposed changes; or a side-by-side document showing a comparison of current law, the proposed legislative changes, and a detailed description of the proposed changes.

Rule 16.—An appropriate opportunity shall be given the minority to examine the proposed text of committee reports prior to their filing or publication. In the event there

are supplemental, minority, or additional views, an appropriate opportunity shall be given the majority to examine the proposed text prior to filing or publication. Unless the chairman and ranking minority member agree on a shorter period of time, the minority shall have no fewer than three business days to prepare supplemental, minority or additional views for inclusion in a committee report from the time the majority makes the proposed text of the committee report available to the minority.

Rule 17.—(a) The committee, or any subcommittee, may issue subpoenas, or hold hearings to take sworn testimony or hear subpoenaed witnesses, only if such investigative activity has been authorized by majority vote of the committee.

(b) For the purpose of holding a hearing to take sworn testimony or hear subpoenaed witnesses, three members of the committee or subcommittee shall constitute a quorum: provided, with the concurrence of the chairman and ranking minority member of the committee or subcommittee, a single member may hear subpoenaed witnesses or take sworn testimony.

(c) The committee may, by a majority vote, delegate the authority to issue subpoenas to the chairman of the committee or a subcommittee, or to any member designated by such chairman. Prior to the issuance of each subpoena, the ranking minority member of the committee or subcommittee, and any other member so requesting, shall be notified regarding the identity of the person to whom it will be issued and the nature of the information sought and its relationship to the authorized investigative activity, except where the chairman of the committee or subcommittee, in consultation with the ranking minority member, determines that such notice would unduly impede the investigation. All information obtained pursuant to such investigative activity shall be made available as promptly as possible to each member of the committee requesting same, or to any assistant to a member of the committee designated by such member in writing, but the use of any such information is subject to restrictions imposed by the rules of the Senate. Such information, to the extent that it is relevant to the investigation shall, if requested by a member, be summarized in writing as soon as practicable. Upon the request of any member, the chairman of the committee or subcommittee shall call an executive session to discuss such investigative activity or the issuance of any subpoena in connection therewith.

(d) Any witness summoned to testify at a hearing, or any witness giving sworn testimony, may be accompanied by counsel of his own choosing who shall be permitted, while the witness is testifying, to advise him of his legal rights.

(e) No confidential testimony taken or confidential material presented in an executive hearing, or any report of the proceedings of such an executive hearing, shall be made public, either in whole or in part or by way of summary, unless authorized by a majority of the members of the committee or subcommittee.

Rule 18.—Presidential nominees shall submit a statement of their background and financial interests, including the financial interests of their spouse and children living in their household, on a form approved by the committee which shall be sworn to as to its completeness and accuracy. The committee form shall be in two parts—

(I) information relating to employment, education and background of the nominee relating to the position to which the individual is nominated, and which is to be made public; and,

(II) information relating to financial and other background of the nominee, to be made public when the committee determines that such information bears directly on the nominee's qualifications to hold the position to which the individual is nominated.

Information relating to background and financial interests (parts I and II) shall not be required of nominees for less than full-time appointments to councils, commissions or boards when the committee determines that some or all of the information is not relevant to the nature of the position. Information relating to other background and financial interests (part II) shall not be required of any nominee when the committee determines that it is not relevant to the nature of the position.

Committee action on a nomination, including hearings or meetings to consider a motion to recommend confirmation, shall not be initiated until at least five days after the nominee submits the form required by this rule unless the chairman, with the concurrence of the ranking minority member, waives this waiting period.

Rule 19.—Subject to statutory requirements imposed on the committee with respect to procedure, the rules of the committee may be changed, modified, amended or suspended at any time; provided, not less than a majority of the entire membership so determine at a regular meeting with due notice, or at a meeting specifically called for that purpose.

Rule 20.—When the ratio of members on the committee is even, the term "majority" as used in the committee's rules and guidelines shall refer to the party of the chairman for purposes of party identification. Numerical requirements for quorums, votes and the like shall be unaffected.

Rule 21.—First degree amendments must be filed with the chairman at least 24 hours before an executive session. The chairman shall promptly distribute all filed amendments electronically to the members of the committee. The chairman may modify the filing requirements to meet special circumstances with the concurrence of the ranking minority member.

Rule 22.—In addition to the foregoing, the proceedings of the committee shall be governed by the Standing Rules of the Senate and the provisions of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946, as amended.

GUIDELINES OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS WITH RESPECT TO HEARINGS, MARKUP SESSIONS, AND RELATED MATTERS

HEARINGS

Section 133A(a) of the Legislative Reorganization Act requires each committee of the Senate to publicly announce the date, place, and subject matter of any hearing at least one week prior to the commencement of such hearing.

The spirit of this requirement is to assure adequate notice to the public and other Members of the Senate as to the time and subject matter of proposed hearings. In the spirit of section 133A(a) and in order to assure that members of the committee are themselves fully informed and involved in the development of hearings:

1. Public notice of the date, place, and subject matter of each committee or subcommittee hearing should be inserted in the Congressional Record seven days prior to the commencement of such hearing.

2. At least seven days prior to public notice of each committee or subcommittee hearing, the majority should provide notice to the minority of the time, place and specific subject matter of such hearing.

3. At least three days prior to the date of such hearing, the committee or subcommittee should provide to each member a

list of witnesses who have been or are proposed to be invited to appear.

4. The committee and its subcommittee should, to the maximum feasible extent, enforce the provisions of rule 9 of the committee rules as it relates to the submission of written statements of witnesses twenty-four hours in advance of a hearing.

Witnesses will be urged to submit testimony even earlier whenever possible. When statements are received in advance of a hearing, the committee or subcommittee (as appropriate) should distribute copies of such statements to each of its members. Witness testimony may be submitted and distributed electronically.

EXECUTIVE SESSIONS FOR THE PURPOSE OF MARKING UP BILLS

In order to expedite the process of marking up bills and to assist each member of the committee so that there may be full and fair consideration of each bill which the committee or a subcommittee is marking up the following procedures should be followed:

1. Seven days prior to the proposed date for an executive session for the purpose of marking up bills the committee or subcommittee (as appropriate) should provide written notice to each of its members as to the time, place, and specific subject matter of such session, including an agenda listing each bill or other matters to be considered and including:

(a) a copy of each bill, joint resolution, or other legislative matter (or committee print thereof) to be considered at such executive session; and

(b) a copy of a summary of the provisions of each bill, joint resolution, or other legislative matter to be considered at such executive session including, whenever possible, an explanation of changes to existing law proposed to be made.

2. Insofar as practical, prior to the scheduled date for an executive session for the purpose of marking up bills, the committee or a subcommittee (as appropriate) should provide each member with a copy of the printed record or a summary of any hearings conducted by the committee or a subcommittee with respect to each bill, joint resolution, or other legislative matter to be considered at such executive session.

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION RULES OF PROCEDURE

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation has adopted rules governing its procedures for the 116th Congress. Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 2, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that the accompanying rules for the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be printed in the Record.

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

RULES OF THE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION 116TH CONGRESS

RULE I—MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE

1. IN GENERAL.—The regular meeting dates of the Committee shall be the first and third Wednesdays of each month. Additional meetings may be called by the Chairman as the Chairman may deem necessary, or pursuant to the provisions of paragraph 3 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate.

2. OPEN MEETINGS.—Meetings of the Committee, or any subcommittee, including

meetings to conduct hearings, shall be open to the public, except that a meeting or series of meetings by the Committee, or any subcommittee, on the same subject for a period of no more than 14 calendar days may be closed to the public on a motion made and seconded to go into closed session to discuss only whether the matters enumerated in subparagraphs (A) through (F) would require the meeting to be closed, followed immediately by a record vote in open session by a majority of the members of the Committee, or any subcommittee, when it is determined that the matter to be discussed or the testimony to be taken at such meeting or meetings—

(A) will disclose matters necessary to be kept secret in the interests of national defense or the confidential conduct of the foreign relations of the United States;

(B) will relate solely to matters of Committee staff personnel or internal staff management or procedure;

(C) will tend to charge an individual with crime or misconduct, to disgrace or injure the professional standing of an individual, or otherwise to expose an individual to public contempt or obloquy, or will represent a clearly unwarranted invasion of the privacy of an individual;

(D) will disclose the identity of any informer or law enforcement agent or will disclose any information relating to the investigation or prosecution of a criminal offense that is required to be kept secret in the interest of effective law enforcement;

(E) will disclose information relating to the trade secrets of, or financial or commercial information pertaining specifically to, a given person if—

(1) an Act of Congress requires the information to be kept confidential by Government officers and employees; or

(2) the information has been obtained by the Government on a confidential basis, other than through an application by such person for a specific Government financial or other benefit, and is required to be kept secret in order to prevent undue injury to the competitive position of such person; or

(F) may divulge matters required to be kept confidential under other provisions of law or Government regulations.

3. STATEMENTS.—Each witness who is to appear before the Committee or any subcommittee shall file with the Committee, at least 24 hours in advance of the hearing, a written statement of the witness's testimony in as many copies as the Chairman of the Committee or subcommittee prescribes. In the event a witness fails to file a timely written statement in accordance with this rule, the Chairman of the Committee or subcommittee, as applicable, may permit the witness to testify, or deny the witness the privilege of testifying before the Committee, or permit the witness to testify in response to questions from members without the benefit of giving an opening statement.

4. FIELD HEARINGS.—Field hearings of the full Committee, and any subcommittee thereof, shall be scheduled only when authorized by the Chairman and ranking minority member of the full Committee.

RULE II—QUORUMS

1. BILLS, RESOLUTIONS, AND NOMINATIONS.—A majority of the members, which includes at least 1 minority member, shall constitute a quorum for official action of the Committee when reporting a bill, resolution, or nomination. Proxies may not be counted in making a quorum for purposes of this paragraph.

2. OTHER BUSINESS.—One-third of the entire membership of the Committee shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of all business as may be considered by the Com-

mittee, except for the reporting of a bill, resolution, or nomination or authorizing a subpoena. Proxies may not be counted in making a quorum for purposes of this paragraph.

3. TAKING TESTIMONY.—For the purpose of taking sworn testimony a quorum of the Committee and each subcommittee thereof, now or hereafter appointed, shall consist of 1 member of the Committee.

RULE III—PROXIES

When a record vote is taken in the Committee on any bill, resolution, amendment, or any other question, the required quorum being present, a member who is unable to attend the meeting may submit his or her vote by proxy, in writing or through personal instructions.

RULE IV—CONSIDERATION OF BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

IT SHALL NOT BE IN ORDER DURING A MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE TO MOVE TO PROCEED TO THE CONSIDERATION OF ANY BILL OR RESOLUTION UNLESS THE BILL OR RESOLUTION HAS BEEN FILED WITH THE CLERK OF THE COMMITTEE NOT LESS THAN 48 HOURS IN ADVANCE OF THE COMMITTEE MEETING, IN AS MANY COPIES AS THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE PRESCRIBES. THIS RULE MAY BE WAIVED WITH THE CONCURRENCE OF THE CHAIRMAN AND THE RANKING MINORITY MEMBER OF THE FULL COMMITTEE.

RULE V—SUBPOENAS; COUNSEL; RECORD

1. SUBPOENAS.—The Chairman, with the approval of the ranking minority member of the Committee, may subpoena the attendance of witnesses for hearings and the production of memoranda, documents, records, or any other materials. The Chairman may subpoena such attendance of witnesses or production of materials without the approval of the ranking minority member if the Chairman or a member of the Committee staff designated by the Chairman has not received notification from the ranking minority member or a member of the Committee staff designated by the ranking minority member of disapproval of the subpoena within 72 hours, excluding Saturdays and Sundays, of being notified of the subpoena. If a subpoena is disapproved by the ranking minority member as provided in this paragraph, the subpoena may be authorized by vote of the Members of the Committee, the quorum required by paragraph 1 of rule II being present. When the Committee or Chairman authorizes a subpoena, it shall be issued upon the signature of the Chairman or any other Member of the Committee designated by the Chairman. At the direction of the Chairman, with notification to the ranking minority member of not less than 72 hours, the staff is authorized to take depositions from witnesses. The ranking minority member, or a member of the Committee staff designated by the ranking minority member, shall be given the opportunity to attend and participate in the taking of any deposition. Witnesses at depositions shall be examined upon oath administered by an individual authorized by law to administer oaths, or administered by any member of the Committee if one is present.

2. COUNSEL.—Witnesses may be accompanied at a public or executive hearing, or the taking of a deposition, by counsel to advise them of their rights. Counsel retained by any witness and accompanying such witness shall be permitted to be present during the testimony of the witness at any public or executive hearing, or the taking of a deposition, to advise the witness, while the witness is testifying, of the witness's legal rights. In the case of any witness who is an officer or employee of the government, or of a corporation or association, the Chairman may rule that representation by counsel from the government, corporation, or association or by

counsel representing other witnesses, creates a conflict of interest, and that the witness may only be represented during testimony before the Committee by personal counsel not from the government, corporation, or association or by personal counsel not representing other witnesses. This paragraph shall not be construed to excuse a witness from testifying in the event the witness's counsel is ejected for conducting himself or herself in such manner as to prevent, impede, disrupt, obstruct, or interfere with the orderly administration of a hearing or the taking of a deposition. This paragraph may not be construed as authorizing counsel to coach the witness or to answer for the witness. The failure of any witness to secure counsel shall not excuse the witness from complying with a subpoena.

3. RECORD.—An accurate electronic or stenographic record shall be kept of the testimony of all witnesses in executive and public hearings and depositions. If testimony given by deposition is transcribed, the individual administering the oath shall certify on the transcript that the witness was duly sworn in his or her presence and the transcriber shall certify that the transcript is a true record of the testimony. The transcript with these certifications shall be filed with the chief clerk of the Committee. The record of a witness's testimony, whether in public or executive session or in a deposition, shall be made available for inspection by the witness or the witness's counsel under Committee supervision. A copy of any testimony given in public session, or that part of the testimony given by the witness in executive session or deposition and subsequently quoted or made part of the record in a public session, shall be provided to that witness at the witness's expense if so requested. Upon inspecting the transcript, within a time limit set by the Clerk of the Committee, a witness may request changes in the transcript to correct errors of transcription and grammatical errors. The witness may also bring to the attention of the Committee errors of fact in the witness's testimony by submitting a sworn statement about those facts with a request that it be attached to the transcript. The Chairman or a member of the Committee staff designated by the Chairman shall rule on such requests.

RULE VI—BROADCASTING OF HEARINGS

Public hearings of the full Committee, or any subcommittee thereof, shall be televised or broadcast only when authorized by the Chairman and the ranking minority member of the full Committee.

RULE VII—SUBCOMMITTEES

1. HEARINGS.—Any member of the Committee may sit with any subcommittee during its hearings.

2. CHANGE OF CHAIRMANSHIP.—Subcommittees shall be considered de novo whenever there is a change in the chairmanship, and seniority on the particular subcommittee shall not necessarily apply.

S. RES. 19

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, S. Res. 19 is unnecessary because no religious test is being applied to nominees for Federal office. If my colleague, the junior Senator from Nebraska, wants to embrace the alt-right's position by offering this resolution, that is his business.

Rather than passing a resolution to address a problem that doesn't exist, we should focus on something real, like ending this totally unnecessary, unjustified shutdown that is harming millions of Americans.

I ask unanimous consent for, statements supporting the separation of church and state from Catholics for Choice, People for the American Way, and several Hawaii residents.

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

CATHOLICS FOR CHOICE,

Washington, DC, January 4, 2019.

Hon. MAZIE HIRONO,
U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR HIRONO: Catholics for Choice represents the majority of Catholics across the United States that believes that each woman should be free to follow her conscience in moral matters regarding reproductive health.

We were very disappointed to see your colleagues, Senators Hirono and Harris, attacked for duly questioning district court nominee Brian Buescher about his ability to keep judicial impartiality due to his membership in the hardline Catholic organization, Knights of Columbus. They had every reason to raise these questions due to the Knights' troubling record.

Today's Knights of Columbus have strayed far from their civic roots as a philanthropic organization. Our enclosed report, The Knights of Columbus: Crusaders for Discrimination, provides a detailed look at how they have brazenly used their 501c8 status to pour money, effort and influence into political contests and policy debates.

As our investigation showed, they have spent more than \$10 million since 2014 in direct antichoice and anti-LGBT lobbying, like their petition in Albuquerque to try to ban later abortion. The Knights' organization uses a large portion of its time and effort funding ultrasound equipment for fake health centers that actively deceive and pressure women to keep unwanted pregnancies. The insurance arm of the Knights ranks in the top one percent of the North American insurance market, yet pays no federal and nearly no state or local taxes. Make no mistake: they do not represent what the majority of Catholics believe on issues of reproductive health or the separation of church and state.

We believe this and other attacks on Senators fulfilling their obligations to question judicial nominees are just the latest tactic in shifting the conversation about religious liberty toward making special accommodations to those who wish to refuse, impede and impose rather than to protect the true religious liberty of all, no matter their beliefs. As Religious Freedom Day nears—and we usher in a historic new Congress that embodies our country's religious plurality—we must remember that our society allows for free religious exercise, but also protects against religious influence in politics.

Catholics for Choice works at the intersection of religious liberty, reproductive freedom and freedom of conscience for all. We are at your and your staff's disposal as the committee continues to protect fundamental freedoms through its work. Should you have any questions, please contact me at gnorthern@catholicsforchoice.org or 202-986-6093.

Sincerely,

GLENN NORTHERN,
Domestic Program Director.

[From Honolulu Civil Beat, Jan. 14, 2019]

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

(By Lisa H. Gibson, Ray Markey, Maya Maxym)

U.S. Sen. Mazie Hirono, Democrat of Hawaii, is under attack.

She stands for women, both as a champion of a woman's right to choose and as a defender of those who have been sexually assaulted; she fought Trump and the Republicans in defense of the Affordable Care Act, against the Muslim ban and the Kavanaugh Supreme Court nomination. She is being attacked because she has become one of the most eloquent and effective voices of the values Indivisible Hawaii cherishes.

The attack comes not only from rightwing ideologues, it now comes from Hawaii's own member of the House of Representatives, Tulsi Gabbard, a Democrat who on Friday announced her candidacy for the presidency. Her article in The Hill accuses Democratic Party members of the Senate Judiciary Committee of "fomenting religious bigotry" and "weaponizing religion" during their questioning of nominee Brian Buescher to the U.S. District Court in Nebraska.

This thinly veiled attack on Sen. Hirono, who sits on the Senate Judiciary Committee which is responsible for approving judicial nominees, is a ludicrous assertion and a stunning act of hypocrisy on the part of Rep. Gabbard. The assertion is that Hirono is a religious bigot because of questions designed to reveal a nominee's clear record of antichoice activism as a barrier to his appropriateness for a judicial appointment.

This attack is not only inaccurate, it exposes Gabbard's self-serving attempt to project herself as a defender of religious freedom—a position which is inconsistent with her own actions. Rather than align herself with India's overt right-wing Hindu Nationalists or Syria's Assad, we suggest Rep. Gabbard follow Sen. Hirono as a model of both authentic patriotic behavior and defense of civil rights.

Members of Indivisible Hawaii and other groups have visited Sen. Hirono's offices, as well as those of the other members of Hawaii's Congressional delegation, dozens of times since President Donald Trump's Jan. 20, 2017, inauguration. We know firsthand that she has championed our beliefs because we have talked with her and her staff many times. We have followed her votes, watched her on television, read her Facebook Page and emails, and attended her town halls.

Sen. Hirono immigrated to Hawaii as a child and understands from personal experience the challenges faced by immigrants. She is the first Buddhist to serve in the Senate. Her years of public service establish a record which, in particular, show her to be a defender of religious tolerance as well as the values of democratic government and the rule of law upon which our country depends.

We witnessed what Gabbard did at, during, and after the Democratic Party Convention in 2016 to attack not Trump or the Republicans, but former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and the Democratic Party. Since Trump's election Gabbard's silence in response to Trump's efforts to dismantle the institutions of our democracy has been deafening and stands in stark contrast to Sen. Hirono's forthright, clear and courageous actions to fight the racist, misogynist, and authoritarian actions of Trump and the GOP. The Hill article mimics her past behavior—why does she choose to do this again?

As we fight to preserve our democracy unity is more important than ever. An attack on Sen. Mazie Hirono as a champion of progressive values in the Democratic Party is an attack on all of us who want to take our country back. We must stand with Sen. Hirono and other champions of democracy to be successful.

[Jan. 8, 2019]

PEOPLE FOR THE AMERICAN WAY: CONSERVATIVES' DISHONEST USE OF 'RELIGIOUS BIGOTRY' TO DEFLECT ATTENTION FROM NOMINEE'S DISTURBING RECORDS

(By Rev. Leslie Watson Malachi)

Happy New Year! Well, for most of us it should be—unless you are fighting to protect our courts. New year, same old tactic by conservatives, who are hoping to insulate narrow-minded judicial nominees from scrutiny by smearing people who ask critical questions about their records and rhetoric.

This dishonest “religious bigotry” strategy has been around as long as the organized effort to shift the federal judiciary to conservatism and reverse decades of precedent that protect Americans' legal and constitutional rights. In the recent past, for example, these groups have charged some Catholic senators with wanting to keep Catholics off the federal bench.

The latest smear is being pushed by the notoriously right-wing editorial board of the Wall Street Journal, which has run an attack on Senators Kamala Harris and Mazie Hirono. The Journal's editorial is an over-the-top response to written questions submitted by Sens. Harris and Hirono to federal court nominee Brian Buescher about his commitment to upholding legal equality for LGBTQ Americans and American women's legal right to abortion.

In their questions, the senators noted Buescher's long-time membership in the Knights of Columbus, a Catholic fraternal organization that does much laudable charitable work, but which was also a top funder of anti-marriage-equality efforts and supports restrictions on federal family-planning funds. Before the 2016 election, the group's influential leader declared that Catholics cannot vote for candidates who support abortion rights.

Given these facts, the senators asked Buescher whether he could assure litigants that he would deal with these issues fairly and impartially as a federal judge. (Buescher's answer stated that while he had run for political office as a “pro-life candidate,” as a judge he would “faithfully apply all United States Supreme Court and Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals precedent on all issues, including *Roe v. Wade*” and *Obergefell*.)

The Journal's editorial board responded to the senators' reasonable line of questioning with outrage and horror. By seeking to protect LGBTQ equality and reproductive rights, and asking questions about the Knights' public policy positions, the editorial implied, Sens. Harris and Hirono were resurrecting the kind of anti-Catholic bigotry directed at John F. Kennedy and earlier presidential candidate Al Smith. The editorial said the questions were part of a “distressing pattern” that seeks to “banish” religious people from public life—the kind of false charge Religious Right groups have often leveled to deflect criticism of their political agendas or tactics.

This is not only absurd, but an insult to American voters.

The Journal also gave space to conservative African American pastor Eugene Rivers to repeat the charge, saying that the senators' questions were “about silencing believers of any kind whose views differ from the progressive view on social issues.” He unbelievably suggested that opponents of Buescher's confirmation would be voting to deny his chance to be a public servant based on his baptism in the Catholic Church.

These inflammatory charges are designed to create distraction. It is not only acceptable, but necessary for senators to explore whether a nominee for a powerful lifetime

job as a federal judge will uphold every Americans' rights. In the case of Buescher this is doubtful, given that as an unsuccessful candidate for attorney general of Nebraska, he said he did not believe LGBT Americans should be protected by anti-discrimination laws the way people are protected from racial or ethnic discrimination. It was also at this time that he declared that he supported the “complete reversal” of *Roe v. Wade*. Buescher has a long record as a partisan ideological warrior, an additional reason cited by the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights in opposing his confirmation.

Religious freedom is a core constitutional principle, and as the Constitution makes clear, there must be no religious test for public office. We rely on the federal courts to enforce all Americans' constitutional rights. That means judges, regardless of their religious or personal beliefs, must be counted on to uphold Americans' legal protections. Subsequently, a person's political positions or legal ideology grounded in their faith does not make those legal and political stances off-limits to questioning or criticism.

With Senate Republicans rubber-stamping even President Trump's most extreme and unqualified nominees, right-wing intimidation tactics must not prevent senators from fulfilling their constitutional obligation to ensure that lifetime federal judges are committed to protecting the rights of all Americans.

Thank you, Senators Harris and Hirono! It's a new year, and it's time to retire this old dishonest tactic of silencing and attempts to shame. Let the questions be asked and let them be answered.

[From the Honolulu Star-Advertiser, Jan. 6, 2019]

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

(By Gary Edwards)

With regard to Donna L. Ching's letter (“Leave religion out in vetting qualifications,” *Star-Advertiser*, Dec. 27): While I agree that a person's religious affiliation, alone, should not be a means of exclusion for public office, I do not agree that religion should be “left out of the conversation.”

One of the real concerns in vetting candidates for public office is how they will apply their personal beliefs, including their religion, to the role they seek to fill. And while freedom of religion is a vital right, so is freedom from religion.

Significant damage can be done to our society by those who would seek to impose their religious beliefs and values on others through the force of law. These beliefs and values do not always align with the principles of our Constitution, and laws based on them would deny others their freedom and fair treatment.

I'm glad U.S. Sens. Mazie Hirono and Kamala Harris are probing these issues. Kaneohe.

[From the Wall Street Journal, Jan. 15, 2019]

SENATORS WERE RIGHT TO ASK THOSE QUESTIONS ON RELIGION

(By Michael Keegan)

Regarding your editorial “Kamala Harris's Dark Knights” (Jan. 3): Sens. Harris and Mazie Hirono's questions for Brian Buescher were focused on appropriate and important questions, namely whether the nominee could be counted on as a federal judge to recognize and protect the legal equality of LGBTQ Americans and the right of American women to have access to safe and legal abortion.

You charge that such questioning is about trying to “banish” people from public life for their religious beliefs and associations. In re-

ality, protecting the legal rights of all Americans of all faiths by ensuring that nominees for powerful lifetime seats on America's federal courts are committed to enforcing them is one of senators' most important responsibilities, one that the current Republican majority has abandoned in its rush to achieve ideological domination of the courts.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO KORI KELLER

● Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, this week I have the honor of recognizing Kori Keller of Yellowstone County for her impact on the Billings community, through her work at the Ramsey Keller Memorial.

Mrs. Keller, a Billings native, has dedicated her time to aiding parents who have undergone the hardship of losing a child too young. Mrs. Keller and her husband lost their precious daughter Ramsey soon after she was born.

As a way of honoring their daughter, Kori and her husband founded the Ramsey Keller Memorial. The Ramsey Keller Memorial is dedicated to helping families who have lost children under the age of 1 year old. The foundation raises money through both an annual race and a pink-tie affair to pay for the funerals of Montana infants that have passed away before their first birthday. Since then, Kori has been an advocate and provided comfort for numerous parents going through the same hardships she experienced.

I congratulate Kori on her growing role in the State of Montana. She has been a constant source of hope and aid to families going through similar hardships she has endured. I look forward to seeing the success of the Ramsey Keller Memorial, as it continues to pour into Montana family's lives.●

REMEMBERING EUCARIO BERMUDEZ

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I would like to honor the life and legacy of Colombian-American journalist and broadcaster, Eucario Bermudez. Bermudez, a beloved south Florida radio legend amongst the Hispanic community, died earlier this month after years of service to the Hispanic community in the State of Florida. Today I pay tribute to Eucario's life, with immense gratitude for his work and dedication.●

RECOGNIZING INDIAN PASS RAW BAR

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I would like to highlight the hard work and unique entrepreneurial spirit that can be found across my home State of Florida. As chairman of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, each week I recognize a small business that exemplifies hard work and dedication toward the local

community. Today, it is my distinct privilege to honor Indian Pass Raw Bar from Port St. Joe in Gulf County, FL, as the Senate Small Business of the Week.

Indian Pass Raw Bar has deep historical ties to the Florida Panhandle along the coastline of the Gulf of Mexico, tracing its roots to a commissary store founded in 1903, for workers in the then-booming turpentine industry. It is located in the same building as the original Indian Pass Trading Post that opened in 1929, where Mrs. Gypsy McNeil established her talent with her delicious seafood gumbo.

In 1986, Hurricane Kate struck the Florida Panhandle and destroyed the Indian Pass Trading Post. The McNeil family showed resilience after the storm and recovered by converting the general store into an oyster bar, setting the stage for business to skyrocket.

Twenty-three miles from Apalachicola, FL, Indian Pass Raw Bar serves the panhandle's world-famous oysters and iconic seafood dishes, such as steamed shrimp and crab legs. Drinks are served on an honor system where customers keep their tabs to turn in at checkout, treating customers like trusted friends. It has become a renowned location for Floridians and tourists alike to enjoy time with family. Southern Living magazine once described Indian Pass Raw Bar as "quite possibly the best seafood shack in existence." It has also received praise from the Garden & Gun magazine as one of Florida's "Hidden Hotspots." Indian Pass Raw Bar's success continued with the opening of a second location in June 2017, in downtown Port St. Joe, FL.

In October 2018, category 5 Hurricane Michael devastated the Florida Panhandle, including Gulf County. The storm severely damaged Indian Pass Raw Bar, as high winds blew off the front door, forcefully removed the air-conditioning system, and threw its iconic street sign hundreds of yards away. However, just as they did after the 1986 storm, the McNeil family is rebuilding and looks forward to continuing to serve their world-famous oysters again this spring. Upon reopening, they will welcome visitors to the gulf coast of Florida for their 90th year in business.

The Indian Pass Raw Bar became what it is today partly because of Hurricane Kate in 1986. The McNeil family understands how devastating these storms truly are and the impact they can have on small business and working families. To help their community, the McNeil family enthusiastically opened their facilities as emergency supply distribution centers to their neighbors in need, despite having their own difficulties. Meredith McNeil said in October 2018: "This whole area, the whole Gulf, we've done this before. We're all resilient."

This is the kind of commitment to community that is unique to American

small business. During a catastrophe, the Indian Pass Raw Bar helped bring their fellow citizens together by offering emergency supplies in order to help their customers and to give back to the community that has supported their business. Indian Pass Raw Bar is an example of Florida's exceptional entrepreneurship, continuing a 90-year history, being resilient and innovative in its approach to challenges, and giving back to the community during a time of need. I would like to congratulate the McNeil family and all the employees at Indian Pass Raw Bar for being named the Senate Small Business of the Week for the week of January 14 to 18, 2019. I wish them continued success in their future endeavors.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Pate, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

REPORT RELATIVE TO THE CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY THAT WAS DECLARED IN EXECUTIVE ORDER 12947 OF JANUARY 23, 1995, WITH RESPECT TO TERRORISTS WHO THREATEN TO DISRUPT THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS—PM 1

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report, which was referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs:

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days before the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency declared in Executive Order 12947 of January 23, 1995, with respect to foreign terrorists who threaten to disrupt the Middle East peace

process, is to continue in effect beyond January 23, 2019.

The crisis with respect to grave acts of violence committed by foreign terrorists who threaten to disrupt the Middle East peace process that led to the declaration of a national emergency on January 23, 1995, has not been resolved. Terrorist groups continue to engage in activities that have the purpose or effect of threatening the Middle East peace process and that are hostile to United States interests in the region. Such actions continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States. Therefore, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared in Executive Order 12947 with respect to foreign terrorists who threaten to disrupt the Middle East peace process and to maintain in force the sanctions against them to respond to this threat.

DONALD J. TRUMP,
THE WHITE HOUSE, January 16, 2019.

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:28 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 113. An act to require the purchase of domestically made flags of the United States of America for use by the Federal Government.

H.R. 135. An act to amend the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002 to strengthen Federal antidiscrimination laws enforced by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and expand accountability within the Federal Government, and for other purposes.

H.R. 136. An act to amend title 5, United States Code, to protect unpaid interns in the Federal Government from workplace harassment and discrimination, and for other purposes.

H.R. 202. An act to amend the Inspector General Act of 1978 relative to the powers of the Department of Justice Inspector General.

H.R. 247. An act to amend chapter 36 of title 44, United States Code, to make certain changes relating to electronic Government services, 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. 113. An act to require the purchase of domestically made flags of the United States of America for use by the Federal Government; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 135. An act to amend the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002 to strengthen Federal antidiscrimination laws enforced by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and expand accountability within the Federal Government, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 136. An act to amend title 5, United States Code, to protect unpaid interns in the

Federal Government from workplace harassment and discrimination, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 202. An act to amend the Inspector General Act of 1978 relative to the powers of the Department of Justice Inspector General; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

H.R. 247. An act to amend chapter 36 of title 44, United States Code, to make certain changes relating to electronic Government services, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

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 Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Mr. SCHATZ):

S. 137. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to increase the credit for employers establishing workplace child care facilities, to increase the child care credit to encourage greater use of quality child care services, to provide incentives for students to earn child care-related degrees and to work in child care facilities, and to increase the exclusion for employer-provided dependent care assistance; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. ALEXANDER (for himself and Mrs. BLACKBURN):

S. 138. A bill to modify the boundary of the Shiloh National Military Park located in the States of Tennessee and Mississippi, to establish Parker's Crossroads Battlefield as an affiliated area of the National Park System, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. ALEXANDER (for himself and Mrs. BLACKBURN):

S. 139. A bill to designate the bridge located in Blount County, Tennessee, on the Foothills Parkway (commonly known as "Bridge 2") as the "Dean Stone Bridge"; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. ALEXANDER (for himself and Mrs. BLACKBURN):

S. 140. A bill to require the Secretary of the Interior to study the suitability and feasibility of designating the President James K. Polk Home in Columbia, Tennessee, as a unit of the National Park System, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. ERNST (for herself, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. RISCH, Mr. COTTON, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. CRAPO, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. SASSE, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. RUBIO, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. MORAN, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. THUNE, Mr. ENZI, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. HAWLEY, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. ROMNEY, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. DAINES, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. PAUL, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. BARRASSO, and Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina):

S. 141. A bill to prohibit Federal funding of Planned Parenthood Federation of America; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. RUBIO:

S. 142. A bill to impose privacy requirements on providers of internet services similar to the requirements imposed on Federal agencies under the Privacy Act of 1974; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Ms. ERNST (for herself, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. KING, and Mr. HEINRICH):

S. 143. A bill to authorize the Department of Energy to conduct collaborative research with the Department of Veterans Affairs in order to improve healthcare services for veterans in the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. ENZI (for himself and Mr. BARRASSO):

S. 144. A bill to designate the mountain at the Devils Tower National Monument, Wyoming, as Devils Tower, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina (for himself, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. SASSE, Mrs. BLACKBURN, and Mr. BRAUN):

S. 145. A bill to expand opportunity through greater choice in education, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. HOEVEN (for himself and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 146. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for Move America bonds and Move America credits; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. PAUL (for himself, Mr. LEE, and Ms. ERNST):

S. 147. A bill to amend title 31, United States Code, to provide for automatic continuing resolutions; to the Committee on Appropriations.

By Mr. PAUL (for himself, Mr. LEE, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. PORTMAN, and Mr. YOUNG):

S. 148. A bill to require a full audit of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System and the Federal reserve banks by the Comptroller General of the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. CASEY (for himself and Mr. MORAN):

S. 149. A bill to establish a Senior Scams Prevention Advisory Council; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. SANDERS (for himself, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. SCHUMER, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BROWN, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. CARDIN, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. DURBIN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. HARRIS, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. KAINE, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. PETERS, Mr. REED, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. SCHATZ, Ms. SMITH, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 150. A bill to provide for increases in the Federal minimum wage, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. THUNE (for himself and Mr. MARKEY):

S. 151. A bill to deter criminal robocall violations and improve enforcement of section 227(b) of the Communications Act of 1934, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. COTTON (for himself and Mr. VAN HOLLEN):

S. 152. A bill to direct the President to impose penalties pursuant to denial orders with respect to certain Chinese telecommunications companies that are in violation of the export control or sanctions laws of the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. 153. A bill to promote veteran involvement in STEM education, computer science, and scientific research, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. TESTER (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. BALDWIN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. KAINE, Mr. BENNET, and Ms. SINEMA):

S. 154. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve oversight of contracts for services and financial processes of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. JONES (for himself, Ms. HASSAN, and Mrs. GILLIBRAND):

S. 155. A bill to improve the financial literacy of secondary school students; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. BALDWIN:

S. 156. A bill to prevent conflicts of interest that stem from executive branch employees receiving bonuses or other compensation arrangements from non-Government sources, from the revolving door that raises concerns about the independence of executive branch employees, and from the revolving door that casts aspersions over the awarding of Government contracts and other financial benefits; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. CRUZ (for himself, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. SASSE, Mr. PAUL, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. COTTON, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. LANKFORD, and Mr. LEE):

S. 157. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permit kindergarten through grade 12 educational expenses to be paid from a 529 account; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. PAUL:

S. 158. A bill to prohibit Federal funding of Planned Parenthood Federation of America; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. PAUL (for himself, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. RISCH, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. PERDUE, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. THUNE, and Mr. BOOZMAN):

S. 159. A bill to implement equal protection under the 14th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States for the right to life of each born and preborn human person; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. GRAHAM (for himself, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. RISCH, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. BRAUN, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. SASSE, Mr. INHOFE, Ms. ERNST, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. CRAMER, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. ROUNDS, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. PERDUE, Mr. MORAN, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. WICKER, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. ENZI, Mr. BURR, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. ROMNEY, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. DAINES, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. COTTON, Mr. LEE, Mr. PAUL, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. TOOMEY, and Mr. THUNE):

S. 160. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to protect pain-capable unborn children, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. SULLIVAN:

S. 161. A bill to require the Comptroller General of the United States to conduct a study and submit a report on filing requirements under the Universal Service Fund programs; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Ms. SMITH (for herself, Mr. BROWN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WARNER, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. KAINE, Mr. MARKEY, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. WARREN, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. JONES, Ms. HARRIS, Mr. UDALL, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. KING, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. TESTER, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, and Mr. BLUMENTHAL):

S. 162. A bill to provide back pay to low-wage contractor employees, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. SULLIVAN (for himself and Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S. 163. A bill to prevent catastrophic failure or shutdown of remote diesel power engines due to emission control devices, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. DAINES (for himself, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. CRAPO, Ms. BALDWIN, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. TESTER, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. MORAN, Mr. JONES, Mr. HOEVEN, and Ms. ROSEN):

S. 164. 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; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself, Ms. HARRIS, and Mr. MURPHY):

S. 165. A bill to amend chapter 85 of title 5, United States Code, to clarify that Federal employees excepted from a furlough are eligible for unemployment compensation; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. GRAHAM:

S. 166. A bill to provide provisional protected presence status for certain aliens and to provide mandatory appropriations relating to border security; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. YOUNG:

S. 167. A bill to amend the National Trails System Act to extend the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. YOUNG (for himself and Mr. BRAUN):

S. 168. A bill to retitle Indiana Dunes National Park, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. CARPER, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Mrs. CAPITO):

S. 169. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide an exemption from gross income for civil damages as recompense for trafficking in persons; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. DAINES (for himself and Ms. STABENOW):

S. 170. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to limit the amount of certain qualified conservation contributions; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself and Mr. CORNYN):

S. 171. A bill to authorize the Office on Violence Against Women to improve the handling of crimes of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking by incorporating a trauma-informed approach into the initial response to and investigation of such crimes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. GARDNER (for himself, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. JONES, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, and Ms. SINEMA):

S. 172. A bill to delay the reimposition of the annual fee on health insurance providers

until after 2021; to the Committee on Finance.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. SASSE:

S. Res. 19. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that disqualifying a nominee to Federal office on the basis of membership in the Knights of Columbus violates the Constitution of the United States; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. CARDIN, and Mr. COONS):

S. Con. Res. 1. A concurrent resolution calling for credible, transparent, and safe elections in Nigeria, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 20

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 20, a bill to amend the Ethics in Government Act of 1978 to require the disclosure of certain tax returns by Presidents and certain candidates for the office of the President, and for other purposes.

S. 39

At the request of Mr. BRAUN, the names of the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) and the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT) were added as cosponsors of S. 39, a bill to provide that Members of Congress may not receive pay after October 1 of any fiscal year in which Congress has not approved a concurrent resolution on the budget and passed the regular appropriations bills.

S. 47

At the request of Ms. MURKOWSKI, the names of the Senator from Utah (Mr. ROMNEY) and the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) were added as cosponsors of S. 47, a bill to provide for the management of the natural resources of the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 69

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG) was added as a cosponsor of S. 69, a bill to allow reciprocity for the carrying of certain concealed firearms.

S. 83

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 83, a bill to amend section 203 of Public Law 94-305 to ensure proper authority for the Office of Advocacy of the Small Business Administration, and for other purposes.

S. 92

At the request of Mr. PAUL, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 92, a bill to amend chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, to provide that major rules of the executive

branch shall have no force or effect unless a joint resolution of approval is enacted into law.

S. 96

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 96, a bill to revise the authorized route of the North Country National Scenic Trail in northeastern Minnesota and to extend the trail into Vermont to connect with the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, and for other purposes.

S. 98

At the request of Mr. JOHNSON, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 98, a bill to authorize the President to award the Medal of Honor to James Megellas, formerly of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, and currently of Colleyville, Texas, for acts of valor on January 28, 1945, during the Battle of the Bulge in World War II.

S. 104

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 104, a bill to amend title 31, United States Code, to provide for automatic continuing resolutions.

S. 106

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the names of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) and the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 106, a bill to reauthorize and extend funding for community health centers and the National Health Service Corps.

S. 113

At the request of Mr. JOHNSON, the names of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI) and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 113, a bill to appropriate funds for pay and allowances of excepted Federal employees, and for other purposes.

S. 119

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the names of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN), the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. KENNEDY) were added as cosponsors of S. 119, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit taking minors across State lines in circumvention of laws requiring the involvement of parents in abortion decisions.

S. 120

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 120, a bill to protect victims of stalking from gun violence.

S. 131

At the request of Mr. CASSIDY, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 131, a bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to prohibit Federal Medicaid funding for the administrative costs of providing health benefits to individuals who are unauthorized immigrants.

S.J. RES. 3

At the request of Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, the names of the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE) and the Senator from Colorado (Mr. GARDNER) were added as co-sponsors of S.J. Res. 3, a joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relative to balancing the budget.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Ms. ERNST (for herself, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. RISCH, Mr. COTTON, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. CRAPO, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. SASSE, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. RUBIO, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. MORAN, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. THUNE, Mr. ENZI, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. HAWLEY, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. ROMNEY, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. DAINES, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. PAUL, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. BARRASSO, and Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina):

S. 141. A bill to prohibit Federal funding of Planned Parenthood Federation of America; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Ms. ERNST. Thank you very much to my colleagues, the Senator from Nebraska, the Senator from Mississippi, as well as our other colleague, the Senator from Missouri. Thank you for joining us on the floor today to express our support for those who march for life. Thank you so much.

As my colleagues can attest, the invaluable message being shared by the pro-life community this week has implications far beyond that of simply the March for Life. As I travel across my home State of Iowa, I see this life-affirming message in our pregnancy resource centers, maternity homes, and adoption agencies. These comprehensive on-the-ground services provide women and families with service options that are changing and saving lives every single day.

These life-affirming services are the foundation of the pro-life movement across our Nation, and I sincerely thank those centers and agencies for their critical work to fight for vulnerable lives throughout the year.

I see the same message in the remarkable stories of individual families, such as the Pickering family from Newton, IA. I have had the opportunity to share the phenomenal story of Micah Pickering on the Senate floor before. As you may recall, Micah was born at just 20 weeks postfertilization. He was only about the size of a bag of M&M's—the size of the palm of my hand. That was Micah. Yet Micah was also a perfect, fully-formed baby boy, with 10 fingers and 10 toes. In fact, no one makes his case more eloquently than Micah himself.

When I first met Micah, I had a picture of him displayed in my office from

the day that he was born—again, the size of the palm of my hand. Micah immediately ran up to that picture. He pointed at it, and he said: “Baby.”

Micah recognized right away that even at just 20 weeks postfertilization, the humanity of the child was undeniable.

Micah's parents and the doctors and nurses at the University of Iowa Hospitals & Clinics recognized this humanity, as well, and were dedicated to his survival. Today Micah is a happy, healthy, and energetic 6-year-old boy.

Stories like Micah's are extraordinary reminders that the life-affirming services, for which the pro-life community marches, have real and significant impacts on the lives of families across America.

Since coming to Congress, I have also tried to do my part to ensure that this message from those in my home State of Iowa and from other communities all across the Nation is taken back and turned into action in Washington. For me, that has meant supporting crucial pro-life initiatives, such as the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act, which would prevent abortions after 20 weeks of development—the very same age at which my dear Micah was born.

Another critical piece of legislation, the Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act, would create concrete enforcement provisions to hold abortionists accountable if they do not provide the same degree of care to a baby who survives an abortion as they would any child born naturally premature at that same age.

Fighting for commonsense legislation that protects innocent life has been a priority of mine in the Senate. But Congress must also do more to ensure that taxpayers are not forced to subsidize abortion or the abortion industry giants, such as Planned Parenthood.

During the 115th Congress, I led the fight in the Senate to pass critical legislation, which was signed into law in 2017, that ensures States are not forced to provide entities like Planned Parenthood, the Nation's single largest provider of abortions, with Federal title X dollars.

I am grateful to have worked with former Congresswoman Diane Black, my Senate colleagues, and President Trump to make sure States are not forced to award providers like Planned Parenthood with taxpayer dollars like title X family planning grants.

As I have stated time and again, taxpayers should not be forced to foot the bill for roughly one-half billion dollars annually for an organization like Planned Parenthood, which exhibits such disrespect for human life. With that in mind, today I reintroduced legislation that would defund Planned Parenthood while still protecting vital funding for women's healthcare services. Contrary to what they claim, Planned Parenthood is not the Nation's preeminent provider of women's healthcare. In fact, Planned Parent-

hood facilities do not even perform in-house mammograms; something so simple is not performed by Planned Parenthood.

On the other hand, just as my colleague the senior Senator from Nebraska stated, community health centers continue to greatly outnumber Planned Parenthood clinics nationwide and provide more comprehensive preventive and primary health services, including cervical and breast cancer screenings, diagnostic laboratory and radiology services, well childcare, prenatal and postnatal care, immunizations, and so much more. Access to comprehensive health services is absolutely critical to women and families across this Nation, and federally qualified health centers offer such services, regardless of a person's ability to pay.

A recent GAO study that I requested, along with many of my colleagues in both the House and the Senate, showed that over a 3-year period, federally qualified health centers served 25 million individuals compared to only 2.4 million individuals that Planned Parenthood served. That is more than 10 times more people served by those healthcare centers.

Furthermore, a recent Marist poll shows that 54 percent of Americans do not support taxpayer dollars going toward abortions. While there are Federal regulations that prevent Federal dollars from directly covering abortion, these laws are governed by a complicated patchwork of policies and funding riders that must be reapproved during the appropriations process every single year.

Since 1976, the Hyde amendment has been attached to appropriations bills in order to block Federal funds from paying for abortions. However, this policy, which once drew widespread bipartisan support, has recently been under attack. For the first time ever, the Affordable Care Act authorized and appropriated funds that bypassed the Hyde amendment funding restrictions. In 2016, the Democratic Party added the repeal of the Hyde amendment protections to its Presidential platform.

The Hyde amendment is a long-standing and critical provision that protects Federal dollars and ensures that taxpayers are not footing the bill for abortion procedures. That is why I support the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion and Abortion Insurance Full Disclosure Act of 2019, which was recently reintroduced in the Senate. This legislation would permanently codify the Hyde amendment, ensuring that funding restrictions remain in place and are applied to all Federal programs. Furthermore, this bill takes important steps to eliminate certain tax benefits related to abortions and improve disclosure requirements related to insurance coverage of abortion.

Preventing our taxpayer dollars from paying for abortion procedures—a position that a majority of Americans agree with—should not be a complicated process vulnerable to partisan

attack. Congress must take steps to ensure that permanent protections apply governmentwide.

As such, I urge the Senate to consider the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion and Abortion Insurance Disclosure Act on the floor in order to protect not only our taxpayer dollars but the innocent lives of our most vulnerable.

I appreciate all of the marchers who will be coming to Washington, DC, in the following days and spending their time in a most worthy effort, which is our annual March for Life. God bless them all. Of course, God bless my Iowans for that journey.

Thank you very much.

By Mr. THUNE (for himself and Mr. MARKEY):

S. 151. A bill to deter criminal robocall violations and improve enforcement of section 227(b) of the Communications Act of 1934, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

Mr. THUNE. 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. 151

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 “Telephone Robocall Abuse Criminal Enforcement and Deterrence Act” or the “TRACED Act”.

SEC. 2. FORFEITURE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 227 of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 227) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b), by adding at the end the following:

“(4) CIVIL FORFEITURE.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Any person that is determined by the Commission, in accordance with paragraph (3) or (4) of section 503(b), to have violated any provision of this subsection shall be liable to the United States for a forfeiture penalty pursuant to section 503(b)(1). The amount of the forfeiture penalty determined under this subparagraph shall be determined in accordance with subparagraphs (A) through (F) of section 503(b)(2).

“(B) VIOLATION WITH INTENT.—Any person that is determined by the Commission, in accordance with paragraph (3) or (4) of section 503(b), to have violated this subsection with the intent to cause such violation shall be liable to the United States for a forfeiture penalty. The amount of the forfeiture penalty determined under this subparagraph shall be equal to an amount determined in accordance with subparagraphs (A) through (F) of section 503(b)(2) plus an additional penalty not to exceed \$10,000.

“(C) RECOVERY.—Any forfeiture penalty determined under subparagraph (A) or (B) shall be recoverable under section 504(a).

“(D) PROCEDURE.—No forfeiture liability shall be determined under subparagraph (A) or (B) against any person unless such person receives the notice required by paragraph (3) or (4) of section 503(b).

“(E) STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS.—No forfeiture penalty shall be determined or imposed against any person—

“(i) under subparagraph (A) if the violation charged occurred more than 1 year prior to

the date of issuance of the required notice or notice of apparent liability; and

“(ii) under subparagraph (B) if the violation charged occurred more than 3 years prior to the date of issuance of the required notice or notice of apparent liability.

“(F) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, the Commission may not determine or impose a forfeiture penalty on a person under both subparagraphs (A) and (B) based on the same conduct.”; and

(2) by striking subsection (h).

(b) APPLICABILITY.—The amendments made by this section shall not affect any action or proceeding commenced before and pending on the date of enactment of this Act.

(c) DEADLINE FOR REGULATIONS.—The Federal Communications Commission shall prescribe regulations to implement the amendments made by this section not later than 270 days after the date of enactment of this Act.

SEC. 3. CALL AUTHENTICATION.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) STIR/SHAKEN AUTHENTICATION FRAMEWORK.—The term “STIR/SHAKEN authentication framework” means the secure telephone identity revisited and signature-based handling of asserted information using tokens standards proposed by the information and communications technology industry to attach a certificate of authenticity to each phone to verify the source of each call.

(2) VOICE SERVICE.—The term “voice service”—

(A) means any service that is interconnected with the public switched telephone network and that furnishes voice communications to an end user using resources from the North American Numbering Plan or any successor to the North American Numbering Plan adopted by the Commission under section 251(e)(1) of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 251(e)(1)); and

(B) includes—

(i) transmissions from a telephone facsimile machine, computer, or other device to a telephone facsimile machine; and

(ii) without limitation, any service that enables real-time, two-way voice communications, including any service that requires internet protocol-compatible customer premises equipment (commonly known as “CPE”) and permits out-bound calling, whether or not the service is one-way or two-way voice over internet protocol.

(b) AUTHENTICATION FRAMEWORK.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraphs (2) and (3), not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Federal Communications Commission shall require a provider of voice service to implement the STIR/SHAKEN authentication framework in the internet protocol networks of voice service providers.

(2) IMPLEMENTATION.—The Federal Communications Commission shall not take the action described in paragraph (1) if the Commission determines that a provider of voice service, not later than 12 months after the date of enactment of this Act—

(A) has adopted the STIR/SHAKEN authentication framework for calls on the internet protocol networks of voice service providers;

(B) has agreed voluntarily to participate with other providers of voice service in the STIR/SHAKEN authentication framework;

(C) has begun to implement the STIR/SHAKEN authentication framework; and

(D) will be capable of fully implementing the STIR/SHAKEN authentication framework not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act.

(3) IMPLEMENTATION REPORT.—Not later than 12 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Federal Communications

Commission shall submit to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives a report on the determination required under paragraph (2), which shall include—

(A) an analysis of the extent to which providers of a voice service have implemented the STIR/SHAKEN authentication framework; and

(B) an assessment of the efficacy of the STIR/SHAKEN authentication framework, as being implemented under this section, in addressing all aspects of call authentication.

(4) REVIEW AND REVISION OR REPLACEMENT.—Not later than 3 years after the date of enactment of this Act, and every 3 years thereafter, the Federal Communications Commission, after public notice and an opportunity for comment, shall—

(A) assess the efficacy of the call authentication framework implemented under this section;

(B) based on the assessment under subparagraph (A), revise or replace the call authentication framework under this section if the Commission determines it is in the public interest to do so; and

(C) submit to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives a report on the findings of the assessment under subparagraph (A) and on any actions to revise or replace the call authentication framework under subparagraph (B).

(5) EXTENSION OF IMPLEMENTATION DEADLINE.—The Federal Communications Commission may extend any deadline for the implementation of a call authentication framework required under this section by 12 months or such further amount of time as the Commission determines necessary if the Commission determines that purchasing or upgrading equipment to support call authentication would constitute a substantial hardship for a provider or category of providers.

(c) SAFE HARBOR AND OTHER REGULATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Federal Communications Commission shall promulgate rules—

(A) establishing when a provider of voice service may block a voice call based, in whole or in part, on information provided by the call authentication framework under subsection (b);

(B) establishing a safe harbor for a provider of voice service from liability for unintended or inadvertent blocking of calls or for the unintended or inadvertent misidentification of the level of trust for individual calls based, in whole or in part, on information provided by the call authentication framework under subsection (b); and

(C) establishing a process to permit a calling party adversely affected by the information provided by the call authentication framework under subsection (b) to verify the authenticity of the calling party's calls.

(2) CONSIDERATIONS.—In establishing the safe harbor under paragraph (1), the Federal Communications Commission shall consider limiting the liability of a provider based on the extent to which the provider—

(A) blocks or identifies calls based, in whole or in part, on the information provided by the call authentication framework under subsection (b);

(B) implemented procedures based, in whole or in part, on the information provided by the call authentication framework under subsection (b); and

(C) used reasonable care.

(d) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section shall preclude the Federal Communications Commission from initiating a rulemaking pursuant to its existing statutory authority.

SEC. 4. PROTECTIONS FROM SPOOFED CALLS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, and consistent with the call authentication framework under section 3, the Federal Communications Commission shall initiate a rulemaking to help protect a subscriber from receiving unwanted calls or text messages from a caller using an unauthenticated number.

(b) CONSIDERATIONS.—In promulgating rules under subsection (a), the Federal Communications Commission shall consider—

(1) the Government Accountability Office report on combating the fraudulent provision of misleading or inaccurate caller identification required by section 503(c) of division P of the Consolidated Appropriations Act 2018 (Public Law 115-141);

(2) the best means of ensuring that a subscriber or provider has the ability to block calls from a caller using an unauthenticated North American Numbering Plan number;

(3) the impact on the privacy of a subscriber from unauthenticated calls;

(4) the effectiveness in verifying the accuracy of caller identification information; and

(5) the availability and cost of providing protection from the unwanted calls or text messages described in subsection (a).

SEC. 5. INTERAGENCY WORKING GROUP.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Attorney General, in consultation with the Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, shall convene an interagency working group to study Government prosecution of violations of section 227(b) of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 227(b)).

(b) DUTIES.—In carrying out the study under subsection (a), the interagency working group shall—

(1) determine whether, and if so how, any Federal laws, including regulations, policies, and practices, or budgetary or jurisdictional constraints inhibit the prosecution of such violations;

(2) identify existing and potential Federal policies and programs that encourage and improve coordination among Federal departments and agencies and States, and between States, in the prevention and prosecution of such violations;

(3) identify existing and potential international policies and programs that encourage and improve coordination between countries in the prevention and prosecution of such violations; and

(4) consider—

(A) the benefit and potential sources of additional resources for the Federal prevention and prosecution of criminal violations of that section;

(B) whether to establish memoranda of understanding regarding the prevention and prosecution of such violations between—

(i) the States;

(ii) the States and the Federal Government; and

(iii) the Federal Government and a foreign government;

(C) whether to establish a process to allow States to request Federal subpoenas from the Federal Communications Commission;

(D) whether extending civil enforcement authority to the States would assist in the successful prevention and prosecution of such violations;

(E) whether increased forfeiture and imprisonment penalties are appropriate, such as extending imprisonment for such a violation to a term longer than 2 years;

(F) whether regulation of any entity that enters into a business arrangement with a common carrier regulated under title II of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 201 et seq.) for the specific purpose of carrying, routing, or transmitting a call that

constitutes such a violation would assist in the successful prevention and prosecution of such violations; and

(G) the extent to which, if any, Department of Justice policies to pursue the prosecution of violations causing economic harm, physical danger, or erosion of an inhabitant's peace of mind and sense of security inhibits the prevention or prosecution of such violations.

(c) MEMBERS.—The interagency working group shall be composed of such representatives of Federal departments and agencies as the Attorney General considers appropriate, such as—

(1) the Department of Commerce;

(2) the Department of State;

(3) the Department of Homeland Security;

(4) the Federal Communications Commission;

(5) the Federal Trade Commission; and

(6) the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection.

(d) NON-FEDERAL STAKEHOLDERS.—In carrying out the study under subsection (a), the interagency working group shall consult with such non-Federal stakeholders as the Attorney General determines have the relevant expertise, including the National Association of Attorneys General.

(e) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 270 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the interagency working group shall submit to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives a report on the findings of the study under subsection (a), including—

(1) any recommendations regarding the prevention and prosecution of such violations; and

(2) a description of what progress, if any, relevant Federal departments and agencies have made in implementing the recommendations under paragraph (1).

SEC. 6. ACCESS TO NUMBER RESOURCES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—

(1) EXAMINATION OF FCC POLICIES.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Federal Communications Commission shall commence a proceeding to determine whether Federal Communications Commission policies regarding access to number resources, including number resources for toll free and non-toll free telephone numbers, could be modified, including by establishing registration and compliance obligations, to help reduce access to numbers by potential perpetrators of violations of section 227(b) of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 227(b)).

(2) REGULATIONS.—If the Federal Communications Commission determines under paragraph (1) that modifying the policies described in that paragraph could help achieve the goal described in that paragraph, the Commission shall prescribe regulations to implement those policy modifications.

(b) AUTHORITY.—Any person who knowingly, through an employee, agent, officer, or otherwise, directly or indirectly, by or through any means or device whatsoever, is a party to obtaining number resources, including number resources for toll free and non-toll free telephone numbers, from a common carrier regulated under title II of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 201 et seq.), in violation of a regulation prescribed under subsection (a) of this section, shall, notwithstanding section 503(b)(5) of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 503(b)(5)), be subject to a forfeiture penalty under section 503 of that Act. A forfeiture penalty under this subsection shall be in addition to any other penalty provided for by law.

By Mr. DAINES (for himself, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. CRAPO, Ms. BALDWIN, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. TESTER, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. MORAN, Mr. JONES, Mr. HOEVEN, and Ms. ROSEN):

S. 164. 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; to the Committee on Armed Services.

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. 164

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 “TRICARE Reserve Improvement Act”.

SEC. 2. MODIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY FOR TRICARE RESERVE SELECT OF CERTAIN MEMBERS OF THE SELECTED RESERVE.

Section 1076d(a) of title 10, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking “(1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), a member” and inserting “A member”; and

(2) by striking paragraph (2).

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS**SENATE RESOLUTION 19—EX-PRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE THAT DISQUALIFYING A NOMINEE TO FEDERAL OFFICE ON THE BASIS OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS VIOLATES THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES**

Mr. SASSE submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 19

Whereas, throughout the history of the United States, the religious liberty protected by both the First Amendment and the No Religious Test Clause of the Constitution of the United States has been at the heart of the American experiment;

Whereas, in 1960, the presidential candidacy of John F. Kennedy was met with significant anti-Catholic bigotry;

Whereas then Senator Kennedy responded to the bigotry with these timeless words: “For while this year it may be a Catholic against whom the finger of suspicion is pointed, in other years it has been, and may someday be again, a Jew or a Quaker or a Unitarian or a Baptist. . . . Today I may be the victim, but tomorrow it may be you, until the whole fabric of our harmonious society is ripped at a time of great national peril.”;

Whereas the Knights of Columbus (in this preamble referred to as the “Knights”) constitute the largest Catholic fraternal service organization in the world;

Whereas the Knights have a proud tradition of standing against the forces of prejudice and oppression, such as the Ku Klux Klan and Nazi Germany;

Whereas the Knights are founded on the principles of charity, unity, fraternity, and patriotism; and

Whereas, in 2017, the Knights made more than \$185,000,000 in charitable contributions and volunteered more than 75,600,000 service hours: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that disqualifying a nominee to Federal office on the basis of membership in the Knights of Columbus violates clause 3 of article VI of the Constitution of the United States, which establishes that Senators “shall be bound by Oath or Affirmation, to support th[e] Constitution” and “no religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States”.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 1—CALLING FOR CREDIBLE, TRANSPARENT, AND SAFE ELECTIONS IN NIGERIA, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. CARDIN, and Mr. COONS) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. CON. RES. 1

Whereas it is in the national interest of the United States to maintain a strong bilateral relationship with a politically stable, democratic, and economically sound Nigeria that can play a leadership role in the region and the continent more broadly;

Whereas Nigeria has presidential elections scheduled for February 16, 2019, and gubernatorial and National Assembly elections scheduled for March 2, 2019;

Whereas credible elections could further consolidate democratic gains achieved in Nigeria over the last two decades since the transition from military to civilian democratic rule;

Whereas a 2017 survey conducted by Afrobarometer found that 72 percent of Nigerians agreed that democratic elections are the best means of choosing their country's leaders, thus indicating that the country's citizens are deeply committed to democracy;

Whereas collaboration between civil society actors and the international community was a key factor that contributed to successful elections in 2015;

Whereas successive elections in Nigeria have featured varying degrees of violence;

Whereas there have been deeply concerning instances of incitement to violence in Nigeria by members of both the ruling coalition and the opposition inciting supporters to ethnic violence as a means by which to gain electoral advantage, intimidate electoral rivals, or suppress voter turnout;

Whereas, during the Ekiti and Osun gubernatorial elections in July 2018 and September 2018, respectively, there were concerning incidents in which some elements of Nigeria's security agencies displayed partisanship and a lack of objectivity, which risks escalating tensions within the country;

Whereas Nigeria's Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has improved the voting process, notably through the introduction of continuous voter registration, the adoption of simultaneous accreditation and voting, improvements to the secrecy of the ballot, and the advancement of smart card reader technology;

Whereas the statement of the September 2018 Joint National Democratic Institute/International Republican Institute Pre-Election Assessment Mission to Nigeria cited re-

maining challenges and concerns such as delays in finalizing the legal framework for the elections, delayed release of funds for the elections, security threats in the Middle Belt and North East, instances of vote-buying, and incitement to violence and disinformation; and

Whereas ensuring transparency in electoral preparations and building public confidence in the electoral process is vital for the success of the upcoming elections in Nigeria: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That the Senate—

(1) reaffirms that the people of the United States will continue to stand with the people of Nigeria in support of peace and democracy;

(2) calls on the Government of Nigeria and all political parties and actors to—

(A) take actions to facilitate elections that are credible, transparent, and peaceful in order to support the will of the people and advance the consolidation of democracy and the stability of the broader region;

(B) condemn in the strongest terms the use of speech that incites to violence, and refrain from any rhetoric or action that seeks to demonize or delegitimize opponents, sow division among Nigerians, or otherwise inflame tensions;

(C) seek to resolve any disputes over results peacefully, including through the legal system as necessary; and

(D) respect the impartiality of the Independent National Electoral Commission;

(3) calls on the Government of Nigeria to—

(A) refrain from deploying security forces in a partisan manner;

(B) ensure that security services maintain the highest level of professionalism and impartiality in facilitating the electoral process, enable accredited observers and journalists to perform their work, and protect the right of citizens to exercise their votes freely;

(C) move expeditiously to finalize the proposed reforms to the legal framework for the 2019 elections; and

(D) enforce laws against election malfeasance, including vote buying, and ensure equal and robust application through such measures as the establishment of the Electoral Offenses Commission and Tribunal;

(4) urges all Nigerians to fully and peacefully engage in the electoral process, insist on full enfranchisement, reject inflammatory or divisive rhetoric or actions, and seek to resolve any disputes over results through the legal system;

(5) calls upon the Independent National Electoral Commission to sustain confidence and trust in its management of the electoral process by—

(A) taking concrete measures to combat vote buying through voter education campaigns, enforcement of laws against voter inducement, and a nationwide ban on cell phones in the voting cubicle;

(B) releasing specimen ballots well in advance of Election Day so that civil society and other electoral stakeholders can conduct sufficient education to orient voters;

(C) making adequate arrangements to ensure the participation in the election of internally displaced persons (IDPs); and

(D) taking steps to clean the voter roll and ensure timely production and distribution of the Permanent Voter Card to new voters;

(6) encourages political parties in Nigeria to adhere to and enforce existing codes of conduct that commit parties to democratic electoral standards regarding campaign use of resources, engagement of voters, peaceful resolution of disputes, and acceptance of verified and credible results;

(7) condemns any efforts on the part of any politicians or political parties in Nigeria to

politicize the security and law enforcement agencies;

(8) encourages civil society organizations in Nigeria to—

(A) promote the peaceful participation of citizens in the electoral process and draw on existing inter-religious and peacebuilding bodies to enhance their efforts;

(B) disseminate information about citizen-based observation findings and analysis to increase public knowledge and understanding about the conduct of the elections; and

(C) continue leading important early warning and response mechanisms to mitigate election-related violence, including monitoring efforts to incite violence or further inflame tensions;

(9) supports efforts by the Department of State, including the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations, and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to assist election-related preparation in Nigeria, including through programs focused on conflict mitigation; and

(10) calls on the United States Government and other international partners, especially election-focused nongovernmental organizations, to—

(A) continue to support efforts by the Government of Nigeria to address the remaining electoral preparation challenges and identify gaps in which additional resources or diplomatic engagement could make important contributions to the conduct of the elections; and

(B) support civil society organizations and media organizations working towards transparency and accountability in the use of state resources around the election period.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 1. Mr. KAINÉ (for himself and Mr. VAN HOLLEN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the joint resolution S.J. Res. 2, disapproving the President's proposal to take an action relating to the application of certain sanctions with respect to the Russian Federation; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2. Mr. KAINÉ (for himself, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, and Mr. WARNER) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 109, to prohibit taxpayer funded abortions; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3. Mr. McCONNELL (for Mr. JOHNSON (for himself and Mr. PETERS)) proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 251, to extend by 15 months the Chemical Facility Anti-Terrorism Standards Program of the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes.

SA 4. Mr. McCONNELL (for Mr. JOHNSON (for himself and Mr. PETERS)) proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 251, *supra*.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 1. Mr. KAINÉ (for himself and Mr. VAN HOLLEN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the joint resolution S.J. Res. 2, disapproving the President's proposal to take an action relating to the application of certain sanctions with respect to the Russian Federation; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end, add the following:

SEC. 2. APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2019.

(a) The provisions of the following measures of the 116th Congress are hereby enacted into law:

(1) H.R. 21, as passed by the House of Representatives on January 3, 2019.

(2) H.J. Res. 1, as passed by the House of Representatives on January 3, 2019.

(b) In publishing this Act in slip form and in the United States Statutes at Large pursuant to section 112 of title 1, United States Code, the Archivist of the United States shall include after the date of approval at the end appendixes setting forth the texts of the measures referred to in subsection (a) of this section and the text of any other measure enacted into law by reference by reason of the enactment of this Act.

SA 2. Mr. KAINÉ (for himself, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, and Mr. WARNER) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 109, to prohibit taxpayer funded abortions; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____ . APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2019.

(a) The provisions of the following measures of the 116th Congress are hereby enacted into law:

(1) H.R. 21, as passed by the House of Representatives on January 3, 2019.

(2) H. J. Res. 1, as passed by the House of Representatives on January 3, 2019.

(b) In publishing this Act in slip form and in the United States Statutes at Large pursuant to section 112 of title 1, United States Code, the Archivist of the United States shall include after the date of approval at the end appendixes setting forth the texts of the measures referred to in subsection (a) of this section and the text of any other measure enacted into law by reference by reason of the enactment of this Act.

SA 3. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. JOHNSON (for himself and Mr. PETERS)) proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 251, to extend by 15 months the Chemical Facility Anti-Terrorism Standards Program of the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes; as follows:

On page 2, line 7, striking “6 years” and insert “5 years and 3 months”.

SA 4. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. JOHNSON (for himself and Mr. PETERS)) proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 251, to extend by 15 months the Chemical Facility Anti-Terrorism Standards Program of the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes; as follows:

Amend the title so as to read: “An Act to extend by 15 months the Chemical Facility Anti-Terrorism Standards Program of the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes.”.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I have 5 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, January 16, 2019, at 10 a.m., to conduct an Executive Session.

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

The Committee on Environment and Public Works is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, January 16, 2019, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing on the nomination of Andrew Wheeler, of Virginia, to be Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, January 16, 2019, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing on the nomination of William Pelham Barr, of Virginia, to be Attorney General, Department of Justice.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, January 16, 2019, at 10 a.m., to conduct a closed briefing.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

The Special Committee on Aging is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, January 16, 2019, at 9:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled “Fighting Elder Fraud: Progress Made, Work to be Done”.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that my intern, Celine Wolff, have privileges of the floor for the remainder of the day.

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

APPOINTMENTS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the Democratic Leader, pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 99-93, as amended by Public Law 99-151, appoints the following Senators as members of the United States Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control: The Honorable DIANNE FEINSTEIN of California (Vice Chairman); The Honorable SHELDON WHITEHOUSE of Rhode Island; The Honorable JACKY ROSEN of Nevada.

The Chair announces, on behalf of the Majority Leader, pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 100-458, sec. 114(b)(2)(c), the appointment of the following individual to serve as a member of the Board of Trustees of the John C. Stennis Center for Public Service Training and Development for a six-year term: Thomas Daffron of Maine.

CHEMICAL FACILITY ANTI-TERRORISM STANDARDS PROGRAM EXTENSION ACT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Sen-

ate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 8, H.R. 251.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 251) to extend by two years the Chemical Facility Anti-Terrorism Standards Program of the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the Johnson amendment at the desk be considered and agreed to, the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed, the Johnson title amendment be agreed to, and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The amendment (No. 3) was agreed to as follows:

(Purpose: To extend by 15 months the Chemical Facility Anti-Terrorism Standards Program of the Department of Homeland Security)

On page 2, line 7, striking “6 years” and insert “5 years and 3 months”.

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. 251), as amended, was passed.

The amendment (No. 4) was agreed to as follows:

(Purpose: To amend the title)

Amend the title so as to read: “An Act to extend by 15 months the Chemical Facility Anti-Terrorism Standards Program of the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes.”.

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, JANUARY 17, 2019

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 4 p.m. Thursday, January 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; further, following leader remarks, the Senate resume consideration on the motion to proceed to S. 109; finally, notwithstanding the provisions of rule XXII, there be 30 minutes of debate equally divided between the two leaders or their designees, and upon the use or yielding back of that time, the Senate vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to S. 109.

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

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

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 following the remarks of Senator MERKLEY.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, the most important words of our Constitution are the first three: "We the People." Those three words, written in big, bold, beautiful script, convey the mission of our Constitution. We are a nation, as Abraham Lincoln opined, "of the people, by the people, and for the people." That was the mission.

Our Constitution also lays out how our Founding Fathers intended to be a nation of, by, and for the people to be governed by coequal branches, with the branch carrying the weight of policy development being Congress: the House, and the Senate. The Executive is to have quite a different role in executing the laws. Judiciary has yet another role in weighing whether the laws are in accordance with the parameters of the Constitution—the principles of the Constitution.

So there we are, the branch of government—the Senate and the House—with the power of the purse, with the responsibility for laying out the governing vision and rules for our Nation.

Yet, one-quarter of our government goes unfunded for a fourth week. Why is this Chamber not full of Senators? Why are we not debating funding bills? Why is there not a bill before the Senate right now? It is because the rhythm of the floor in this Chamber is guided by the majority leader. The majority leader refuses to put the bill on the floor so we can go about our work, putting the government back in business and ending this shutdown.

The majority leader has refused to have the Senate fulfill its responsibility and, indeed, has said: "... will not take up any proposal that does not have a real chance of ... getting a Presidential signature."

In the Constitution, we have the ability to set law without a Presidential signature. It is certainly not a waste of time to be here debating proposals for funding the government. In fact, this is a complete abdication of our responsibility. It is an abdication at a time when 800,000 American families have a mother or father who is not getting paid, when many more thousands of contractors are not getting paid. Millions of Americans are seeking government services and finding there is no one to answer their phone call or their letter or process their online application, whether for an FAA mortgage, whether for an agricultural grant or loan for the next farming season, whether it is any of a host of hundreds of roles the government plays in facilitating the commerce and life of this Nation.

President Trump and the Senate majority are holding seven funding bills hostage. Hostage-taking is not the wisest move. Only one of these hos-

tages has anything to do with the battle over the border. So why not release six of these hostages? Why not end the Trump-McConnell shutdown and release six of the seven hostages and on the seventh do a continuing resolution so we can continue debating the issues at stake while putting people back to work. That is a pretty good idea.

Here is the genius of the idea, which is, these are bills that already have support in the Senate. If we were to look at that support, we would find it was substantial when these bills came through in a bipartisan fashion under a Republican-led Senate. You have the Republican endorsement from here and you have the Democratic endorsement from the House. That is the making of a path forward.

Yet we need to remind the Members how our Constitution is constructed. Article I section 7 says in an abbreviated format: "If he approve he shall sign it, but if not he shall return it, with his Objections." Then it goes back to the House and Senate, whichever body first initiated it. "... and if approved by two-thirds ... it shall become a Law."

Let's recognize that the vision of our Constitution was not for us to sit on some chair or bench somewhere waiting for someone far down Pennsylvania Avenue to tell us what to do. That is not fulfilling our job. The President is supposed to implement the laws we pass—the vision we adopt—not for us to sit here doing nothing, waiting for the man in the Oval Office to tell us he has some message from on high on what we are supposed to do. No, that is not the vision of our Constitution.

It is disturbing that a responsibility we all signed on to—we took our oath of office—is being neglected in this Chamber at this moment, when so many Americans are suffering as a result.

Those funding bills that I was speaking of and that partisan support, how strong it was—the Agriculture bill, Interior, Financial Services, General Government, Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development. Those passed this floor just a few weeks ago on a 92-to-6 vote. How much more bipartisan does it get?

The State and Foreign Operations bill passed out of the Republican-led Appropriations Committee 31 to 0. The Commerce, Justice, and Science spending bill passed 30 to 1 in our spending committee. Homeland Security passed out 26 to 5.

So these have a powerful imprint of overwhelming bipartisan support in this Chamber, and yet we sit here afraid to take action and lay out the vision we have a responsibility to lay out.

I hope every Member will say back home that they invite the feedback of their constituents; that they will hold townhalls because then they will hear what I hear, which is that is an absurdity. It is an irresponsibility. It is a failure of leadership. It is a neglect of

duty, and that is not what this Chamber should be about. It is not a proud moment to have such dysfunction in the heart of the Senate.

I am reminded of the historical reference: "While Nero fiddles, Rome burns." It is a reference to the year A.D. 64, when Rome burned to the ground. The historian Suetonius records that Nero was responsible for the fire, and he watched it from a tower while playing an instrument and singing about the destruction of a different place—the destruction of Troy.

Here we sit today with our leadership's fiddling while our Nation suffers, while our leadership watches from afar from the tower, playing some fiddle for its amusement, instead of taking action here on the floor of the Senate.

While the Republican Senate leadership fiddles, our farmers aren't getting the funds or assistance they need to get through the winter to prepare for the next season because the Department of Agriculture is closed for business.

While the Republican leadership of this Chamber fiddles, firefighters whom we ask to risk their lives in fighting massive infernos in our Nation's forests are missing out on critical training and preparation time for the next fire season. In addition, the work being done to thin the forests, to make the forests more fire resistant, is suspended. The work getting the fuel off the forest floors to make them more fire resistant is suspended. The prescription burns being done to make the forests more fire resistant are canceled. Yet this is the time they have to happen. While the leadership fiddles, it is setting the stage for more savage forest fires to wreak havoc on the Western States in the United States in the summer to come.

While the Republican leadership of this Chamber fiddles, 100,000 low-income tenants are at risk because there is no staffer in place at Housing and Urban Development to renew the 1,100 affordable housing contracts that expired last month.

While the leadership fiddles, small, rural economies, like that of Lakeview, OR, are stuck in limbo and are unable to move forward on critical projects. According to the South Central Oregon Economic Development District's director, they are working at trying to give a loan to a small business in Lakeview, but they need EPA staff approval to be able to use the grant funding for an environmental assessment before they can borrow funds to buy a building. So they are up the creek while the Republican leadership fiddles.

The real victims in this misguided standoff are the hundreds of thousands of Federal workers who aren't being paid and the contractors who might never be paid. Let's listen to them. What do they have to say about this? Are they writing and saying: "Love this dysfunction in the Senate. Love

the failure of leadership. Love the incompetence. Love the fact that nobody is working here to solve the problem?"

No, that is not what they are saying.

Erin, a furloughed Forest Service employee of Sandy, OR, writes that both she and her husband are Forest Service employees who have been furloughed in the Mt. Hood National Forest, and they are terrified about their personal finances.

Erin writes:

I have two boys that I will still have to continue to pay daycare for so I do not lose their spot. That's \$1,400 a month alone.

She went on to write:

We have to be smart on how we balance our finances because the cost of living is going up, but our salaries have not been increased besides a minor cost-of-living adjustment last year. So I am very worried what a long shutdown means for my family and my coworkers.

Erin and her husband have every right to be worried about what is in the future for her family. They are suffering the effects of this shutdown through no fault of their own.

Steven, of southeast Portland, writes:

I am writing as a constituent, residing in southeast Portland, and as a furloughed Federal employee. I do not in any way support President Trump's efforts to build a wall along our southern border. The proposed wall is unneeded. It would be a wantonly wasteful use of taxpayer money. It would be environmentally destructive, and it would further the inhumane disregard of the rights of those seeking asylum.

Steven is a Federal worker who is not being paid, and he doesn't support this shutdown.

Julie, the wife of a firefighter in Redmond, OR, wrote last week that her husband "isn't able to work because of the government shutdown." In just over a week, they are supposed to hire all of their seasonal firefighters for the summer. If they can't work, the hiring will get delayed or not happen, which will put communities at serious risk this summer from wilderness fires. This risk for this coming summer is very real in our State of Oregon.

Julie writes:

In no way is it OK to let the government shut down. . . . Don't participate in holding our own country hostage.

Dr. Genevieve Grady, of Sheridan, OR, wrote:

I am a licensed clinical psychologist who is working at the Federal Bureau of Prisons in Sheridan, OR. I am also a single mom with two children under the age of 5. As an essential Federal employee, I am required to continue to work without being paid. As a licensed psychologist, I could cultivate outside work with Agency permission to supplement my income. However, I am unable to do this due to having to continue working full time. Given that I am a single mother of two small children, I must provide care for my children during all other hours of the day. In order to maintain a roof over my and my children's heads, I have had to contact my Federal student loan company to seek relief. Unfortunately, they cannot alter my student loan status any earlier than February 6. My daycare provider, who watched my children so that I may continue going to work with-

out pay, is an in-home provider with three teenaged children of her own. I cannot ask her to go without pay as she too needs to continue keeping her family financially stable.

She writes:

There are very few expenses in my life that can go without money: food, daycare, gas to get to work, car insurance to drive legally, a phone required for my job to contact me in an emergency, medical expenses. Both of my kids have been sick during this furlough and have had to see the doctor to get medication. After 26 days without pay, these bills continue to require cash to pay, and I continue to wonder how much longer I should keep coming to work or when I should look for another job.

Linnea from Roseburg, OR, writes:

The unrepentant hostage holding of people's wages is cruel and shows just how removed the Trump administration is from the American people. I live in a single-income household in which the only breadwinner is a government employee, my mother. This means that we went through the holidays not knowing when the next paycheck was going to come. We still don't know.

Britt, a furloughed IRS worker who was proud of his government service and called it his small way of participating in our democracy, writes:

My savings is small and will not last through an extended shutdown. I have already applied for unemployment insurance compensation, but that process takes several weeks before I actually receive any money. I have never had to file for unemployment before, and it's quite unsettling that I am forced to resort to government aid.

Like so many other Oregonians in a State that is 20-percent National Forest, Brien, of Pendleton, OR, writes:

As a United States Forest Service employee, I am waiting for relocation reimbursement on a current move. I used most of my savings to move duty stations 2 months ago, and with the current furlough, I cannot afford to miss a pay period even if I will get it in the end. I am currently paying interest on my move that was to be covered by the Forest Service. If the furlough lasts longer than January 13, it will be extremely difficult to avoid late payment charges on utilities, mortgage, and other bills. Don't hold me and my middle-class family hostage to rich men's antics.

That is exactly what is happening with a President who is so far removed from the reality of ordinary people, with a President who worked with the leadership of this body in the Senate to approve a series of spending bills that we passed by a vast bipartisan majority but who then changed his mind and withdrew his support after they were passed. The President switched his position after the bills went through the Senate. The President bragged about owning this shutdown. He didn't have 1 second of worry about the plight of an ordinary American who was struggling to pay his bills.

From his ivory tower, his skyscraper in Florida, and his club—and, oh, he is still happy with his golf courses—he has no idea of the pain this is inflicting on people. If someone explains it to him, he doesn't care. That says a lot about the failure of leadership. As this writer said, "Don't hold me and my

middle-class family hostage to rich men's antics."

Air traffic controllers are essential to the safety of our air traffic across this country. I received a stack of handwritten letters last week—old-fashioned, ink on paper, all kinds of paper, all colors of pens. They were handwritten by Oregon air traffic controllers who have been absolutely incensed with what is going on. Being an air traffic controller is an unbelievably tough job. Air traffic controllers are responsible for thousands of lives at any given moment. They have to be on their game 100 percent of the time. It can't be 99.5 or a plane is going to crash on you that day. These folks are working without pay. It is inflicting stress and anxiety on people who should have their absolute, full attention solely on the job of making sure no plane hits another.

James Ferguson, of Forest Grove, writes:

If the shutdown lasts any longer, I will lose my health insurance and will no longer be able to pay for my 1-year-old son's physical therapy, potentially adding additional months to correct his spine and neck muscle problems.

This is another example of the pain. Here is a parent who feels the medical affliction of his child is going to be accentuated by the actions of the Republican leadership in the Senate and President Trump in the Oval Office. James isn't complaining that he needs to go shopping for new clothes or that he wants to check out a new car. He is worried about getting medical care for his infant child. He is worried about his infant child's recovery and of his improvement being stalled or damaged by this callous, inhumane shutdown.

Trevor Stokes, of Hillsboro, OR, and his wife are veterans of the U.S. Navy. They certainly are no strangers to sacrificing for their country.

In fact, in his letter, Trevor writes:

Over the past few weeks, during the shutdown, I have worked both Christmas and New Year's as well as their eves. I was not able to spend time with my family, which is a necessary sacrifice.

Then he writes:

Now our financial future is uncertain due to a potentially long unpaid period. I've had to withdraw from mutual funds just to cover monthly financial obligations. My family and the families of my air traffic colleagues have suffered from the sudden loss of income. Please end the shutdown.

We ask so much of these people. We ask long hours and missed holidays in the name of protecting us as travelers. Shouldn't we also be looking out for them in their time of need?

Why don't we reopen the Department of Transportation and make sure our air traffic controllers start getting paid? All of these individuals are saying: Do your job. Do your job. Do your job. Senate leadership, do your job.

Put the bills that have passed the Senate already back on the floor so that we can send them to the Oval Office. Let us do our job.

This Trump-McConnell shutdown, this inaction of the Senate, abdicating

its responsibility—isn't that exactly parallel to Nero fiddling while Rome burned? That fire here in America is touching the lives of so many. There are 800,000 workers without pay. Thousands more are contractors. Millions of Americans are caught in limbo in the midst of an important transaction—applying for an agricultural loan, trying to get a mortgage, signing up for help from the Small Business Administration to launch their business, getting their paperwork processed in one of 1,000 different ways, and here, the leadership fiddles while the American public suffers. It is wrong.

It may not be comfortable to have a debate on the spending bills. It may not be comfortable to vote on these bills. It may not be sweet to support or oppose a particular amendment, but do you know what is worse? What is worse is doing nothing.

That is what this Chamber is doing right now. It is doing nothing, despite our responsibility to millions of Americans to act. Let's change that. Let's change it now.

I understand that the majority is going on a retreat. Instead of going on a retreat to play the fiddle, how about you be here on the floor and put these bills on the floor? Let's get all 100 Senators on the floor to actually talk to each other, to actually wrestle with the issues, to actually make our arguments, and to actually take the votes instead of going off somewhere to party. That is just wrong.

I encourage the majority leader to read the letter that was sent to him today from the freshmen from the House of Representatives down the hall. The freshmen haven't been here long enough to become cynical. They haven't become trapped in the partisan boundaries and warfare that seem to ensnare so much of this Chamber and the Chamber across the way. No, they are here, fresh from other occupations and other responsibilities, still full of common sense and the passion to do what is right for the American people. So let's listen to them.

Today they sent a letter to Majority Leader McConnell, which I read on the floor earlier today, and they said: Put the bills on the floor, put the spending bills on the floor—the bills that have already passed here in the Republican-led Senate or that passed overwhelmingly by the Republican-led Appropriations Committee, endorsed by the Democratic House. Put them on the floor and act.

Let's listen to the freshmen down the hall. They are reminding us that we have a responsibility to act, and let's do so immediately.

Thank you.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 4 P.M.
TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 4 p.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 6:35 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, January 17, 2019, at 4 p.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

MINDY BRASHEARS, OF TEXAS, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE FOR FOOD SAFETY, VICE ELISABETH ANN HAGEN, RESIGNED.

NAOMI C. EARP, OF MARYLAND, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE, VICE JOE LEONARD, JR.

SCOTT HUTCHINS, OF INDIANA, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE FOR RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND ECONOMICS, VICE CATHERINE E. WOTEKI.

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

WILLIAM BOOKLESS, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE PRINCIPAL DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR, NATIONAL NUCLEAR SECURITY ADMINISTRATION, VICE MADELYN R. CREEDON.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

VERONICA DAIGLE, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, VICE FREDERICK VOLLRATH, RESIGNED.

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

JOSEPH BRUCE HAMILTON, OF TEXAS, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD FOR A TERM EXPIRING OCTOBER 18, 2022. VICE DANIEL J. SANTOS, TERM EXPIRED.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

THOMAS MCCAFFERY, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, VICE JONATHAN WOODSON, RESIGNED.

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

JESSIE HILL ROBERSON, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD FOR A TERM EXPIRING OCTOBER 18, 2023. (RE-APPOINTMENT)

LISA VICKERS, OF TEXAS, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD FOR A TERM EXPIRING OCTOBER 18, 2021. VICE JOSEPH BRUCE HAMILTON, TERM EXPIRED.

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

SETH DANIEL APPLETON, OF MISSOURI, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, VICE KATHERINE M. O'REGAN.

EXPORT-IMPORT BANK OF THE UNITED STATES

SPENCER BACHUS III, OF ALABAMA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE EXPORT-IMPORT BANK OF THE UNITED STATES FOR A TERM EXPIRING JANUARY 20, 2023. VICE PATRICIA M. LOUI, TERM EXPIRED.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

THELMA DRAKE, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION ADMINISTRATOR, VICE PETER M. ROGOFF, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

DINO FALASCHETTI, OF MONTANA, TO BE DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF FINANCIAL RESEARCH, DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY, FOR A TERM OF SIX YEARS, VICE RICHARD B. BERNER, RESIGNED.

NATIONAL CREDIT UNION ADMINISTRATION

RODNEY HOOD, OF NORTH CAROLINA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL CREDIT UNION ADMINISTRATION BOARD FOR A TERM EXPIRING AUGUST 2, 2023. VICE RICHARD T. METSGER, TERM EXPIRED.

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

ROBERT HUNTER KURTZ, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, VICE SANDRA BROOKS HENRIQUEZ, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

JEFFREY NADANER, OF MARYLAND, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF COMMERCE, VICE DAVID W. MILLS, RETIRED.

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

BIMAL PATEL, OF GEORGIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY, VICE CHRISTOPHER CAMPBELL, RESIGNED.

EXPORT-IMPORT BANK OF THE UNITED STATES

JUDITH DELZOPPO PRYOR, OF OHIO, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE EXPORT-IMPORT BANK OF THE UNITED STATES FOR A TERM EXPIRING JANUARY 20, 2021. VICE LARRY W. WALTHER, TERM EXPIRED.

KIMBERLY A. REED, OF WEST VIRGINIA, TO BE PRESIDENT OF THE EXPORT-IMPORT BANK OF THE UNITED STATES FOR A TERM EXPIRING JANUARY 20, 2021. VICE FRED F. HOCHBERG, RESIGNED.

CLAUDIA SLACK, OF NEW YORK, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE EXPORT-IMPORT

BANK OF THE UNITED STATES FOR A TERM EXPIRING JANUARY 20, 2023. VICE SEAN ROBERT MULVANEY, TERM EXPIRED.

CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION

ANN MARIE BUERKLE, OF NEW YORK, TO BE A COMMISSIONER OF THE CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION FOR A TERM OF SEVEN YEARS FROM OCTOBER 27, 2018. (RE-APPOINTMENT)

ANN MARIE BUERKLE, OF NEW YORK, TO BE CHAIRMAN OF THE CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION, VICE ELLIOT F. KAYE.

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON AIRPORTS AUTHORITY

ALAN E. COBB, OF KANSAS, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON AIRPORTS AUTHORITY FOR A TERM EXPIRING NOVEMBER 22, 2023. VICE WILLIAM SHAW MCDERMOTT, TERM EXPIRED.

AMTRAK BOARD OF DIRECTORS

RICK A. DEARBORN, OF OKLAHOMA, TO BE A DIRECTOR OF THE AMTRAK BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR A TERM OF FIVE YEARS, VICE JEFFREY R. MORELAND, TERM EXPIRED.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

DIANA FURCHTGOTT-ROTH, OF MARYLAND, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION. (NEW POSITION)

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

LANE GENATOWSKI, OF NEW YORK, TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE ADVANCED RESEARCH PROJECTS AGENCY-ENERGY, DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY, VICE ELLEN DUDLEY WILLIAMS.

AMTRAK BOARD OF DIRECTORS

JOSEPH RYAN GRUTERS, OF FLORIDA, TO BE A DIRECTOR OF THE AMTRAK BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR A TERM OF FIVE YEARS. VICE ALBERT DICLEMENTE, TERM EXPIRED.

CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING

JANICE MIRIAM HELLREICH, OF HAWAII, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING FOR A TERM EXPIRING JANUARY 31, 2024. VICE HOWARD ABEL HUSOCK, TERM EXPIRED.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

HEIDI R. KING, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION, VICE MARK R. ROSEKIND.

CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING

ROBERT A. MANDELL, OF FLORIDA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING FOR A TERM EXPIRING JANUARY 31, 2022. VICE BRENT FRANKLIN NELSEN, TERM EXPIRED.

DON MUNCE, OF FLORIDA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING FOR A TERM EXPIRING JANUARY 31, 2024. VICE LORETTA CHERYL SUTLIFF, TERM EXPIRED.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

BARRY LEE MYERS, OF PENNSYLVANIA, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF COMMERCE FOR OCEANS AND ATMOSPHERE, VICE KATHRYN D. SULLIVAN, RESIGNED.

CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING

BRUCE M. RAMER, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING FOR A TERM EXPIRING JANUARY 31, 2024. (RE-APPOINTMENT)

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

MICHELLE A. SCHULTZ, OF PENNSYLVANIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD FOR THE TERM OF FIVE YEARS. (NEW POSITION)

AMTRAK BOARD OF DIRECTORS

LEON A. WESTMORELAND, OF GEORGIA, TO BE A DIRECTOR OF THE AMTRAK BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR A TERM OF FIVE YEARS. (NEW POSITION)

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON AIRPORTS AUTHORITY

WILLIAM SHAW MCDERMOTT, OF MASSACHUSETTS, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON AIRPORTS AUTHORITY FOR A TERM EXPIRING MAY 30, 2024. VICE NINA MITCHELL WELLS, TERM EXPIRED.

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

RITA BARANWAL, OF PENNSYLVANIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF ENERGY (NUCLEAR ENERGY), VICE PETER BRUCE LYONS, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

SUSAN COMBS, OF TEXAS, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR, VICE RHEA S. SUH, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

WILLIAM COOPER, OF MARYLAND, TO BE GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY, VICE STEVEN CROLEY, RESIGNED.

CHRISTOPHER FALL, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF SCIENCE, DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY, VICE CHERRY ANN MURRAY.

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION

AIMEE KATHRYN JORJANI, OF WISCONSIN, TO BE CHAIRMAN OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION FOR A TERM EXPIRING JANUARY 19, 2021, VICE MILFORD WAYNE DONALDSON, TERM EXPIRED.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

JOHN FLEMING, OF LOUISIANA, TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF COMMERCE FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, VICE ROY K. J. WILLIAMS.

TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY

JOHN L. RYDER, OF TENNESSEE, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY FOR A TERM EXPIRING MAY 18, 2021, VICE MICHAEL MCWHERTER, TERM EXPIRED.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

PETER C. WRIGHT OF MICHIGAN, TO BE ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR, OFFICE OF SOLID WASTE, ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY, VICE MATHY STANISLAUS.

SOCIAL SECURITY ADVISORY BOARD

MICHAEL J. ASTRUE, OF MASSACHUSETTS, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ADVISORY BOARD FOR A TERM EXPIRING SEPTEMBER 30, 2022, VICE ALAN L. COHEN, TERM EXPIRED.

JASON J. FICHTNER, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ADVISORY BOARD FOR A TERM EXPIRING SEPTEMBER 30, 2024, VICE LANHEE J. CHEN, TERM EXPIRED.

FEDERAL HOSPITAL INSURANCE TRUST FUND

JAMES B. LOCKHART III, OF CONNECTICUT, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE FEDERAL HOSPITAL INSURANCE TRUST FUND FOR A TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE CHARLES P. BLAHOUS III, TERM EXPIRED.

FEDERAL OLD-AGE AND SURVIVORS INSURANCE TRUST FUND

JAMES B. LOCKHART III, OF CONNECTICUT, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE FEDERAL OLD-AGE AND SURVIVORS INSURANCE TRUST FUND AND THE FEDERAL DISABILITY INSURANCE TRUST FUND FOR A TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE CHARLES P. BLAHOUS III, TERM EXPIRED.

FEDERAL SUPPLEMENTARY MEDICAL INSURANCE TRUST FUND

JAMES B. LOCKHART III, OF CONNECTICUT, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE FEDERAL SUPPLEMENTARY MEDICAL INSURANCE TRUST FUND FOR A TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE CHARLES P. BLAHOUS III, TERM EXPIRED.

SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

DAVID FABIAN BLACK, OF NORTH DAKOTA, TO BE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OF SOCIAL SECURITY FOR THE TERM EXPIRING JANUARY 19, 2019, VICE CAROLYN W. COLVIN, TERM EXPIRED.

DAVID FABIAN BLACK, OF NORTH DAKOTA, TO BE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OF SOCIAL SECURITY FOR A TERM EXPIRING JANUARY 19, 2025. (REAPPOINTMENT)

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

ELIZABETH DARLING, OF TEXAS, TO BE COMMISSIONER ON CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, VICE RAFAEL J. LOPEZ.

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

MICHAEL J. DESMOND, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE CHIEF COUNSEL FOR THE INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE AND AN ASSISTANT GENERAL COUNSEL IN THE DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY, VICE WILLIAM J. WILKINS.

MICHAEL FAULKENDER, OF MARYLAND, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY, VICE KAREN DYNAN.

UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL TRADE COMMISSION

AMY KARPEL, OF WASHINGTON, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL TRADE COMMISSION FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE TERM EXPIRING JUNE 16, 2020, VICE F. SCOTT KIEFF, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

JEFFREY KESSLER, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF COMMERCE, VICE PAUL PIQUADO, RESIGNED.

SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

ANDREW M. SAUL, OF NEW YORK, TO BE COMMISSIONER OF SOCIAL SECURITY FOR THE TERM EXPIRING JANUARY 19, 2019, VICE MICHAEL J. ASTRUE, RESIGNED.

ANDREW M. SAUL, OF NEW YORK, TO BE COMMISSIONER OF SOCIAL SECURITY FOR THE TERM EXPIRING JANUARY 19, 2025. (REAPPOINTMENT)

UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL TRADE COMMISSION

RANDOLPH J. STAYIN, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL TRADE COMMISSION FOR A TERM EXPIRING JUNE 16, 2026, VICE MEREDITH M. BROADBENT, TERM EXPIRED.

OVERSEAS PRIVATE INVESTMENT CORPORATION

IRVING BAILEY, OF FLORIDA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE OVERSEAS PRIVATE INVESTMENT CORPORATION FOR A TERM EXPIRING DECEMBER 17, 2021, VICE MATTHEW MAXWELL TAYLOR KENNEDY, TERM EXPIRED.

MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORPORATION

ALEXANDER CRENSHAW, OF FLORIDA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORPORATION FOR A TERM OF THREE YEARS, VICE MARK GREEN, TERM EXPIRED.

OVERSEAS PRIVATE INVESTMENT CORPORATION

LOUIS DEJOY, OF NORTH CAROLINA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE OVERSEAS PRIVATE INVESTMENT CORPORATION FOR A TERM EXPIRING DECEMBER 17, 2020, VICE JAMES M. DEMERS, TERM EXPIRED.

MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORPORATION

GEORGE M. MARCUS, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORPORATION FOR A TERM OF THREE YEARS, VICE MORTON H. HALPERIN, TERM EXPIRED.

SUSAN M. MCCUE, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORPORATION FOR A TERM OF TWO YEARS. (REAPPOINTMENT)

UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

RICHARD C. PARKER, OF NORTH CAROLINA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR OF THE UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, VICE T. CHARLES COOPER, RESIGNED.

OVERSEAS PRIVATE INVESTMENT CORPORATION

CHRISTOPHER P. VINCZE, OF MASSACHUSETTS, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE OVERSEAS PRIVATE INVESTMENT CORPORATION FOR A TERM EXPIRING DECEMBER 17, 2019, VICE TODD A. FISHER, TERM EXPIRED.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

JOHN P. ABIZAID, OF NEVADA, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA.

STEPHEN AKARD, OF INDIANA, TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF FOREIGN MISSIONS, WITH THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR, VICE GENTRY O. SMITH, RESIGNED.

UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

JOHN BARSA, OF FLORIDA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR OF THE UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, VICE MARCELA ESCOBARI.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

PAMELA BATES, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE ORGANIZATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT, WITH THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR.

MARSHALL BILLINGSLEA, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE AN UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (CIVILIAN SECURITY, DEMOCRACY, AND HUMAN RIGHTS), VICE SARAH SEWALL, RESIGNED.

LYNDA BLANCHARD, OF ALABAMA, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA.

INTER-AMERICAN FOUNDATION

KIMBERLY BREIER, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE INTER-AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR A TERM EXPIRING SEPTEMBER 20, 2020, VICE ADOLFO A. FRANCO, TERM EXPIRED.

UNITED NATIONS

ANDREW P. BREMBERG, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN GENEVA, WITH THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

BRIAN J. BULATAO, OF TEXAS, TO BE AN UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (MANAGEMENT), VICE PATRICK FRANCIS KENNEDY.

KATE MARIE BYRNES, OF FLORIDA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA.

MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORPORATION

SEAN CAIRCROSS, OF MINNESOTA, TO BE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORPORATION, VICE DANA J. HYDE.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

JOSEPH CELLA, OF MICHIGAN, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI, AND TO SERVE CONCURRENTLY AND WITHOUT ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION AS AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF KIRIBATI, THE REPUBLIC OF NAURU, THE KINGDOM OF TONGA, AND TUVALU.

UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

MINA CHANG, OF TEXAS, TO BE AN ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR OF THE UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, VICE JONATHAN NICHOLAS STIVERS.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

R. CLARKE COOPER, OF FLORIDA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE (POLITICAL-MILITARY AFFAIRS), VICE PUNEET TALWAR, RESIGNED.

INTERNATIONAL JOINT COMMISSION, UNITED STATES AND CANADA

JANE L. CORWIN, OF NEW YORK, TO BE COMMISSIONER ON THE PART OF THE UNITED STATES ON THE INTERNATIONAL JOINT COMMISSION, UNITED STATES AND CANADA, VICE LANA POLLACK.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

EDWARD F. CRAWFORD, OF OHIO, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO IRELAND.

ROBERT A. DESTRO, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR, VICE TOMASZ P. MALINOWSKI.

JEFFREY L. EBERHARDT, OF WISCONSIN, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE, TO BE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PRESIDENT FOR NUCLEAR NONPROLIFERATION, WITH THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR.

DAVID T. FISCHER, OF MICHIGAN, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE KINGDOM OF MOROCCO.

MICHAEL J. FITZPATRICK, OF VIRGINIA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF ECUADOR.

KENNETH S. GEORGE, OF TEXAS, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE ORIENTAL REPUBLIC OF URUGUAY.

JAMES S. GILMORE, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE U.S. REPRESENTATIVE TO THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE, WITH THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR.

BRETT P. GIROIR, OF TEXAS, TO BE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES ON THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION, VICE THOMAS FRIEDEN.

JEFFREY ROSS GUNTER, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF ICELAND.

KENNETH A. HOWERY, OF TEXAS, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE KINGDOM OF SWEDEN.

TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

DARRELL E. ISSA, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY, VICE LEOCADIA IRINE ZAK.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

RONALD DOUGLAS JOHNSON, OF FLORIDA, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF EL SALVADOR.

DOUG MANCHESTER, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE BAHAMAS.

LANA J. MARKS, OF FLORIDA, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA.

RONALD MORTENSEN, OF UTAH, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE (POPULATION, REFUGEES, AND MIGRATION), VICE ANNE CLAIRE RICHARD.

W. PATRICK MURPHY, OF VERMONT, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA.

BROADCASTING BOARD OF GOVERNORS

MICHAEL PACK, OF MARYLAND, TO BE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE BROADCASTING BOARD OF GOVERNORS FOR THE TERM OF THREE YEARS. (NEW POSITION)

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

JOHN RAKOLTA, JR., OF MICHIGAN, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES.

LEANDRO RIZZUTO, OF NEW JERSEY, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO BARBADOS, AND TO SERVE CONCURRENTLY AND WITHOUT ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION AS AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE FEDERATION OF SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS, SAINT LUCIA, ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA, THE COMMONWEALTH OF DOMINICA, GRENADA, AND SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES.

INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND

MARK ROSEN, OF CONNECTICUT, TO BE UNITED STATES EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND FOR A TERM OF TWO YEARS, VICE MARGRETHE LUNDSAGER, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DANIEL N. ROSENBLUM, OF MARYLAND, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN.

DAVID SCHENKER, OF NEW JERSEY, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE (NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS), VICE ANNE W. PATTERSON, RESIGNED.

INTERNATIONAL JOINT COMMISSION, UNITED STATES AND CANADA

ROBERT C. SISSON, OF MICHIGAN, TO BE COMMISSIONER ON THE PART OF THE UNITED STATES ON THE INTERNATIONAL JOINT COMMISSION, UNITED STATES AND CANADA, VICE DERETH BRITT GLANCE.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DAVID STILWELL, OF HAWAII, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE (EAST ASIAN AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS), VICE DANIEL R. RUSSELL.

PEACE CORPS

ALAN R. SWENDIMAN, OF NORTH CAROLINA, TO BE DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE PEACE CORPS, VICE CARLOS J. TORRES.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DONALD R. TAPIA, OF ARIZONA, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO JAMAICA.

KIP TOM, OF INDIANA, FOR THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR DURING HIS TENURE OF SERVICE AS U.S. REPRESENTATIVE TO THE UNITED NATIONS AGENCIES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE.

CHRISTINE J. TORETTI, OF PENNSYLVANIA, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF MALTA.

MATTHEW H. TUELLER, OF UTAH, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF IRAQ.

INTERNATIONAL JOINT COMMISSION, UNITED STATES AND CANADA

LANCE V. YOHE, OF NORTH DAKOTA, TO BE COMMISSIONER ON THE PART OF THE UNITED STATES ON THE INTERNATIONAL JOINT COMMISSION, UNITED STATES AND CANADA, VICE RICHARD M. MOY.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ADRIAN ZUCKERMAN, OF NEW JERSEY, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO ROMANIA.

NATIONAL FOUNDATION ON THE ARTS AND THE HUMANITIES

KATHE HICKS ALBRECHT, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON THE HUMANITIES FOR A TERM EXPIRING JANUARY 26, 2024, VICE BRUCE R. SIEVERS, TERM EXPIRED.

PENSION BENEFIT GUARANTY CORPORATION

GORDON HARTOGENSIS, OF CONNECTICUT, TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE PENSION BENEFIT GUARANTY CORPORATION FOR A TERM OF FIVE YEARS, VICE W. THOMAS REEDER, JR., RESIGNED.

NATIONAL FOUNDATION ON THE ARTS AND THE HUMANITIES

CHARLES WICKSER BANTA, OF NEW YORK, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON THE ARTS FOR A TERM EXPIRING SEPTEMBER 3, 2022, VICE MARIA ROSARIO JACKSON, TERM EXPIRED.

KEEGAN F. CALLANAN, OF VERMONT, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON THE HUMANITIES FOR A TERM EXPIRING JANUARY 26, 2024, VICE MANFREDI PICCOLOMINI, RESIGNED.

DAVID ARMAND DEKEYSER, OF ALABAMA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON THE HUMANITIES FOR A TERM EXPIRING JANUARY 26, 2020, VICE DAWN HO DELBANCO, TERM EXPIRED.

LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION

ROBERT J. GREY, JR., OF VIRGINIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION FOR A TERM EXPIRING JULY 13, 2020. (REAPPOINTMENT)

NATIONAL FOUNDATION ON THE ARTS AND THE HUMANITIES

KIM R. HOLMES, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON THE HUMANITIES FOR A TERM EXPIRING JANUARY 26, 2022, VICE PAULA BARKER DUFFY, TERM EXPIRED.

CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

VICTORIA ANN HUGHES, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE FOR A TERM EXPIRING OCTOBER 6, 2021. (REAPPOINTMENT)

NATIONAL FOUNDATION ON THE ARTS AND THE HUMANITIES

MICHELLE ITCZAK, OF INDIANA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON THE ARTS FOR A TERM EXPIRING SEPTEMBER 3, 2020, VICE IRVIN M. MAYFIELD, JR., TERM EXPIRED.

PHYLLIS KAMINSKY, OF ARIZONA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON THE HUMANITIES FOR A TERM EXPIRING JANUARY 26, 2020, VICE ADELE LOGAN ALEXANDER, TERM EXPIRED.

LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION

ABIGAIL L. KUZMA, OF INDIANA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION FOR A TERM EXPIRING JULY 13, 2019, VICE CHARLES NORMAN WILTSE KECKLER, RESIGNED.

ABIGAIL L. KUZMA, OF INDIANA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION FOR A TERM EXPIRING JULY 13, 2022. (REAPPOINTMENT)

JOHN G. LEVI, OF ILLINOIS, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION FOR A TERM EXPIRING JULY 13, 2020. (REAPPOINTMENT)

NATIONAL FOUNDATION ON THE ARTS AND THE HUMANITIES

BARBARA COLEEN LONG, OF MISSOURI, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON THE ARTS FOR A TERM EXPIRING SEPTEMBER 3, 2022, VICE DEEPA GUPTA, TERM EXPIRED.

LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION

JOHN G. MALCOLM, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION FOR A TERM EXPIRING JULY 13, 2020, VICE MARTHA L. MINOW, TERM EXPIRED.

FRANK X. NEUNER, JR., OF LOUISIANA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION FOR A TERM EXPIRING JULY 13, 2019, VICE SHARON L. BROWNE, RESIGNED.

FRANK X. NEUNER, JR., OF LOUISIANA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION FOR A TERM EXPIRING JULY 13, 2022. (REAPPOINTMENT)

CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

HEATHER REYNOLDS, OF TEXAS, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE FOR A TERM EXPIRING SEPTEMBER 14, 2021, VICE DEAN A. REUTER, TERM EXPIRED.

LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION

GLORIA VALENCIA-WEBER, OF NEW MEXICO, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION FOR A TERM EXPIRING JULY 13, 2020. (REAPPOINTMENT)

NATIONAL FOUNDATION ON THE ARTS AND THE HUMANITIES

CARLETON VARNEY, OF MASSACHUSETTS, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON THE ARTS FOR A TERM EXPIRING SEPTEMBER 3, 2022, VICE PAUL W. HODES, TERM EXPIRED.

JEAN M. YARBROUGH, OF MAINE, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON THE HUMANITIES FOR A TERM EXPIRING JANUARY 26, 2022, VICE MARTHA WAGNER WEINBERG, TERM EXPIRED.

FEDERAL MINE SAFETY AND HEALTH REVIEW COMMISSION

WILLIAM I. ALTHEN, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE FEDERAL MINE SAFETY AND HEALTH REVIEW COMMISSION FOR A TERM OF SIX YEARS EXPIRING AUGUST 30, 2024. (REAPPOINTMENT)

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

WILLIAM BEACH, OF KANSAS, TO BE COMMISSIONER OF LABOR STATISTICS, DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, FOR A TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE ERICA LYNN GROSHEN, TERM EXPIRED.

NATIONAL FOUNDATION ON THE ARTS AND THE HUMANITIES

MARY ANNE CARTER, OF TENNESSEE, TO BE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS FOR A TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE R. JANE CHU, RESIGNED.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION

JANET DHILLON, OF PENNSYLVANIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION FOR A TERM EXPIRING JULY 1, 2022, VICE JENNY R. YANG, TERM EXPIRING.

SHARON FAST GUSTAFSON, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION FOR A TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE P. DAVID LOPEZ, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

JOHN LOWRY III, OF ILLINOIS, TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF LABOR FOR VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING, VICE MICHAEL HERMAN MICHAUD.

SCOTT A. MUGNO, OF PENNSYLVANIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF LABOR, VICE DAVID MORRIS MICHAELS.

JOHN P. PALLASCH, OF KENTUCKY, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF LABOR, VICE PORTIA Y. WU.

FEDERAL MINE SAFETY AND HEALTH REVIEW COMMISSION

MARCO M. RAJKOVICH, JR., OF KENTUCKY, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE FEDERAL MINE SAFETY AND HEALTH REVIEW COMMISSION FOR A TERM OF SIX YEARS EXPIRING AUGUST 30, 2024, VICE ROBERT F. COHEN, JR., TERM EXPIRED.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

CHERYL MARIE STANTON, OF SOUTH CAROLINA, TO BE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE WAGE AND HOUR DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, VICE DAVID WEILL, RESIGNED.

FEDERAL MINE SAFETY AND HEALTH REVIEW COMMISSION

ARTHUR R. TRAYNOR III, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE FEDERAL MINE SAFETY AND HEALTH REVIEW COMMISSION FOR A TERM EXPIRING AUGUST 30, 2022, VICE PATRICK K. NAKAMURA, TERM EXPIRED.

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

RON A. BLOOM, OF NEW YORK, TO BE A GOVERNOR OF THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE FOR A TERM EXPIRING DECEMBER 8, 2020, VICE MICKEY D. BARNETT, TERM EXPIRED.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

WILLIAM BRYAN, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY, VICE L. REGINALD BROTHERS, JR., RESIGNED.

MERIT SYSTEMS PROTECTION BOARD

JULIA AKINS CLARK, OF MARYLAND, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE MERIT SYSTEMS PROTECTION BOARD FOR THE TERM OF SEVEN YEARS EXPIRING MARCH 1, 2021, VICE ANNE MARIE WAGNER, TERM EXPIRED.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

JOSEPH V. CUFFARI, OF ARIZONA, TO BE INSPECTOR GENERAL, DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY, VICE JOHN ROTH.

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

ROBERT M. DUNCAN, OF KENTUCKY, TO BE A GOVERNOR OF THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE FOR A TERM EXPIRING DECEMBER 8, 2025. (REAPPOINTMENT)

MERIT SYSTEMS PROTECTION BOARD

DENNIS DEAN KIRK, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE MERIT SYSTEMS PROTECTION BOARD FOR THE TERM OF SEVEN YEARS EXPIRING MARCH 1, 2023, VICE SUSAN TSUI GRUNDMANN, TERM EXPIRED.

DENNIS DEAN KIRK, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE CHAIRMAN OF THE MERIT SYSTEMS PROTECTION BOARD, VICE SUSAN TSUI GRUNDMANN.

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

ROMAN MARTINEZ IV, OF FLORIDA, TO BE A GOVERNOR OF THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE FOR A TERM EXPIRING DECEMBER 8, 2024, VICE JAMES C. MILLER III, TERM EXPIRED.

MERIT SYSTEMS PROTECTION BOARD

ANDREW F. MAUNZ, OF OHIO, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE MERIT SYSTEMS PROTECTION BOARD FOR THE TERM OF SEVEN YEARS EXPIRING MARCH 1, 2025, VICE MARK A. ROBBINS, TERM EXPIRED.

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

CALVIN R. TUCKER, OF PENNSYLVANIA, TO BE A GOVERNOR OF THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE FOR A TERM EXPIRING DECEMBER 8, 2023, VICE CAROLYN L. GALLAGHER, TERM EXPIRED.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

RONALD D. VITIELLO, OF ILLINOIS, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF HOMELAND SECURITY, VICE SARAH R. SALDANA.

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE

WILLIAM R. EVANINA, OF PENNSYLVANIA, TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL COUNTERINTELLIGENCE AND SECURITY CENTER. (NEW POSITION)

PRIVACY AND CIVIL LIBERTIES OVERSIGHT BOARD

ADITYA BAMZAI, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE PRIVACY AND CIVIL LIBERTIES OVERSIGHT BOARD FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE TERM EXPIRING JANUARY 29, 2020, VICE ELISEBETH COLLINS COOK, RESIGNING.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

SHANNON LEE GOESSLING, OF FLORIDA, TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN OFFICE, DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, VICE SUSAN B. CARBON.

PRIVACY AND CIVIL LIBERTIES OVERSIGHT BOARD

TRAVIS LEBLANC, OF MARYLAND, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE PRIVACY AND CIVIL LIBERTIES OVERSIGHT BOARD FOR A TERM EXPIRING JANUARY 29, 2022, VICE JAMES XAVIER DEMPSEY, TERM EXPIRED.

UNITED STATES PAROLE COMMISSION

VIRGIL MADDEN, OF INDIANA, TO BE A COMMISSIONER OF THE UNITED STATES PAROLE COMMISSION FOR A

TERM OF SIX YEARS, VICE PATRICIA CUSHWA, TERM EXPIRED.

FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION

JAMES E. TRAINOR III, OF TEXAS, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION FOR A TERM EX-

PIRING APRIL 30, 2023, VICE MATTHEW S. PETERSEN, TERM EXPIRED.

GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

ROBERT C. TAPPELLA, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE, VICE DAVITA VANCE-COOKS.

SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

DAVID CHRISTIAN TRYON, OF OHIO, TO BE CHIEF COUNSEL FOR ADVOCACY, SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, VICE DARRYL L. DEPRIEST, RESIGNED.