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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable KEVIN CRAMER, a Senator from the State of North Dakota.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal Father, strong to save, whose arm has bound the restless waves, we praise You for Your magnificent love that awakens us each day.

Thank You for lawmakers who strive to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with You. Lord, continue to guide their feet and teach them Your paths.

In these complex times, show yourself strong on behalf of those who love You. Solve the riddles that confound us. Confuse those who seek to hinder the unfolding of Your loving providence.

Lord, bring sanity to a world that often seems to spin out of control. Nothing is impossible for you, so transform our dark yesterdays into bright tomorrows.

We pray in Your strong Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

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

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, May 1, 2019.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable KEVIN CRAMER, a Senator from the State of North Dakota, to perform the duties of the Chair.

CHUCK GRASSLEY,
President pro tempore.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

NOMINATIONS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, this week the Senate is continuing to make progress in consideration of the President's nominees. By the end of this week, three more executive branch and five court vacancies will have been filled with thoroughly qualified individuals.

Already, these uncontroversial nominees have earned overwhelming bipartisan support. Yesterday, more than two-thirds of the Senate voted to confirm William Cooper to serve as general counsel for the Department of Energy. Mr. Cooper's expertise and energy policy was evident to Chairman MURKOWSKI and our colleagues in committee who voted by voice to report this nomination to the full Senate. Now we have put a sharp lawyer on the job at DOE.

Later in the day, we confirmed two more well-qualified executive branch nominees to the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation and the State Department's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs by even wider margins. Each received bipartisan support in committee. So, again, I am glad to see a similar degree of swift, reasonable consideration here on the floor.

I might add that these are the kinds of nominees who, a few years ago, would have been approved on a voice vote. Today the Senate will turn to a slate of judicial nominees with their own impressive trail of credentials—things like prestigious clerkships and strong reviews from the American Bar Association. Most importantly, all have demonstrated their commitment to the rule of law.

Celebrating small wins for comity in the personnel business is, of course, only necessary in the wake of, literally, years of unprecedented partisan obstruction. But I will readily express my hope that in the coming days and weeks, we will continue to work toward clearing the Executive Calendar backlog and confirming more well-qualified nominees.

HEALTHCARE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on another matter, while the Senate may be writing a new chapter of bipartisan productivity, the same cannot be said for the House under Democratic leadership. On this side of the Capitol, we have passed timely legislation to address real, urgent policy priorities. S. 1, for example, helps fight back against anti-Semitism and attends to several other pressing matters with respect to American foreign policy in the Middle East.

The Senate debated the bill and passed it by a wide bipartisan majority. We sent it over to the House, and now it is just sitting there, gathering dust. It is gathering dust because Democratic leadership is more interested in making flashy political points and picking fights with the President than in making meaningful bipartisan progress.

House Democrats are uninterested in our important foreign policy legislation. What has captured their energy and attention instead? This week they are giving prime billing to a scheme

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



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that would snatch away the private health insurance plans that more than 180 million Americans rely on and jeopardize the Medicare coverage counted on by tens of millions more. That is what they are up to this week.

The House Rules Committee, and by extension the Democratic leadership, have officially granted a platform to this proposal, which could best be described as Medicare for None. That is not just some cute phrase. It is literally what the plan would usher in—an end to the Medicare Program as American seniors have known it for generations. Democrats want to take the program that seniors have paid into, which we ought to be shoring up and stabilizing, and, instead, pile every other American into it—one size fits all. That is what it is: End Medicare as we know it; reuse its name for a new sort of built-from-scratch, government-administered plan, and make sure the resulting Washington nightmare is the only game in town by outlawing choice and competition from the private sector. That is what they want to do.

To the 60 million seniors on Medicare, most of whom like things the way they are, Democrats say: Too bad. To the 180 million-plus other Americans who rely on private health coverage from their employers, many of whom like their own plans, our Democratic colleagues say: Too bad. All of these things that American families count on, I guess my Democratic colleagues want to wipe them all away in favor of this untested government takeover—completely untested.

In Congresses past, this kind of far-left proposal would have been unlikely to even receive a hearing. Democrats would have taken one look at this socialist steamroller and run away from it like the plague. Jeopardize current health coverage for nearly all Americans—one way or another—for the sake of leftwing ideology? Who would go for that?

Needless to say, times seem to have changed. Now, across the aisle, this level of radical intrusion is the proud rallying cry both here in Congress, and, of course, out on the Presidential campaign trail. One of the major ironies is that Medicare is not even safely on autopilot as things stand right now, let alone herding every other American into the system. As I have noted, the Administrator of CMS herself recently explained that “the program’s main trust fund for hospital services can only pay full benefits for seven more years.” That is the Medicare we have now.

Instead of a serious plan to shore up Medicare or address costs for middle-class families, Democrats are focused on raising taxes massively, trading consumer choice for Washington control, and destabilizing the current system in the process.

Senate Republicans will stay focused on middle-class families’ priorities. We will leave the destructive daydreams to our friends across the aisle.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination J. Campbell Barker, of Texas, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Texas.

Mr. McCONNELL. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TAX REFORM

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, last week we got the first estimate of economic growth for the first quarter of 2019, and the news was excellent. The economy grew at a robust 3.2 percent in the first quarter of 2019, smashing expectations. The news is particularly notable because the first quarter of the year is typically regarded as a weak quarter for growth.

Then, this morning, CNBC reported that 275,000 jobs were created in April—also, far exceeding expectations.

And of course these are just the latest pieces of good news about the economy. The economy is thriving, unemployment is low, job creation is up, personal income is up, wages are up, business investment is up, and much more.

How did we get here? Well, just a couple of years ago, our economy was struggling. Some experts were predicting that weak growth would be the new normal and the economic progress we have made over the past 2 years wasn’t supposed to happen.

At the beginning of 2017, the Congressional Budget Office projected growth of 2.3 percent for 2017, 2 percent for 2018, and just 1.7 percent for 2019.

Actual growth, of course, exceeded those numbers: 2.5 percent for 2017, 3 percent for 2018—a full percentage point higher than the CBO’s projection—and 2019 is clearly off to a great start.

So, again, how did we get here? Well, after President Trump was elected and Republicans took office, we set out to do something about the economy. We knew that Americans were struggling. Recovery from the great recession was long and slow, wages were stagnant, and too many families were living paycheck to paycheck. American families needed relief, and Republicans were committed to giving it to them. That meant getting our economy going again.

If the economy isn’t thriving, then, American families aren’t thriving. You need a strong economy to produce the kinds of jobs, wages, and opportunities that American workers need to flourish.

So we got right to work trimming some of the burdensome regulations that were acting as a drag on economic growth, and we made it clear to businesses that we were committed to creating the conditions that would allow them to create new jobs and opportunities for American workers.

But we knew that while cutting oppressive regulations was important, more needed to be done. So at the end of 2017, we passed a historic reform of our outdated Tax Code. We lowered tax rates for businesses, expanded business owners’ ability to invest in their operations and their workers, and made American businesses more competitive in the global economy.

Now we are seeing the results: a thriving economy that is producing good jobs, better wages and benefits, and more opportunities for American workers.

Importantly, the benefits of this economic growth are being spread far and wide. In March, the Wall Street Journal noted:

All sorts of people who have previously had trouble landing a job are now finding work. Racial minorities, those with less education and people working in the lowest-paying jobs are getting bigger pay raises and, in many cases, experiencing the lowest unemployment rate ever recorded for their groups. They are joining manufacturing workers, women in their prime working years, Americans with disabilities and those with criminal records, among others, in finding improved job prospects after years of disappointment.

That, again, is from the Wall Street Journal.

Getting our economy going again was a huge part of tax reform. We wanted to make life better for American workers, and we knew that a strong economy was the only way to create prosperity for Americans. We wanted to make life better for American workers, and we wanted to make sure that their families and the employees in the workplace all participated in a stronger economy. So we focused on creating the conditions for economic growth.

But that is not all we did with tax reform. We also cut individual tax rates across the board, we doubled the child tax credit, and we nearly doubled the standard deduction. Thanks to the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, the average family

of four received a tax cut of more than \$2,000 in 2018.

We also made it easier for millions of Americans to file their taxes by reducing the need to itemize. In addition to promoting economic growth generally, we created opportunity zones to focus specifically on helping to revitalize distressed communities. Championed by Senator SCOTT, the opportunity zones provisions of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act provide incentives for long-term investment in low-income communities, with the goal of creating new jobs and economic opportunity for local residents.

We also took action to provide additional support to families by creating an incentive for employers to offer paid family leave to their workers.

Two-plus years ago, Republicans in Congress and the President set out with one goal in mind—to make life better for American families. I am proud that tax reform has expanded opportunity for Americans and made life easier for families, and we are not stopping here.

Republicans will keep working to ensure that the economic growth that we are experiencing continues and that every American has access to a secure and a prosperous future.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATION OF RODOLFO ARMANDO RUIZ II

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, I rise today in support of the nomination of Rodolfo Ruiz to serve as a judge for the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida.

I first met Judge Rudy Ruiz in 2012 when I appointed him to the Miami-Dade County Court, when he was only 33 years old. He served Miami-Dade County very well, and 3 years later I had the opportunity to appoint him to the circuit court bench.

Judge Ruiz has an impressive record. He graduated from Duke University and earned his law degree from Georgetown University.

Following law school, Judge Ruiz clerked for Federal Judge Federico Moreno in the Southern District of Florida and later served as assistant county attorney for Miami-Dade County.

With 7 years of distinguished service as a judge in Florida, it is no surprise that the administration has nominated him for this position, and the American Bar Association agrees. They unanimously rated him as “well qualified” for the robe.

Judge Rudy Ruiz has honorably served the State of Florida, and I am proud to support his appointment to the Federal bench today.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. 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 ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

ATTORNEY GENERAL WILLIAM BARR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, as we speak, Attorney General William Barr is testifying before a hearing in front of the Judiciary Committee.

There may not be a member of this administration with more to answer for than the current Attorney General, and that is a pretty high bar. His confirmation occurred only a few months ago. Yet, in a short time, Mr. Barr's conduct has raised damning questions about his impartiality and about his fitness.

Just last night we learned that Special Counsel Mueller sent a private letter more than a month ago to the Attorney General that took issue with Mr. Barr's early description of the Russia investigation's conclusions.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a letter dated March 27, 2019, to Mr. Barr.

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

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, THE SPECIAL COUNSEL'S OFFICE,

Washington, DC, March 27, 2019.

Re Report of the Special Counsel on the Investigation Into Russian Interference in the 2016 Presidential Election and Obstruction of Justice (March 2019).

Hon. WILLIAM P. BARR,

Attorney General of the United States, Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

DEAR ATTORNEY GENERAL BARR: I previously sent you a letter dated March 25, 2019, that enclosed the introduction and executive summary for each volume of the Special Counsel's report marked with redactions to remove any information that potentially could be protected by Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 6(e); that concerned declination decisions; or that related to a charged case. We also had marked an additional two sentences for review and have now confirmed that these sentences can be released publicly.

Accordingly, the enclosed documents are in a form that can be released to the public consistent with legal requirements and Department policies. I am requesting that you provide these materials to Congress and authorize their public release at this time.

As we stated in our meeting of March 5 and reiterated to the Department early in the afternoon of March 24, the introductions and executive summaries of our two-volume report accurately summarize this Office's work and conclusions. The summary letter the Department sent to Congress and released to the public late in the afternoon of March 24 did not fully capture the context, nature, and substance of this Office's work and conclusions. We communicated that concern to the Department on the morning of March 25.

There is now public confusion about critical aspects of the results of our investigation. This threatens to undermine a central purpose for which the Department appointed the Special Counsel: to assure full public confidence in the outcome of the investigations. See Department of Justice, Press Release (May 17, 2017).

While we understand that the Department is reviewing the full report to determine what is appropriate for public release—a process that our Office is working with you to complete—that process need not delay release of the enclosed materials. Release at this time would alleviate the misunderstandings that have arisen and would answer congressional and public questions about the nature and outcome of our investigation. It would also accord with the standard for public release of notifications to Congress cited in your letter. See 28 C.F.R. 609(c) (“the Attorney General may determine that public release” of congressional notifications “would be in the public interest”).

Sincerely yours,

ROBERT S. MUELLER, III,

Special Counsel.

Mr. SCHUMER. What a stunning indictment of the Attorney General, whose principal job in all of this was to make sure—to make sure—that he wasn't mischaracterizing or spinning results. This letter shows what an awful, awful Attorney General Mr. Barr has been so far. I will have more to say on this later.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. President, on infrastructure, yesterday Speaker PELOSI and I had a productive meeting with President Trump at the White House on the topic of infrastructure. We all agreed on the need to invest substantial resources in infrastructure. We all agreed on the need to modernize and rebuild our roads, bridges, highways, and also our schools, our housing, and our power grids, and there was a specific conversation about the need to invest in expanding broadband to underserved communities.

We told the President we needed labor protections, we needed a green bill, and we needed to see that minorities, women, and veterans got their fair share when contracts were let out.

It was a good discussion, but there is more to be decided. So what we agreed was that we would have another discussion in which the administration will present proposals for how to pay for the bill.

Let's face it, the reason we haven't gotten far in infrastructure is that the administration has come up with no way for pay-fors. We Democrats put in a \$1 trillion plan—not \$2 trillion—but we paid for all of it. We used tax breaks on the wealthy and the powerful who got huge, huge benefits recently to pay for it. That may not be the way the President wants to pay for it, but we want to know how he would because last time he came up with a bill that had virtually no real pay-fors—public-private partnerships, which even he discredits.

The bottom line is simple. We will get an infrastructure bill if the President will come up with pay-fors, and then we can put ours forward—we have

already—and see if we can come to an agreement.

Seven or eight people at the meeting all told the President that we will not get a bill done unless he comes up with pay-fors. He agreed. He said: I will. He said: I will take some heat from some of my fellow Republicans, but I will do it. We will be waiting. We will be waiting.

At the White House, I made it explicitly clear that in an effort to pay for infrastructure, the administration must not take the Tax Code and make it any more regressive than it already is. I prefer to make it more progressive. To tell the wealthy that they are getting a huge tax break and then to tell the middle-class, working people that they are paying for the bulk of this is totally unfair and unacceptable to this Member.

The President said he would come up with pay-fors, but this morning I was disappointed. I saw both the Acting Chief of Staff, Mr. Mulvaney, and the Wall Street Journal editorial board mock the effort we are trying to make to rebuild the Nation's infrastructure. Their criticism? Too much spending, the deficit is too high, and we can't find revenue. Funny that we didn't hear those same criticisms when the Republicans in Congress were jamming through a partisan, unpaid-for \$2 trillion tax cut for the wealthiest of Americans. That doesn't have to be paid for, but our roads and bridges do. We are willing to pay for both, although I am not willing to pay for any big tax cuts on the wealthy that didn't pass with a single Democratic vote. I hope, for the good of the country and for the need of infrastructure—we know when we build infrastructure, America grows, and jobs are created. So we hope Mr. Mulvaney and the Wall Street Journal editorial board will rethink their knee-jerk partisan reactions.

Let's face it. Mulvaney is different. He was with the President. He supported the tax cuts. The Wall Street Journal editorial board believes it is OK to increase the deficit to reduce tax cuts on the wealthy but not OK when you are building infrastructure. Ninety-five percent of all Americans don't agree with that. Let's hope Donald Trump doesn't follow their ministrations.

The bottom line is, we hope to hear from the White House in several weeks, one way or the other.

Mr. President, what are your pay-fors? We want to know, and the American people want to know. Right now it is the biggest barrier to preventing us from getting an infrastructure bill.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. President, finally, on climate change, over the past few months, I have been asking Leader McCONNELL and my Republican colleagues three simple questions on climate: Do they agree that climate change is real; do they believe it is caused by humans; and do they believe we should take significant action? It seems that after re-

peating those questions over and over again, we have finally gotten some results.

Yesterday the New York Times said in an article that some Senate Republicans, "in a switch," are starting to cite climate change as the reason for some of their policy suggestions, be they support nuclear energy or carbon capture research. That is a first.

The fact that we have been asking our Republican colleagues the question: Do you believe in climate change, and now the fact that they feel compelled to say yes, even though we don't agree with their solutions—which we may not—is progress. It is not enough progress, given that the globe is at stake, but at least it is a step forward, and we haven't seen any steps come out of our Republican friends in a long time.

Hopefully, our Republican friends are finally coming around to realizing that climate change is real and caused by humans. Maybe they are looking at poll numbers and realizing that calling climate change a hoax looks as crazy as it sounds. Maybe they are seeing the changes in their own States with the climate. Whatever the reason, it is at least a little bit of progress—and we will have to take whatever little bit we can get from our normally intransigent Republican friends on this issue—and we welcome it.

That said, the types of policies my Republican colleagues talk about when they talk about climate do a disservice to the term "low-hanging fruit." Of course, I welcome smart and sensible solutions from anywhere in this Chamber, but there is a difference between getting serious on climate change and just mouthing the words or coming up with solutions that don't really solve the problem.

Some of my colleagues have called for funding for more research on carbon capture, and that is a good idea. It should be part of any plan, but in the face of an existential threat of our time, if they support carbon capture but don't go bigger, don't advocate more solutions than that, they are not doing close to enough of what we need. We must go bolder. We must grapple with the central challenge—reducing carbon emissions as quickly as possible. The good news is, we can do that with affordable and reliable technologies that exist today.

We have waited far too long to address the climate crisis in a serious way. We now need to act in a way that matches the urgency and scale of this challenge. My Republican colleagues on the other side of the aisle mocked the Green New Deal, but the growing youth movement leading the fight for the Green New Deal understands something that I think most Americans do: We must think big, bold, and fast, and that we can create jobs and economic opportunity for working families in this transition. We welcome the glimmer, the little, small green sprouts of progress, whatever we can get.

Our Republican friends are starting to answer our pointed questions on climate change, but now the next step is, they have to think bigger and talk to the leader about pursuing real legislation instead of just partisan stunts.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASIDY). The Senator from Oklahoma.

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

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

NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, every President since 1952 has signed a national declaration declaring a National Day of Prayer. It is bipartisan cooperation to recognize people who pray and who set aside time to spend time with God and pray for the Nation. Quite frankly, for us as a party and as a body and as a nation, it is a good thing to pause.

This year, on May 2, with the theme "Love One Another," we will again have a National Day of Prayer. There is not a requirement for Americans to pray. There is not a requirement for people to direct themselves to pray by a certain method at a certain location. It is just a call to the Nation to say that we have great needs as a country.

As we watch the attacks on synagogues in our country, as we watch bombings of Christians in Sri Lanka, gun battles that have erupted in churches in the United States, mosques that have been attacked, people of faith being targeted simply because of their faith, it is reasonable for us as a nation to pause and say "How are we doing?" as this year's theme is "Love One Another."

We as a nation have a long history of prayer. Hanging in the Rotunda in this Capitol Building is a painting called the Embarkation of the Pilgrims. That painting depicts the beginning of America. It has been hanging in that same spot in the Rotunda since 1843. The painting is simply of a group of people on a deck of a ship leaving out from Europe and huddled around an open Bible and praying. The painting was designed and created to depict how America began in the 1600s—people on the deck of a ship, around an open Bible, praying.

That is still something I would encourage Americans of faith to stop and do, and it is still one of the most humbling experiences that I experience each time someone from my State of Oklahoma catches me, as someone did this morning, and says: Every day, my wife and I pray for you.

It is not a terrible thing to do as a nation—to love and pray for each other and for the future direction of our country.

If I can model for the Nation for just a moment in my own way and encourage the Nation on our National Day of

Prayer to pause and pray, I would simply say this:

Let us pray as a nation.

Father, guide us. We need Your help. The controversy, the division in our Nation, the anger, the struggle. Help us to be able to love one another. Help us to be able to see each other as You have created us and to respect You, Your wisdom, and Your guidance. Father, we admit that we do not know as much as You, so we need Your help. We need Your insight.

For our first responders and our military scattered around this Nation and around the world, we pray for Your protection for them. We pray that You would give them insight to help them to represent us well.

For members of our State Department, members in our government who are scattered around the Earth, members of our intelligence community and others who serve us every day, God, would You guide them and would You protect them in their tasks and give them the insight they need.

For Federal employees who serve our Nation each day and for members of our Nation who are finding ways to serve each other in our communities, would You help us this day to love one another and to be able to set the tone for a world that is watching us as a nation.

Help us represent well, You, who You have called us to be individuals.

In the Name of Jesus, I pray. Amen.

CONTRABAND CELL PHONES IN PRISON

Mr. President, on Facebook, a posting was made not long ago, and it was sent to a correctional facility in Oklahoma, and this was the posting, simply a question: "How do I contact the facility regarding your inmates that sex offenders have a cell phone in your prison and they are having contact with children on social media?"

An inmate who is a sex offender with a cell phone in a prison in Oklahoma contacting children should give a chill to all of us. I wish that were the only example. Just in Oklahoma last year, 7,518 cell phones that were contraband cell phones were picked up in Oklahoma prisons—just last year, 7,518 contraband cell phones.

This is within the correctional facility. This is from one of the facilities. That table is 12 feet long, and in many spots, the cell phones are stacked up 10 deep on this picture. These were all taken from inside the prison. Do you want to know what that looks like for the whole State and how that is gathered? The picture would look like this. This is the gathering of cell phones from my State, from correctional facilities across the State.

The challenge that we have is—for all of us—how do we stop these cell phones from getting inside the prison? That is a corruption issue, and sometimes it is a perimeter issue. It will be wrapped in duct tape and thrown over the fence. It will be slipped through at some point. A guard or someone who works inside the prison will be paid off to deliver it

and drop it in a certain spot. The result of it is the same: contact with people on the outside—contact that leads to dramatic effects. It is not only contact with people outside, like these predators who are sex offenders reaching out to children from inside the prison, but over and over again there are consequences.

We have the consequences of individuals—for instance, white-collar criminals who are continuing to run their companies. There was the famous occasion of the person known as the Pharma Bro, who bought out pharmaceutical companies, drove out competition, jacked up the prices, and ended up going to Federal prison, but even from prison he was able to get access to a cell phone and continue running his pharmacy operation from inside the prison.

There was an occasion not long ago in Oklahoma where an individual who was a murderer and, while he was in the State penitentiary, used cell phones to direct others to distribute methamphetamine for him across all of Northeastern Oklahoma. He was running a meth ring with his cell phone from inside the prison.

There was a prison facility, Lee Correctional Institution, where there was a mass riot that broke out inside the facility. In that riot seven inmates were killed and 17 others were injured. This happened in South Carolina. Afterward the South Carolina Department of Corrections director blamed cell phones for fueling the deadliest prison riot they had in South Carolina.

In another case, back in an Oklahoma prison, many of those charged within the prison have gang ties—MS-13, Crips, Indian Brotherhood, Universal Aryan Brotherhood, Irish Mob. Records show that those individuals had access to cell phones and were running their gangs outside the prison from inside the prison. We have one individual who is serving 20 years in prison for robbery and assault with a dangerous weapon and drug manufacturing and who used his cell phone to control the methamphetamine distribution and transactions outside the prison.

We have a RICO case in the Northern District of Oklahoma right now, which is racketeering, which is happening from large numbers of cell phones in an Aryan Brotherhood gang, a White supremacist group that is operating a drug ring outside the prison and coordinating their work and operation inside the prison.

This is not unique to Oklahoma. This is happening in prisons all over the country. We can go to one after another after another.

The two issues that have to be addressed are stopping the flow within, but the second, more obvious question that I hear from people when I raise this issue is this: Why can't the prisons just jam the cell phones?

That is a great question. Federal law does not allow State prisons to jam the cell phones.

Why don't we change that law?

That is another great question, and it should have been answered by this body a long time ago. But communications companies and cell phone company lobbyists overwhelmed this body and pushed back and said: Let's study the issue.

For years the cell phone lobby has come to Members of Congress and said: We totally agree with you that this is a problem. Let's study it.

I have met personally now for several years with the leadership of the FCC, which has jurisdiction over this, and said "Let's resolve this issue about prison cell phones," and every year when I meet with FCC folks, they say "We are studying it." At the same time, meth rings and sexual predators are operating inside our prisons. "We are studying it."

I waited patiently until the last study just came out. The summary of the last study that just came out on cell phones in prisons and jamming them—the study basically came back and said: We need more study on this issue. That was the result of the study.

One of the prisons got permission and a waiver to test a cell phone jammer in their prison with what is called a microjammer; they can put a jammer to block the cell phone coverage in one particular housing unit. They came back with the results of that from one individual State prison and said it was successful. The cell phone companies responded by saying: Hey, we wish you would have included us in that study. We should have been involved in that study. We need to do another study on top of your study to make sure it is all correct. Study after study after study is done when this is what is happening in our prisons.

So let me just bring this up to the cell phone industry: You do not want your company name attached to pedophiles in prisons who are contacting children outside the prison, waiting until they are released. You do not want your company name attached to a meth ring being operated inside a prison because you wanted to study the issue more. You do not want your company name attached to a prison riot where they directly linked the access to cell phones as leading up to that riot.

Every one of the major cell phone companies in the United States has done lab testing of jammers in their labs. This is not something that needs to be studied again. They all know the results.

What is worse, if you go back to 2005—New Zealand had already seen this issue arising in 2005. New Zealand worked with all of the cell phone companies in their country, and guess what. They studied it and implemented a policy to start jamming cell phones in their prisons in the following years. The cell phone companies overseas have already studied this in New Zealand.

Let's take it to the UK in 2012. In 2011, all of the cell phone companies

worked with the UK Government to be able to study cell phones in prisons, came to a decision about the best way to jam those signals, and, in 2012, the UK passed a piece of legislation to get this resolved.

So this has been studied in labs; it has been studied in New Zealand; it has been studied in the UK; and all we are hearing is it needs to be studied more here.

My suggestion is simple. Let's jam cell phones in prisons for the protection of our guards, our families, and to block criminal activity operating from inside our prisons. We know how to do this. We have the technology to do this. This body needs to address it in law and make sure it gets resolved in the days ahead. I look forward to passing that and not doing one more study to delay action on it.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 30 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATION OF STEPHEN MOORE

Ms. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. President.

I think it is fair to say that most Americans didn't wake up this morning thinking about the role the Federal Reserve plays in their lives. The people we represent are focused on putting in an honest day's work, taking care of their families, and gradually climbing the economic ladder. The Fed is focused on making sure our economy is giving them every opportunity to do just that—or at least it is supposed to be.

The Fed's mission is to keep employment high, prices stable, and our financial system in good working order. When it succeeds, we see the full potential of the American economy, the greatest force for prosperity the world has ever known. When it fails, ordinary people can wind up losing their jobs, their homes, and their savings.

Even though most Americans don't know their names or think about their work, the seven members of the Federal Reserve Board of Governors, nominated by the President and confirmed by Congress, have an important job to do.

The Fed is not supposed to be a place for politics. It is not a job for politicians. It is a job for the most accomplished and thoughtful economists and financial experts we have—men and women who truly understand not just what makes an economy work on paper, but what makes our economy truly work for working Americans.

Through his choice of nominees for this position, a President demonstrates whether he understands the importance of a functioning financial system and respects the American people, who rely on the Fed to keep our economy on solid footing. Through our consider-

ation of those nominees, we here in the Senate do the same—which brings me to the President's latest choice for this position: Stephen Moore.

Let's be clear about who Mr. Moore is. He is not a professor of economics at a prestigious university. He has won no prizes for his intellectual scholarship. In fact, he has never authored or coauthored a single peer-reviewed article or journal ever.

While some have suggested it might not be a bad thing to have a range of experience on the Federal Reserve Board, it is unclear what experience Mr. Moore has that would contribute a useful perspective. He has never run a bank or a business of any size. In fact, he has barely any experience in the private sector at all. No, Stephen Moore is a political operative and a pundit. There is nothing wrong with that, *per se*, but the fact is that President Trump picked him not because of anything he has accomplished in business or in the study of economics but rather because of what Mr. Moore believes—or at least what he goes on TV and says he believes.

As we try to decide who Mr. Moore is and whether he is, in fact, suitable for a job that has never before been held by someone with his total lack of qualifications, we might start by taking a look at the opinions he has shared over the decades he spent doing little else but sharing his opinions. For example, nearly all economists agree that empowering women to participate fully and equally in the workforce would result in huge gains for our economy. In fact, earlier this decade, a McKinsey analysis found that the increased number of women entering the workforce between 1970 and 2011 accounted for roughly a quarter of the gains in GDP achieved over that time period.

This McKinsey study noted:

Still, the full potential of women in the workforce has yet to be tapped. As the U.S. struggles to sustain historic GDP growth rates, it is critically important to bring more women into the workforce and fully deploy high-skill women to drive productivity improvement.

That is why so many of us in Washington are focused on empowering women to find jobs and build careers, to balance the responsibilities of work and family, and to participate in the economy on equal footing with men.

Mr. Moore apparently disagrees. He believes and has written that “the male needs to be breadwinner of the family.” When it comes to pay discrimination, Mr. Moore was unconcerned with the fact that, on average, women were earning 77 cents on the dollar compared to men. In fact, just 5 years ago, he warned that raising women's pay “could be disruptive to family stability.”

Perhaps Mr. Moore should read the McKinsey study. After all, it was produced for the Wall Street Journal, where he is a frequent commentator and used to serve on the editorial

board, so I am sure he could get a copy of it. But the more Mr. Moore's public statements are examined, the more it becomes clear that his views on women and the economy might have less to do with the economy and more to do with women.

Here is just one example. Mr. Moore apparently believes that efforts to address sexual harassment and assault on college campuses are quote “draining all the fun out of college life.”

He goes on to elaborate:

Colleges are places for rabble-rousing. For men to lose their boyhood innocence. To do stupid things. To stay out way too late drinking. To chase skirts. (At the University of Illinois we used to say that the best thing about Sunday nights was sleeping alone.) It's all a time-tested rite of passage into adulthood. And the women seemed to survive just fine. If they were so oppressed and offended by drunken, lustful frat boys, why is it that on Friday nights they showed up in droves in tight skirts to the keg parties?

This is the sort of thing a college freshman writes on his Facebook page that comes back to haunt him in his first round of job interviews. Mr. Moore chose to put those words in a newspaper column, underneath his name, at the age of 40.

Then again, anyone familiar with his record wouldn't be surprised to learn that Mr. Moore doesn't take sexual assault seriously. CNN recently unearthed that years earlier he had mocked the Violence Against Women Act as “objectionable pork” and referred to a program designed to promote gender quality in education as “vile.”

So in addition to “chasing skirts” on college campuses, Mr. Moore seems to believe that women's equality is ruining another favorite pastime—sports. He wrote that “co-ed sports is doing irreparable harm to the psyche of America's little boys,” and he mused about urging his young son to assault a kindergarten named Kate Lynn just because she was a better soccer player.

In another bit of sports commentary, Mr. Moore wrote:

Here's the rule change I propose: No more women refs, no more women announcers, no women beer vendors, no women anything. There is, of course, an exception to this rule. Women are permitted to participate, if and only if, they look like Bonnie Bernstein. The fact that Bonnie knows nothing about basketball is entirely irrelevant.

At the time Mr. Moore wrote this, Bonnie Bernstein was a prominent journalist and ESPN analyst, and he was a 42-year-old married man. But that didn't stop him from further underscoring his creepy affections for Ms. Bernstein, adding that she should be required to wear a halter top on the air. “If Bonnie were President of the United States,” wrote this adult male in a national publication about a complete stranger, “she'd be a Babe-raham Lincoln.” Perhaps that is why Mr. Moore has also said that powerful men should never meet alone with women, because they might wind up being accused of sexual harassment. Maybe it is a rule he should follow. Frankly, if I

were Bonnie Bernstein or any woman who read that column, I wouldn't want to be alone in a room with him.

Mr. Moore has tried to explain away some of these misogynistic comments as jokes, so maybe he just has a profoundly unfunny sense of humor. But he didn't sound like he was joking when he called for the elimination of child labor laws, adding, "I want people starting to work at 11, 12."

He didn't sound like he was joking when he went on CNN 2 years ago and claimed falsely that the Civil War was not fought over slavery or when he claimed bizarrely that liberals were to blame for the rise of White supremacist violence that resulted in the death of a young woman in Charlottesville. He didn't sound like he was joking when he attacked equal rights for LGBTQ Americans, arguing that rulings in favor of marriage equality were "overturning the will of the people."

He didn't sound like he was joking when he referred to the unemployment insurance that millions of Americans rely on to make ends meet during hard times as "paid vacation" or when he warned that guaranteeing paid sick leave for workers was "very dangerous."

And if he was joking when he referred to most of the Midwest, including great cities like Cincinnati and Cleveland, as "armpits of America," well, I know my friend Senator BROWN didn't think that was funny and neither did I.

Still, Mr. Moore tried to change the subject from his long history of offensive remarks, and he went on FOX News last week and said: "I'm no angel." No kidding.

Indeed, the best possible argument in Mr. Moore's favor is that it is possible to be a jerk about women, LGBTQ Americans, low-income workers, and anyone who has ever lived anyplace other than New York or Chicago or Georgetown and that you could still be that person and be a good economist, except, of course, that Mr. Moore isn't even a good economist.

For example, he opposed the farm bill that provides the lifeblood to rural communities that I represent in Minnesota, and he believes we should get rid of safety net programs that help those rural communities. Well, I think most people living in rural America would rather withstand Mr. Moore's insults than suffer the consequences of his agenda. The truth is, we need policymakers who are committed to creating more economic opportunities in rural communities by expanding access to credit, investing in education and infrastructure, and protecting the agricultural safety net. I guess Mr. Moore doesn't care what goes on in those parts of the country that he calls the armpits of America.

Here is another example. Mr. Moore has repeatedly called for a return to the gold standard, a position described by a Washington Post reporter as "a lot like playing Russian roulette with the economy." Now, an economist who

believes in a return to the gold standard is like a zoologist who believes in the existence of unicorns. It is a plainly ludicrous opinion for a serious expert to hold, which is probably why Mr. Moore has tried to deny that he has ever said this, claiming that he has "never actually been a gold standard guy." But he has—consistently and forcefully.

In 2009, he told a Washington Policy Center reception: "We need to go back to the gold standard." In 2010, he told an audience at the Fort Henry Club in West Virginia: "We have to reestablish some kind of gold standard." In 2011, he went on the FOX Business channel and said: "I do think we have to peg the dollar to gold." In 2012, he was asked on CNBC whether he wanted to go back to the gold standard, and he answered: "Yes, I do."

In 2015, he told a tea party crowd: "We have got to get rid of the Federal Reserve and move towards a gold standard in this country." In 2016, he told a group of young conservatives: "We should go back to some sort of gold standard."

Mr. Moore apparently doesn't understand that things have changed a lot since the 1950s, not just when it comes to the role of women but when it comes to the ubiquity of video cameras. He is on tape again and again giving voice to this crazy idea that he claims he has never supported. Indeed, his position on the gold standard isn't just an example of being badly out of step.

Mr. Moore is out of step with mainstream economics, and it is a pretty good illustration of his difficult relationship with the facts. A few years ago, he was banned from the opinion pages of the Kansas City Star after he wrote a column claiming that low-tax States were performing better than high-tax States. He wrote:

No-income-tax Texas gained 1 million jobs over the last five years; California, with its 13 percent tax rate, managed to lose jobs. Oops. Florida gained hundreds of thousands of jobs while New York lost jobs. Oops.

It turns out that Mr. Moore got his facts wrong—never a good thing when you are in the economics business. Instead of adding a million jobs, Texas had actually added less than half that number. Florida hadn't gained hundreds of thousands of jobs; it had lost nearly half a million jobs. New York hadn't lost jobs; it had gained 57,000 jobs. "Oops" is right.

The truth is Mr. Moore is wrong a lot. He predicted that the Affordable Care Act would kill jobs. It didn't. He claimed that President Trump's tax giveaway to corporations would pay for itself. It didn't. He argued that the Fed should return to a rule tying monetary policy to commodity prices. No such rule ever existed. I could go on and on, and it would take me hours to even get to the kind of scandals that have disqualified previous nominees, like the \$75,000 in unpaid taxes it was discovered he owed after filing what the IRS called a "fraudulent" tax return, or the

time his political committee agreed to pay \$350,000 in fines for campaign finance violations, or the time he was held in contempt of court for failing to pay \$300,000 in alimony and child support after his divorce, or even the time he bought his mistress a T-shirt with the words "Doing It," which is pretty amazing coming from a guy who, again, thinks paying women a fair wage is, in his words, "disruptive to family stability."

We would be making a mistake if we made this story entirely about Mr. Moore. It is certainly troubling that President Trump was able to look past so many red flags in selecting this man for this important position, but it is even more troubling to consider why he wanted to pick someone like Mr. Moore for this role. It is not hard to figure out. This President wants an Attorney General who will act as his personal lawyer. He wants an Environmental Protection Agency staffed with scientists who will push the phony science of his energy industry donors. He wants a Consumer Financial Protection Bureau where his Wall Street friends get a free pass to rip consumers off. Now President Trump wants a Federal Reserve that, instead of acting in the economic interest of the American people, will act in the political interest of the President. That is the only explanation for Mr. Moore's nomination.

You see, Mr. Moore isn't really an economist at all. He is a political operative. When he is wrong—and he is wrong a lot—it isn't because he made a mistake. Mr. Moore has made a career out of being wrong on purpose.

Catherine Rampell wrote in the Washington Post:

Moore has repeatedly, and falsely, claimed that the country is experiencing "deflation." That means prices are falling, which they are not. But claiming this gives him cover to argue that the Fed should pump more stimulus into the economy just as Trump begins running for reelection.

Conversely, when we were in the depths of the financial crisis and prices were falling, Moore claimed that we were on the brink of Weimar-style hyperinflation. He therefore called on the Fed to tighten monetary policy, which would have crippled the economy—and, just coincidentally, maimed President Barack Obama.

If confirmed, Mr. Moore would not see his job as fulfilling the Fed's dual mandate of stabilizing prices and raising employment. He would not see his job as providing effective oversight to the financial system. He would see his job as getting President Trump reelected, no matter what it meant for American workers, investors, and businesses. That is why President Trump picked him.

Two years ago, President Trump allowed his advisers to talk him into nominating Jerome Powell, an accomplished financial expert with long experience in both public service and in the private sector, as Chair of the Federal Reserve Board. Now, Chair Powell and I certainly don't agree on every aspect of monetary policy, but we do agree that the Fed should be focused on the

productivity of our economy and the protection of American workers, not partisan political goals. In a recent hearing, for example, I discussed with Chair Powell the specific challenges of the labor market in rural areas, and he came prepared with a serious and thoughtful economic analysis that showed his keen understanding of these issues.

Chair Powell has resisted pressure from the White House to intervene in the economy to produce results in line with President Trump's political agenda, and that has infuriated President Trump, who has attacked Chair Powell on Twitter and harangued him in meetings. The President feels he made a mistake in choosing an actual, serious, sober-minded, thoughtful public servant, and he is set on not making that same mistake again.

Either President Trump doesn't understand what the Fed is for or he is hoping that we don't. And whether it is Mr. Moore or someone with the good sense to keep his misogyny to himself, we on the Senate Banking Committee should be prepared to give special scrutiny to any Federal Reserve nomination that this President sends to us because, while these issues might not be the flashiest, they are of critical importance to the people whom we represent.

Indeed, when I joined the Senate Banking Committee earlier this year, few Minnesotans took notice, but I see it as a chance to make an enormous impact on people's lives by opening up new opportunities for people to bet on themselves and to build the lives they want. Our work can help to open up access to credit for families and small businesses and underserved communities, especially communities of color. As a Senator from Minnesota who is proud to represent our States' Tribal communities, I know how badly they have been neglected by our financial system, and I am determined to rectify that injustice. As a Senator who is proud to represent so many rural communities, I am excited to use my place on this committee to expand opportunities for economic development in parts of our State that too often go overlooked.

Our work can make sure that our financial system remains on solid footing, not just so that our economy can continue to grow but so that more people can claim their stake in it—buying homes, starting businesses, and building wealth they can pass down to their next generation. Our work can help to hold Wall Street greed in check and to make sure that people don't get ripped off when applying for student loans and mortgages and so that we never again see a repeat of the great recession that wiped out so many jobs and pensions. Yes, our work can help to protect the integrity of the Federal Reserve from people who see it as a tool for partisan politics, as a laboratory for radical ideas, or as a playground for extremist ideologues who love to spout off with-

out knowing their facts—people like Stephen Moore.

So I urge my colleagues to join me in opposing this nomination. I also urge us all not to let the important work of the Federal Reserve slip out of the public eye once this nominee is defeated. Instead, let's make this a moment to highlight the important issues that the Fed deals with every day and ensure that it is led by men and women who understand its mission and appreciate the impact it has on the people that we all serve.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SASSE). Under the previous order, all postcloture time has expired.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Barker nomination?

Mr. PETERS. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) and the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) would have voted "yea."

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

The result was announced—yeas 51, nays 47, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 85 Ex.]

YEAS—51

Alexander	Ernst	Paul
Barrasso	Fischer	Perdue
Blackburn	Gardner	Portman
Blunt	Graham	Risch
Boozman	Grassley	Roberts
Braun	Hawley	Romney
Burr	Hoeven	Rounds
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Cassidy	Isakson	Sasse
Collins	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Cornyn	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Cotton	Lankford	Shelby
Cramer	Lee	Sullivan
Crapo	McConnell	Thune
Cruz	McSally	Tillis
Daines	Moran	Toomey
Enzi	Murkowski	Wicker

NAYS—47

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

NOT VOTING—2

Inhofe Young

The nomination was confirmed.

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 the nomination of Andrew Lynn Brasher, of Alabama, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Alabama.

Mitch McConnell, Johnny Isakson, Roger F. Wicker, John Boozman, John Cornyn, Mike Crapo, Shelley Moore Capito, Pat Roberts, Roy Blunt, Deb Fischer, David Perdue, Todd Young, John Thune, Mike Rounds, Steve Daines, John Hoeven, Thom Tillis.

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 the nomination of Andrew Lynn Brasher, of Alabama, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Alabama, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG).

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 52, nays 47, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 86 Ex.]

YEAS—52

Alexander	Fischer	Perdue
Barrasso	Gardner	Portman
Blackburn	Graham	Risch
Blunt	Grassley	Roberts
Boozman	Hawley	Romney
Braun	Hoeven	Rounds
Burr	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Capito	Inhofe	Sasse
Cassidy	Isakson	Scott (FL)
Collins	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Cornyn	Kennedy	Shelby
Cotton	Lankford	Sullivan
Cramer	Lee	Thune
Crapo	McConnell	Tillis
Cruz	McSally	Toomey
Daines	Moran	Wicker
Enzi	Murkowski	
Ernst	Paul	

NAYS—47

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

NOT VOTING—1

Young

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 52, and the nays are 47.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Andrew Lynn Brasher, of Alabama, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Alabama.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

RAPE KIT BACKLOG

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, from time to time, our country has listened with empathy and heartbreak as survivors of various forms of sexual abuse come forward, men and women alike, who have bravely shared their stories, reviving a national conversation about sexual violence and inviting others to share their stories after years or even decades of silence. We know that these cases aren't limited to any class, place, age, gender, or circumstance. We have heard from major public figures and close friends alike, highlighting an issue that has for too long hidden in the shadows.

Some of the most disturbing allegations are those that take place against our children in school. Last month, Senator HASSAN and I introduced the Jenna Quinn Law, which would help educators and caregivers identify and prevent child sexual abuse. It literally teaches people how to recognize the symptoms, what children are saying, when they are not vocalizing their plight, by the way they act. It would allow the use of grant funds for specialized training to ensure that teachers and school personnel are prepared to recognize and report child sexual abuse.

This legislation is named after a brave Texan, a child abuse survivor herself, and has been modeled after successful State legislation. It is an important step in our efforts to stop sexual abuse, and I hope we can take these reforms, which have been adopted now by more than half the States, and make them nationwide.

Of course, protecting students from sexual abuse doesn't end after high school, as we know. In recent years, our country has followed high-profile cases involving students even at our colleges and universities. We all remember 2011, when the now notorious Penn State football coach, Jerry Sandusky, was arrested and charged with 52 counts of sexual abuse of boys. What happened next was a combination of support for the survivors and disgust with those who knew about the allegations but did nothing. Employees, ranging from a graduate assistant to the university president himself, were aware of the allegations but remained silent.

Then there is Larry Nassar, an employee at Michigan State University

and a former USA Gymnastics national team doctor. He was accused of molesting hundreds of young athletes under his care, and more than 250 women shared their testimony at his sentencing last year. Despite numerous complaints about Nassar's behavior, some dating back to the 1990s, university officials kept quiet. Law enforcement was never informed, and his disgusting abuse was allowed to continue unreported for years.

Sadly, these are not the only instances of university officials turning to avert their gaze from sexual misconduct. It has happened at other major universities across the country, including one in Texas. In each of these cases, university leaders did not take action against the abusers despite the fact that official title IX or external investigations had been conducted. Some of them said: "We just simply didn't read the results of the report."

These stories of abuse are difficult to hear, but they have led to positive changes by highlighting the ineffective and sometimes nonexistent policies to handle these types of abuse.

That is why last month, along with my colleagues from Michigan, Senator PETERS and STABENOW, I introduced the Accountability of Leaders in Education to Report Title IX Investigations Act, or ALERT Act for short. The purpose of this legislation is to ensure greater accountability by requiring colleges and universities to submit an annual certification to the Secretary of Education, to include the following:

First, it would affirm that the university president and the board members have reviewed all title IX and Clery Act sexual offense reports of an employee involving sexual misconduct. This would compel administrators to take this matter more seriously and thoroughly examine all the allegations.

Secondly, it would require that the university certify that the president or board members had not interfered with or inappropriately tried to influence an ongoing investigation.

In any educational institution, especially those that receive taxpayer funds, administrators should be held accountable for their actions and place the health and well-being of their students above all else.

The public conversation regarding these abuses has encouraged more victims to confront their abusers and pursue justice.

Throughout my career, dating back to my time as Texas attorney general, it has been my privilege to work with advocates for victims' rights and to help provide them with the resources they need in order to heal and recover. But what if we could do more to prevent people from becoming victims in the first place? What if we could improve accountability on college campuses related to reports of sexual assault perpetrated by their employees? Well, it seems to me the answer is obvious. While there is nothing we can do to turn back the hands of time and pre-

vent these young men and women from being taken advantage of in the first place, we can take action to hold universities accountable for employee sexual misconduct that they already know about and stop abusers from continuing to harm students.

I hope this bill can work its way quickly through the regular order through Congress, the House and the Senate, and make its way to the President's desk so we can begin to improve accountability on college campuses all across our country.

While we continue our work to prevent sexual abuse in all its forms, there is more we need to do to support victims. Tomorrow, the Senate Judiciary Committee will vote on what I have no doubt will be a major bipartisan achievement for the 116th Congress.

We see many pieces of legislation that divide Members of the Senate, and sadly those are often the ones that get the most attention. But the Debbie Smith Act is the type of bill we should be talking about and celebrating. The namesake of this legislation is an incredibly courageous woman whom I have had the pleasure of working with over the years.

Debbie Smith is an ardent advocate for eliminating the rape kit backlog and expanding the DNA database to provide victims with answers and peace of mind. Sadly, her personal advocacy was borne from experience. In 1989, Debbie was home doing laundry when a stranger broke into her house. He blindfolded her, abducted her, and took her to a wooded area behind her home, where he robbed and repeatedly raped her. Debbie reported the crime to the police and went to the emergency room for a forensic exam, but because of the nationwide backlog, there were no immediate answers. Her rape kit was not even tested right away, as it should have been.

Although exact numbers are difficult to estimate, experts believe that as many as 400,000 rape kits remain untested in the United States. We really don't know with any precision. Each one of them represents a story of a sexual assault victim and holds the key to identifying and apprehending a vile criminal. Like every other victim whose DNA evidence sat or still sits on a shelf, Debbie simply had to wait. In her case, it took 6½ years before she finally got the answers she had been looking for when a cold hit revealed the identity of her rapist.

Debbie knows the fear and uncertainty that comes upon victims just by not knowing the answers to who did it and how we make sure justice is served. She made it her mission to eliminate the backlog. She has become a trusted voice for sexual assault victims all across this country and, of course, works the Halls of Congress on a bipartisan basis to make sure we don't lose sight of this important goal, which is to eliminate the rape kit backlog.

The Debbie Smith Act was signed into law in 2004 and provides local and

State crime labs with resources they need to end the backlog of unsolved crimes. So far, more than \$1 billion has been provided to forensic labs because of this law and has led to some pretty incredible results.

One reason it is important that the Federal Government assumes part of this responsibility is because many jurisdictions—small police departments, rural counties—simply don't have the tax base, don't have the money, and don't have the expertise to be able to solve this problem of untested rape kits. Since 2005, thanks to Debbie Smith, more than 860,000 DNA cases have been processed because of the Debbie Smith Act, accounting for 43 percent of all forensic profiles in the FBI's DNA database.

Though the primary goal is to reduce the rape kit backlog and identify their assailants, processing this DNA evidence can assist investigations for non-violent crimes as well. Similar to criminal fingerprint databases, this DNA evidence can help convict people who commit other crimes.

The Debbie Smith Act of 2019 will reauthorize this important funding that supports testing of these rape kits so we can eliminate the backlog and ensure it will not grow again in the future. This law also authorizes important training for law enforcement, correctional personnel, forensic nurses, and other professionals who assist victims of sexual assault.

So I am grateful to Debbie for her courage and the courage of countless other survivors who have shared their stories publicly—it can't be easy—and who continue to advocate for reforms to eliminate the backlog. Two other inspiring survivors from Texas, Lavinia Masters and Carol Bart, have also been strong advocates in my State and at the Federal level. It has been my privilege to know them and work with them on this issue.

This legislation is undoubtedly stronger because of the input of these and other brave survivors who are champions for victims all across the country. I admire these women who have given their voice to the voiceless and continue to fight for these reforms.

I thank Chairman GRAHAM and Ranking Member FEINSTEIN of the Senate Judiciary Committee for quickly moving this important legislation through the committee, and I hope we will soon be able to vote for it on the Senate floor.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MEDICARE

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, during the last week I was home in Wyo-

ming, traveling the State, visiting with people, talking to constituents, listening to what they had to say. I had the chance to attend a couple of health fairs in Rawlins, WY, and Mountain View, WY. The health fair is a gathering of the community. It is based on prevention and early detection of problems as ways to help lower the cost of care. For many years, I was the medical director of the Wyoming Health Fairs bringing low-cost health screening to people of Wyoming. At the fair, people come out. There are booths from the heart association, diabetes association, the American Cancer Society. People learn information about diseases, how they work, and how they affect their bodies. It can aid in early detection of problems. People can get their blood drawn and visit with healthcare providers from the community to go over blood results. All of this is aimed at prevention, early detection, and early treatment.

It is interesting that during the same time Democrats running for President have been traveling the country talking about healthcare as well, and specifically Senator BERNIE SANDERS has talked about "BernieCare"—Medicare for All.

To me, Medicare for All is going to drive up costs for Americans in terms of taxes, and it is also going to take away the kind of choice people look for when I talk with them at Wyoming health fairs.

I come to you today to talk on the floor about the real problems I see with this so-called Medicare for All, and I come to it as a doctor who has practiced medicine in Wyoming for 25 years, taking care of patients for decades. When I go to health fairs, more people refer to me as Dr. BARRASSO rather than Senator BARRASSO.

I also want to talk as the husband of a breast cancer survivor. My wife, Bobbi, has had three operations, chemotherapy twice, and is now disease-free for 15 years, but I know how critically important it is as a doctor as well as a husband to make sure that people with preexisting conditions are protected.

I also speak as the son of a 96-year-old mother, and she is a motivating force in our lives. She is a constant reminder to me that we must do everything we can to care for our seniors. So as I have been listening to the Presidential candidates talk about this Medicare for All proposal, whether it is Senators HARRIS, WARREN, GILLIBRAND, or BOOKER, all of them back what Senator SANDERS has been proposing. I am just not sure most Americans understand what Medicare for All means and what it would mean for them personally. Maybe some of the Presidential candidates don't even want people to know what it means.

Senator SANDERS has claimed that Medicare for All is, as he said, "a struggle for the soul of who we are as a nation." Let's be clear. Americans are facing a critical choice. It is a choice between a big, government-run

healthcare system and a system that gives Americans access to quality, affordable care that they can choose that is right for them and their families. That, to me, is the choice we are facing.

Medicare for All essentially means a complete government takeover of all healthcare in this country. Central planners in Washington, DC, would then be in control of the healthcare for all of us.

Medicare for All would enroll every American in a government-run healthcare system. It will take away America's healthcare choices. Senator HARRIS talks about, perhaps, a supplemental plan, but the legislation I have read that has been introduced is crystal clear—Medicare for All outlaws private health insurance plans. The only exception, Senator SANDERS says, is some limited insurance for cosmetic surgery—he says procedures like nose jobs.

With about 180 million Americans getting insurance through work, currently covered through their employers, people who get insurance through work like the insurance they have. All of them will lose their coverage under what is proposed under the Medicare for All legislation. All of them will be forced onto this new government program—every one of them. Never mind that 71 percent of Americans covered through their employer actually say they like their current plan. A single-payer Medicare for All proposal says, basically, if you like your current healthcare plan, you cannot keep it. The government will take it away and make it illegal.

Seniors are going to suffer, too, and, actually, I think seniors may end up suffering the most. I am talking about people who are already on Medicare because this legislation threatens the 60 million Americans who currently get their healthcare as part of Medicare. They get their healthcare today through Medicare. Medicare is already expected to run out of money by 2026. It was confirmed by last month's trustee report, but the Democrats' proposal will even outlaw Medicare Advantage, a program that 22 million Americans currently use for their healthcare. It is called Medicare Advantage because there are advantages to being on this program in terms of preventive care and coordinated care. There is a reason people sign up for Medicare Advantage. All 22 million would lose that as well under the Democrats' Medicare for All plan.

Healthcare programs benefiting military families and children will also be eliminated. Democrats plan to abolish servicemembers' TRICARE and the Children's Health Insurance Plan. All of that goes away under what the Democrats' radical proposal is talking about.

Perhaps the greatest deception of Medicare for All is the suggestion that government-run care would be free. Let me say to the American people: Do not

be deceived. Do not be deceived. Americans will pay a very high price. Medicare for All has been estimated at a 10-year pricetag of \$32 trillion. There is only one way to even try to pay for this massive plan and that is to dramatically raise everyone's income taxes to the point where they may need to pay double. That is what is being proposed.

So the result will be less freedom, lower quality of care, and longer lines as people have to wait to get to a doctor, because Washington will be controlling the doctor-patient medical decisions—and, mark my words, Washington will ration care. Rationing means delays and delay means denial of care. Government-run healthcare is notorious for producing long lines, long waiting periods, delay in care—even urgently needed care.

The government-run system has failed where they tried to put it in place in Vermont, in Senator SANDERS' home State. They started it and ended up having to eliminate it. They couldn't afford it. It wasn't working. It was too complicated. That is in one State.

We also have the situation of what is going on both in England and Canada right now in terms of costs and limits of care, the denial of treatment, the delay in treatment.

I think people watching may have seen the stories as a result of what is happening in England, where elderly patients are going blind in Britain right now. Why would they be going blind? Because the government is rationing cataract surgery. People can Google "going blind in Britain." It is the British healthcare system that is causing it because of the rationing of care. So Democrats are promoting this Medicare for All. Basically they are saying that ObamaCare needs to be repealed and replaced because it has failed the American people. The solution they are offering is not one that I think would make things better, but it is one that I think would make things worse.

Republicans, at the same time, are working for meaningful, workable solutions that lower the costs of prescription drugs, solutions that increase healthcare choice and transparency, and solutions that expand all Americans' access to affordable care. We want to make sure patients can get the care they need from the doctor they choose at a lower cost.

So instead of proposing higher taxes, which is what the Democrats are proposing, instead of proposing healthcare rationing, which will come with Medicare for All, Democrats need to begin working with Republicans to improve healthcare for all Americans, and they should start by rejecting BernieCare.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Ohio.

TRIBUTE TO MARK POWDEN

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the career of my long-

time chief of staff, staff director of the Democratic staff on the Senate Banking Committee, former staff director for Republicans on the HELP Committee, and my good friend Mark Powden.

Mark is the model of a public servant and of a Senate staffer. He spent decades serving in these Halls, first for Senator Jeffords, and then, in 2007, he joined my office, becoming my chief of staff less than 2 years later.

I was a brandnew Senator. I still had a lot to learn. There were few better teachers in this institution and this city than Mark Powden. He helped steer our office in its early days, setting up a well-oiled machine. I would like to think, that would serve Ohioans at home and advocate for them in Washington. Under Mark's leadership, we delivered results for the 12 million people in Ohio.

When the country wanted to write off the American auto industry, we said no. We weren't going to abandon this industry and millions of American workers—literally hundreds of thousands in Ohio. Mark was passionate about making sure we got the best deal possible for Ohio workers. It wasn't just auto workers.

Mark took over the job as chief of staff in my office during the depths of the recession around the time President Obama took office, after the economy was tanking with a loss of 800,000 jobs a month at the end of the Bush administration. Ohio had lost 423,000 jobs over a 2-year period—nearly 8 percent of the jobs in the State. Under Mark's leadership, we worked to create the Hardest Hit Fund, which targeted resources to communities in places like Ohio that had been devastated by the financial crisis. Mark and so many others have heard me say that the ZIP Code where my wife Connie and I live in Cleveland, OH—ZIP Code 44105—at that point, in the first half of 2007, there were more foreclosures in that ZIP Code than in any other ZIP Code in the United States of America.

Mark always made sure that investing in Ohio was a priority. We helped secure \$100 million to expand cancer research and treatment at the Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center and James Cancer Hospital.

Through all of these accomplishments, Mark remained true to his Vermont roots. It is where he grew up. His first major job in Washington was with a Republican in those days, a Senator from Vermont. He tried his hardest always to bring Vermont's bucolic vales to the Nation's Capital, and he maintained the utmost respect for the institution of the Senate.

He had an incredible wealth of knowledge on the history of this place and on legislative procedure and tradition, and he passed it on to other staffers—from my new chief of staff, when Mark moved over to lead the Senate Banking Committee, to the LCs new to the Senate, hoping to learn. We will miss all that about Mark Powden.

I will miss Mark's counsel. I will miss his hard work. I will miss his sense of humor. I will miss his modesty. I will particularly miss his farmer jokes that he tells so well after growing up in rural Vermont. It is not surprising that Mark would not want to be here today as I honor him because he just doesn't want to show up to be honored. But after decades in public service, he has earned a long retirement with his wife Wendy; his two sons, Joseph and Russell; and his entire family.

Mark, thank you for what you did for me, thank you for what you did for our State, and thank you for what you do for our country.

I would add to this that one of the people Mark helped to teach is with me on the floor today. She is about to join a Presidential campaign. Her name is Hannah Fine. I want to recognize her service. This is the first time, I believe, she has been on the Senate floor for a moment like this. So, Hannah, thank you.

NOMINATION OF STEPHEN MOORE

Mr. President, this weekend, the President's pick for the Federal Reserve, Stephen Moore, said that we should focus a little less on all of his offensive and outlandish articles, the comments he made about women in print and on the air, the comments he made about places like Cincinnati and Cleveland, the attacks he has made on middle America, on working families. He said: Forget about all that. Let's talk about my economic record.

Well, Mr. Moore should be careful what he wishes for. His economic record is dangerous. It is out of touch. It is a big part of the reason we have suffered so many of the economic problems we have had in the last decade. Even conservative economists have criticized him.

He has claimed over and over again that the country is experiencing deflation. In other words, he thinks prices are falling. I don't know where he gets these ideas. I don't have any constituents who complain to me about prices falling—about deflation—but Mr. Moore seems to see things that aren't really there.

Tell someone who is paying college tuition, whether it is at Sinclair Community College or whether it is at Ohio State or Kent State University, that the prices are going down. Tell it to someone with diabetes trying to afford insulin. Tell somebody in Columbus, OH, who is trying to pay the rent that prices are falling. It is absurd. He makes economic statements like that with so little basis in fact.

He has been a conspiracy theorist. He thinks government statistics on the economy can't be trusted. Maybe that is where he got the idea that the cost of living is going down. He wants to return to the gold standard. He said on CNBC this morning that instead of talking about equal pay for women, the problem actually has been the steady decline in male earnings. I don't disagree the problem has been stagnant

wages for men, but I also can't believe he would say the problem is not women's wages when we know that—I have spent a lot of time on this floor talking about the dignity of work. I understand that so many Americans have seen corporate profits go up; we have seen executive compensation explode upward; we have seen workers working harder and being more productive; and we have seen wages remain flat. The issue is that wages are flat, in large part, because this body and this President have followed the advice of Stephen Moore and continued to cut taxes on rich people, underinvest in infrastructure, underinvest in working families, underinvest in public health, and underinvest in public education. So to put it on women and say that the problem has actually been the steady decline in male earnings—we shouldn't even be talking about women's wages—just makes no sense.

He doesn't seem to understand that, fundamentally, as challenged as so many working families are with stagnant wages and with lack of opportunity, if you are a woman in this country, if you are someone of color, the challenges are even greater. He should know that. Every economic statistic shows that. Sentient human beings walking down the street and listening should know that. But for some reason, this man who wants to be a Governor on the Federal Reserve thinks otherwise.

He wants the entire country—and this is probably even more serious. He wants the entire country to look like Kansas. He was the mastermind—or one of the masterminds—behind Governor Brownback's move in Kansas to basically eliminate tax liability for a whole group of mostly prosperous people, to cut taxes overall on the rich, and then go after public education and cut public education. It was so extreme that once it was enacted in a very Republican State by a Republican Governor, it was the Republicans in the legislature who unenacted it. They repealed most of the things he did and overrode this far-right Republican Governor's veto, again, based on what Mr. Moore had suggested. While almost all of the 50 States were gaining jobs, once-prosperous Kansas lost jobs during this time. He wants that disastrous economic model to go nationwide, and we know he is not alone. It is the same philosophy that so many in this town say we should do—tax cuts for the rich and not for working families. It is this view that if you cut taxes on the rich, the money will trickle down and everybody will have a better standard of living. We tried that with President Reagan, and it didn't work. We tried that with President Bush, and it didn't work. If you remember in the 8 years of the Bush economy, a few hundred thousand in a country of 300-plus million, there was no net job growth to speak of in the Bush 8 years. Then the Trump tax bill cut taxes on the rich, and maybe it will trickle down, and we will

have more jobs and more wages and all that. It just never works. It works for the rich. They get huge tax cuts. Bill Clinton, on the other hand—during his 8 years, in which they increased taxes on upper income people, we saw a 20 million net job increase.

For some reason, Stephen Moore and his corporate crowd don't understand what happens when you cut taxes for the rich. You don't grow the economy by giving more money to the super-wealthy, who will invest it in Swiss bank accounts. You focus on the middle class, and you give the tax breaks to the middle class like our earned-income tax credit bill. If you focus tax breaks on the middle class, you will grow the economy because you are putting money in the pocket of somebody making \$20- or \$30- or \$50- or \$100,000 a year. They are going to spend it. They are not going to put it in a Swiss bank account. When you give tax cuts to some of the people in the Trump Cabinet, they are going to put more in Swiss bank accounts. They are not going to spend it. They are not going to invest it. They are not going to make any difference in our economy.

So I ask my colleagues to vote no on Stephen Moore not only because there is so much about him and what he has done and what he has written, but mostly for what he would advocate as a member of the Federal Reserve.

If you love your country, you will fight for the people who make it work, and you respect and honor work. There is nothing about Mr. Moore's record that would suggest he would do that. We need someone on the Federal Reserve who actually understands that.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. 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 ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Iowa.

NATIONAL SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I would like to first give approximately a 1-minute speech and then speak for a longer time on another subject.

I am happy to recognize small businesses in Iowa, and, of course, we should recognize them all across our country. We do that by celebrating National Small Business Week.

In my State of Iowa, 99 percent of all businesses are small businesses. Also, almost half of Iowa's employees are employed by small businesses.

Government regulations have a disproportionate impact on small businesses, often costing them 20 percent more than the average of all businesses. So we need to remember that small businesses are the main source of America's innovations and economic strength. We should all be proud of and support these men and women who

work hard to keep our communities vibrant.

This week is devoted to honoring small business.

TAX REFORM

Mr. President, a few weeks ago, our tax filing season came to an end. This filing season was a very important milestone as it was the first tax filing season under the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act signed by the President before Christmas 2017.

Congressional Democrats sought to turn the filing season into an indictment of the tax reform through a campaign of misinformation and a campaign of half-truths. They were obsessed with finding anything—just anything—they could hang their hat on to declare that the tax filing system was a failure.

I will give you a case in point—maybe, several cases.

They attempted to use early and incomplete tax reform data to mislead taxpayers into believing that since the average tax refunds went down, taxpayers' taxes actually went up. Of course, such a claim is just simple hogwash. The size of the tax refund tells you absolutely nothing about a taxpayer's overall tax liability. The tax refund, as most people ought to know, tells you how much a taxpayer overpaid the Federal Government throughout the year.

None other than the Washington Post Fact Checker called out Democrat tax refund falsehoods as, in their words, "nonsensical and misleading." The Democrat talking points earned the Democrats a whopping four Pinocchios from that Fact Checker. Yet the Democrats wouldn't let facts or reason get in their way, because if it did, it wouldn't be a political win for them. The Democrats continued to mislead and scare the public for several more weeks. And why not? The truth might hurt.

Then, more complete tax refund data came in showing that the average tax refunds were actually in line with the previous years. Much to the Democrats' chagrin, their favorite talking point was, once and for all, exposed for the nonsense that it is.

The fact is that this filing season was a resounding success for the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, signed before Christmas 2017. The filing season happened to run remarkably smoothly. This became even clearer the further into the filing season we went and a more complete picture emerged. On four points, all the IRS computer systems functioned as planned, refunds were processed in a timely manner, the total number of refunds sent to taxpayers are up—and the average refund amount differed by only \$55 compared to the previous tax year—and, lastly and most importantly, millions of middle-income taxpayers saw less of their hard-earned money go to Washington. And, of course, that was the purpose of the tax bill in the first place.

Now, unfortunately, the Democrats remain yet today as determined as ever

to take down tax reform through a campaign of misinformation. For years, they misled the American people and promoted a narrative full of distortions and misrepresentations about what the law does and doesn't do. Even when the bill was a little more than a 1-page outline, Democrats began their campaign depicting tax reform as a giveaway to the wealthy and a tax hike for the middle class. As the committee discussed new ideas and as the committee drafted a final bill, it actually evolved. It was never like somebody 6 months before said: This is what we are going to pass, and we are going to pass it just this way.

No, it evolved considerably from the initial framework.

Yet the Democrat talking points that began when we first started talking about the bill never changed and, still today, haven't changed. Analysis after analysis, ranging from the nonpartisan Joint Committee on Taxation to even the very liberal Tax Policy Center, showed that tax reform would cut taxes on average for every income group. These analyses showed that to the extent there were tax increases, they were largely concentrated on the wealthy—in other words, a more aggressive tax law.

That is right. The taxpayers Democrats claimed were the big winners in the tax reform are actually the ones most likely to see a tax hike. Moreover, according to the Joint Committee on Taxation analysis, the largest percentage of tax cuts are concentrated among low- and middle-income groups. For emphasis, the Joint Committee on Taxation analysis also shows that tax reform made the Tax Code more progressive. I have said it twice now. I say it a lot of times. I am trying to get somebody to understand that this is what experts say, not what this Senator says.

Millionaires now shoulder an even larger share of the total tax burden than under prior law. As you can ex-

pect, Democrats are determined not to let these facts get in their political way. Since the beginning, they have argued that up was down and that tax cuts were tax increases, and have even suggested the bill's passage was a sign of "Armageddon."

Unfortunately, their constant drum beat, coupled with little pushback from the mainstream media, has worked to mislead too many taxpayers. However, there are signs that some in the media are starting to see that the Democrats' talking points are the nonsense that those talking points really are. You might not believe this, but a few weeks ago the New York Times, of all papers, published an article highlighting how Democratic talking points and far too many Americans' perceptions of the law don't match reality.

I would like to ask you to study this chart. It compares the liberal Tax Policy Center's analysis of taxpayers receiving tax cuts under the individual income provisions of the law with a recent survey of taxpayers who think they received a tax cut.

Follow me on this chart. As you can see, there is a large gap between how many taxpayers actually received a tax cut and those who think they did.

Based on the Tax Policy Center analysis, nearly 70 percent of Americans earning between \$30,000 and \$50,000 saw a tax cut, but only about 36 percent think they got the tax cut. Similarly, more than 80 percent of Americans earning \$50,000 and \$70,000 received a tax cut, but only half that amount, 40 percent, think they got a tax cut. The gap between perception and reality continues as you go up the income scale. Only about half as many people who did actually get a tax cut think they did. As noted in the New York Times:

To a large degree, the gap between perception and reality on the tax cuts appears to flow from a sustained—and misleading—effort by liberal opponents of the law to brand it as a broad middle-class tax increase.

Now, read "liberal opponents" as people in the leadership of the Democratic Party, both in Congress and outside of Congress, misleading the people. You can see from these statistics on the chart that they were enormously successful and they probably knew what the information was, but for some people, when it comes to politics, the truth doesn't matter.

Something I don't get a chance to do very often is to applaud the New York Times for finally calling Democrats out for their efforts to mislead the American public, but even in this New York Times article, the paper was selective in its reporting. The paper chose to highlight only the Tax Policy Center's analysis of the individual income tax provisions rather than its analysis of all major tax provisions enacted in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. Even the liberal Tax Policy Center recognizes the person who has the legal burden of paying a tax isn't necessarily the one who bears the economic incidence of that tax. For instance, it is widely recognized that a portion of the corporate tax ultimately falls on individuals in the form of reduced wages, so we cut the corporate tax rate. There ought to be a positive benefit from that for the workers.

Thus, when all major provisions of tax reform are considered, the percentage of taxpayers receiving a tax cut is not 70 percent, as reported, but 80 percent. Moreover, when you look at taxpayers with incomes between \$50,000 and \$70,000, the percentage receiving a tax cut climbs to 90 percent.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the complete Tax Policy Center analysis of Americans who receive tax cuts under tax reform.

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

TABLE T18-0026—THE TAX CUTS AND JOBS ACT (TCJA). ALL PROVISIONS AND INDIVIDUAL INCOME TAX PROVISIONS TAX UNITS WITH A TAX INCREASE OR TAX CUT, BY EXPANDED CASH INCOME LEVEL, 2018

[All provisions]

Expanded Cash Income Level (thousands of 2017 dollars)	Tax Units		Tax Units with Tax Increase or Cut				Average Tax Change (Dollars) for all Tax Units	
	Number (thousands)	Percent of Total	With Tax Cut		With Tax Increase		All Provisions	Major Provisions Included Here
			Pct of Tax Units	Avg Tax Change (\$)	Pct of Tax Units	Avg Tax Change (\$)		
Less than 10	13,260	7.5	19.3	-40	0.3	430	-10	-10
10-20	23,850	13.5	62.0	-100	1.1	850	-50	-50
20-30	22,240	12.6	79.1	-250	2.6	780	-180	-180
30-40	16,640	9.5	87.3	-460	4.5	750	-360	-360
40-50	13,220	7.5	90.4	-670	6.2	710	-570	-570
50-75	24,450	13.9	91.6	-1,010	7.0	810	-870	-870
75-100	16,650	9.5	91.5	-1,540	8.1	1,200	-1,310	-1,310
100-200	30,860	17.5	92.5	-2,560	7.4	1,510	-2,260	-2,260
200-500	11,640	6.6	95.1	-7,000	4.8	2,820	-6,560	-6,520
500-1,000	1,530	0.9	95.0	-22,170	5.0	9,970	-21,240	-20,570
More than 1,000	670	0.4	88.3	-88,940	11.7	121,920	-69,660	-64,300
All	176,100	100.0	80.4	-2,140	4.8	2,770	-1,610	-1,590
[Individual income tax provisions]								
Less than 10	13,260	7.5	4.4	-80	0.3	440	*	*
10-20	23,850	13.5	29.8	-150	1.3	790	-30	-40
20-30	22,240	12.6	51.0	-320	3.1	700	-140	-140
30-40	16,640	9.5	65.2	-520	5.5	660	-300	-310
40-50	13,220	7.5	73.9	-720	7.6	660	-480	-480
50-75	24,450	13.9	81.7	-990	8.7	750	-740	-740
75-100	16,650	9.5	86.6	-1,380	10.1	1,140	-1,080	-1,080
100-200	30,860	17.5	89.1	-2,250	10.1	1,450	-1,850	-1,860
200-500	11,640	6.6	90.9	-6,020	8.5	2,450	-5,280	-5,270
500-1,000	1,530	0.9	92.1	-19,050	7.3	8,930	-17,340	-16,900

TABLE T18-0026—THE TAX CUTS AND JOBS ACT (TCJA). ALL PROVISIONS AND INDIVIDUAL INCOME TAX PROVISIONS TAX UNITS WITH A TAX INCREASE OR TAX CUT, BY EXPANDED CASH INCOME LEVEL, 2018—Continued

[All provisions]

Expanded Cash Income Level (thousands of 2017 dollars)	Tax Units		Tax Units with Tax Increase or Cut				Average Tax Change (Dollars) for all Tax Units	
	Number (thousands)	Percent of Total	With Tax Cut		With Tax Increase		All Provisions	Major Provisions Included Here
			Pct of Tax Units	Avg Tax Change (\$)	Pct of Tax Units	Avg Tax Change (\$)		
More than 1,000	670	0.4	78.2	-75,110	20.8	98,200	-41,910	-38,290
All	176,100	100.0	64.8	-2,180	6.3	2,760	-1,260	-1,240

Source: Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center Microsimulation Model (version 0217-1).
* Non-zero value rounded to zero.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I hope that the New York Times article will be a wake-up call to congressional Democrats and people outside of Congress to abandon this misleading rhetoric. Unfortunately, it is more likely they will continue their campaign of misinformation. Yet, as more and more hard data come in on the benefits of tax reform, it will become harder and harder for the American public to take the Democrats seriously with their rhetoric.

With the tax filing season now behind us, we are finally starting to get some of this hard data. H&R Block has released data for this filing season based upon its experience in helping taxpayers during this filing season, which demonstrate how taxpayers fared in each State. Again, as you can see from this chart, taxpayers who are in red and blue States alike have all benefited from tax reform.

One knows what the rhetoric was around here even before we voted on this bill: It is an attack on the blue States. Well, it didn't turn out that way. On average for all States, taxpayers saw a 24-percent reduction in their tax bills.

This data directly contradict misleading arguments by these Washington Democrats, as I stated, that tax reform was an attack on high-tax blue States due to the cap on the State and local tax deductions, and we set that cap at \$10,000.

According to H&R Block, not according to this Senator, some of the largest tax reductions are actually found in the high-tax blue States. On average, taxpayers in New Jersey saw the largest reduction in their tax bills at 29 percent. New Jersey, based on the last several elections, is a blue State. Massachusetts had the second largest reduction of 27.6 percent, and California had the third largest with 27.1 percent. They are blue States.

The fact is, on average, taxpayers in every State have benefited from tax reform, and in some cases, high-tax blue States have fared even better than red States.

I am proud of the work we did on tax reform. No bill is perfect, and we still have work to do in addressing a number of technical correction issues, but we have kept our promise to enact meaningful reform that has cut taxes for the middle class.

Even more important is what tax reform means for long-term economic

growth. It doesn't take a tax expert to see that income, wages, jobs, and unemployment numbers have all very much improved since the enactment of this tax bill. That then reflects in significant benefits obtained by American workers. Of course, that is on top of the direct tax relief that hard-working individuals and families are already receiving, which I described at the beginning of my remarks.

Annualized growth in real after-tax personal income averaged 2½ percent during the Obama administration; it has averaged 3.3 percent since tax reform.

Annualized growth in real average hourly earnings averaged a mere 0.6 percent under Obama compared to 1.7 percent following the enactment of the tax bill. So it is about three times as much.

Monthly job gains averaged 110,000 under President Obama; they averaged 215,000 after this tax bill passed.

There have been nearly 5.4 million jobs created since January of 2017, with more than half of that job creation having occurred since the enactment of tax reform.

Under President Obama, the unemployment rate averaged a whopping 7.4 percent. Today, it averages 3.9 percent.

Following tax reform and for the first time since 2001, the number of job openings in the national economy has exceeded the number of unemployed Americans—a phenomenon that has continued for the past year. That means an American who wants a job can get a job.

To say it simply, tax reform is working for America. For the Democrats to suggest otherwise is nothing more than their continued effort to mislead the American public. I invite the Democrats to take a page from the New York Times article, acknowledge the facts, and work with us to continue to improve the economic environment for hard-working individuals and families all across this great country.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

OPPORTUNITY ZONES

Mr. BRAUN. Mr. President, I thank Senator ERNST for allowing me the opportunity to talk about opportunity zones.

So much has happened since President Trump has been elected that I think has brought opportunity. The economy is obviously booming. In the State of Indiana, for instance, we have 156 opportunity zones in 83 different cities and 58 counties. That is a lot in one State. This is investment into these areas that need jobs. Capital investment is hard to measure. Thank goodness it has come along and has been an opportunity that we in the Hoosier State have taken advantage of.

We are one of the lowest unemployment States in the Union. I am from Dubois County, from the town of Jasper, which supports the lowest unemployment rates in our State—a State of enterprise, a State of commerce. Workforce development is probably the most critical issue that faces our State, but we do a lot of other things well. We live within our means. We addressed infrastructure back in 2017 by repairing roads and bridges and by doing a lot of things well.

We have 80,000 jobs in our State that need one simple thing, and that is proper training.

When I went to school back in the seventies—it dates me a little bit—I took industrial arts. You had a shop class. You had a welding class. You had practical training that led you into good-paying jobs. Somewhere along the way, we kind of almost stigmatized that pathway called career and technical education. We have schools like Ivy Tech. When I was a State legislator, there were 19 different programs, and we were spending nearly \$1 billion a year, but we were not providing proper training for high-demand, high-wage jobs.

In our State, we are shipping out twice as many 4-year degrees as we use. Something is not right. I just spoke with an online college, which is another issue I want to mention. The cost of these 4-year degrees has gotten way out of hand. Many graduates spend \$80,000, \$90,000, \$100,000. They take on that debt and have jobs that are not marketable.

We need to pay attention to the simple things that most States need by reorienting the focus of education and providing proper training for jobs that

in many cases pay more than 4-year degrees, those that start in the neighborhood of \$40,000 to \$60,000 and have good benefits and potential wages of over \$100,000 a year. In our State and in most States across the country, those are the jobs that need to be filled.

In my own company, 80 jobs can't be filled because, really, there needs to be a better curriculum at the high school level, one from which you get basic skills taught rather than the misguided approach of overemphasizing 4-year degrees. There is nothing wrong with that, and everyone should aspire to that, but the market doesn't necessarily need it. It will pay more for a lot less education, and you will not be walking away with the debt that so many students do in this day and age.

Tax reform then came along. As a business owner, I can clearly say that there has been nothing in the 38 years of building a little Main Street business into a national company that has catapulted our ability to do more for our employees than what has happened with tax reform.

An opportunity zone is a great idea. We need to have more of it, and we need to make sure this institution starts to set an example across this country whereby we live within our means and not create \$850 billion deficits annually on top of \$22 trillion of debt. We all know that is going to lead us nowhere other than into despair down the road.

Again, I am here to tout what tax relief and the JOBS Act did, as well as opportunity zones, which we have run with in the Hoosier State. We also need to fix a few things, like matching training and education with high-demand, high-wage jobs. If we do that across the country, I think we will be into decades of prosperity that will prevent us from maybe going down that trail of some of the things we have heard about recently, like the Green New Deal, Medicare for All, and a lot of things that we know we can't afford and that will not work.

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PERDUE). The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. Mr. President, I thank Vice Chair ERNST for putting this event together on the floor to talk about the success of opportunity zones and what they could mean for so many Americans who desperately need the assistance in so many places. Without any question, this is a great part of the tax bill that has not received enough attention. A lot of folks know about opportunity zones, and a lot of folks are excited about opportunity zones.

I would like to spend a little time talking about the success of our economy and touching on some of the issues that my colleague Senator BRAUN spoke about as well, those being the importance of workforce development and of making sure our workforce has the skills that meet the jobs of our current economy.

One estimate said that perhaps there are a million more jobs than there are people looking for work, and a part of the reason why that is so is because we still need to make sure that we harmonize the skill set necessary to do the work with the skills being taught or trained to our younger folks and folks looking for work.

This has been an amazing journey from an economic perspective, when you think about where we are financially as a country.

This past quarter we saw the announcement of a growth rate of around 3.2 percent. That is astounding because all of the estimates were so significantly lower.

We finished 2018 with a growth rate of around 3.1 percent. Now, we have not seen that acceleration in our economy in a very long time. So it is really good news for those folks looking for work.

Our unemployment rate is near a 50-year low—somewhere between 3.8 and 3.9 percent. This is something we haven't seen in a very long time. African-American unemployment is near 7 percent. Some of the lowest numbers ever recorded in the history of the country for African-American employment are there now. Hispanic unemployment is in the same range—very low, record lows.

We have seen wages in the last several months continue to increase. Wage growth is now hitting the bottom quintile of our workforce at a 3-percent growth rate, which is really good news because it was another one of those targets that we knew was important for us to reach.

Said differently, income disparity is shrinking because of the success of our Tax Code and the success of our regulatory reset, and that is good news for everyone.

The economic recovery, however, has been uneven. Part of the challenge that we see is that there are areas of our Nation that are not doing as well as the numbers I have just indicated. That reinforces the fact that, as a whole, the Nation is succeeding and the people of our country are succeeding at a much higher level and at a faster clip. However, rural America still lags a little behind and needs more tools in the toolkit, more arrows in the quiver to address some of the challenges that are endemic and specific to those rural parts of our country.

I am thankful to have partnered in the opportunity zone legislation with folks who are compassionate and who are committed to making sure that rural America realizes its full potential.

I have had an opportunity to travel this country on my national opportunity zone tour. I have gone from places in Florida, with Senator RUBIO, to parts of our country that I have really enjoyed seeing, but I can't articulate fully the passion that I saw in folks from West Virginia, New Hampshire, and Iowa when we had a chance to tour these three States and learn

more about the rural economy and the potential in those rural economies.

I remember vividly walking down in Huntington, WV, with my good friend Senator CAPITO. We had a great visit in Huntington, WV, and what we realized there was the passion of the people and the willingness to work were evident and that we needed to bring more resources to the table so that the employers and would-be employers would make the investment in Huntington, WV, and in other parts of rural West Virginia.

We left there encouraged and enthusiastic because the opportunity zone legislation was seen as a true tool in the toolkit for rural America that needed to be rolled out. At that time, it hadn't been rolled out like it has been now.

So today we see over \$100 billion migrating toward opportunity funds. That means good news for rural America. If we are able to continue that progress, we will see rural America live its full potential, and that is great news.

I enjoyed visiting New Hampshire with Governor Sununu, where the unemployment rate is 2.4 percent, one of the lowest in the country. But even in a place like New Hampshire, where the unemployment rate is really low, the rural parts of the State were still devastated and needed an infusion of hope and opportunity. The O zone, or the opportunity zone, has presented itself as one of the many solutions necessary to confront some of the rural issues that we saw in New Hampshire.

I enjoyed my time in West Des Moines with Senator ERNST, as we had a chance to visit a potential housing project incubator at a church, where folks were fascinated by using the tax deferral to encourage and to attract more investment into West Des Moines because the people are willing to work. There is dignity in all work, and they understood that. They were passionate about opportunities, and they needed another tool to make it happen.

Opportunity zones are a part of that toolkit, and I will say, without any question, that when you think about great leadership, it is hard to have missed the compassion and the passion that JONI ERNST has for her constituents and her business owners and her willingness to partner with legislation like the opportunity zones and partner with the entrepreneurs of her State and the folks who are looking for ways to reinvest in their own neighborhoods to help encourage and to support a willing workforce.

That tool of opportunity zones can be brought to bear against some of the strongest and hardest challenges in rural America, and I am here to say thank you to my colleagues for, a, making sure that opportunity zones are a reality; b, for taking this time on the floor to encourage others, especially our rural Americans, to stay hopeful; and, c, to continue to address some of the challenges that Senator BRAUN mentioned about the workforce

development and harmonizing the skill set with the workforce in a way that allows for those folks to realize their full potential and live the American Dream.

I yield to Senator CAPITO.

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, I want to thank my colleague Senator TIM SCOTT from South Carolina. I am going to talk a little bit about our visit later, but our visit was really tremendous in West Virginia.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that all postcloture time on the Brasher nomination expire at 3 p.m. today and that, if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

I further ask that following disposition of the Brasher nomination, the Senate vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the Ruiz II, Arias-Marxuach, and Wolson nominations in the order listed, and that if cloture is invoked on the nominations, the postcloture time on the nominations expire at 10:30 a.m. on Thursday, May 2, and the Senate vote on confirmation of the nominations in the order in which cloture was invoked; and finally, if confirmed, that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there any objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

OPPORTUNITY ZONES

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, I am here to join my colleagues today to speak about what I believe is one of the most significant parts of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act that we passed a little over a year ago, and that is the opportunity zones.

Senator SCOTT is the author and the brains behind this concept that he has been working on for years, and I was really proud to be a cosponsor of that bill and am excited to see what is going to happen.

Ever since that historic legislation that we passed and became law in 2017, I have heard from many individuals, families, and small businesses back in West Virginia about all the ways that they have benefited from this. I have met with families who have been able to save for their children, whether it is to increase their children's education or to actually get some things done around the house that they hadn't been able to afford before.

I have spoken with small businesses that have been able to expand their operations and create new jobs. I have heard from individuals who have been able to give back to their churches and to their communities. I have seen—which, I think, may even be the most significant—a renewed sense of optimism and hope about where our econ-

omy is going, not just in our State but across the country.

Many critics of the tax cut legislation said folks like those living in West Virginia wouldn't feel the positive effects, but I can tell you that we have experienced that in West Virginia. Those same critics then said that the benefits would only be temporary.

I heard Senator SCOTT talk about the growth figures over the last quarter. It is phenomenal. I have seen figures in West Virginia of how wage growth is increasing and how our annual salaries are increasing.

Our unemployment still remains a little bit high, but it is still moving down over the last month.

As recently as last week, I met a small business owner in South Charleston who is currently creating new jobs because of that tax reform.

But thanks to a specific provision in the tax reform bill—a provision, as I said, that Senator SCOTT sponsored and that several of our colleagues joined in—I am positive that the new tax law will continue to drive economic growth and optimism through opportunity zones.

Now there is no State better made for an opportunity zone investment than our State. I am going to sell it right here.

As my colleagues before me have explained, the idea is quite simple. It is to incentivize private investment in communities that need it the most—communities that, for one reason or another, have struggled more than others economically and that have been hit hard and are in need of not just a little but a major jump start. They are communities full of great people—people with great ideas and strong ambition—but they are in need of the capital to get those ideas off the ground, to start and expand their businesses, and to drive that growth and development.

That is something that is really not easy to do in a small State, particularly a small rural State. It is very difficult.

The New York Times actually reported recently that the rural areas around our country accounted for just 3 percent of America's job growth between the years of 2010 and 2014.

But with the creation of the opportunity zones, enthusiasm is growing across the Mountain State when it comes to our economic potential.

Senator SCOTT talked about his visit to Huntington, and he did remark on the enthusiasm that he saw firsthand when he visited with me and we toured 3 of our State's 55 opportunity zones. During that visit, we met with a lot of businesses. We met with local and government leaders, and we met with education officials and city officials about how opportunity zones can shape growth in that community, as well as in others across our State.

I think Senator SCOTT would agree that the optimism was there and the excitement was palpable.

The mayor of Huntington, Mayor Steve Williams, actually put it best when he characterized the trip as an opportunity to show not only what the community has been able to do to attract investment but, better yet, what the community aspires to do and become in the next generations or the next decades.

That is really what opportunity zones are all about—not only driving investments today but building those foundations of growth and development for the future.

I think we can all think of an area we either live near or we have driven through in our respective States that maybe used to be vibrant communities, whether in, say, Wheeling, where they had a big steel industry at some point, or in Weston, where there was a glass industry at some point. The downtowns have begun to shrink, but they are almost like sleeping bears. They are ready to wake up, and that is what I think opportunity zones are going to do.

Today, a little less than a year ago, the Governor made the appointments of 55 areas in our State. Law firms, accounting firms, investors, and several others are working in our State to use this new tax provision to bring jobs and growth to parts of our country that need it the most.

Communities are developing pitch books—I have seen a couple on the internet—to market their projects and proposals. Our city of Parkersburg is a great example of that. A nonprofit put together a pitch book that shows where the investments can occur in and around those opportunity zones surrounding Parkersburg.

We have also seen the establishment of our first opportunity fund, called the Savage Grant.

So we have some great momentum. We are working to build on it. My staff has just done an outreach in almost every single county, and we just finished a 3-day educational tour in partnership with West Virginia Forward, the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond, the West Virginia Department of Commerce, and the Benedum Foundation to spread the word.

Also, nonprofits are really interested in seeing this work. It takes some of the pressure off of them. If the private investor can come in, then the nonprofits can come in and provide some of the alternative services and additional services that would be needed.

So we are going to keep at it, and with Treasury's release of the most recent opportunity zone regulations, the program will be a viable tool that will be more viable than ever for investments in our operating businesses.

I am confident that West Virginians and others will make the most of it, and we should make the most of it because this is a great idea and a great opportunity. It is a way to transform our communities and to improve our communities and to lift up individuals and businesses that contribute, and to

build that bigger and greater foundation for a brighter future.

So these are the kinds of opportunities that, as Republicans, when we voted for this bill, we knew that this was a core part of our mission in terms of being able to deliver that firm foundation, and we are going to continue to deliver for West Virginians and for all Americans.

I wish to thank the Senator from Iowa as well.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, today we have an economy that is booming. Unemployment is at its lowest in Iowa since 2000, and wages are up.

In the first quarter of this year, we saw 3.2 percent GDP growth, which far exceeded expectations, but we know economic statistics alone don't completely tell the story of the health or wealth of a community.

More than 52 million Americans, including approximately 90,000 Iowans, live in economically distressed communities. Some have dubbed these communities as "left behind" due to low incomes, their high housing vacancies, people out of work, and not a lot of hope for the future. For too long, so many of these communities were limited not because of lack of ingenuity but simply by a lack of access to opportunity. Folks across Iowa have felt the door to a better job or a higher wage was closed to them.

The Governor of Iowa, Kim Reynolds, has been doing a tremendous job working to help these areas through both economic development and workforce development efforts. Programs like Future Ready Iowa help folks learn the skills they need to prepare for rewarding careers and the jobs of tomorrow.

Places like Dubuque, through its Development Corporation and Chamber of Commerce, are working day in and day out to improve the local economy, spur on investment, and get workers trained and back on their feet. They also recognize the challenges unique to the city and its people, like childcare access and housing.

At the Federal level, we also took concrete steps in late 2017 to recognize the specific needs of these communities. Senator TIM SCOTT's wonderful initiative, Investing in Opportunity Act, was included in the tax reform package and created what we now know as the Opportunity Zones Program. I thank Senator TIM SCOTT for working so hard on this opportunity for millions of Americans. They are seeing the benefits. Thank you, Senator, very much.

The Opportunity Zones Program is tremendous. This program incentivizes long-term investment in these low-income and distressed communities by allowing private capital to be used to support small businesses, encourage our entrepreneurs, and to develop dilapidated properties in ZIP Codes most in need of resurgence.

From the heart of Des Moines to rural areas around my State of Iowa, opportunity zones are beginning to unleash the economic potential of Iowa's communities.

Nearly a year ago, the Treasury Department approved 62 opportunity zones in Iowa, which include the communities of more than 200,000 Iowans.

Last summer, as part of his opportunity zone tour, Senator SCOTT joined me in visiting two of these Iowa organizations located in one of the opportunity zones. He had talked about these briefly. One was the Des Moines Dream Center, and the other was the Phenix School Apartments in West Des Moines. Since becoming eligible for private investment, the Des Moines Dream Center has been able to carry out their mission of working to restore hope and helping Iowans to pursue their dreams.

Today I am proud to say that with the passage of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, we are working for Iowa families and communities to help them turn a page and to change the rhetoric from "left behind" to "moving ahead."

One of the best parts of the Opportunity Zones Programs is that it is powered by the people on the ground, not by bureaucrats right here in Washington, DC. That is a very good thing. The 62 designated opportunity zones were nominated by their mayors and Governors because folks back home in Iowa know where help is needed the most.

As a result of the Opportunity Zones Program, we are seeing greater investment in Iowa's small businesses and entrepreneurs, more educational programs for our children, and affordable housing for our families.

Opportunity zones can help power a renaissance in communities across Iowa and reopen doors families once thought were closed. The potential is truly amazing, and I firmly believe this is only the beginning.

I thank my colleagues for coming to the floor today. I thank Senator SCOTT for his wonderful innovation. We look forward to seeing many more wonderful years of opportunity presented to the Americans who need it the most.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I would like to join my colleague from Iowa and my colleague from South Carolina, Senator SCOTT, to talk about opportunity zones.

Senator SCOTT has shown incredible leadership on this issue. He has a big heart, and he has a passion for dealing with communities that have been left behind.

The tax reform bill we passed is doing a great job in growing the economy. If you look at the numbers, they are unbelievable. In the first quarter, there was a 3.2-percent economic growth. That is exactly twice what was projected by the Congressional Budget Office, a nonpartisan group in Con-

gress, before tax reform was passed. Now tax reform has passed, and growth is twice as fast.

By the way, the same is true with job creation. Over the last year, we have created twice as many jobs as was projected before tax reform was passed. There is no question but that tax reform has helped stimulate development, helped stimulate economic growth, and helped stimulate jobs. Actually, what is most exciting to me is that it has also increased wages for people in Ohio and around the country.

Wages have increased higher in the last year than they have in the previous decade. You have to go back to before the great recession to find wage growth like we have seen. Wage growth is great across the board, but it is particularly encouraging that there is slightly more wage growth among what is called nonsupervisory jobs—think about middle-class jobs and blue-collar jobs. So this thing is working, and it is working well.

However, the fact is, the prosperity we are seeing is not evenly spread. There are some communities that haven't recovered since the great recession, and those are the communities—low-income communities that have been stubbornly poverty stricken—that the enterprise zones and opportunity zones are meant to focus on. It is a critical tool, and it is in the tax legislation. It is designed to help encourage investment and therefore job creation in these communities.

As I was listening to others talk earlier, they talked about States that are identifying urban communities and rural communities that are most in need. I will tell you that in my State of Ohio, we now have 320—320—census tracts that have been identified. When I am traveling around the State, it doesn't take me long to find one of these census tracts and to talk with people who are excited about it.

It allows investors and companies to defer paying these capital gains taxes, and, in some cases, if they make a commitment for long enough to invest additional money, they can avoid the capital gains tax altogether. This is working, and over time it is going to create more investment in these communities.

Throughout the past year, I have been traveling to Ohio and talking to people about this. In Youngstown, OH, and in Cleveland, OH, we had roundtable meetings with investors, businesses, and community leaders, and what I have heard is that people are excited about it. They think there is great potential here. To ensure that it works like it is supposed to work, we have to make sure everybody is involved, and that does include economic developers and all levels of government, not just the businesses and investors who are interested in getting the tax incentives. We have to work together to make sure these programs work and do expand opportunities in these communities.

By the way, I want to highlight the promising work Ohio has done to bring everyone to the table to ensure that happens. Specifically, last week, Governor DeWine announced the creation of a new website to serve as a one-stop shop for businesses, investors, and economic development officials who are looking to invest in Ohio's opportunity zones. The website includes an interactive map that shows investors where the projects are around the State, streamlining the flow of capital into these areas that need it most. These are the kinds of things we need to be able to ensure that this works properly.

I am also encouraged by the ongoing implementation of this program by Secretary Mnuchin and the Department of Treasury. Since the implementation process began, I have been urging the Secretary to issue taxpayer-friendly regulations and rules with regard to this. In other words, look at our intent—what we intended to do—which is, again, to create more jobs and economic opportunities in these zones. This includes a letter we sent, which was bicameral—meaning both the House and the Senate—and bipartisan to Treasury that named a number of concerns we had about where we were up to that point in terms of the regulations. We asked for some further guidance on a number of threshold questions that investors were asking about, including clarifying an onerous proposal that was out there that opportunity zone businesses have to make 50 percent of their revenues within their specific zones. That doesn't make sense for some businesses. I mean, think about a restaurant that is going to be built in an opportunity zone. If they don't get 50 percent of the revenue from people who live in that community, that is not necessarily a bad thing. We want to be sure they are hiring people from that community, but it may be that this 50-percent rule does not work for all of these businesses, including the ones that are going to sell to the outside or maybe even sell to other countries from an opportunity zone.

A few weeks ago, Treasury issued a second set of regulations that took important steps to responding to each of the requests we laid out in our January letter. I am pleased to see that, specifically, they addressed the 50-percent revenue requirement, providing safe harbors that seem to allow operating businesses to generate revenue outside of their opportunity zones without the risk of losing those tax incentives. Again, I commend the Secretary and the Department for taking these steps. We need that kind of certainty in order to ensure we take full advantage of this great opportunity. With the release of these new regulations, many more investors are going to have certainty to start making these investments in struggling communities throughout Ohio.

Overall, I am excited about the benefits of this new tax incentive, and I am

committed to doing everything I can do to make sure Ohio communities benefit from it.

Thank you.

I yield back my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I appreciate the words my colleague from Ohio has started with and shared and the work done by this Chamber not only to cut taxes and grow our economy for businesses and entrepreneurs around the country but for individuals, small towns, and families.

I live in a town of about 3,000 people. It is a little, tiny town. Growing up, we had two stoplights, and thanks to some of the oil and gas development that took place around our town several years back, we now have a third stoplight. It is big time now. The reason it is, is because we allowed innovation to flourish. We allowed technology to develop new ways to develop our energy resources, but while the policies in the field and in commerce have advanced, sometimes the policies in this place have grown stale. That is why I was excited to support the tax cuts of last Congress that have energized our economy, that have created new opportunity for American workers and families, and that have led to billions of dollars being brought back into the United States from overseas.

Of course, one of the provisions many of my colleagues have talked about today is the Opportunity Zones Program that was established in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. When we were getting the Opportunity Zones Program up and running, as a cosponsor of that legislation, my office heard complaints that there might not be enough money for the investments that would be utilized within these opportunity zones. In fact, we heard from people who were saying that no one would be interested in starting a business in struggling American communities. Other critics complained it would be too tempting to pick only census tracts that were already well-positioned for growth. What I am hearing and seeing in Colorado have proven both of those criticisms wrong.

Clarity is the compass to navigating any new venture. Treasury has been actively working to make sure its regulations best position the Opportunity Zones Program for success.

Real estate investments have experienced early success with this program; however, we need more than just real estate investments to make all of America and all of Colorado prosperous. Operational businesses and other entities will support the long-term successes of these communities as well—not just real estate, the operational side.

With its second round of regulations recently released, operating businesses received much awaited, positive news from the Treasury. Industries like clean energy, new breweries, or other capital-heavy businesses received the

clarification they need for opportunity zones to succeed. These critical tax provisions—those for accelerated depreciation—will encourage money to come off the sidelines and will translate into large investments in our communities.

While we are still in the infancy of the Opportunity Zones Program, Colorado already has roughly 40 projects in the works. The Office of Economic Development and International Trade, which is the office tasked with implementing opportunity zones in Colorado, has been working alongside local and State entities to maximize its programs for Coloradans. It is in an effort to ensure that the 126 opportunity zones—of which about 60 percent are in rural areas—are successful.

I am going to make sure we continue to fight to leave no part of Colorado behind, and the Investing in Opportunity Act will promote growth in all four corners of our great State.

That little tiny town that I talked about is going to benefit from the opportunity zones that take place. Whether it is a new manufacturing plant, a pizza shop, or a movie theater, investments like these will make a world of difference to small communities. It is the difference between people staying in the town they love versus being forced to leave and find a different job.

Let me give an example. There is a jewelry store in Wray, CO, Amos Jewelry. It is on the main street of this little town. My guess is that when this jewelry store leaves, if there is nobody to take over the business, maybe that will be just one more empty storefront in that town. Nobody will come in to take it over. There is no Zales or Kay Jewelers that is going to come in and replace this smalltown jewelry store. But through an opportunity zone and the chances we are giving people to invest in rural areas and underinvested areas, maybe there can be new life breathed into these small communities—that business, that jewelry store and others like it—to make sure that we don't lose businesses and to make sure that we grow active businesses and that we start new businesses as well.

It is the difference between having access to services on our local Main Street—like that jewelry store; like fixing a watch—and being forced to travel to the next town over and taking the dollars out of that town and bringing them to a different city. It is the difference between going out at all and staying home. A boarded-up storefront tells people to go somewhere else; it is not a "Welcome Home" sign. When those boards are taken down, the town comes back to life—new spirit, new opportunity. Opportunity zones have the potential to take those boards down and to revive our Main Streets.

Whether it is small towns, big cities, or mid-sized economies and communities, the zone shares one common trait: They are communities across

America that have been left behind. These opportunity zones can unlock investment, rebuild infrastructure, and rebuild hope for so many struggling families who no longer feel they have the ability to climb America's economic ladder—those opportunities that were in reach for America's previous generations.

Looking ahead, it will be important to ensure that these real estate and commercial developments are benefiting community members. We know that with new businesses comes new job opportunities, which in turn provide investments in struggling education systems and housing markets. It is a tide that lifts all ships. In the end, these investments are aimed to help all families who are working to pay rent, to become homeowners, and to pay down a mortgage.

We need to work together through the aisle to ensure that we develop a pipeline for the next generation of workers to enter these new job markets, because each and every person in Colorado and everyone across our great Nation should have access to the American dream.

I was pleased that not too long ago, at a White House conference hosted over at the White House, the mayor of Silt, CO, was able to join in the discussion at the Opportunity Zones Conference. Mayor Keith Richel and other officials from Colorado met in Washington, DC, to discuss opportunities, and I am very pleased they were able to do this.

I hope my colleagues, instead of fighting to repeal the tax law, which included opportunity zones, will instead embrace the opportunity to invest, to grow, and to create more prosperous communities.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, as chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, I have worked to secure tax policies to help spur entrepreneurship, competition, and innovation. Opportunity zones are a perfect example of the type of tax policy that creates that kind of growth in our economy.

Opportunity zones were created under the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act signed by the President in December 2017. That bill stimulates economic development and job creation across the country by incentivizing long-term investments in economically distressed neighborhoods. Last year, more than 8,700 census tracts were identified as opportunity zones by the Governors of each of the 50 States. These zones are home to approximately 31 million Americans, or roughly 10 percent of the population.

Even in just this short period, we are already seeing wage increases within these economically distressed areas after their having been designated as opportunity zones. For example, during the second and third quarters of last year, our counties with a large pres-

ence of opportunity zones experienced an annualized wage growth of 8 percent. That is compared to other economically distressed counties that were not designated as zones, which did not see a significant spike in wages.

We are also seeing States across the country showing an interest in opportunity zones, with at least 17 State legislators considering their own opportunity zone measures at the State level.

Although States can't make direct investments into the Federal opportunity zone projects, many are considering measures to encourage initiatives such as solar energy or affordable housing. Even in my home State of Iowa, cities such as Iowa City and Coralville have made local investments in their economically distressed communities and are actively recruiting investors for development projects in their opportunity zone areas.

I also want to applaud the efforts of the Treasury Department to provide much needed clarity for community leaders and investors. These include two packages of proposed regulations dedicated to implementing opportunity zone rules.

As the Treasury Department works to finalize these regulations and provide other guidance, I will continue working with Secretary Mnuchin, States and cities, and the investment community to ensure that opportunity zones succeed in driving new business investment and activity to America's low-income communities.

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. 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.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, for the leader, I ask unanimous consent that following disposition of the Wolson nomination, the Senate proceed to legislative session and resume consideration of the veto message on S.J. Res. 7, and the Senate vote on passage of the bill, the objections of the President to the contrary notwithstanding, with no intervening action or debate, at 1:45 p.m., Thursday, May 2, and with 5 minutes of debate prior to the vote under the control of Senator MENENDEZ.

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. UDALL. 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.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Brasher nomination?

Mr. UDALL. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG).

The result was announced—yeas 52, nays 47, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 87 Ex.]

YEAS—52

Alexander	Fischer	Perdue
Barrasso	Gardner	Portman
Blackburn	Graham	Risch
Blunt	Grassley	Roberts
Boozman	Hawley	Romney
Braun	Hoeven	Rounds
Burr	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Capito	Inhofe	Sasse
Cassidy	Isakson	Scott (FL)
Collins	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Cornyn	Kennedy	Shelby
Cotton	Lankford	Sullivan
Cramer	Lee	Thune
Crapo	McConnell	Tillis
Cruz	McSally	Toomey
Daines	Moran	Toomey
Enzi	Murkowski	Wicker
Ernst	Paul	

NAYS—47

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

NOT VOTING—1

Young

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the remaining votes in this series be 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, all votes will be 10 minutes each.

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 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 nomination of Rodolfo Armando Ruiz II, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Florida.

Mitch McConnell, Deb Fischer, Mike Rounds, James E. Risch, John Thune, Rick Scott, James M. Inhofe, John Cornyn, John Hoeven, Pat Roberts, Tim Scott, Steve Daines, Richard Burr, John Boozman, Roy Blunt, Shelley Moore Capito, John Barrasso.

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 the nomination of Rodolfo Armando Ruiz II, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Florida, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

This is a 10-minute vote.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 89, nays 10, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 88 Ex.]

YEAS—89

Alexander	Feinstein	Paul
Baldwin	Fischer	Perdue
Barrasso	Gardner	Portman
Bennet	Graham	Reed
Blackburn	Grassley	Risch
Blumenthal	Harris	Roberts
Blunt	Hassan	Romney
Booker	Hawley	Rosen
Boozman	Heinrich	Rounds
Braun	Hoeven	Rubio
Brown	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Burr	Inhofe	Schatz
Cantwell	Isakson	Scott (FL)
Capito	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Carper	Jones	Shaheen
Casey	Kaine	Shelby
Cassidy	Kennedy	Sinema
Collins	King	Smith
Coons	Lankford	Stabenow
Cornyn	Leahy	Sullivan
Cortez Masto	Lee	Tester
Cotton	Manchin	Thune
Cramer	McConnell	Tillis
Crapo	McSally	Toomey
Cruz	Menendez	Udall
Daines	Merkley	Warner
Duckworth	Moran	Whitehouse
Durbin	Murkowski	Wicker
Enzi	Murphy	Wyden
Ernst	Murray	

NAYS—10

Cardin	Markey	Van Hollen
Gillibrand	Peters	Warren
Hirono	Sanders	
Klobuchar	Schumer	

NOT VOTING—1

Young

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote the yeas are 89, the nays are 10.

The motion is agreed to.

CLOTURE MOTION

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

The assistant bill 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 nomination of Raul M. Arias-Marxuach, of Puerto Rico, to be United States District Judge for the District of Puerto Rico.

Mitch McConnell, Deb Fischer, Mike Rounds, James E. Risch, John Thune,

Rick Scott, James M. Inhofe, John Cornyn, John Hoeven, Pat Roberts, Tim Scott, Steve Daines, Richard Burr, John Boozman, Roy Blunt, Shelley Moore Capito, John Barrasso.

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 the nomination of Raul M. Arias-Marxuach, of Puerto Rico, to be United States District Judge for the District of Puerto Rico, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

I will remind the Senate this is a 10-minute vote, and we got the last vote done in an excellent 20 minutes. Let's see if we can do better.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG).

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 94, nays 5, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 89 Ex.]

YEAS—94

Alexander	Fischer	Peters
Baldwin	Gardner	Portman
Barrasso	Graham	Reed
Bennet	Grassley	Risch
Blackburn	Harris	Roberts
Blumenthal	Hassan	Romney
Blunt	Hawley	Rosen
Booker	Heinrich	Rounds
Boozman	Hoeven	Rubio
Braun	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Brown	Inhofe	Schatz
Burr	Isakson	Schumer
Cantwell	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Capito	Jones	Scott (SC)
Carper	Kaine	Shaheen
Casey	Kennedy	Shelby
Cassidy	King	Sinema
Collins	Klobuchar	Smith
Coons	Lankford	Stabenow
Cornyn	Leahy	Sullivan
Cortez Masto	Lee	Tester
Cotton	Manchin	Thune
Cramer	McConnell	Tillis
Crapo	McSally	Toomey
Cruz	Menendez	Udall
Daines	Merkley	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Moran	Warner
Durbin	Murkowski	Whitehouse
Enzi	Murphy	Wicker
Ernst	Murray	Wyden
Feinstein	Perdue	

NAYS—5

Gillibrand	Markey	Warren
Hirono	Sanders	

NOT VOTING—1

Young

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 94 and the nays are 5.

The motion is agreed to.

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 the nomination of Joshua Wolson, of Pennsylvania, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

Mitch McConnell, David Perdue, Shelley Moore Capito, John Barrasso, John Boozman, Mike Crapo, Richard C. Shelby, Mike Rounds, John Cornyn, Roger F. Wicker, Pat Roberts, John Thune, John Hoeven, Roy Blunt, Marco Rubio, Tim Scott, Kevin Cramer.

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 the nomination of Joshua Wolson, of Pennsylvania, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG).

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 64, nays 35, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 90 Ex.]

YEAS—64

Alexander	Gardner	Perdue
Barrasso	Graham	Portman
Blackburn	Grassley	Risch
Blunt	Hawley	Roberts
Boozman	Hoeven	Romney
Braun	Hyde-Smith	Rosen
Burr	Inhofe	Rounds
Capito	Isakson	Rubio
Carper	Johnson	Sasse
Casey	Jones	Schatz
Cassidy	Kennedy	Schumer
Collins	King	Scott (FL)
Coons	Lankford	Scott (SC)
Cornyn	Leahy	Shaheen
Cortez Masto	Lee	Shelby
Cotton	Manchin	Sinema
Cramer	McConnell	Sullivan
Crapo	McSally	Tester
Cruz	Moran	Thune
Daines	Murkowski	Tillis
Enzi	Murphy	Toomey
Ernst	Murray	Udall
Fischer	Paul	Van Hollen

NAYS—35

Baldwin	Harris	Sanders
Bennet	Hassan	Schatz
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Schumer
Booker	Hirono	Smith
Brown	Kaine	Stabenow
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Udall
Cardin	Markey	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Warner
Duckworth	Merkley	Warren
Durbin	Murray	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Peters	Wyden
Gillibrand	Reed	

NOT VOTING—1

Young

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 64, the nays are 35.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Joshua Wolson,

of Pennsylvania, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

BARR HEARING

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, we have now had a day where the Attorney General testified before the Judiciary Committee, and many issues are not resolved because there are great discrepancies based on Mr. Mueller's letter that has been made public—two letters, in fact, that have been made public between what Mr. Barr has been saying and what Mr. Mueller believes.

The cloud that hangs over our country because of Russian interference in our elections—and, frankly, that hangs over the President because of the actions Mr. Mueller outlined in his report—remains. There is a great need to clear all of that up and to clear all of it up with no ands, ifs, or buts.

I was shocked when I heard the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, my friend and colleague whom I have traveled with, LINDSEY GRAHAM, come out of the hearing and say that he was not going to call Mueller for a hearing. The fact that he on his own, despite the desires of many other members of the committee, would simply say that Mueller is not going to testify was so outrageous and wrong. So I went to my colleague here on the floor—my friend LINDSEY GRAHAM. I said to him: How can you do this? This is outrageous.

He said: I am just going to ask Mr. Mueller in a letter if Barr said anything misleading or inaccurate but not have the hearing.

I was appalled.

Now I see on a tweet by a reporter, Emma Dumain, that LINDSEY GRAHAM has slightly modified what he has said. He said that if Mueller tells GRAHAM in the letter that Barr said anything misleading or inaccurate today, he would have the hearing. That is not good enough. That is a game. He should not put the onus on Mr. Mueller, a straight arrow, somebody who believes in a chain of command, to publicly state that in a letter.

Mueller should come testify—no ands, ifs, or buts. Mueller should come testify—no games as to what he answers in a letter.

What are our colleagues so afraid of on the other side of the aisle? Are they afraid Mueller might say things that are different than what Attorney General Barr said? Are they afraid for the country to discuss the kinds of things the President has done, which nobody much seems to like? Are they afraid that we talk about foreign interference in our elections?

I would plead with my colleague LINDSEY GRAHAM to reconsider. I would plead with my colleague LINDSEY GRAHAM to say: Mueller is coming; no ands, ifs, or buts so we can question him, including our side of the aisle. That is what Congressional oversight is about. It is not about the chairman of the Judiciary Committee deciding what

should be heard and what should not be heard. That is not the job of the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, no matter who he or she is.

Special Counsel Mueller just concluded one of the most important investigations in our Nation's history. The Senate and the American people have a right to hear from the special counsel directly about the threat of foreign interference in our elections and, yes, the conduct of the President. It is one of the biggest takeaways from the hearing; that we need the special counsel here to testify, to clarify the discrepancies between what he and the Attorney General are saying. We don't need a letter. We don't need conditions. That seems like a game, a dodge, a ruse, a way to prevent Mr. Mueller from testifying.

In my view, Attorney General Barr routinely mischaracterizes the special counsel's words, his intentions, his reasoning. We know, from the special counsel's letter that was publicly released, that to be true. It is likely that Attorney General Barr did so again in the hearings. We need to hear from the special counsel himself to sort this out and get the truth, not at the discretion of the Judiciary Committee chairman but because America, our system of government, our rule of law, demands it.

Congress has always had, from the days of the Founding Fathers, a duty to provide oversight for the executive branch. Just because one party doesn't feel like doing it because the President is from the same party doesn't measure up to the grandness of our Constitution.

My dear friend from South Carolina, please rethink your position. Back off of this idea that Mueller shouldn't testify or should only testify if he meets certain conditions only set by you and call Special Counsel Mueller in to testify.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

MISSOURI FLOODING

Mr. BLUNT. Madam President, we have been stuck for some time now on having an appropriations bill that meets the disasters that have occurred recently in Missouri and, before that, in the Carolinas and Georgia, and other places. I want to continue to work hard to get that done, but I want to talk a little bit about the effects of what has happened in the State of Missouri as part of what has happened with floods this spring.

We have seen catastrophic and, in some cases, historic flooding both on the Missouri and the Mississippi Rivers over the last couple of months. Along the Missouri, there was this unusual thing, and I actually never heard the term before, a "bomb cyclone." It is a wind event that also produced lots of rain in Nebraska in the Northern Plains on frozen ground. All of that water had no place to go except run off, and it was the equivalent of 8 inches of

rain in a place from which we usually don't get water. There had been significant rain over the last few days of March. That created another flood. On the Mississippi, we have seen significant rains there. While they haven't set a record, they have certainly consistently ranked the Mississippi crests among the seventh highest flood levels that river has ever been from some of the locks. There are locks north of St. Louis. You can navigate the river without locks south of St. Louis, but in the area from the Canton Lock and Dam to the Winfield Lock and Dam on the Mississippi, there are significant problems waiting to happen over the next few weeks.

After the rains occurred in Northwest Missouri and in Iowa and Nebraska, in our State and Kansas, much of the water is still there. The floods have stayed up so high for so long that it is difficult to really evaluate the damage that has been done. Unlike a tornado, which we have some familiarity with, where you can go in quickly and evaluate what happened, you can't do that nearly as quickly with a flood.

We do know there has been at least \$25 million in damages to public infrastructure and costs of emergency measures experienced statewide. There have been 215 road closures statewide, with 46 roads that continue to be closed as late as the third week in April. Interstate 29, north of St. Joseph, has been closed since March and is expected to stay closed until probably June.

This is obviously a very disruptive set of circumstances for people who would normally use those roads and bridges all the time. One of the major class 1 roadways has been damaged. That roadway was just raised in 2011 to deal with the flood in 2011. An ethanol plant was knocked offline. Electric substations have been damaged. Grains stored in bins from last year's harvest have been destroyed. Livestock have been lost. Many farmers will not be able to get crops in the ground this year because it will be too wet once the water goes down—until it is too late to successfully plant the crops. So thousands of acres and hundreds of farms just simply will not be able to do what they do because of the flood.

The scale and scope of these events has clearly overwhelmed local governments, overwhelmed county governments, and stretched the State government in a significant way. Most effectively, and most importantly, it has impacted families and individuals. If your home is underwater, if it takes 2 more hours to get to school, if you have no chance of planting your crop or if you are in a business that relates to the family who is going to plant the crop, if you have nobody buying the seed or paying the repairs for their equipment, paying for the gasoline—the things you do to stay in business—that has all kinds of impact as well.

The Governor of Missouri has requested a Presidential disaster declaration. I am certainly for that, and every

Member of the Missouri delegation signed the letter asking the President to grant that declaration. The assistance that would be impacted by this would be vital. It is important. We need that kind of assistance now.

I am going to continue to work—and I hope all our colleagues continue to work—to make this year's disasters and last fall's disasters eligible for the funds we appropriate for disaster coverage.

During the flood, a lot has been said about the Corps of Engineer's management of the Missouri River, and what, if anything, they could have done that might have prevented the flood this time. I think probably not. This is such an unusual flood that the locks on the Missouri were north of where the flood occurred. There was a dam that broke that would not normally have broken, and that would normally not even be part of the Missouri River management system.

The Corps has been out there trying to help figure out how to recover rather than figure out what caused this particular flood. In fact, the Corps and the permanent staff in places like the Kansas City office of the Corps understand the Missouri River better than anybody, in my view, and are helpful when they can be.

That doesn't mean the Corps, in a greater sense, isn't responsible for what has become the new normal on the Missouri River. We have had recurrent historic flooding on the river now for 15 years. Ever since the Corps asked for a new management plan in 2004 and got the new management plan, it just simply doesn't work.

At least 6 of the top 10 river crests in recorded history have occurred in the last 15 years. Floods in 2007, 2008, 2009, 2011—you see the pattern here—2013, and 2019. The only reason we didn't have dramatic floods every year was we had a couple of drought years in 2009 and 2012.

This all goes back to that 2004 management plan. What changed in 2004? In 2004, the Corps started to implement the Missouri River Recovery Program in response to a Biological Opinion—"opinion" may be the key word here—Biological Opinion from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which took the position that the existing management of the river was impacting one species of fish and two species of birds.

The ultimate result was prioritizing the management of the entire river to benefit that fish and those birds. It was above flood control. It was above navigation. It didn't consider what was detrimental to families, to farms, or the local infrastructure and was not necessary. Saving wildlife is a worthy goal, but for that goal to truly be worthy, it has to also include how it impacts families, how it impacts people, and how it impacts the economy.

We had management plans on the Mississippi River as well, but the wildlife management plans didn't become the plan that substituted for all other plans.

The Corps' management plan brought out changes to the lower river. There are six locks and there are six dams, rather, and reservoirs above the Lower Missouri that starts roughly in the place where Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa, and Missouri all come together. What happened was they began to destabilize the banks, constructing pallid sturgeon chutes that impacted how the water ran into the river. They no longer dredged the river like they had before. Just to understand why that matters, a 9-foot channel of the river carries a lot more water than a 6- or 7-foot channel of the river. If you are channeling the river so you can still navigate the river, they had interception rearing complexes, none of which appears to have made much of a difference, except they made it hard to control the river at flood stage.

Modifying or eliminating the river control systems eliminate the normal things in a river, such as revetments, wing dikes, and chevrons that control the river and send the water in the direction it needs to be for flood protection, and that just didn't happen.

Fish and Wildlife and the Corps of Engineers actually now know that some of the actions they were carrying out caused direct negative impacts on the river and didn't do any good. There is a high level of certainty that when you notch a dike in the river—which means you cut a hole in a structure that is designed to channel the water—that when you do that, bad things happen. That is why that structure was put there in the first place for a reason.

One of the most disappointing parts of what has happened is a relatively low level of certainty that any of these things do any good. In fact, the Corps and the Fish and Wildlife people have already abandoned the pursuit of what they constructed, pallid sturgeon chutes, which they thought would encourage the pallid sturgeon to multiply. By the way, this is a fish we happen to multiply ourselves at the Neosho National Fish Hatchery, which I believe is the oldest fish hatchery in the United States. The U.S. hatchery system is in Neosho. Pallid sturgeon is one of the things they do. They didn't work, but they did encourage more flood risk.

I would have one suggestion for the Corps: If you know an action will increase flood control and you know it will harm people and harm property and you don't know whether it will help save a species, don't do it. There has to be a way you figure out first whether this is going to work, and then you might evaluate if it is so important that we are going to impact people and property.

What we had is a big experiment that turned out to be the wrong thing to do to start with. It didn't serve the purpose, and it did harm the river and people who live on the river. Flood control and navigation needs to be, once again, elevated to the top two priorities of managing the river. I look forward to

working with my colleagues to figure out how to do this in a better way.

There is no question that the Mississippi River is about to be more important than it has been in 100 years. There is also no reason that the Missouri River, as an avenue of commerce and as an avenue that people can get near and enjoy from a tourist's and traveler's perspective, can't be there, and there is no reason it can't continue to be managed in a way that benefits families, that benefits us economically, and that doesn't repeat year after year after year the flooding that did not occur under the original management plan.

We need to look at that plan. We need to have a management plan that meets the commonsense standard. The current plan does not, and we have had now 15 years to prove that the current plan does not meet it. I am going to be working hard with both the Corps, the Department of the Interior, and Fish and Wildlife to see if we can't have a plan that meets that commonsense standard.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, first of all, I thank the Senator from Missouri for his comments about the disaster. We are having a disaster in the U.S. Senate because we haven't been able to solve our emergency problem yet. It is not because of Senator BLUNT. He has done a great job, as have many Members of the Senate. We are close now, and there is a meeting this afternoon with important Senators. We are close on Hawaii, on Alaska, on Georgia, on South Carolina, on Tennessee, on Alabama, on Florida, and on the other States that have had disasters in the past year to which we have still been late on getting disaster emergency funds.

In fact, in Georgia, this is the 222nd day, in the case of one emergency, that those funds have been held up. In the agricultural season, 222 days is 1½ plants. It is one planting, one picking, and a second planting. So it is a significant part of the agriculture year. We are getting killed in Georgia. Our farmers are getting hurt badly because of the ineptitude, in part and sometimes in whole, of the U.S. Senate.

Finally, cool heads are coming together. We are getting over some arguments, and we are getting some things solved. Thanks to the help of Senator BLUNT and others in the U.S. Senate, we are going to get help to our farmers in Georgia, to those in Alabama, and to those in Alaska from the earthquake and to those in Hawaii from the lava flow and the eruptions they have had there and from all of the other disasters we have had. Finally, that money is going to start flowing.

REMEMBERING BETTY JO WILLIAMS

Mr. President, I lost two great friends in the last week—one of them a Georgian. Nobody in this room knew her. Her name was Betty Jo Williams, who was 90 years old.

Betty Jo was elected to the Georgia Legislature in 1978, which was 2 years after I was elected in 1976 to that same body. We were two scrawny Republicans in a world of Democrats in Georgia. I was one of the first people to get elected from Cobb County, which is the suburban county of Atlanta, and she was the first woman to get elected to anything in Georgia. She was one of the first to break the glass ceiling. A lot of people may ask: Where is this glass ceiling? Well, I will tell you where it is. A lot of people tried to make their way, but they were always held back by laws or custom or whatever.

Betty Jo fought for women's rights, and she fought for women's rights in the right way. She saw to it that women were equally represented and that they had an opportunity to represent themselves. She fought hard to see to it that there was no glass ceiling to hold back anybody who was trying to do the right things for the right reasons and had the right qualifications.

I loved Betty Jo. She was great. In fact, she helped me to get elected as the minority leader, as the Republican leader, of the Georgia House of Representatives in 1983. I won by one vote. It was 7 to 6. That shows you how small a caucus we had. She was one of those seven who voted for me, and I have never forgotten it. I am sure, when I have a funeral one day, somebody will come and remember on that day something I did for him. It is something you never take away.

Betty Jo was a unique person. She had a husband and three wonderful children. Her husband passed on, and she spent the rest of her 25 years of life living with another gentleman. They had his children. Between the two of them, they raised 12 grandchildren, 6 great-grandchildren—wonderful kids with wonderful opportunities. They helped those kids grow up to understand the great promise America had.

When Betty Jo served in the legislative body, even though she was outnumbered by men by 20 to 1, she was a woman who broke the glass ceiling. She also broke custom. In the Georgia Legislature back in the sixties and seventies, you didn't find people putting their numbers in the phonebook. Betty Jo was the first one. She paid extra to have her number put in there in big, bold, black letters. She started the custom by which, all of a sudden, all who were in the State legislature got the Betty Jo Williams rule applied to them. If they didn't have their numbers in the book, they weren't in touch with their constituents. She did little things like that to make a difference.

She was the first woman to be appointed to the Judiciary Committee. It was a great compliment to her, too, for she was not a lawyer. Even though she was not a lawyer, she was well respected, even by the speaker of the house, so she was appointed to the Judiciary Committee.

Speaking of the speaker of the house in Georgia, his name was Tom Murphy.

I am sure, somewhere in the walls of this room, his name has been used before. He was the toughest, most ornery, hardest working speaker of the house who ever was. He served as the speaker of the house in Georgia longer than any speaker in any house in the United States of America.

He also didn't like women representatives, and he let everybody know it. Yet he couldn't handle Betty Jo because she was sweet, kind, and she was smart, and she always got the best of him. He would be tough, but she would be sweet, and she got a lot of things done that other women couldn't do because they would cry. Betty Jo didn't cry. She just worked a little harder to get it done. Tom Murphy finally broke down and did some things for the women in the caucus and the women of the Georgia State Legislature that hadn't been done for years—they were treated more like equals in the legislative body.

Betty Jo was just one of those special, unique individuals who made my life better by my having known her. I thank her tonight for the vote she cast for me a long time ago as minority leader. I thank her for those children they raised and great-grandchildren and children. I thank her for all of the things she did in her community, for all of the things she did for women, and for all of the things she did to make everybody more equal and more served.

Most importantly of all, I thank her for breaking that glass ceiling because there are a lot of women in office today in this Senate—20 percent of our body—who wouldn't be here today if it had not been for the Betty Jo Williams of 50 years ago who broke the habits we had in America that didn't allow women to do a lot of things.

I pay tribute to her, and I pay honor to her for her service and for the great time I had in knowing her in life. I will miss her greatly, but I will always be a better man for knowing Betty Jo Williams and what she taught me about life and success.

REMEMBERING RICHARD LUGAR

Mr. President, everybody in this room, everybody in this Capitol, and everybody in this country knows who Dick Lugar was. We lost Dick earlier this week. Dick Lugar was and is an American icon.

When I got elected to the U.S. Senate in 2004, I came here and was put on the Foreign Relations Committee in 2006, primarily because we were one Republican short and because nobody else would take the seat. So I wasn't the unanimous choice; I was the only choice.

Dick Lugar came to me and said: Johnny, would you take this seat? I have to have somebody take this seat, and I have to have somebody be the chairman of the Africa Subcommittee.

I said: Well, Dick, I will be happy to take the seat, but I don't know a damned thing about Africa. I have never been there. I would be a bad chairman.

He said: No, you wouldn't. I will take you over there with me. We will study it, and you will be great.

Today, 15 years later, I am still on the Africa Subcommittee. I have been the chairman of it for half that time. I fell in love with it because of Dick Lugar. I have learned more about it, and America is a better country today for its being able to open doors in Africa.

I worked with Dick Lugar on the New START treaty. Dick Lugar was a quiet gentleman, but he was a giant when it came to his ability to solve problems. He was elected as the mayor of Indianapolis, IN, at a time when racial tensions were at their height. He was one of the most successful mayors in the history of the country. At the particular time that he was elected mayor, he was the most respected mayor in the country. He received awards that designated him the best mayor in America.

He was a man who held on to hope, who held on to opportunity, and fought for equality at whatever risk there was to him to see to it that it happened in his city. Later, he went on to be elected to the Indiana Legislature and then was elected to the U.S. Senate. He was the longest serving Senator from Indiana in the history of the U.S. Senate.

As I said, I served on his committee with him, Foreign Relations, but I also served at the time that Dick got beaten. You wouldn't think a guy who had served six terms in the Senate and who had been a Republican would get beaten in his own primary by the Republican Party, but it happened to us. I know the Acting President pro tempore remembers those times a few years ago when our party kind of got divided. We had tea parties and other types of parties, and people started picking on folks. All of a sudden, it was a bad thing to have served for a long time. It was a bad thing to have been a gentle giant. It was a bad thing to have been a guy like Dick Lugar. So they got some new blood in to shake the place up, and they beat Dick in the primary. It was one of the saddest days I ever had to see. A man who had accomplished so much and who was so great got beaten over things that were really inconsequential—over political rhetoric. It was just to win a point of view, not to win a case.

I went to Dick after it was over, and I said: Dick, I am so sorry you lost.

He said: Don't worry about it. I have lots to do. I have The Lugar Center. I have the Lugar-Nunn initiative.

Sam Nunn was the great Senator from the State of Georgia who, many years ago, held the seat I have. He and Dick Lugar did more for nuclear nonproliferation than any two men in the history of our country. Dick's fingerprints are on every positive nuclear deal we have ever made in this country. President Barack Obama gave him the Congressional Medal of Honor because of his efforts on behalf of peace. His efforts were on behalf of the country and nuclear nonproliferation.

Sam Nunn and Dick Lugar dismantled most of the loose nukes that were lying on the floor of the Soviet Union when the wall fell in Berlin. In the years after that time, he saw to it that they were disposed of properly rather than their having gotten into the hands of some terrorist who would have made a dirty bomb later on. Dick Lugar did all of that for his country.

He loved his 604-acre farm back home in Indiana—his family home—which he still ran until the day he died. It was where he served as not a visiting professor but as a real professor and not as an adjunct professor but as a real professor. It was where he talked about peace, love, hope, and humanity. Most importantly of all, he talked about people solving the problems of the world by working together and not against each other.

I don't know that I will ever know a better man than Dick Lugar. I am a little younger than Dick, although not by that much. I haven't served nearly as long in this body as he had. Yet, in all of the time I have been here and from all of the things I have read about great Members of the Senate and of the ones I have known, like Sam Nunn from Georgia, I have never known one better than Dick Lugar.

As a tribute to Dick—and just so you will know, the New START treaty is coming up for renewal in the next couple of years. The New START treaty is the treaty by which we broke the ice on inspecting and verifying nuclear warheads. Because of what Dick Lugar and Sam Nunn did and because of what we did in the Foreign Relations Committee in the negotiations for that, along with John Kerry and others, we saw to it that we got no notice of inspections in the Soviet Union and no notice of inspections in America of our nuclear warheads.

In 12 hours, we can get somebody to Moscow. We can knock on the door of the nuclear storage facility and say: We are coming in. When we go in, we can scan the hologram on the nuclear warhead—it is part of the treaty—which is embedded so you can count the warheads. A lot of these nuclear warheads are not comprised of just 1 bomb—they have 12 or 15. It is so we will know exactly what they have and so they will know exactly what we have.

Knowledge is power. Dick saw to it that we had the knowledge of what we had and what they had before we got in trouble rather than to have an altercation and then a threat and have to say that we really didn't know what they had or what we had and then to have to start overcompensating. The next thing you know, we would be overcompensating with war when we start living the lies unnecessarily—when we do the wrong thing.

When I go down my checklist one of these days of all of those great people I had the chance to know, of the people I learned so much from, of the people I appreciated were around when I got to

live so my kids could grow up in a world that was freer and more prosperous and more safe than any world possible, I will know Dick Lugar was my friend. I will know I had the honor of serving with him.

To Dick's family, to his many friends in Washington, to the people of the State of Indiana who felt blessed just by having him so long, Dick lived a great life.

God bless you. Thank you for your service.

God bless the United States of America and Dick Lugar.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I thank my friend from Georgia, who just gave us some great memories about Dick Lugar—one of the truly great Senators who served here in the last half century. He was a friend and was someone whom so many of us looked up to.

One of the things he did that was special to Ohio was that he became totally devoted to his college, Denison University. He served on the board until his death. He was the longest serving board member ever, I am sure. He not only served on the board, but he showed up. Denison University, which is in my State of Ohio, is very grateful for his service, and as a neighbor from Indiana, again, I miss him, and I appreciate him.

REMEMBERING JOSEPH H. HEAD, JR.

Mr. President, I am here to take a moment to pay honor to a mentor of mine who was also one of the great Ohioans, Joseph H. Head, Jr., who was known for his leadership, for his unwavering loyalty to his city of Cincinnati, OH—my hometown—for his vision, and for all of his contributions. He was a tireless contributor to our community. In fact, I would describe Joe as a kind of one-person chamber of commerce for Greater Cincinnati. He loved his city, and he loved to help young people. I was a beneficiary of that.

I first met Joe when I was either in junior high school or just getting into high school. As usual, he was very direct. He came up to me and asked me about my future. I had no idea what my future was going to be.

He asked: Have you ever been to a law firm?

I said: No, I have not.

None of my family had been lawyers, and I hadn't had any experience with that.

He said: Why don't you borrow a tie from your father and come down to my law firm.

What do you say to that?

So I said: Yes, I will do that.

I remember I was a little intimidated, but I went downtown with my tie on—it was a little bit long for me—and I had an interesting visit with Joe Head.

Then, when I was in college, Joe Head gave me my first job in politics. It was an internship with then-Congressman Bill Gradison. Joe Head had been the chairman of his efforts and suggested that I work for him.

Bill Gradison was a Republican from my hometown, and 16 years later, I succeeded him in Congress. Trust me, I had no clue that I was going to do that at the time I interned for him, but that door was opened by Joe Head.

I went on to practice international trade law after going to law school. Again, a lot of that was because of Joe Head, being exposed to the law through him. I then came back to Cincinnati and worked in his law firm, Graydon Head & Ritchey, where he was managing partner.

Lo and behold, George H.W. Bush got elected President and asked me to come to Washington to work in the White House as Associate Counsel to the President. Joe Head encouraged me to do that, but he also encouraged me to come home when I was done. In fact, at the farewell party sending me off to Washington from the law firm, there was a large card that was presented to me, and Joe Head wrote on that card: "Come home when you are done." That was great advice, maybe some of the best advice I ever took, because I did go home, went back to the law firm, and became a partner in that law firm.

I had not expected to run for Congress, but, again, Bill Gradison had resigned unexpectedly, and Joe Head, of course, chaired my campaign.

He was a guy who didn't just benefit people like me; he benefited everybody in Greater Cincinnati because he was so involved throughout his life.

In 2016, he and his wife Louise were honored with the Jake Davis Award from the Greater Cincinnati Foundation. That is a big deal. It is an annual award given to only one community-minded citizen or couple who volunteer their time and leadership skills to make Greater Cincinnati a better place to live and to work. Joe certainly lived up to that.

Just a couple months ago, Joe also received another big honor, and that was the highest honor of the Greater Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce called the Great Living Cincinnati Award. I had the honor of being there to watch him receive that award. He received it for his community service, his leadership, and his lifetime of helping others in the community—all of his distinguished accomplishments.

Joe also served his country. Prior to his service to our community, he served in Germany with the U.S. Army's artillery division for a couple of years. He also had the Midas touch in law and in business, both as the

managing partner at the Graydon Head & Ritchey law firm and then as CEO and chairman of the Atkins & Pearce company, an industrial textile business.

His active service on area boards was where he really distinguished himself. I got into the habit of just calling him Chairman because he chaired everything. He chaired the Greater Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce, the Children's Home of Greater Cincinnati, the Christ Hospital Board, the Fine Arts Fund for Cincinnati, and the Cincinnati Business Committee. I know I have missed a number of entities, institutions, and nonprofits he chaired. The point is, no one was a bigger booster or bigger contributor to our community.

I think I can speak for a lot of people when I say that we are going to miss his dedication, his humor, his wisdom, and his uncanny ability to articulate and define issues. He was an impressive leader, a dear friend, and a truly great Cincinnatian.

To his extraordinary wife, Louise, of 60 years; to his children, Lisa, Jeb, and Andy, and their spouses, Nirvani, Jack, and Melanie; to his grandchildren and his one great-grandchild, Jane and I send our condolences. We are thinking about you. Joe was so proud of each and every one of you.

May we all endeavor to embrace Joe's extraordinary commitment to his community and carry on his profound legacy.

Godspeed, Joe Head.

Mr. President, I would now like to yield to my colleague from Delaware who has just come to the floor, and I would like to speak after him.

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

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

STAFF SERGEANT CHRISTOPHER A. SLUTMAN

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I want to thank my friend and colleague from Ohio for his kindness in yielding to me today.

I rise this afternoon to pay tribute to an American hero—this man right here—an American hero and patriot who was taken away from us far too soon.

Earlier last month, I was standing on the flight line at Dover Air Force Base alongside Congresswoman LISA BLUNT ROCHESTER; our colleague in the Senate, CHRIS COONS; and our Governor, John Carney. We were there to join the members of three families who had come to receive the remains of their loved ones, all marines who had been killed in action on April 8—a couple weeks earlier—when a roadside bomb went off in Afghanistan near Kabul as their convey was passing through.

Two of the servicemembers killed were Active Duty: Cpl Robert A. Hendriks of Long Island, NY, and SSgt Benjamin S. Hines of York County, PA, which is not too far from my State of Delaware.

There was a third marine, SSgt Christopher Slutman. Christopher was a reservist, a 15-year member of the

New York City Fire Department, and a Delawarean. The 43-year-old U.S. marine was also a loving husband to his wife, Shannon, and the father of three girls: McKenna, age 10; Kenley, age 8; and Weslynn, age 4.

In life and in death, Staff Sergeant Slutman epitomized the best of this country. He selflessly put his life on the line to protect and serve his country and his community.

We read in the New Testament these words, and I will paraphrase them: No greater love hath a man than his willingness to lay down his life for a friend.

These three marines laid down their lives for our country, and they also laid down their lives for a nation we are allied with, the government and the people of Afghanistan.

Winston Churchill said a lot of memorable things, but one of the most memorable to me, a retired Navy captain, is that a reservist is twice a citizen. A reservist is twice a citizen.

By that measure, Christopher Slutman was three times a citizen. He wore two uniforms in service to our Nation. One of them was this uniform, the fire department—a 15-year, decorated veteran of the New York City Fire Department—and also that of a staff sergeant of the U.S. Marines, serving in the 25th Marine Regiment, 4th Marine Division in the Marine Forces Reserve, which is based in Harrisburg, PA.

Christopher's family calls him Chris. Chris had always dreamed of being a firefighter. He grew up in Maryland. He graduated from Frederick Douglass High School, where he played football, basketball, wrestled, and achieved Eagle Scout status. As a father of two Eagle Scouts, that is quite an achievement. Eventually, he volunteered with fire departments in Maryland and in Washington, DC. Most recently, he spent his time between the Bronx and Wilmington, DE, where his wife and three daughters lived full time.

As my colleagues know, I live in Delaware, and I commute to work here by train almost every day—3, maybe 4 days a week. Christopher Slutman had a similar kind of commute. His family was in Delaware, and instead of coming this way, he would go north to work as a firefighter in New York City. He took the train in the opposite direction to do his job. He so wanted to serve that he would travel from his home in Delaware to Ladder Company 27 in New York City almost every day. In fact, he was on military leave from Ladder Company 27 and nearing the end of his most recent deployment with the Marine Reserves in Afghanistan when he and his two comrades lost their lives.

It was for Chris Slutman's work in the Bronx that in 2014 he won the Fire Chiefs Association Memorial Medal for rescuing an unconscious woman from the 11th floor of a high-rise apartment building. I heard a firsthand account of that rescue, and it tells the story of a hero and a woman who could easily have died, and she didn't, and it was

because of his actions. Staff Sergeant Slutman lived that kind of profound love. He dedicated his life to serving others even at his own peril.

It seems that this kind of selflessness and devotion to service was a hallmark of the Slutman household. Staff Sergeant Slutman is survived by three brothers. One of his brothers is in the Marines, another is in the Army, and the third is a firefighter in Washington, DC—right here. Their father was an Army veteran and was also a volunteer firefighter, as was Chris Slutman's mother. What a family—Marines, Army, volunteer firefighters, firefighters up in New York City. I like to say leadership is leading by example. Leaders lead by example. It is not do as we say, but do as we do. They provide an incredible example for all of us.

Last Friday, I was honored to have been able to join our Governor, John Carney, and Staff Sergeant Slutman's family, friends, and fellow servicemembers in New York City to pay our respects, along with the mayor of New York City and many other dignitaries who were there to pay their respects to a man who gave his life for this country.

The first speaker at his funeral was Marine SgtMaj Christopher Armstrong—another Christopher—who served alongside his friend Chris for 8 years. Marine Sergeant Major Armstrong remembered Chris Slutman with these words. Here is what Christopher Armstrong had to say:

Upon joining the unit, I began observing the Marines; who they watched, how they looked at their leaders, and what they said. There were a small number of men that when they spoke, silence fell; when they issued an order, the response was immediate; and when they were looked upon, it was with reverence. Christopher Slutman immediately stood out as a leader who was both respected and admired. He didn't pound his chest, he didn't try to impress or go on about what he was going to do. He just did it.

He just did it.

Sergeant Major Armstrong continued:

Chris Slutman placed his Marines' welfare before his own. Chris never sought credit, but he always gave it.

Think about that. That is a good lesson for all of us, even here. Chris Slutman never sought credit; he always gave it to others.

Fire Department New York Commissioner Dan Nigro also spoke. He described Chris Slutman as "the type of American we can all be proud of." He continued: "Chris was a protector of those in danger and a defender to those who needed him, a rescuer to those who needed saving, and a leader who demonstrated his valor on every tour of duty, both here and abroad." Those are the words of the Commissioner of the New York City Fire Department.

I believe there was a poet named Edgar Guest—like a house guest—Edgar Guest. I think he spent most of his life in Detroit, MI. He was often-times referred as a people's poet. He

used to say: "I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day." Think about that. "I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day."

Chris Slutman, your life was better than any sermon.

Chris demonstrated the absolute best of our country every day with his heroism and his service to others. The way he lived his life and the way he give his life is a language that is clear to one and all.

It is with a heavy heart that I, along with the entire First State—that is the State of Delaware—and the people of this country, offer our sincere condolences to Chris's wife, Shannon, and their three girls. Their dad is an American hero.

Our congressional delegation and our Governor promise that he will not soon be forgotten.

I know that his legacy lives on in his daughters and in his wife Shannon.

A friend of mine was married to a Navy SEAL a number of years ago. That marriage produced a daughter who is 18 years old and who will graduate from high school later this month. Her dad died of complications of PTSD. He served in Iraq and Afghanistan, as I recall. He later came down with ALS, Lou Gehrig's disease. He succumbed to that about a year ago. Members of my staff in Delaware—constituent service staff—have worked for months trying to make sure that his 18-year-old daughter would be eligible for the benefits of her Navy SEAL dad, now deceased. We learned last month that she will be eligible.

One of the things our congressional delegation will work hard to do is to make sure that to the extent that Chris Slutman was eligible for the GI bill—and our guess is that he was—those benefits, under the law, if not used by the veteran, by the soldier, by the sailor, or by the airman, could be used by the spouse, and if not used by the spouse, could be used by a dependent child.

There are three dependent children here—three daughters who are beautiful girls, who anyone would be proud to claim as their own child, grandchild, or niece. We are going to work hard to make sure that those GI bill benefits—if there is any way to do this legally—accrue to Chris and Shannon and Shannon's three daughters.

I, again, thank my friend Senator PORTMAN for his kindness in yielding tonight.

To Chris Slutman: God bless you, Chris.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Ohio.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, first, I say thanks to my colleague from Delaware for the touching tribute to Chris and his service in the U.S. Navy.

I am here to talk about our economy, what is going on out there, and how we can do a better job of bringing people

off the sidelines and into work. They are needed.

Right now we have an incredibly strong economy. We just learned in the first quarter of this year that the economy grew by 3.2 percent. That is strong and way above expectations. In fact, when you look at the expectations that were set by the Congressional Budget Office, which is a nonpartisan group that analyzes what is going to happen in the economy going forward, prior to the tax bill being signed into law—that is, the tax reform and tax cuts from the end of 2017—they said this first quarter growth would be 1.6 percent. It is interesting. It was exactly twice the economic growth than was projected before the tax bill.

By the way, before the tax bill, they also made a projection on jobs. Over the last year, we have produced just about exactly twice as many jobs—a little more than that—than was projected. The tax cuts and the tax reform have worked, along with regulatory relief, to give this economy a shot in the arm. That is so important.

I will say that when you look at what happened in the first quarter of this year, the 3.2 percent is great, but it would have been even better had we not shut down the government. I say that because we have some new numbers from the Congressional Budget Office that say that the level of GDP this first quarter would have been 0.2 percent more if we had not had the government shutdown late last year, which was the longest government shutdown in the history of our country. So it would have been 3.6 percent instead of 3.2 percent. Wow, that would be terrific. I guess I bring that up only because I think it is time for us, again, to prepare for the potential of our having another impasse year at the end of this fiscal year on September 30. I hope we will avoid going into another government shutdown. It just doesn't make sense. It is shooting ourselves in the foot.

There is legislation called the End Government Shutdowns Act. Almost all of my colleagues on this side of the aisle have now sponsored that legislation. It just avoids our going into a shutdown but still allows us to continue to move forward on our spending and, over time, reduce that spending until we get our act together and do the appropriations bills here. Again, there is good news in terms of job growth in the first quarter.

The other thing I think is really important and may be the most important statistic of all is the fact that wages are going up for the first time in a decade. Really, in Ohio, for a decade and a half, we have had flat wages—higher expenses but flat wages. It is really frustrating to the families who are working hard and doing everything right but can't get ahead. Over the last year now, we have seen wage increases. A 3.4-percent wage increase is the strongest we have seen since the great recession. I love the fact that this wage

growth is happening not just among higher paid individuals but, actually, primarily among what is called non-supervisory employees. That is how the Department of Labor terms it. These are blue-collar jobs. These are middle-class jobs. These are jobs of people who, again, have had a tough time making ends meet. I know in my State most people work paycheck to paycheck, and it is great to have that higher wage come in.

We passed tax reform because we believed it is the right thing to do for our economy, for employers, for investment, and we have seen that positive impact. I have had over two dozen townhall meetings and roundtable discussions in my State, talking to employers, usually smaller businesses, about what happened to them with regard to tax reform. Every single one of them said the same thing: We have reinvested in the business. We have invested in technology, in new equipment, and we have invested in our people. In some cases, that means better benefits. In two cases, small businesses acknowledged to me that they weren't providing healthcare before the tax cuts, and now they are because of the savings from the tax cut. They have also invested in people's 401(k)s and other benefits. That is what is happening out there in terms of the business side of the tax reform and tax cuts.

In addition to that, there are also a lot of Americans who now have more of their hard-earned money coming home. Their paychecks are better because of the middle-class tax cuts that are in the legislation. For Ohio, this amounted to \$2,000 per year, on average, for a median-income family. I know there has been a lot of discussion by others saying: Well, really, these tax cuts didn't happen. Yes, they did. They did. That is a fact. Most people I represent have seen a tax cut, and a lot of those individuals saw their overall tax liability go down—not just that the monthly checks were better, but on April 15 they had better news. Let me give you some facts about that.

According to H&R Block, which is probably the firm that handles more middle-class tax returns than any other firm in the country, the average Ohioan saw a 23.3-percent decrease in their overall tax bill in 2018. This is from H&R Block. They also said that there is a 2.3-percent increase in the average refund in Ohio. I know there has been a lot of discussion about this back and forth, and early on people were concerned about their refunds. These are the numbers. These are the facts from H&R Block. Overall, about 90 percent of middle-class Americans received a tax cut in 2018, which means more money in their pockets to pay down student debt, to save for retirement, to take a long-awaited family vacation, and to be able to, again, achieve whatever their dream is in life.

The economy is growing, creating jobs, and wages are rising. That is all

good news. But with more jobs there is a problem that has developed, and that is a lack of workers. I can't go anywhere in Ohio—and I just had a bunch of meetings in Ohio, talking about this—where people don't tell me: We don't have enough qualified workers to fill the jobs that we have. Some people call it the skills gap, and that is true in Ohio. We have a mismatch between the skills that are out there—the skills that people who are looking for jobs have—and the jobs that are available. If you go on the OhioMeansJobs website right now, you will see about 145,000 jobs being offered. When you look at them, these are good jobs. A lot of them, though, require a certain level of skill. Some are information technology jobs, coding jobs. Some are skilled manufacturing jobs, like machining or welding. Some of the jobs are in bioscience, healthcare jobs, technicians. The problem is we don't have the people who have the skills to fill those jobs. That is a shame for those individuals who aren't achieving their hopes in life because they aren't getting those good jobs and certainly for our economy, which would be even stronger if we had more people to fill those jobs.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics at the Department of Labor, 7.3 million U.S. jobs are currently vacant, again, largely because of the shortage of qualified workers. The National Skills Coalition estimates that nearly half of all job openings between now and 2022 will be what they call middle-skill jobs. This means jobs that require education beyond high school, like a certificate program, but not a 4-year degree. The supply of skilled workers in this category—students pursuing post high school certifications—still falls way short of what the industry demand is.

This is why career and technical education is important. CTE is part of the answer to this. If you are in high school and looking for an opportunity, check out your career and technical academy. In many high schools, it is combined in one CTE program. It is a great opportunity. It will give you the knowledge and training necessary to succeed in your career.

I am the cofounder and the cochair of what is called the Senate CTE Caucus. We have been working to raise awareness of this issue, so many of my colleagues have now joined this caucus because they go home and see the same thing. How do we connect our hard-working Ohioans to good-paying jobs, and how do we strengthen these CTE programs to make them more affordable and more accessible?

One answer is legislation recently reintroduced by Senator TIM KAINE and me. It is called the JOBS Act. It is really very simple. It says we should be allowed to use Pell grants not just to pay for college but to pay for shorter term certificate programs. These have to be qualified programs, programs that provide real credentials to people.

Right now, with the Pell grant, if it is a program of less than 15 weeks, you can't use it. So low-income students all over the country are told: You can go to college. That is great. We are going to encourage you to do that, incentivize you to do that, but you can't get this short-term training program that can get you the job right away.

In Ohio, if those students graduate—and most don't—their average debt is \$27,000 compared, again, to the opportunity to go through the short-term training program, get the job, and begin to make money to buy the car, to be able to buy a small home or at least to rent an apartment and not be in your parents' basement, and to be able to move ahead with your life and your family. So career and technical education is a great opportunity, and the JOBS Act would make it much more likely that people would take that opportunity.

By the way, the community colleges around the country love the JOBS Act. I believe it is their top priority this year. Why? Because so many of them are now offering these certificate-based programs because they are responding to the needs of the community and what the businesses are telling them they need.

It is going to be different in every community, by the way, and that is good. There is no "one size fits all." In some communities in Ohio, because we are a big manufacturing State, it is welding, and it is machining. In other places around the country, it might be something else. It might be for the fishing industry, the oil and gas industry, or bioscience. All across Ohio I have seen how these programs are working and could work even better if we had the JOBS Act.

Last week I toured Venture Products. It is a family-owned company that designs and makes tractors. They make an incredible product called the Ventrac. They have a really impressive facility, and it was great to see them and their success. The company has benefited from tax reform and has made additional investments in its business and its workers with their tax savings, just like all of these companies that I have gone to visit all over our State.

After the tour of the company, we had a roundtable discussion. It was with educators—people from the local community college and career and technical education folks who came in—also business people and people from the area who were involved in economic development because they are very concerned that without the workforce they can't expand the businesses in this community in Ohio. We talked about the need to strengthen CTE programs, and we talked about the JOBS Act. All of them agreed that this would be really helpful and helpful right now.

I also had a visit at the Central Ohio Technical College. The investiture

ceremony took place last Thursday, and I had the chance to meet the new president, Dr. John Berry. There are a lot of exciting things happening at this career and technical college.

They work pretty closely with Ohio State, which is terrific. So you have Ohio State, a 4-year college, and a great series of graduate programs, working directly with these community colleges that focus on skills training. They are expanding their programming, which will help to meet the needs of today's workforce. The JOBS Act, according to them, will greatly benefit the students who are using these shorter term programs to put them on a path to a good-paying job.

In Walnut Creek, OH, I spoke at the Eastern Ohio Development Alliance's annual meeting in Hockley County. This meeting represented counties from all over eastern and southeastern Ohio. We talked about a lot of things, including the shortage of skilled workers, because it comes up again and again. In this case, Ohio has this wonderful opportunity with the Marcellus and the Utica Shale finds to develop our natural gas and our wet gas and our oil industry, but they need workers. We don't want to have workers coming in from out of State, frankly. We want to develop our own Ohio workforce, and we can only do that with skills training because a lot of these jobs require skills that are not available in Ohio today.

In Columbus, last week I spoke at a reentry conference. This is an annual conference talking about how to get people going from prison into our communities with the job skills they need and the mental health and drug treatment they need to be successful. Again, it all came down to this issue of workforce training being so important, both because it helps people to get a job and not go back into the prison system and also because getting a job is an essential part of so many successful recovery programs for people who have drug and alcohol addiction and want to be able to participate in our economy. This gives them meaning and purpose in life and helps with their recovery.

I was in Knox County at a roundtable discussion. Again, in this case, it was with first responders, local elected officials, and the leadership of their mental health and recovery organization there. Their board there is focused on dealing with the crystal meth problem. It has almost pushed the opioid problem to the second most troubling drug problem in the community. They still have overdoses from opioids. They are still concerned about that. Crystal meth has now come in with a vengeance—pure crystal meth from Mexico. Their big issue is how to get people in recovery and successful recovery. Again, the issue of job training came up. How do you give people the skills they need to get a job, and how do you incorporate job skills in a recovery program, again, so people have a reason to turn their life around to get

back with their family. That purpose and meaning come from a job, so often.

So it was an opportunity to talk about the need for us to develop the workforce to meet the needs of our communities and the opportunity to talk about the need for the JOBS Act. I am really pleased that the JOBS Act is in the President's budget this year. I thank President Trump and his administration for including that. It makes all the sense in the world. The higher education bill will be reauthorized this year, we all hope. That is certainly the plan. If that happens, it is the perfect place for having the JOBS Act included.

Senator KAINE of Virginia and I are the coauthors of this legislation. We are hopeful that our colleagues on both sides of the aisle will join us in this legislation and help us to get it in the Higher Education Act. I know that it is a priority of many members of that committee, and Chairman ALEXANDER, in particular, has a passion for ensuring that we have the training we need out there to get people the jobs to let them achieve their dreams in life.

Passing the JOBS Act will give us an opportunity to help so many Americans have better opportunities, and, just as importantly, it would enable us to help our economy right now because the biggest concern I hear is no longer the taxes. People love the tax cuts and tax reform, and they love the regulatory relief, but they are looking for skilled workers. This is an opportunity. Let's seize it. Let's keep growing our economy and help Americans fulfill their God-given potential.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Nebraska.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES
SPECIALIST BLAKE KELLY

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I rise today to continue my tribute to Nebraska heroes—the men and women who have given their lives defending our freedom in Iraq and Afghanistan. Each of these Nebraskans has a powerful story to tell.

Today I will reflect upon the life of Nebraska Army National Guard SPC Blake Kelly. Blake was a typical smalltown Nebraska boy. Born and raised in Shelby, NE, which has a population of just over 700, Blake lived next to the city park. His parents, Randy and Patty, have lived in the same house for 44 years.

Blake's early life was filled with football, track, lifeguarding at the local swimming pool in the summer, band major duties, and playing the drums. In fact, he met his future wife, Christina, at band practice in 1997. He loved to play the drums, and the neighborhood, well, always knew when he was practicing.

When he was old enough to cruise around Shelby, his dad, Randy, bought him a 1976 Dodge Charger. Every smalltown Nebraska boy needs a car. Blake knew everyone around town and everyone knew him. He was always

happy and eager to help someone solve a problem.

In high school, one of his teachers encouraged him to join the National Guard. For Blake, this was an opportunity to spread his wings and go to college using the Guard's tuition assistance program.

In 2000, between his junior and senior years in high school, he went through Army basic training at Fort Jackson, SC. Before graduation in 2001, he asked Christina to marry him. After becoming engaged and graduating from high school, Blake attended advanced training at Fort Knox, in Kentucky, that included Ranger training. He returned home in September 2001 just as life in the United States was changing forever following the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

Shortly after, Blake enrolled at Southeast Community College in Beatrice to study animal science. There he became interested in rodeo and joined the school's rodeo team. The year 2002 was a busy one for Blake, filled with school, National Guard training with the 1st Squadron, 167th Cavalry, known as the Cav, and wedding planning. He and Christina tied the knot on September 7, 2002, just as the Cav was preparing to deploy to Bosnia.

At that time, early Active-Duty Army resources were devoted to fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq, but the United States still had significant commitments to peacekeeping operations in the Balkans. The Cav's mission was an ideal one for the National Guard and a critical element in our national security.

The Cav arrived in Bosnia in January 2003, and just before Blake left Nebraska with the unit, Christina learned that she was pregnant. In Bosnia, Blake delved into the mission at hand. He was always ready and eager to serve, and he connected well with the local population. Unit chaplains needed help, and so he embraced his Catholic faith even more deeply by becoming a Eucharistic minister and actively supporting chapel programs.

On July 29, 2003, Blake was killed in an accident involving his convoy and a local vehicle. The loss of Blake was the first casualty of a deployed Nebraska Army National Guard member in over a decade. His community and the entire State were shocked.

He was buried at St. Mary's Catholic Church in rural Nebraska on August 6, 2003. The entire town turned out for the funeral, as did freedom riders from throughout Nebraska. Blake's son Simon was born in September 2003, the month the Cav returned home from their deployment.

Today, Simon is a freshman in high school, and Christina maintains a tight relationship with Blake's family. Randy and Patty, his parents, still live in the same house in Shelby.

In 2014, the town of Shelby dedicated a veterans' memorial, and Blake's family played a prominent role in the dedication ceremony. Blake's spirit lives on, and he is remembered in so many ways.

SPC Blake Kelly embodied the pride of his small town and his State. He served his country with distinction, and he loved his family. I am honored to tell his story.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

YEMEN

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about a true humanitarian crisis. This is a crisis that is close to my heart, and that is because it is close to the hearts of so many wonderful people in the State of Michigan.

Michigan is home to a large and welcoming Yemeni American community—one of the Nation's largest—and we are so proud and happy that they are part of our community. Right now these Michigan residents are horrified to watch what is happening to a country where many of them have family members and friends.

More than 4 years ago, war broke out in Yemen. Imagine 4 years of going to bed every night, wondering if this will be the night that a bomb or rocket will hit your home and destroy everything you have, including your family; 4 years of being unable to send your children to school because it is simply not safe for them to be outside; 4 years of deadly disease outbreaks with little access to medical care or even safe drinking water; perhaps worst of all, 4 years of sending your children to bed hungry every night because there is simply not enough food.

It is bad enough to think about being a parent under those circumstances. Imagine what it is like to be a child. You are 4 years old. You don't understand what is going on. You just know that you can't go outside, you can't sleep at night, and you are hungry all the time. There are 4-year-olds in Yemen today who have never lived in a country that wasn't at war.

Sadly, there are 4-year-olds in Yemen today who will never see their fifth birthday. About 1.2 million children are living in active conflict zones, meaning that a stray bullet or rocket could end their life at any moment. It is estimated that a child in Yemen dies every 10 minutes—the length of my speaking today on the floor, every 10 minutes—from a lack of food or diseases that can be prevented with adequate medical care, including vaccinations.

Overall, the United Nations estimates that no matter what we do at this moment—no matter what we do—250,000 Yemeni people will die within the next year due to malnutrition, dehydration, and by diseases like cholera.

That is astounding and horrible—250,000 people in addition to the estimated 60,000 people whose lives have been cut short due to bombings and violence.

If you are having trouble picturing 250,000 people, it is as if a fully loaded jumbo jet crashed every day for a year and then kept crashing, one per day, until late August.

If these dire circumstances don't change soon, that number could reach 10 million people by this time next year—10 million people. It is astounding. We should all feel a sense of urgency about the United States playing a positive, not a negative, role in stopping this.

I want to say again that 10 million people could die from a combination of famine, dehydration, and disease. That is like the entire populations of New York City and San Antonio being wiped off the map.

We simply cannot sit by and let this humanitarian disaster continue. I was passed back in March when the Senate passed the bipartisan resolution to direct the U.S. Armed Forces be removed from hostilities in Yemen. I have supported this resolution since the very beginning, the first time it was on the floor. It has been gaining momentum, gaining more and more support from the Senate, and I am thankful that it finally got to the Senate.

Unfortunately, the administration chose to veto the resolution and allow the suffering to continue.

Taking action to end this suffering is more than just the right thing to do; it is our moral obligation as fellow human beings. That is why I am calling on all of the Members in the Chamber, all of the Members in the Senate to stand together to override the veto and end the U.S. support for this conflict. We need a clear strategy on how to take an active role in deescalating the conflict and addressing the accompanying humanitarian crisis.

We should be leading the international response—leading the international response and working with international partners to find a solution, not contributing to the problem.

We should be supporting peace talks that involve all parties, all of which are contributing to this horrible, horrible humanitarian crisis.

We know who not to blame for all of this—those scared and hungry 4-year-olds who have spent every day of their lives just trying to stay alive. Can you imagine how their parents are feeling about this situation that their children are in as well?

Ending this conflict and humanitarian crisis is where we should be focusing our policies and our political might.

I will be voting to override this Presidential veto, and I encourage every Member of the Chamber to join me—join us, together, in doing the right thing. It is time to do the right thing for those 4-year-olds, for all of the people in Yemen who just want to be able

to feed their families, send their children to school, have a safe home, and be able to carry on with their lives.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session and be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

REMEMBERING DOMINIC DiFRISCO

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, in 1962, the airline Alitalia sent a young man named Dominic DiFrisco to Chicago to help with publicity for its inaugural flight between the city and Rome. What was a temporary assignment became a life decision for my friend Dominic. He found a home in Chicago and, in the decades following, became a champion for Chicago's Italian community.

On Sunday, he passed away at the age of 85 after a life of celebration, stories, and love. There are so many stories of Dominic helping people that they are too numerous to count here. If you grew up in Chicago, you knew Dominic.

For decades, Dominic was the most recognized and vocal supporter of Italian Americans. Dominic was born in 1933 in the Bronx of New York City to Leoluca and Antonina, immigrants from Sicily. He graduated from Fordham University in 1955 and began his career in public relations. His career was defined by building bridges between the public and private sectors.

His color commentary, with his vast knowledge of Chicago-Italian history, was a staple during the broadcast of Columbus Day parades. He helped make sure other ethnic groups and Jewish Holocaust victims had roles in the Chicago Columbus Day parade. He was a man of stories. He always had one for any situation, and Columbus Day will not be the same without him.

If you travel a few blocks north of Taylor Street's Little Italy in Chicago, you will find Our Lady of Pompeii, the oldest surviving Italian-American Catholic Church in Chicago. It has been an anchor to the community since 1910, but in 1993, the archdiocese announced

it would close Our Lady of Pompeii. That didn't sit well with the locals, especially Dominic. He joined the effort to resurrect the church, which continues to serve the community today. Our Lady of Pompeii calls him a founding father.

Dominic was president emeritus of the Joint Civic Committee of Italian Americans, and he created and hosted the annual Dante Awards. More than 40 journalists have won Dante Awards for their work answering Dante Alighieri's call to be "no timid friend to truth." Dominic was no timid friend to anyone he knew.

Dominic was a great friend. He was always helping people whether it was a smile, a kind word, or his latest recommendation for an Italian restaurant. His stories were legendary, but his whole life was an extraordinary story. A few years ago, Dominic accepted my invitation to attend a joint session of Congress featuring the Prime Minister of Italy. It is fair to say that many of those in the Capitol that day were as impressed with Dominic's passion for life, his stories, and his hopefulness for the U.S.-Italian relationship as the speech itself.

In a Chicago restaurant called Gene and Georgetti's, there is a table that was Dominic's. It was his court, and now, sadly, it is quiet. To his wife Carol and the DiFrisco family, Loretta and I send our sincere condolences.

CHOOSE MEDICARE ACT

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise in support of the Choose Medicare Act, which would strengthen the Affordable Care Act and help reduce healthcare costs for all Americans.

This commonsense bill would create a public healthcare option based on Medicare that would increase choice and competition in the Affordable Care Act marketplaces, including California's state exchange, Covered California.

I would also allow the Secretary of Health Human Services to negotiate drug prices under Medicare, increase healthcare subsidies for middle-income Americans, and allow the federal government to block unreasonable health insurance rate increases.

The majority of Americans support expanding healthcare choices to achieve universal coverage and lower costs for everyone. However, too many Americans are still unable to afford a private plan that covers the care they need. The Choose Medicare Act would fix this by creating a public health insurance plan that would compete alongside private insurers in the individual and group insurance marketplaces.

Known as Medicare Part E, the public option health plan would offer comprehensive coverage and all of the benefits covered under traditional Medicare. Every doctor that accepts traditional Medicare would also be enrolled as a provider for the public health plan,

giving patients access to a large network of doctors across the country. It would also benefit employers. Around half of Californians receive their health insurance through their work. The Choose Medicare Act would give them more options, allowing large employers to choose a plan modeled on traditional Medicare for their workers. Just as they do now, employers would cover a portion of the cost of their employees' coverage.

Having access to this new public option would increase competition and choice in the employer market, and the public plan's negotiating power would help reduce health costs for employers, not just individuals. Moreover, our bill would ensure that people who receive their health coverage through the public option would be able to keep their health insurance when they change employers. Americans would no longer feel stuck in low-paying jobs because they are worried about losing their health insurance.

The Choose Medicare Act would also provide funding for a new reinsurance program to partially offset the high healthcare costs paid by insurers for the sickest individuals. This reinsurance program would improve insurer participation in the Affordable Care Act exchanges and lower premiums for everyone. It would also give States the option to use this funding to address high out-of-pocket costs, such as copayments, coinsurance, premiums, and deductibles.

I am proud to note that this bill includes rate review legislation I have previously introduced to help keep insurance premiums down. Rather than allowing American workers to suffer under excessive premium increases, our bill would give the Secretary of Health and Human Services the authority to review, modify, and reject unjustified premium increases in States where the insurance commissioner does not have that authority.

This review process has already been successful in States where it was implemented. Our bill would ensure that everyone, regardless of where they live, is protected from unreasonable premium increases.

The rising cost of drug pricing is also a huge problem in our healthcare system. Our bill would give the Secretary of Health and Human Services the authority to negotiate lower drug prices with manufacturers, reducing the amount patients pay at the pharmacy.

After 1 year of negotiations, if the Secretary and drug manufacturers are unable to agree on a fair price, the Secretary will then be able to use the price that the Department of Veterans Affairs or other Federal agencies that purchase prescription drugs already use.

Finally, our bill would protect America's seniors enrolled in traditional Medicare from unlimited out-of-pocket costs by adding an annual out-of-pocket maximum for what they can pay. Seniors would no longer be burdened

with mounting medical costs because they are enrolled in Medicare instead of private insurance.

I want to thank Senator MERKLEY and Senator MURPHY for leading our efforts on this important legislation. I urge my colleagues to join us in supporting this much-needed, common-sense bill to strengthen the Affordable Care Act, give consumers more choices when picking their healthcare plan, and make healthcare more affordable for all.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON PRINTING RULES OF PROCEDURE

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, on April 30, 2019, the Joint Committee on Printing organized, elected a chair, a vice chair, and adopted committee rules for the 116th Congress. Members of the Joint Committee on Printing elected Representative ZOE LOFGREN as chair and Senator ROY BLUNT as vice chair.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 2, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that a copy of the committee rules be printed in the RECORD.

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

JOINT COMMITTEE ON PRINTING—116TH CONGRESS

RULE I.—COMMITTEE RULES

(a) The rules of the Senate and House insofar as they are applicable, shall govern the Committee.

(b) The Committee's rules shall be published in the Congressional Record as soon as possible following the Committee's organizational meeting in each odd-numbered year.

(c) Where these rules require a vote of the members of the Committee, polling of members either in writing or by telephone shall not be permitted to substitute for a vote taken at a Committee meeting, unless the ranking minority member assents to waiver of this requirement.

(d) Proposals for amending Committee rules shall be sent to all members at least one week before final action is taken thereon, unless the amendment is made by unanimous consent.

RULE 2.—REGULAR COMMITTEE MEETINGS

(a) The regular meeting date of the Committee shall be the second Wednesday of every month when the House and Senate are in session. A regularly scheduled meeting need not be held if there is no business to be considered and after appropriate notification is made to the ranking minority member. Additional meetings may be called by the Chair, as the Chair may deem necessary or at the request of the majority of the members of the Committee.

(b) If the Chair of the Committee is not present at any meeting of the Committee, the Vice-Chair or Ranking Member of the majority party on the Committee who is present shall preside at the meeting.

RULE 3.—QUORUM

(a) Five members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum, which is required for the purpose of closing meetings, promulgating Committee orders or changing the rules of the Committee.

(b) Three members shall constitute a quorum for purposes of taking testimony and receiving evidence.

RULE 4.—PROXIES

(a) Written or telegraphic proxies of Committee members will be received and re-

corded on any vote taken by the Committee, except for the purpose of creating a quorum.

(b) Proxies will be allowed on any such votes for the purpose of recording a member's position on a question only when the absentee Committee member has been informed of the question and has affirmatively requested that the vote be recorded.

RULE 5.—OPEN AND CLOSED MEETINGS

(a) Each meeting for the transaction of business of the Committee shall be open to the public except when the Committee, in open session and with a quorum present, determines by roll call I vote that all or part of the remainder of the meeting on that day shall be closed to the public. No such vote shall be required to close a meeting that relates solely to internal budget or personnel matters.

(b) No person other than members of the Committee, and such congressional staff and other representatives as they may authorize, shall be present in any business session that has been closed to the public.

RULE 6.—ALTERNATING CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR BY CONGRESSES

(a) The Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee shall alternate between the House and the Senate by Congresses: The senior member of the minority party in the House of Congress opposite of that of the Chair shall be the Ranking Minority Member of the Committee.

(b) In the event the House and Senate are under different party control, the Chair and Vice-Chair shall represent the majority party in their respective Houses. When the Chair and Vice Chair represent different parties, the Vice Chair shall also fulfill the responsibilities of the Ranking Minority Member as prescribed by these rules.

RULE 7.—PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS

Questions as to the order of business and the procedures of the Committee shall in the first instance be decided by the Chair; subject always to an appeal to the Committee.

RULE 8.—HEARINGS: PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS AND WITNESSES

(a) The Chair, in the case of hearings to be conducted by the Committee, shall make public announcement of the date, place and subject matter of any hearing to be conducted on any measure or matter at least one week before the commencement of that hearing unless the Committee determines that there is good cause to begin such hearing at an earlier date. In the latter event, the Chair shall make such public announcement at the earliest possible date. The staff director of the Committee shall promptly notify the Daily Digest of the Congressional Record as soon as possible after such public announcement is made.

(b) So far as practicable, all witnesses appearing before the Committee shall file advance written statements of their proposed testimony at least 48 hours in advance of their appearance and their oral testimony shall be limited to brief summaries. Limited insertions or additional germane material will be received for the record, subject to the approval of the Chair.

RULE 9.—OFFICIAL HEARING RECORD

(a) An accurate stenographic record shall be kept of all Committee proceedings and actions. Brief supplemental materials when required to clarify the transcript may be inserted in the record subject to the approval of the Chair.

(b) Each member of the Committee shall be provided with a copy of the hearing transcript for the purpose of correcting errors of transcription and grammar, and clarifying questions or remarks. If any other person is authorized by a Committee Member to make

his corrections, the staff director shall be so notified.

(c) Members who have received unanimous consent to submit written questions to witnesses shall be allowed two days within which to submit these to the staff director for transmission to the witnesses. The record may be held open for a period not to exceed two weeks awaiting the responses by witnesses.

(d) A witness may obtain a transcript copy of his testimony given at a public session or, if given at an executive session, when authorized by the Committee. Testimony received in closed hearings shall not be released or included in any report without the approval of the Committee.

RULE 10.—WITNESSES FOR COMMITTEE HEARINGS

(a) Selection of witnesses for Committee hearings shall be made by the Committee staff under the direction of the Chair. A list of proposed witnesses shall be submitted to the members of the Committee for review sufficiently in advance of the hearings to permit suggestions by the Committee members to receive appropriate consideration.

(b) The Chair shall provide adequate time for questioning of witnesses by all members, including minority Members and the rule of germaneness shall be enforced in all hearings notified.

(c) Whenever a hearing is conducted by the Committee upon any measure or matter, the minority on the Committee shall be entitled, upon unanimous request to the Chair before the completion of such hearings, to call witnesses selected by the minority to testify with respect to the measure or matter during at least one day of hearing thereon.

RULE 11.—CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION FURNISHED TO THE COMMITTEE

The information contained in any books, papers or documents furnished to the Committee by any individual, partnership, corporation or other legal entity shall, upon the request of the individual, partnership, corporation or entity furnishing the same, be maintained in strict confidence by the members and staff of the Committee, except that any such information may be released outside of executive session of the Committee if the release thereof is effected in a manner which will not reveal the identity of such individual, partnership, corporation or entity in connection with any pending hearing or as a part of a duly authorized report of the Committee if such release is deemed essential to the performance of the functions of the Committee and is in the public interest.

RULE 12.—BROADCASTING OF COMMITTEE HEARINGS

The rule for broadcasting of Committee hearings shall be the same as Rule XI, clause 4, of the Rules of the House of Representatives.

RULE 13.—COMMITTEE REPORTS

(a) No Committee report shall be made public or transmitted to the Congress without the approval of a majority of the Committee except when Congress has adjourned: provided that any member of the Committee may make a report supplementary to or dissenting from the majority report. Such supplementary or dissenting reports should be as brief as possible.

(b) Factual reports by the Committee staff may be printed for distribution to Committee members and the public only upon authorization of the Chair either with the approval of a majority of the Committee or with the consent of the Ranking Minority Member.

RULE 14.—CONFIDENTIALITY OF COMMITTEE REPORTS

No summary of a Committee report, prediction of the contents of a report, or state-

ment of conclusions concerning any investigation shall be made by a member of the Committee or by any staff member of the Committee prior to the issuance of a report of the Committee.

RULE 15.—COMMITTEE STAFF

(a) The Committee shall have a staff director, selected by the Chair. The staff director shall be an employee of the House of Representatives or of the Senate.

(b) The Ranking Minority Member may designate an employee of the House of Representatives or of the Senate as the minority staff director.

(c) The staff director, under the general supervision of the Chair, is authorized to deal directly with agencies of the Government and with non-Government groups and individuals on behalf of the Committee.

(d) The Chair or staff director shall timely notify the Ranking Minority Member or the minority staff director of decisions made on behalf of the Committee.

RULE 16.—COMMITTEE CHAIR

The Chair of the Committee may establish such other procedures and take such actions as may be necessary to carry out the foregoing rules or to facilitate the effective operation of the Committee. Specifically, the Chair is authorized, during the interim periods between meetings of the Committee, to act on all requests submitted by any executive department, independent agency, temporary or permanent commissions and committees of the Federal Government, the Government Publishing Office and any other Federal entity, pursuant to the requirements of applicable Federal law and regulations.

JOINT COMMITTEE OF CONGRESS ON THE LIBRARY RULES OF PROCEDURE

Mr. BLUNT, Mr. President, on April 30, 2019, the Joint Committee of Congress on the Library organized, elected a chair, a vice chair, and adopted committee rules for the 116th Congress. Members of the Joint Committee on the Library elected Senator Roy Blunt as chair and Representative Zoe Lofgren as vice chair.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 2, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that a copy of the committee rules be printed in the RECORD.

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

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE LIBRARY—116TH CONGRESS

TITLE I—MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE

1. Regular meetings may be called by the Chair, with the concurrence of the Vice Chair, as may be deemed necessary or pursuant to the provision of paragraph 3 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate.

2. Meetings of the committee, including meetings to conduct hearings, shall be open to the public, except that a meeting or series of meetings by the committee 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 recorded vote in open session by a majority of the members of the committee when it is determined that the matters 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 the committee staff personnel or internal staff management or procedures;

(C) will tend to charge an individual with a 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 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 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 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 the provisions of law or Government regulation. (Paragraph 5(b) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate.)

3. Written notices of committee meetings will normally be sent by the committee's staff director to all members at least 3 days in advance. In addition, the committee staff will email or telephone reminders of committee meetings to all members of the committee or to the appropriate staff assistants in their offices.

4. A copy of the committee's intended agenda enumerating separate items of committee business will normally be sent to all members of the committee by the staff director at least 1 day in advance of all meetings. This does not preclude any member of the committee from raising appropriate non-agenda topics.

5. Any witness who is to appear before the committee in any hearing shall file with the clerk of the committee at least 3 business days before the date of his or her appearance, a written statement of his or her proposed testimony and an executive summary thereof, in such form as the Chair may direct, unless the Chair waived such a requirement for good cause.

TITLE II—QUORUMS

1. Pursuant to paragraph 7(a)(1) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules, 4 members of the committee shall constitute a quorum.

2. Pursuant to paragraph 7(a)(2) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules, 2 members of the committee shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of taking testimony; provided, however, once a quorum is established, any one member can continue to take such testimony.

3. Under no circumstance may proxies be considered for the establishment of a quorum.

TITLE III—VOTING

1. Voting in the committee on any issue will normally be by voice vote.

2. If a third of the members present so demand, a recorded vote will be taken on any question by roll call.

3. The results of the roll call votes taken in any meeting upon a measure, or any amendment thereto, shall be stated in the committee report on that measure unless previously announced by the committee, and such report or announcement shall include a tabulation of the votes cast in favor and the votes cast in opposition to each measure and amendment by each member of the committee. (Paragraph 7(b) and (c) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules.)

4. Proxy voting shall be allowed on all measures and matters before the committee. However, the vote of the committee to report a measure or matters shall require the concurrence of a majority of the members of the committee who are physically present at the time of the vote. Proxies will be allowed in such cases solely for the purpose of recording a member's position on the question and then only in those instances when the absentee committee member has been informed of the question and has affirmatively requested that the vote be recorded. (Paragraph 7(a)(3) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules.)

TITLE IV—DELEGATION AND AUTHORITY TO THE CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

1. The Chair and Vice Chair are authorized to sign all necessary vouchers and routine papers for which the committee's approval is required and to decide in the committee's behalf on all routine business.

2. The Chair is authorized to engage commercial reporters for the preparation of transcripts of committee meetings and hearings.

3. The Chair is authorized to issue, on behalf of the committee, regulations normally promulgated by the committee at the beginning of each session.

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION BUDGET REQUEST

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a copy of my opening statement at the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development be printed in the RECORD.

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

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION BUDGET REQUEST

Mr. ALEXANDER. We run a real risk of losing our best source of carbon-free power just at a time when most Americans are increasingly worried about climate change. Nuclear power must be part of our energy future if we want clean, cheap, and reliable energy that can create good jobs and keep America competitive in a global economy.

Today 98 nuclear reactors provide about 20 percent of electricity in the United States, and 60 percent of all carbon-free electricity in the United States. But nuclear plants are closing because they cost too much to build and cannot compete with natural gas. Two reactors have announced they will retire later this year, and ten more have announced retirements by 2025.

Let's do a little math here. If we closed those 12 reactors, that would mean a 17 percent decline in carbon-free nuclear power by 2025, which is 10 percent of carbon-free electricity. Today, solar power—despite impressive reductions in cost—provides 4 percent and wind provides 20 percent of carbon-free electricity despite billions of dollars in subsidies. To replace those 12 reactors that have announced they will close with other carbon-free electricity, we would have to almost triple the entirety of U.S. solar power or increase wind power by another 50 percent. If

half of our existing nuclear reactors were to close, we would have to double the amount of wind energy produced and or increase the amount of solar energy produced by as much as 10 times.

Nuclear power is much more reliable than solar or wind power. It is available when the sun doesn't shine and the wind doesn't blow. The bottom line is, we can't replace nuclear power with just wind and solar. We would have to use natural gas to replace nuclear power, which would increase emissions in our country.

Unfortunately, we do not need to speculate about what happens when a major industrialized country eliminates nuclear power. We have seen what happened in Japan and Germany for different reasons. Major industrialized economies similar to ours lost their emission-free, low-cost, reliable electricity. Prices went up, pollution went up, and manufacturing became less competitive in the global marketplace. And that is where we are headed in the next 10 years if we do not do something. Stakes are high.

In Japan, the cost of generating electricity increased 56 percent after the Fukushima accident in 2011 when Japan went from obtaining 30 percent of its power from nuclear to less than 2 percent.

Before 2011, Germany obtained one quarter of its electricity from nuclear. Now that number is down to 12 percent. Now Germany has among the highest household electricity rates in the European Union after replacing nuclear power with wind and solar as part of an expensive cap-and-trade policy. Germany also had to build new coal plants to meet demand, which increased emissions.

In late March, I proposed that the United States should launch a New Manhattan Project for Clean Energy, a five-year project with Ten Grand Challenges that will use American research and technology to put our country and the world firmly on a path toward cleaner, cheaper energy.

These Grand Challenges call for breakthroughs in advanced nuclear reactors, natural gas, carbon capture, better batteries, greener buildings, electric vehicles, cheaper solar, and fusion.

I put advanced reactors first on the list for a reason. To make sure nuclear power has a future in this country, we need to develop advanced reactors that have the potential to be smaller, cost less, produce less waste, and be safer than today's reactors.

We need to stop talking about advanced reactors and actually build something. Within the next five years, we need to build one or more advanced reactors to demonstrate the capabilities they may bring.

As we review the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's fiscal year 2020 budget request we need to make sure the Commission has the staff and resources it needs to respond to the changing industry.

First, I would like to thank our witnesses for being here today, and also Senator FEINSTEIN, with whom I have the pleasure to work again this year to draft the Energy and Water Appropriations bill. Our witnesses today include: Kristine Svinicki, Chairman of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission; Commissioner Jeff Baran; Commissioner Annie Caputo; and Commissioner David Wright.

Commissioner Stephen Burns retired yesterday after forty years of distinguished service at the NRC. He started as an attorney in 1978, rose to General Counsel, and then retired from the agency to head Legal Affairs at the Nuclear Energy Agency in Paris. He returned to the NRC in 2014 as a Commissioner and Chairman. He was well respected in every position he held. I would like to thank him for his many years of service.

We're here today to review the administration's fiscal year 2020 budget request for the

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the independent federal agency responsible for regulating the safety of our nation's 98 commercial nuclear power plants and other civilian uses of nuclear material.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission's budget request this fiscal year is \$921 million, which is about \$10 million less than Congress provided last year. The request includes \$38.5 million for the Yucca Mountain licensing process.

It has become increasingly difficult for the nuclear industry to compete with other sources of electricity, especially natural gas. One of the concerns the industry had was the amount of regulatory fees charged by the Commission—currently, \$760 million of the Commission's budget comes from fees paid by utilities and other facilities that are licensed to possess and use nuclear materials.

So over the last five fiscal years, we have worked with the Commission to reduce its overall budget by about \$100 million, which represents about a 10 percent reduction in budget—which means a roughly 10 percent reduction in fees—and more closely reflects its actual workload while maintaining its gold standard of safety.

These savings are important because they lower the fees utilities must pay the Commission, and these savings can be passed on to utilities' customers. These reductions have not been arbitrary and represent the type of oversight the Senate is supposed to do. Our subcommittee has only reduced the Commission's budget in areas that the Commission has identified as unnecessary to its important safety mission.

To ensure nuclear power will continue to play a significant role in our nation's electricity generation, I'd like to focus my remarks on four main areas:

- (1) Licensing small modular and advanced reactors;
- (2) Solving the nuclear waste stalemate;
- (3) Safely extending licenses for existing reactors; and
- (4) Maintaining adequate staffing at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Advanced reactors and small modular reactors represent the future of nuclear power. The Commission needs to be ready to review applications for new these new reactors. In fiscal year 2017, we provided enough funding to complete the Small Modular Reactor Licensing Technical Support program at the Department of Energy. NuScale, which was one of the technologies selected in that program, filed an application for design certification of a small modular reactor with the Commission in December of 2016. A utility group has been working with NuScale and Idaho National Laboratory to build and demonstrate a small modular reactor in Idaho. TVA also has an application under review for a permit to build and demonstrate a small modular reactor at the Clinch River site in Tennessee.

Licenses to build and demonstrate small modular reactors is an important step, and we need to make sure the Commission has the resources it needs to review the applications. I also understand that the Commission expects to receive an application in fiscal year 2020 for a construction and operating license for an advanced, non-light water reactor.

The fiscal year 2019 appropriations bill included \$10 million for the Commission to prepare to review advanced reactor designs, and the current budget request includes \$15.5 million for fiscal year 2020. I'd like to know what the Commission plans to do with the funding Congress provided for advanced reactors so that we can make sure the development of advanced reactors stays on track.

To ensure that nuclear power has a strong future in this country, we must solve the

decades' long stalemate over what to do with used fuel from our nuclear reactors. Senator FEINSTEIN and I have been working on solving the nuclear waste stalemate for years, and I'd like to take the opportunity to compliment Senator Feinstein on her leadership and her insistence that we find a solution to this problem. The only way to break the stalemate is to get a final decision on whether Yucca Mountain is safe or not.

And this year's budget request for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission includes \$38.5 million to begin to answer that questions by restarting the licensing process for the Yucca Mountain repository. This is the next step the Department of Energy must follow to determine whether it can begin construction of Yucca Mountain. After a public hearing where all parties, including the State of Nevada, can provide expert testimony and evidence, the Commission will make a final determination whether it is safe to build Yucca Mountain.

I strongly believe that Yucca Mountain can and should be part of the solution to the nuclear waste stalemate. Federal law designates Yucca Mountain as the nation's repository for used nuclear fuel, and the Commission's own scientists have told us that we can safely store nuclear waste there for up to one million years.

But even if we had Yucca Mountain open today, we would still need to look for another permanent repository. We already have more than enough used fuel to fill Yucca Mountain to its legal capacity.

The quickest, and probably the least expensive, way for the federal government to start to meet its used nuclear fuel obligations is for the Department of Energy to contract with a private storage facility for used nuclear fuel.

I understand that two private companies have submitted license applications to the NRC for private consolidated storage facilities, one in Texas and one in New Mexico, and that the NRC's review is well underway. I'll be asking some questions about that today. I want to make sure that the Commission has all the resources it needs in fiscal year 2020 to review the applications for consolidated storage facilities because we have to start working together to solve the nuclear waste stalemate if we want a strong nuclear industry.

Senator MURKOWSKI, along with Senator FEINSTEIN and I, introduced a bill this week to implement the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future, which include using temporary private storage facilities. The legislation complements Yucca Mountain, and would create a new federal agency to find additional permanent repositories and temporary facilities for used nuclear fuel.

Instead of building more windmills, which only produce 20 percent of our carbon-free electricity, or solar farms, which only produce 4 percent of our carbon-free electricity, the best way to make sure the United States has a reliable source of inexpensive, efficient, carbon-free electricity is to extend the licenses of our existing nuclear plants—which produce 60 percent of our carbon-free electricity—if it is safe to do so.

Most of our 98 reactors have already extended their operating licenses from 40 to 60 years (although many have decided to close prematurely for economic reasons), and some utilities are beginning the process to extend their licenses from 60 to 80 years.

The Commission has spent the past several years developing the framework to review these types of license renewal applications to make sure the reactors can continue to operate safely from 60 to 80 years.

This year's budget request includes funding to review what the Commission calls

"subsequent" license renewal applications for six reactors in Florida, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. Just those 6 reactor extensions would equal about what solar power currently produces and a fourth of what wind power currently produces. That is just accounting for the 6 reactors that have applied to extend their licenses rather than shut down. If even half of the remaining 92 reactors decide to extend their licenses another 20 years, it would produce almost double the amount of wind power that is currently produced and as much as 10 times the amount of solar power produced.

So if you care about carbon free emissions, the short term solution for the next 20 years is, where safely, to extend the licenses for these reactors. I want to make sure that the Commission has the resources it needs to review those applications in fiscal year 2020, because I think it is important to maintain our existing nuclear power when it is safe to do so.

The Commission's budget reduction has been steep over the past five fiscal years. As part of its effort to reduce its budget, the Commission has limited hiring, especially entry-level hiring. We have heard from the Commission that of its 2,900 current employees, 24 percent are currently eligible for retirement. Four years from now, 42 percent will be eligible for retirement. Those numbers are not a concern as long as the NRC has younger staff ready to take over the important work of the agency. But I understand that only 2 percent of NRC employees are under 30 years old. To have nuclear power in the future, we need to have a nuclear regulator. I would like to understand how the Commission is ensuring that the next generation is in place.

I look forward to working with the Commission as we begin putting together our Energy and Water Appropriations bill for fiscal year 2020, and also with Senator FEINSTEIN, who I will now recognize for her opening statement.

104TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Mr. REED. Mr. President, on Sunday, I had the opportunity to attend the 104th anniversary commemoration of the Armenian genocide, hosted at the Armenian Martyrs Memorial in Providence, RI. I was pleased to be able to join with so many in the Armenian community in my home State for this solemn event.

Over a century ago, one of the greatest tragedies of the 20th century began when the Young Turk leaders of the Ottoman Empire executed more than 200 prominent Armenians. What followed was an 8-year campaign of oppression and massacre. By 1923, an estimated 1 and a half million Armenians were killed and over a half a million survivors were exiled. These atrocities affected the lives of every Armenian living in Asia Minor and throughout the world.

The U.S. Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire during this dark time, Henry Morgenthau, Sr., unsuccessfully pleaded with President Wilson to take action, and later remembered the events of the genocide, saying, "I am confident that the whole history of the human race contains no such horrible episode as this. The great massacres and persecutions of the past seem al-

most insignificant when compared to the sufferings of the Armenian race in 1915."

Those who survived the Armenian genocide, however, persevered due to their unbreakable spirit and steadfast resolve, going on to greatly contribute to the lands in which they established new homes and communities, including the United States. That is why we not only commemorate this grave tragedy each year, but also take the time to celebrate the traditions, the contributions, and the bright future of the Armenian people. Indeed, my home State of Rhode Island continues to be enriched by our strong and vibrant Armenian-American community.

To honor the memory of this tragedy, I have once again joined with several of my colleagues on a resolution to encourage the U.S. to officially recognize the Armenian genocide. We must find a way to come together to recognize the truth of what happened and support and assist those facing persecution today.

As ranking member on the Senate Armed Services Committee, I also remain committed to supporting assistance to Armenia to strengthen security, promote economic growth, and foster democratic reforms and development.

As we remember the past, we remain committed to forging a brighter future. We must continue to guard against hatred and oppression so that we can prevent such crimes against humanity from happening again.

REMEMBERING LIEUTENANT COLONEL DICK COLE

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I am here on the floor to talk about an American hero.

General Douglas MacArthur once said, "Duty, Honor, Country. Those three hallowed words reverently dictate what you ought to be, what you can be, what you will be." Those words—duty, honor, country—are exemplified through the life and legacy of Lieutenant Colonel Richard Cole.

Lt. Col. Cole, who went by Dick, was born and raised in my grandfather's hometown, Dayton, OH. He graduated from Steele High School and completed 2 years of college at Ohio University before enlisting in the Aviation Cadet Program of the U.S. Army Air Corps in November 1940. He commissioned as a second lieutenant in July 1941 and received his pilot wings at Randolph Field in Texas. From there, he joined the ranks of the 34th Bombardment Squadron of the 17th Bombardment Group.

Soon after, Lt. Col. Cole became one of the 80 volunteers who signed up for the Doolittle Mission, which was to become the first offensive strike on mainland Japan during World War II. In a turn of fate, a Japanese vessel spotted the USS *Hornet*, forcing the mission to commence a day early. Therefore, what was originally planned

as a 400-mile trip to mainland Japan turned into a 645-mile journey to the target, putting the pilots in grave danger because the planes did not have enough fuel to reach their destination.

Lt. Col. Cole served valiantly as Lt. Col. James Doolittle's co-pilot, and together, they led the squadron of 16 Army Air Force bombers from the Hornet to Tokyo. The squadron succeeded in bombing their target, but as predicted, his plane ran low on fuel and they were forced to bail out over China. His parachute worked, and he landed in a tree, where he spent the night and climbed down in the morning. He ultimately found some Chinese students who took him to Doolittle. After the raid, Cole went to India, helped establish the dangerous Hump flying route and flew more than 100 missions carrying cargo, earning three Distinguished Flying Crosses. The Doolittle Raiders received the Congressional Gold Medal in 2015 and donated it to the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force in Ohio.

The raid provided a psychological lift back home and marked a turning point in the Pacific theater of the war. He was humble about his role in this mission and chalked it up to duty. In 2016, when remembering the raid, he said: "We were the only B-25 crew operating for months. We were going on that mission whether we wanted to or not. That straightens out that fairy tale." He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for heroism for this mission.

Cole remained in China to continue flying bombing and transport missions through the end of the war. He is the only American serviceman of the 16 million who served in World War II to have flown in three elite groups: the Doolittle Raiders, the Himalayan Hump Route pilots, and the 1st Air Commandos.

After retiring from a distinguished 26-year long career in the U.S. Air Force, he spent much of his time as an ambassador for the Air Force and Doolittle Raiders. He traveled the country to keep the history and legacy of the Doolittle Raiders alive and honor those who served beside him.

On April 9, Lt. Col. Cole passed away at the age of 103 years old. What an incredible life. He captured the hearts of everyone who met him, and he will forever be remembered as a hero who faithfully executed his duty for our Country.

Godspeed, Lt. Col. Dick Cole.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO TREY CAMPBELL

• Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I would like to take the opportunity to express my appreciation to Trey for his hard work as an intern in my Cheyenne office. I recognize his efforts and contributions to my office, as well as to the State of Wyoming.

Trey is a native of Casper. He is a student at the University of Wyoming,

where he is studying economics and political science. He has demonstrated a strong work ethic, which has made him an invaluable asset to our office. The quality of his work is reflected in his great efforts over the last several months.

I want to thank Trey for the dedication he has shown while working for me and my staff. It is a pleasure to have him as part of our team. I know he will have continued success with all of his future endeavors. I wish him all my best on his journey.●

TRIBUTE TO JEFFERSON CHA

• Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I would like to take the opportunity to express my appreciation to Jefferson for his hard work as an intern in my Washington, DC, office. I recognize his efforts and contributions to my office, as well as to the State of Wyoming.

Jefferson is a native of California. He is a graduate of UCLA, where he studied history. He has demonstrated a strong work ethic, which has made him an invaluable asset to our office. The quality of his work is reflected in his great efforts over the last several months.

I want to thank Jefferson for the dedication he has shown while working for me and my staff. It is a pleasure to have him as part of our team. I know he will have continued success with all of his future endeavors. I wish him all my best on his journey.●

TRIBUTE TO IAN DEVALLIERE

• Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I would like to take the opportunity to express my appreciation to Ian for his hard work as an intern in the Environment and Public Works Committee. I recognize his efforts and contributions to my office, as well as to the State of Wyoming.

Ian is a native of Nevada. He is a student at George Washington University, where he is studying business economics and public policy. He has demonstrated a strong work ethic, which has made him an invaluable asset to our office. The quality of his work is reflected in his great efforts over the last several months.

I want to thank Ian for the dedication he has shown while working for me and my staff. It is a pleasure to have him as part of our team. I know he will have continued success with all of his future endeavors. I wish him all my best on his journey.●

TRIBUTE TO DAVID GARDNER

• Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I would like to take the opportunity to express my appreciation to David for his hard work as an intern in the Environment and Public Works Committee. I recognize his efforts and contributions to my office, as well as to the State of Wyoming.

David is a native of Massachusetts. He is a student at American University, where he is studying interdisciplinary studies. He has demonstrated a strong work ethic, which has made him an invaluable asset to our office. The quality of his work is reflected in his great efforts over the last several months.

I want to thank David for the dedication he has shown while working for me and my staff. It is a pleasure to have him as part of our team. I know he will have continued success with all of his future endeavors. I wish him all my best on his journey.●

TRIBUTE TO TYLER JORDON

• Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I would like to take the opportunity to express my appreciation to Tyler for his hard work as an intern in the Environment and Public Works Committee. I recognize his efforts and contributions to my office, as well as to the State of Wyoming.

Tyler is a native of West Virginia. He is a graduate student at American University, where he is studying political communication. He has demonstrated a strong work ethic, which has made him an invaluable asset to our office. The quality of his work is reflected in his great efforts over the last several months.

I want to thank Tyler for the dedication he has shown while working for me and my staff. It is a pleasure to have him as part of our team. I know he will have continued success with all of his future endeavors. I wish him all my best on his journey.●

TRIBUTE TO BRENDYN LUPE

• Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I would like to take the opportunity to express my appreciation to Brendyn for his hard work as an intern in my Washington, DC, office. I recognize his efforts and contributions to my office, as well as to the State of Wyoming.

Brendyn is a native of New York. He is a student at American University, where he is studying international relations and French. He has demonstrated a strong work ethic, which has made him an invaluable asset to our office. The quality of his work is reflected in his great efforts over the last several months.

I want to thank Brendyn for the dedication he has shown while working for me and my staff. It is a pleasure to have him as part of our team. I know he will have continued success with all of his future endeavors. I wish him all my best on his journey.●

TRIBUTE TO ANNIE MCKINNEY

• Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I would like to take the opportunity to express my appreciation to Annie for her hard work as an intern in the Senate Republican Conference. I recognize

her efforts and contributions to my office, as well as to the State of Wyoming.

Annie is a native of Ohio. She is a student at Marymount University, where she is studying politics. She has demonstrated a strong work ethic, which has made her an invaluable asset to our office. The quality of her work is reflected in her great efforts over the last several months.

I want to thank Annie for the dedication she has shown while working for me and my staff. It is a pleasure to have her as part of our team. I know she will have continued success with all of her future endeavors. I wish her all my best on her journey.●

TRIBUTE TO JORDAN PAKULA

● Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I would like to take the opportunity to express my appreciation to Jordan for his hard work as an intern in the Environment and Public Works Committee. I recognize his efforts and contributions to my office, as well as to the State of Wyoming.

Jordan is a native of Georgia. He is a graduate of Kenyon College, where he studied political science and French. He has demonstrated a strong work ethic, which has made him an invaluable asset to our office. The quality of his work is reflected in his great efforts over the last several months.

I want to thank Jordan for the dedication he has shown while working for me and my staff. It is a pleasure to have him as part of our team. I know he will have continued success with all of his future endeavors. I wish him all my best on his journey.●

REMEMBERING WILLIAM M. DETWEILER

● Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, today I rise to honor the life and legacy of William M. Detweiler who passed away on March 27, 2019, at age 79. Mr. Detweiler was a lifelong advocate for veterans and a former national commander of the American Legion. His commitment to our country stands as a shining example for every American. He leaves behind a legacy of compassion for his fellow servicemembers that touched everyone who knew him.

Mr. Detweiler was born in New Orleans, LA, on January 28, 1940. He was a graduate of St. Aloysius High School and Loyola University, where he earned both his undergraduate and law degrees.

Mr. Detweiler served as a captain in the U.S. Army Intelligence Corps and, later, as assistant chief of staff for the U.S. Army Defense Center at Fort Bliss, TX. He then joined the U.S. Army Reserve and returned home to New Orleans to practice law.

During his law career, Mr. Detweiler served on various local, State, and national veterans committees. In 1973, President Nixon appointed him to serve on the Veterans Administration's Na-

tional Rehabilitation and Education Advisory Committee, which he later went on to chair.

As a member of the American Legion, Mr. Detweiler served in a number of capacities including Department of Louisiana judge advocate, chairman of the National Public Relations Commission, chairman of the National Foreign Relations Commission, national vice commander, and national commander.

While serving as national commander of the American Legion, he fought for the extension of service-connected disability benefits for Vietnam veterans exposed to Agent Orange. He was also involved in the planning and development of the National D-Day Museum in the heart of New Orleans, which later became the National WWII Museum.

In his most recent leadership role with the American Legion, Mr. Detweiler served as the chairman of the organization's traumatic brain injury—TBI—and posttraumatic stress disorder—PTSD—committee. He was serving as chairman of that committee on March 27, 2019, when his final battle, with pancreatic cancer, came to an end.

William M. Detweiler was a tireless advocate for the veterans community, and we thank him for his lifetime of service to our country.●

REMEMBERING EUGENIA "GENIE" ZAVALETA

● Ms. SINEMA. Mr. President, today I wish to honor the life and legacy of Eugenia "Genie" Zavaleta, a community leader who passed away in Tempe, AZ, on April 6, 2019, at the age of 92. Genie Zavaleta was a fighter for immigration reform, advocate for the DREAM Act, and a dedicated voice for DACA recipients. Our State will miss her dearly.

Genie Zavaleta described her life's concerns as "her family, education, health care, family planning, the environment, poverty and injustice, the Presbyterian Church and the Democratic Party." Throughout her life, she served these issues through educator and advocacy roles within the Presbyterian Church, the Migrant Ministry of the National Council of Churches, Planned Parenthood of Arizona, and the Maricopa County Health Department.

Her immense advocacy work within the migrant community began in 1958, when she and her husband Hector took on roles to serve migrant farm laborers known as braceros. In 1965, Genie Zavaleta and her family moved to Arizona, where she focused on helping migrant workers acquire new skills to adjust to Arizona's rapid industrialization. Eventually, Genie Zavaleta became a fierce advocate for DACA recipients and the DREAM Act.

Genie Zavaleta is survived by her husband Hector, her sons Dan and David, and their wives Nori and Linda. She will be dearly missed by other family members, friends, and the hundreds of people whose lives she touched.

Please join me in honoring her memory.●

TRIBUTE TO ANTONIO MIGUEL BEATTY

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I recognize Antonio "Tony" Miguel Beatty, an intern in my Washington, DC, office, for all of the hard work he has done for me, my staff, and the State of South Dakota over the past several months.

Tony is a graduate of Stevens High School in Rapid City, SD. Currently, he is attending the University of South Dakota in Vermillion, SD, where he is majoring in political science and criminal justice. He is a hard worker who has been dedicated to getting the most out of his internship experience.

I extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Tony for all of the fine work he has done and wish him continued success in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO ANTHONY CONCEPCION

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I recognize Anthony Concepcion, an intern in my Washington, DC, office, for all of the hard work he has done for me, my staff, and the State of South Dakota over the past several months.

Anthony will be graduating later this week from the Mason LIFE Program with a comprehensive concentration in music appreciation and a minor concentration in recreation and leisure education. Anthony is a hard worker who has been dedicated to getting the most out of his internship experience.

I extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Anthony for all of the fine work he has done and wish him continued success in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO AINE CRINION

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I recognize Aine Crinion, an intern in my Washington, DC, office, for all of the hard work she has done for me, my staff, and the State of South Dakota over the past several months.

Aine is a graduate of Brookings High School in Brookings, SD. Currently, she is attending Georgetown University in Washington, DC, where she is majoring in international political economy and Spanish. She is a hard worker who has been dedicated to getting the most out of her internship experience.

I extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Aine for all of the fine work she has done and wish her continued success in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO KATHLYNN SHORT

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I recognize Kathlynn Short, an intern in my Washington, DC, office, for all of the hard work she has done for me, my

staff, and the State of South Dakota over the past several months.

Kathlynn is a graduate of Stevens High School in Rapid City, SD. Currently, she is attending Wichita State University in Wichita, KS, where she is majoring in international studies. She is a hard worker who has been dedicated to getting the most out of her internship experience.

I extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Kathlynn for all of the fine work she has done and wish her continued success in the years to come.●

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:20 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. 828. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 25 Route 111 in Smithtown, New York, as the "Congressman Bill Carney Post Office".

H.R. 1198. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 404 South Boulder Highway in Henderson, Nevada, as the "Henderson Veterans Memorial Post Office Building".

H.R. 1449. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 3033 203rd Street in Olympia Fields, Illinois, as the "Captain Robert L. Martin Post Office".

H.R. 1876. An act to create an interdivisional taskforce at the Securities and Exchange Commission for senior investors.

MEASURES REFERRED

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

H.R. 828. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 25 Route 111 in Smithtown, New York, as the "Congressman Bill Carney Post Office"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 1198. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 404 South Boulder Highway in Henderson, Nevada, as the "Henderson Veterans Memorial Post Office Building"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 1449. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 3033 203rd Street in Olympia Fields, Illinois, as the "Captain Robert L. Martin Post Office"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 1876. An act to create an interdivisional taskforce at the Securities and Exchange Commission for senior investors; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-1076. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division,

Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Bacteriophage active against *Xylella fastidiosa*; Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance" (FRL No. 9991-86-OCSP) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 23, 2019; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-1077. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to violation of the Antideficiency Act that involved fiscal year 2010 Operations and Maintenance (O&M) Air Force funds and was assigned case number 16-02; to the Committee on Appropriations.

EC-1078. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to Yemen that was declared in Executive Order 13611 of May 16, 2012; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-1079. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Plan Approval and Designation of Areas; FL; Redesignation of the Nassau County 2010 1-Hour Sulfur Dioxide Non-attainment Area to Attainment" (FRL No. 9992-53-Region 4) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 23, 2019; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-1080. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Restrictions on Discontinued Uses of Asbestos; Significant New Use Rule" (FRL No. 9991-33-OCSP) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 23, 2019; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-1081. A communication from the Director of Congressional Affairs, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Consolidated Guidance About Materials Licenses: Program-Specific Guidance About Commercial Radiopharmacy Licenses" (NUREG-1556) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 25, 2019; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-1082. A communication from the Board of Trustees of the Federal Hospital Insurance and Federal Supplementary Medical Insurance Trust Funds, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Board's 2019 Annual Report; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-1083. A communication from the Deputy Commissioner for Retirement and Disability Policy, Social Security Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, reports entitled "Annual Report of the Board of the Trustees of the Federal Old-Age and Survivors Insurance and Federal Disability Insurance Trust Funds"; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-1084. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act, the certification of a proposed license for the export of firearms abroad controlled under Category I of the U.S. Munitions Lists of rifles and submachine guns to Thailand for end use by the Royal Thai Police in the amount of \$1,000,000 or more (Transmittal No. DDTC 18-085); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-1085. A communication from the Deputy Assistant General Counsel for Regu-

latory Affairs, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Benefits Payable in Terminated Single-Employer Plans; Interest Assumptions for Paying Benefits" (29 CFR Part 4022) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 24, 2019; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-1086. A communication from the Director of Regulations and Policy Management Staff, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Safety and Effectiveness of Consumer Antiseptic Rubs; Topical Antimicrobial Drug Products for Over-the-Counter Human Use" (RIN0910-AH97) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 22, 2019; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-1087. A communication from the Director of Regulations and Policy Management Staff, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Listing of Color Additives Exempt from Certification; Synthetic Iron Oxide; Confirmation of Effective Date" (Docket No. FDA-2017-C-6238) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 22, 2019; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-1088. A communication from the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, the amendments to the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure that have been adopted by the Supreme Court of the United States; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-1089. A communication from the Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the implementation of the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission for the period from April 1, 2017, through September 30, 2017; to the Committees on the Judiciary; Select Committee on Intelligence; and Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-1090. A communication from the Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the implementation of the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission for the period from October 1, 2016, through March 31, 2017; to the Committees on the Judiciary; Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs; and Select Committee on Intelligence.

EC-1091. A communication from the Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the implementation of the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission for the period from October 1, 2018, through March 31, 2018; to the Committees on the Judiciary; Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs; and Select Committee on Intelligence.

EC-1092. A communication from the Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, an annual report on the Department's activities during calendar year 2016 relative to prison rape abatement; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-1093. A communication from the Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Department's activities under the Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act during fiscal year 2018; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-1094. A communication from the Solicitor General, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, an opinion of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan (United States v. Jumana Nagarwala et al.); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-1095. A communication from the Solicitor General, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, an opinion of the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit (United States v. Solis); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-1096. A communication from the Solicitor General, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, an opinion of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania (Miller v. Barr); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-1097. A communication from the Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Victims Compensation Fund established by the Witness Security Reform Act of 1984; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-1098. A communication from the Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting proposed legislation that would add a jurisdictional element tied to the Commerce Clause to the statute criminalizing female genital mutilation; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-1099. A communication from the Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, reports entitled "Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act: Report to Congress" and "Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Programs: Eleven Case Studies"; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-1100. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of the Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Emergency Interim Report: CBP Families and Children Care Panel"; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-1101. A communication from the Associate General Counsel for General Law, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Assistant Secretary/Director, United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Department of Homeland Security, received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 18, 2019; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-1102. A communication from the Chief of the Office of Regulatory Affairs, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Removal of Expired Regulations Concerning Commerce in Firearms and Ammunition and Machine Guns, Destructive Devices, and Certain Other Firearms" (Docket No. ATF 2014R-42) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 11, 2019; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-1103. A communication from the Chief of the Office of Regulatory Affairs, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Removal of Expired Regulations" (Docket No. ATF 2017R-21) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 11, 2019; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-1104. A joint communication from the General Counsel of Veterans Affairs and the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Manpower and Reserve Affairs), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Veterans Affairs and Department of Defense Joint Executive

Committee Fiscal Year 2018 Annual Report"; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EC-1105. A communication from the Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Uninformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA) Quarterly Report to Congress; First Quarter of Fiscal Year 2019"; to the Committee on Veterans' 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 Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mr. CARPER, Mr. WARNER, Mr. COONS, Mr. KAINE, and Mr. VAN HOLLEN):

S. 1259. A bill to amend the Chesapeake Bay Initiative Act of 1998 to reauthorize the Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Ms. SMITH (for herself and Mr. CASSIDY):

S. 1260. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for grants to enable States to carry out activities to reduce administrative costs and burdens in health care; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. MERKLEY (for himself, Mr. MURPHY, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Ms. HARRIS, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. SCHATZ, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. REED, Ms. SMITH, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. BOOKER, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and Mr. HEINRICH):

S. 1261. A bill to provide for the establishment of Medicare part E public health plans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself and Mr. MERKLEY):

S. 1262. A bill to designate certain land administered by the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service in the State of Oregon as wilderness and national recreation areas, to withdraw certain land located in Curry County and Josephine County, Oregon, from all forms of entry, appropriation, or disposal under the public land laws, location, entry, and patent under the mining laws, and operation under the mineral leasing and geothermal leasing laws, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. CORTEZ MASTO (for herself and Mr. DAINES):

S. 1263. A bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish an interagency task force on the use of public lands to provide medical treatment and therapy to veterans through outdoor recreation; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. DAINES:

S. 1264. A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to deny Federal retirement benefits to individuals convicted of child sex abuse; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. CASEY:

S. 1265. A bill to amend the Oil Region National Heritage Area Act to reauthorize the Oil Region National Heritage Area, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. SCOTT of Florida:

S. 1266. A bill to amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 to protect patients from surprise medical bills; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. CORNYN, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mrs. CAPITO, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. RUBIO, Ms. HARRIS, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. BOOKER, and Ms. MCSALLY):

S. 1267. A bill to establish within the Smithsonian Institution the National Museum of the American Latino, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Ms. STABENOW (for herself, Mr. BURR, Mr. BROWN, and Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina):

S. 1268. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to ensure that hospitals receive adequate payment for the acquisition of hematopoietic stem cells under the Medicare program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. WICKER (for himself and Mr. COONS):

S. 1269. A bill to address the threat to national security from illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing and associated illegal activity, to prevent the illegal trade of seafood and seafood products, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself and Mr. YOUNG):

S. 1270. A bill to provide standards for physical condition and management of housing receiving assistance payments under section 8 of the United States Housing Act of 1937; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. ROUNDS:

S. 1271. A bill to provide for pilot programs to streamline decision-making process for weapon systems; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. REED (for himself and Mr. WHITEHOUSE):

S. 1272. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 575 Dexter Street in Central Falls, Rhode Island, as the "Elizabeth Buffum Chace Post Office"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. KENNEDY (for himself, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. TILLIS, and Ms. HIRONO):

S. 1273. A bill to amend title 17, United States Code, to establish an alternative dispute resolution program for copyright small claims, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND:

S. 1274. A bill to amend the Federal Election Campaign Act to provide for public financing for Federal elections through vouchers directed by eligible voters to the candidates of their choice; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Ms. HASSAN (for herself and Mr. LANKFORD):

S. 1275. A bill to require the collection of voluntary feedback on services provided by agencies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. RUBIO, and Ms. DUCKWORTH):

S. 1276. A bill to require the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to carry out a pilot program to enhance the mapping of urban flooding and associated property damage and the availability of that mapped data to homeowners, businesses, and localities to help understand and mitigate the risk of such flooding, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Ms. MCSALLY (for herself and Ms. SINEMA):

S. 1277. A bill to approve the settlement of water rights claims of the Hualapai Tribe and certain allottees in the State of Arizona, to authorize construction of a water project

relating to those water rights claims, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. CASEY, Mr. MORAN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. KAINE, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. COONS, and Mr. DURBIN):

S. Res. 179. A resolution recognizing widening threats to freedoms of the press and expression around the world, reaffirming the centrality of a free and independent press to the health of democracy, and reaffirming freedom of the press as a priority of the United States in promoting democracy, human rights, and good governance in commemoration of World Press Freedom Day on May 3, 2019; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. LANKFORD (for himself, Ms. SINEMA, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. PETERS, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. CARPER, and Ms. HASSAN):

S. Res. 180. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that, during Public Service Recognition Week, public servants should be commended for their dedication and continued service to the United States; considered and agreed to.

By Ms. HASSAN (for herself, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. CASEY, Ms. ERNST, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. JONES, Mr. KAINE, Mrs. MURRAY, and Ms. SMITH):

S. Res. 181. A resolution supporting the designation of the week of April 8 through April 12, 2019, as "National Specialized Instructional Support Personnel Appreciation Week"; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. PERDUE (for himself, Mr. BRAUN, Ms. ERNST, Mr. MORAN, and Mr. TILLIS):

S. Res. 182. A resolution recognizing the duty of the Senate to condemn Modern Monetary Theory and recognizing Modern Monetary Theory would lead to higher deficits and higher inflation; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Ms. WARREN (for herself, Mr. COTTON, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. PETERS, Ms. ROSEN, and Mr. LANKFORD):

S. Con. Res. 15. A concurrent resolution expressing support for the designation of October 28, 2019, as "Honoring the Nation's First Responders Day"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 92

At the request of Mr. PAUL, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. HAWLEY) 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. 143

At the request of Ms. ERNST, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) was added as a cosponsor of 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.

S. 151

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) was added as a cosponsor of 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.

S. 153

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 153, a bill to promote veteran involvement in STEM education, computer science, and scientific research, and for other purposes.

S. 164

At the request of Mr. DAINES, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) was added as a cosponsor of 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.

S. 358

At the request of Mr. SCHATZ, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 358, a bill to amend title 13, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Commerce to provide advance notice to Congress before changing any questions on the decennial census, and for other purposes.

S. 457

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the names of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) and the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER) were added as cosponsors of S. 457, a bill to require that \$1 coins issued during 2019 honor President George H.W. Bush and to direct the Secretary of the Treasury to issue bullion coins during 2019 in honor of Barbara Bush.

S. 496

At the request of Mr. SULLIVAN, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 496, a bill to preserve United States fishing heritage through a national program dedicated to training and assisting the next generation of commercial fishermen, and for other purposes.

S. 511

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the names of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) and the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) were added as cosponsors of S. 511, a bill to promote and protect from discrimination living organ donors.

S. 520

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the names of the Senator from Iowa (Ms.

ERNST) and the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) were added as cosponsors of S. 520, a bill to require the Secretary of Energy to establish an energy efficiency materials pilot program.

S. 659

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 659, a bill to provide for certain additional requirements with respect to patent disclosures.

S. 703

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 703, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to address health, safety, and environmental hazards at private military housing units, to prohibit the payment by members of the Armed Forces of deposits or other fees relating to such housing units, and for other purposes.

S. 749

At the request of Mr. KING, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Ms. MCSALLY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 749, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to increase and make fully refundable the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit, to increase the maximum amount excludable from gross income for employer-provided dependent care assistance, and for other purposes.

S. 755

At the request of Ms. HARRIS, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 755, a bill to require carbon monoxide detectors in certain federally assisted housing, and for other purposes.

S. 758

At the request of Ms. DUCKWORTH, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 758, a bill to ensure affordable abortion coverage and care for every woman, and for other purposes.

S. 760

At the request of Mr. PETERS, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 760, a bill to enable registered apprenticeship programs to better serve veterans, and for other purposes.

S. 867

At the request of Ms. HASSAN, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 867, a bill to protect students of institutions of higher education and the taxpayer investment in institutions of higher education by improving oversight and accountability of institutions of higher education, particularly for-profit colleges, improving protections for students and borrowers, and ensuring the integrity of postsecondary education programs, and for other purposes.

S. 877

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms.

HIRONO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 877, a bill to prohibit the sale of shark fins, and for other purposes.

S. 879

At the request of Mr. VAN HOLLEN, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 879, a bill to provide a process for granting lawful permanent resident status to aliens from certain countries who meet specified eligibility requirements, and for other purposes.

S. 901

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 901, a bill to amend the Older Americans Act of 1965 to support individuals with younger onset Alzheimer's disease.

S. 905

At the request of Mr. TILLIS, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Ms. MCSALLY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 905, a bill to amend the Older Americans Act of 1965 to authorize a national network of Statewide senior legal hotlines, and for other purposes.

S. 980

At the request of Mr. BURR, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 980, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the provision of services for homeless veterans, and for other purposes.

S. 988

At the request of Mrs. CAPITO, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Ms. ERNST) was added as a cosponsor of S. 988, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to prohibit prescription drug plan sponsors and MA-PD organizations under the Medicare program from retroactively reducing payment on clean claims submitted by pharmacies.

S. 997

At the request of Ms. WARREN, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 997, a bill to recognize and honor the service of individuals who served in the United States Cadet Nurse Corps during World War II, and for other purposes.

S. 998

At the request of Mr. HAWLEY, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Ms. MCSALLY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 998, a bill to amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to expand support for police officer family services, stress reduction, and suicide prevention, and for other purposes.

S. 1025

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1025, a bill to provide humanitarian relief to the Venezuelan people and Venezuelan migrants, to advance a constitutional and democratic solution to Venezuela's political crisis, to address Venezuela's economic recon-

struction, to combat public corruption, narcotics trafficking, and money laundering, and for other purposes.

S. 1081

At the request of Mr. MANCHIN, the names of the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS), the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN), the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) and the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) were added as cosponsors of S. 1081, a bill to amend title 54, United States Code, to provide permanent, dedicated funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and for other purposes.

S. 1106

At the request of Ms. HARRIS, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1106, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow for a credit against tax for rent paid on the personal residence of the taxpayer.

S. 1118

At the request of Ms. WARREN, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1118, a bill to amend the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to authorize spouses of servicemembers who incur a catastrophic injury or illness or die while in military service to terminate leases of premises and motor vehicles, and for other purposes.

S. 1150

At the request of Mr. DAINES, the name of the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1150, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a child tax credit for pregnant moms with respect to their unborn children.

S. 1154

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1154, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to establish an advisory committee on the implementation by the Department of Veterans Affairs of an electronic health record.

S. 1186

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1186, a bill to promote democracy and human rights in Burma, and for other purposes.

S. 1195

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the names of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN), the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT) and the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) were added as cosponsors of S. 1195, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify presumption relating to the exposure of certain veterans who served in the vicinity of the Republic of Vietnam, and for other purposes.

S. 1208

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1208, a bill to amend the

Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 with respect to payments to certain public safety officers who have become permanently and totally disabled as a result of personal injuries sustained in the line of duty, and for other purposes.

S. 1241

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1241, a bill to expand the private right of action under the Telephone Consumer Protection Act for calls in violation of the Do Not Call rules.

S. 1246

At the request of Mr. KAINE, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1246, a bill to extend the protections of the Fair Housing Act to persons suffering discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 80

At the request of Mr. COONS, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 80, a resolution establishing the John S. McCain III Human Rights Commission.

S. RES. 99

At the request of Mr. PETERS, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 99, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that Congress should take all appropriate measures to ensure that the United States Postal Service remains an independent establishment of the Federal Government and is not subject to privatization.

S. RES. 102

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 102, a resolution designating April 2019 as "Second Chance Month".

S. RES. 112

At the request of Mr. BOOZMAN, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Ms. ERNST) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 112, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that the United States condemns all forms of violence against children globally and recognizes the harmful impacts of violence against children.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. RUBIO, and Ms. DUCKWORTH):

S. 1276. A bill to require the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to carry out a pilot program to enhance the mapping of urban flooding and associated property damage and the availability of that mapped data to homeowners, businesses, and localities to help understand and mitigate the risk of such flooding, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

Mr. DURBIN. 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. 1276

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 “Flood Mapping Modernization and Homeowner Empowerment Pilot Program Act of 2019”.

SEC. 2. FLOOD MAPPING MODERNIZATION AND HOMEOWNER EMPOWERMENT PILOT PROGRAM.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term “Administrator” means the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

(2) COASTAL.—The term “coastal” means, with respect to a unit of general local government, that the unit borders a body of water that—

(A) is more than 2,000 square miles in size; and

(B) is not a river.

(3) PELAGIC.—The term “pelagic” means, with respect to a unit of general local government, that—

(A) the unit is a coastal unit; and

(B) the body of water that the unit borders is—

(i) an ocean; or

(ii) a large, open body of water, including a bay or a gulf, that empties into an ocean.

(4) PILOT PROGRAM.—The term “pilot program” means the pilot program carried out by the Administrator under this section.

(5) URBAN FLOODING.—The term “urban flooding”—

(A) means the inundation, by water, of property in a built environment, particularly in a densely populated area, that—

(i) is caused by falling rain—

(I) collecting on an impervious surface; or
(II) increasing the level of a body of water that is located near that built environment; and

(ii) overwhelms the capacity of drainage systems in the built environment, such as storm sewers;

(B) includes—

(i) a situation in which stormwater enters a building through a window, door, or other opening;

(ii) the backup of water through a sewer pipe, shower, toilet, sink, or floor drain;

(iii) the seepage of water through a wall or a floor;

(iv) the accumulation of water on property or a public right-of-way; and

(v) the overflow from a body of water, such as a river, lake, or ocean; and

(C) does not include flooding in an undeveloped or agricultural area.

(6) URBANIZED AREA.—The term “urbanized area” means an area that has been defined and designated as an urbanized area by the Bureau of the Census during the most recently completed decennial census.

(b) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Administrator shall carry out a pilot program to make grants to units of local government to—

(1) enhance the production of maps relating to urban flooding and associated property damage; and

(2) increase the availability of the maps described in paragraph (1) to homeowners, businesses, and units of local government to enable those entities to minimize the risk of urban flooding.

(c) OBJECTIVES.—Amounts from grants made under the pilot program may be used only to carry out activities that meet the following objectives:

(1) Developing a methodology for assessing the risk of urban flooding through the deployment of technology-based mapping tools that—

(A) are easily understandable by the public; and

(B) effectively convey information regarding the level of flood risk.

(2) Providing structure-specific projections of annual chance flood frequency.

(3) Providing structure-based flood risk assessments.

(4) Providing program design for the mitigation of the risk of urban flooding.

(5) Incorporating information regarding climate trends into urban flooding risk assessments.

(6) Making the information described in this subsection publicly available on the internet through a web-based portal so as to increase transparency regarding homeowner flood risks.

(d) ELIGIBLE RECIPIENTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—A grant under the pilot program may be made only to—

(A) a unit of general local government that is located in an urbanized area with a population of more than 50,000 individuals; or

(B) a stormwater management authority of a unit of general local government described in subparagraph (A).

(2) ONE-TIME GRANTS.—A grant under the pilot program may not be made to—

(A) any unit of general local governmental, or the stormwater management authority of a unit of general local government, that previously received a grant under the pilot program;

(B) any unit of general local government if the stormwater management agency for that unit previously received a grant under the pilot program; or

(C) any stormwater management agency of a unit of general local government if that unit previously received a grant under the pilot program.

(3) TREATMENT OF CERTAIN STORMWATER MANAGEMENT AUTHORITIES.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—In the case of a stormwater management authority that operates with respect to more than 1 unit of general local government, the application of that authority shall be considered for purposes of paragraph (2) of this subsection and subsections (f), (g), and (h)(1) to be made for the largest unit of general local government with respect to which that authority operates.

(B) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in subparagraph (A) may be construed to limit the ability of a stormwater management authority described in that subparagraph to carry out activities under a demonstration project in any other jurisdiction in, or with respect to any other unit of local government with, which that authority operates.

(e) APPLICATIONS.—To be eligible for a grant under the pilot program, a unit of general local government or a stormwater management agency shall submit to the Administrator an application in such form and containing such information as the Administrator shall require.

(f) SELECTION OF RECIPIENTS.—

(1) ANNUAL SELECTION.—Subject to paragraph (2), and to the submission of approvable applications, in each fiscal year for which amounts are made available for grants under the pilot program, the Administrator shall select, from among applications submitted under subsection (e) for that fiscal year, 3 units of general government or stormwater management authorities to receive grants under the pilot program.

(2) AGGREGATE LIMIT.—Subject only to the submission of approvable applications, the Administrator shall select, in the aggregate over the entire duration of the pilot pro-

gram, 12 units of general government or stormwater management authorities to receive grants under the pilot program, as follows:

(A) TIER 1.—Three of the applicants selected shall be units of general local government, or stormwater management authorities for those units, each of which has a population of more than 800,000 individuals, as follows:

(i) PELAGIC COASTAL CITY.—One shall be—
(I) a unit of general local government that is a pelagic unit; or

(II) a stormwater authority for a unit described in subclause (I).

(ii) NON-PELAGIC COASTAL CITY.—One shall be—

(I) a unit of general local government that—

(aa) is a coastal unit; and

(bb) is not a pelagic unit; or

(II) a stormwater authority for a unit described in subclause (I).

(iii) NON-COASTAL CITY.—One shall be—

(I) a unit of general local government that is not a coastal unit; or

(II) a stormwater authority for a unit described in subclause (I).

(B) TIER 2.—Six of the applicants selected shall be units of general local government, or stormwater management authorities for those units, each of which has a population of more than 200,000 individuals and not more than 800,000 individuals, as follows:

(i) COASTAL CITIES.—Three shall be—

(I) units of general local government that are coastal units; or

(II) stormwater management authorities for units described in subclause (I).

(ii) NON-COASTAL CITIES.—Three shall be—

(I) units of general local government that are not coastal units; or

(II) stormwater management authorities for units described in subclause (I).

(C) TIER 3.—Three of the applicants selected shall be—

(i) units of general local government, each of which has a population of more than 50,000 individuals and not more than 200,000 individuals; or

(ii) stormwater management authorities for units described in clause (i).

(g) PRIORITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall select applicants for grants under the pilot program based on the extent to which the applications of those applicants shall achieve the objectives described in subsection (c).

(2) TIERS 2 AND 3.—In selecting applicants to receive grants under the pilot program under subparagraphs (B) and (C) of subsection (f)(2), the Administrator shall give priority to applicants—

(A) that are highly vulnerable to sea level rise;

(B) within which are located a military installation or another facility relating to national security concerns; or

(C) that have—

(i) populations that are highly vulnerable to urban flooding; and

(ii) an uneven capacity for flood mitigation and response efforts resulting from socioeconomic factors.

(h) AMOUNT.—

(1) CONSIDERATIONS.—In determining the amount of a grant under the pilot program, the Administrator shall consider the population of the grant recipient, which may be considered in terms of the tier under subsection (f)(2) with respect to the recipient.

(2) FEDERAL SHARE.—The amount of a grant under the pilot program may not exceed 75 percent of the total cost incurred in carrying out the activities described in subsection (c).

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

(i) DURATION.—The Administrator shall require each recipient of a grant under the pilot program to complete the activities described in subsection (c), which shall be, subject to subsection (h)(2), carried out using the grant amounts, not later than 18 months after the date on which the recipient initially receives the grant amounts under the pilot program.

(j) USE OF CENSUS DATA.—The Administrator shall make all determinations regarding population under the pilot program by using data from the most recently completed decennial census by the Bureau of the Census.

(k) GRANTEE REPORTS TO FEMA.—Each recipient of a grant under the pilot program shall, not later than 30 months after the date on which the recipient initially receives the grant amounts, submit to the Administrator a report that describes—

(1) the activities carried out with the grant amounts;

(2) how the activities carried out with the grant amounts have met the objectives described in subsection (c);

(3) any lessons learned in carrying out the activities described in paragraph (2); and

(4) any recommendations for future mapping modernization efforts by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

(l) BIENNIAL REPORTS BY FEMA.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, and not less frequently than once every 2 years thereafter until the date on which all activities carried out with amounts from grants under the pilot program are completed, the Administrator shall submit to Congress and make available to the public on an internet website a report that—

(1) describes—

(A) the progress of the activities carried out with amounts from those grants; and

(B) the effectiveness of technology-based mapping tools used in carrying out the activities described in subparagraph (A); and

(2) with respect to the final report that the Administrator is required to submit under this subsection, includes recommendations to Congress and the executive branch of the Federal Government for implementing strategies, practices, and technologies to mitigate the effects of urban flooding.

(m) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that, because the pilot program is limited with respect to scope and resources, communities that participate in the pilot program should acknowledge that the most successful efforts to mitigate the effects of urban flooding—

(1) take a structural-based mitigation approach with respect to construction, which includes—

(A) recognizing any post-storm damage that may occur; and

(B) pursuing designs that proactively minimize future flood damage;

(2) make individuals in the community aware, through any cost-effective and available means of education, of the best approaches regarding the construction of properties that are able to survive floods, which reduces the cost of future repairs; and

(3) encourage home and property owners to consider the measures described in paragraphs (1) and (2), which are the most cost-effective and prudent ways to reduce the impact of flooding, when constructing or renovating building components.

(n) FUNDING.—There are authorized to be appropriated for grants under the pilot program—

(1) \$1,200,000 for fiscal year 2020; and

(2) \$4,300,000 for fiscal year 2021, to remain available through 2023.

SENATE RESOLUTION 179—RECOGNIZING WIDENING THREATS TO FREEDOMS OF THE PRESS AND EXPRESSION AROUND THE WORLD, REAFFIRMING THE CENTRALITY OF A FREE AND INDEPENDENT PRESS TO THE HEALTH OF DEMOCRACY, AND REAFFIRMING FREEDOM OF THE PRESS AS A PRIORITY OF THE UNITED STATES IN PROMOTING DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND GOOD GOVERNANCE IN COMMEMORATION OF WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY ON MAY 3, 2019

Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. CASEY, Mr. MORAN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. KAINE, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. COONS, and Mr. DURBIN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 179

Whereas Article 19 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted at Paris December 10, 1948, states, “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.”;

Whereas, in 1993, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed May 3 of each year as “World Press Freedom Day”—

(1) to celebrate the fundamental principles of freedom of the press;

(2) to evaluate freedom of the press around the world;

(3) to defend the media against attacks on its independence; and

(4) to pay tribute to journalists who have lost their lives while working in their profession;

Whereas, on December 18, 2013, the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 68/163 on the safety of journalists and the problem of impunity, which unequivocally condemns all attacks on, and violence against, journalists and media workers, including torture, extrajudicial killing, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention, and intimidation and harassment in conflict and nonconflict situations;

Whereas the theme for World Press Freedom Day on May 3, 2019 is “Media for Democracy: Journalism and Democracy in Times of Disinformation”;

Whereas Thomas Jefferson, who recognized the importance of the press in a constitutional republic, wisely declared, “... were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter.”;

Whereas the Daniel Pearl Freedom of the Press Act of 2009 (Public Law 111-166; 22 U.S.C. 2151 note), which the Senate passed by unanimous consent and President Barack Obama signed into law in 2010, expanded the examination of the freedom of the press around the world in the annual country reports on human rights practices of the Department of State;

Whereas the 2019 World Press Freedom Index, published by Reporters Without Borders, warns “The number of countries regarded as safe, where journalists can work in complete security, continues to decline, while authoritarian regimes tighten their grip on the media.”;

Whereas, Freedom House’s publication “Freedom in the World 2019” noted that global freedom of expression has declined each year for the past 13 years;

Whereas, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists, in 2018—

(1) at least 54 journalists were killed around the world for their work, of which at least 34 were singled out for murder;

(2) the 2 deadliest countries for journalists on assignment were Afghanistan and Syria;

(3) the most dangerous subject for a journalist to report on was politics, followed by war;

(4) 251 journalists worldwide were in prison, with Turkey, China, and Egypt responsible for more than ½ of the jailed journalists;

(5) 13 percent of the journalists in jail were female, an increase from 8 percent in 2017;

(6) 70 percent of the journalists who were imprisoned around the world faced anti-state charges, such as belonging to or aiding groups deemed by authorities as terrorist organizations; and

(7) the number of journalists imprisoned on charges of false news rose to 28 globally, compared with 9 such imprisonments in 2016;

Whereas, Reuters journalists Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo, recipients of the 2018 PEN/Barbey Freedom to Write Award—

(1) were arrested in December 2017 for investigating the murder by the Burmese military of 10 Rohingya men in the village of Inn Dinn in Rakhine State; and

(2) were sentenced in September 2018 to 7 years in prison on fraudulent charges of breaching the colonial-era Official Secrets Act, and remain unjustly imprisoned;

Whereas freedom of the press has been under considerable pressure in recent years throughout Southeast Asia, including in the Philippines, where the government has waged a campaign of judicial harassment against the news website Rappler and its editor, Maria Ressa;

Whereas, Nouf Abdulaziz, Loujain Al-Hathloul, and Eman Al-Nafjan, recipients of the 2019 PEN/Barbey Freedom to Write Award, who wrote in opposition to Saudi Arabia’s repressive Guardianship system, have been subjected to imprisonment, solitary confinement, and torture by the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia since May 2018 in an apparent effort to suppress dissent and silence the voices of women;

Whereas, Washington Post journalist and United States resident Jamal Khashoggi was murdered by a team of Saudi operatives while visiting the Saudi Arabian consulate in Istanbul, Turkey;

Whereas the Central Intelligence Agency concluded with high confidence, and the Senate unanimously approved a resolution stating, that Mr. Khashoggi’s murder was carried out at the behest of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman;

Whereas journalist Mimi Mefo Takambou was jailed for 4 days in Cameroon in November 2018 on charges of spreading false news while investigating the death of an American missionary, where 4 out of the 7 total journalists imprisoned in Cameroon were jailed for spreading false news, which is a rising trend in Cameroon and elsewhere around the world;

Whereas according to the Committee to Protect Journalists, at least 26 journalists were killed in Honduras since 2007, making it one of the most deadly countries for journalists in the Americas, and where journalist Leonardo Gabriel Hernandez was murdered in March 2019 after receiving threats related to his work;

Whereas in Nicaragua, Miguel Mora and Lucia Pineda Ubau, the directors of the country’s only 24-hour cable news network,

have been jailed since December 2018 on charges of fomenting hate, spreading fake news, and terrorism, and prominent journalist Carlos Fernando Chamorro has fled the country as President Daniel Ortega cracks down on free expression in a bid to silence dissent and end the protests against him;

Whereas in Mexico, which remains the most dangerous country in the Western Hemisphere for journalists—

(1) murders, death threats, and legal impunity cause journalists to self censor their reporting out of fear; and

(2) Rafael Murúa Manríquez was abducted and murdered in January 2019 after reporting threats from an official in the municipal government for critical reporting;

Whereas Slovakian journalist Ján Kuciak and his partner Martina Kušnírová were murdered in February 2018, allegedly in retaliation for his investigative reporting of tax fraud in connection to a businessman with close ties to Slovakia's ruling party, where the perpetrator awaits trial, just 4 months after the murder of another European journalist, Malta's Daphne Caruana Galizia, for her reporting on corruption;

Whereas the world's growing cadre of ethical and hard-hitting investigative journalists, including those contributing to the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project—

(1) adhere to the highest professional standards;

(2) uncover abuses and corruption being committed in their own countries; and

(3) deserve the international community's support and praise for taking on the risky job of fostering accountability and transparency in their respective countries;

Whereas, under the auspices of the United States Agency for Global Media, the United States Government provides financial assistance to several editorially independent media outlets, including Voice of America, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Radio Free Asia, Radio y Television Marti, and the Middle East Broadcast Networks—

(1) which report and broadcast news, information, and analysis in critical regions around the world; and

(2) whose journalists regularly face harassment, fines, and imprisonment for their work;

Whereas freedom of the press—

(1) is a key component of democratic governance, activism in civil society, and socioeconomic development; and

(2) enhances public accountability, transparency, and participation in civil society and democratic governance:

Now, therefore, be it
Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) expresses concern about threats to freedom of the press and free expression around the world on the occasion of World Press Freedom Day on May 3, 2019;

(2) commends journalists and media workers around the world, despite threats to their safety, for their essential role in—

(A) promoting government accountability;

(B) defending democratic activity; and

(C) strengthening civil society;

(3) pays tribute to journalists who have lost their lives carrying out their work;

(4) calls on governments abroad to implement United Nations General Assembly Resolution 163 (2013) by thoroughly investigating and seeking to resolve outstanding cases of violence against journalists, including murders and kidnappings, while ensuring the protection of witnesses;

(5) condemns all actions around the world that suppress freedom of the press;

(6) reaffirms the centrality of freedom of the press to efforts of the United States Government to support democracy, mitigate

conflict, and promote good governance domestically and around the world; and

(7) calls on the President and the Secretary of State—

(A) to preserve and build upon the leadership of the United States on issues relating to freedom of the press, on the basis of the protections afforded the American people under the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States;

(B) to improve the rapid identification, publication, and response by the United States Government to threats against freedom of the press around the world;

(C) to urge foreign governments to transparently investigate and bring to justice the perpetrators of attacks against journalists; and

(D) to highlight the issue of threats against freedom of the press in the annual country reports on human rights practices of the Department of State and through diplomatic channels.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, freedom of the press is a fundamental human right, a foundational pillar of democracy, and an indispensable check on authoritarian overreach. Today, press freedom is under assault across the globe—including in the United States. As journalists fight to advance truth and objectivity, far too many governments and non-state actors are targeting them, seeking to thwart their efforts to promote transparency and accountability and expose abuses of power. Their focus on attacking journalists indeed serves to highlight their critical work.

Since 2009, 659 journalists and media workers have been killed in connection with their efforts to report and disseminate news and information. Stories of abuses of government power, of human suffering, of environmental disasters, and stories of the remarkable resilience of people abused and oppressed. 2018 marked the worst year on record for deadly violence and abuse toward journalists, with murders, imprisonment, hostage-taking, and enforced disappearances all on the rise.

Slovak journalist Jan Kuciak and his partner Martina Kusnirova were gunned down in their home after investigating organized crime in his country and in alleged retaliation for his reporting of tax fraud on a businessman with close ties to Slovakia's ruling party, a stark reminder of the danger reporters sometimes face when investigating corruption at the highest levels.

Just over a year ago, in the deadliest day for Afghanistan's media since the start of the war, nine journalists were killed in a second-wave suicide bombing in Kabul, and another was shot dead in the eastern city of Khost, a sign of the constant threat against the fundamental elements of a free, secure, and democratic Afghanistan.

Last October, at the Saudi Arabian consulate in Istanbul, Washington Post columnist and U.S. resident Jamal Khashoggi was brutally murdered by a group of Saudi operatives at the behest of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, showing the reach of political oppression and the silencing of dissent.

In many cases, crimes carried out against the media go unpunished—this includes murder, the ultimate form of censorship. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, in nine out of 10 cases where a journalist has been targeted for murder, the perpetrator goes free, reflecting widespread impunity in this space.

In 2018, across the world 251 journalists remained imprisoned on charges related to their reporting. Last month, Burma's Supreme Court upheld the conviction and prison sentence of Pulitzer Prize-winning reporters Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo, who were arrested after exposing the massacre of ten Rohingya men in a village in Rakhine State. In Nicaragua, Miguel Mora and Lucía Pineda Ubau, directors of the country's only 24-hour cable news network, were jailed on charges of fomenting hate, spreading fake news, and terrorism, falling victim to President Daniel Ortega's widespread crackdown on dissent and freedom of expression. While in different countries, these ongoing imprisonments are in countries with degrading records on human rights and fundamental freedoms more broadly.

In the last year, governments have ramped up similar attempts to silence the press in places like Turkey and the Philippines. Beyond threats to journalists themselves, governments across the world from Poland to Sudan continue to pursue legislative efforts to restrict media freedom and free expression, ultimately weakening the ability of citizens to hold their governments accountable. In Bangladesh, photojournalist and human rights advocate Shahidul Alam faced torture and spent 107 days in prison for violating a law that forbids criticism of the government on digital platforms in his native Bangladesh. One of several journalists who were named Time's Person of the Year in 2018 for being one of "the guardians" in the face of the "war on truth," he expressed, "The world over, journalism is under threat. Whether you're a teacher, a dancer, a painter, or a journalist, each one of us needs to be constantly fighting."

But the threat to press freedom isn't limited to foreign lands—it is something we've had to increasingly contend with here at home in the United States. President Trump continues to employ dangerous rhetoric in targeting the media, referring to the free press as the "enemy of the people," and fostering an environment of hostility toward journalists. Moreover, he refuses to hold autocratic world leaders accountable as they attack press freedom in brazen ways, including targeting American journalists in places like Egypt. This only adds to the deterioration in free expression throughout the world. As a recent report from Reporters Without Borders highlights, "The number of countries regarded as safe, where journalists can work in complete security, continues to decline, while authoritarian regimes continue to tighten their grip on the media."

In spite of the unprecedented assault on the free press, journalists continue to take significant risks in the pursuit of truth and transparency. Journalists from Radio Free Asia have relentlessly covered the Chinese government's gross human rights abuses against the country's Uyghur minority, including mass internment and surveillance in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR). If not for the work of these courageous reporters—many of whom are Uyghurs themselves, having to report on abuses exacted against their families and friends—Chinese authorities would be able to commit such abuses largely in secrecy. Instead, those who champion human rights will be able to use the reporting in order to hold this repressive government to account.

Over 200 years ago, our Founding Fathers had the foresight to recognize the importance of a free press to a fledgling democracy, enshrining it in our first amendment. Today, that importance cannot be overstated. Recognizing that societies where informed citizens can hold their governments accountable are more stable, secure, and prosperous, we have a responsibility to stand up for the fundamental right of free expression and free press. I join the international community in honoring and defending freedom of expression and the brave journalists seeking to tell a story that deserves to be told. In fact, the very fact the repressive governments, autocrats, and thugs continue to attack journalists is a tragic testament to the critical work they do. Just yesterday, the Maduro government in Venezuela took CNN off the air while the network was broadcasting live video of protestors being run over by military vehicles in Caracas, a transparent attempt by a criminal regime to silence journalists telling the story of brave Venezuelans standing up for their democratic aspirations.

This week, I introduced a resolution commemorating World Press Freedom Day. The resolution highlights increasing threats to freedoms of the press and expression worldwide, reaffirms the centrality of a free and independent press to the health of democracy, and reiterates freedom of the press as a priority of the United States in promoting democracy, human rights, and good governance. On this World Press Freedom Day, I call on the Trump administration to reverse course and recommit to advancing press freedom—both at home and abroad."

SENATE RESOLUTION 180—EX-PRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE THAT, DURING PUBLIC SERVICE RECOGNITION WEEK, PUBLIC SERVANTS SHOULD BE COMMENDED FOR THEIR DEDICATION AND CONTINUED SERVICE TO THE UNITED STATES

Mr. LANKFORD (for himself, Ms. SINEMA, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. PETERS, Mr.

RUBIO, Mr. CARPER, and Ms. HASSAN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 180

Whereas the week of May 5 through May 11, 2019, has been designated as "Public Service Recognition Week" to honor employees of the Federal Government and State and local governments and members of the uniformed services;

Whereas Public Service Recognition Week provides an opportunity to recognize and promote the important contributions of public servants and to honor the diverse men and women who meet the needs of the United States through work at all levels of government and as members of the uniformed services;

Whereas millions of individuals work in government service and as members of the uniformed services, in every State, county, and city across the United States and in hundreds of cities abroad;

Whereas public service is a noble calling involving a variety of challenging and rewarding professions;

Whereas the ability of the Federal Government and State and local governments to be responsive, innovative, and effective depends on the outstanding performance of dedicated public servants;

Whereas the United States is a great and prosperous country, and public service employees contribute significantly to that greatness and prosperity;

Whereas the United States benefits daily from the knowledge and skills of the highly trained individuals who work in public service;

Whereas public servants—

- (1) defend the freedom of the people of the United States and advance the interests of the United States around the world;
- (2) provide vital strategic support functions to the Armed Forces and serve in the reserve components of the Armed Forces;
- (3) fight crime and fires;
- (4) ensure equal access to secure, efficient, and affordable mail service;
- (5) deliver benefits under the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 301 et seq.), including benefits under the Medicare program under title XVIII of that Act (42 U.S.C. 1395 et seq.);
- (6) fight disease and promote better health;
- (7) protect the environment and parks in the United States;
- (8) enforce laws guaranteeing equal employment opportunity and healthy working conditions;
- (9) defend and secure critical infrastructure;
- (10) help the people of the United States recover from natural disasters and terrorist attacks;
- (11) teach and work in schools and libraries;
- (12) develop new technologies and explore the Earth, the Moon, and space to help improve knowledge on how the world changes;
- (13) improve and secure transportation systems;
- (14) promote economic growth; and
- (15) assist veterans of the Armed Forces;

Whereas members of the uniformed services and civilian employees at all levels of government—

- (1) make significant contributions to the general welfare of the United States; and
- (2) are on the front lines in the fight to defeat terrorism and maintain homeland security;

Whereas public servants work in a professional manner to build relationships with other countries and cultures in order to better represent the interests and promote the ideals of the United States;

Whereas public servants alert Congress and the public to government waste, fraud, and abuse, and dangers to public health;

Whereas the individuals serving in the uniformed services, as well as the skilled trade and craft employees of the Federal Government who provide support to their efforts—

- (1) are committed to doing their jobs regardless of the circumstances; and
- (2) contribute greatly to the security of the United States and the world;

Whereas public servants have bravely fought in armed conflicts in the defense of the United States and its ideals and deserve the care and benefits they have earned through their honorable service;

Whereas public servants—

- (1) have much to offer, as demonstrated by their expertise and innovative ideas; and
- (2) serve as examples by passing on institutional knowledge to train the next generation of public servants; and

Whereas the week of May 5 through May 11, 2019, marks the 35th anniversary of Public Service Recognition Week: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the designation of the week of May 5 through May 11, 2019, as "Public Service Recognition Week";

(2) commends public servants for their outstanding contributions to the United States during Public Service Recognition Week and throughout the year;

(3) salutes government employees and members of the uniformed services for their unyielding dedication to, and enthusiasm for, public service;

(4) honors government employees and members of the uniformed services who have given their lives in service to the United States;

(5) calls upon a new generation to consider a career in public service as an honorable profession;

(6) encourages efforts to promote public service careers at every level of government; and

(7) supports efforts to promote an efficient and effective public service that serves the people of the United States.

SENATE RESOLUTION 181—SUPPORTING THE DESIGNATION OF THE WEEK OF APRIL 8 THROUGH APRIL 12, 2019, AS "NATIONAL SPECIALIZED INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT PERSONNEL APPRECIATION WEEK"

Ms. HASSAN (for herself, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. CASEY, Ms. ERNST, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. JONES, Mr. KAINÉ, Mrs. MURRAY, and Ms. SMITH) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 181

Whereas there are more than 1,000,000 specialized instructional support personnel serving the schools and students of the United States, including—

- (1) school counselors;
- (2) school social workers;
- (3) school psychologists; and
- (4) other qualified professional personnel, such as—
 - (A) school nurses;
 - (B) psychologists;
 - (C) social workers;
 - (D) occupational therapists;
 - (E) physical therapists;
 - (F) art therapists;
 - (G) dance and movement therapists;
 - (H) music therapists;
 - (I) speech-language pathologists; and
 - (J) audiologists;

Whereas specialized instructional support personnel provide school-based prevention

and early intervention services to reduce barriers to learning;

Whereas specialized instructional support personnel work with teachers, school leaders, and parents to ensure that all students are successful in school;

Whereas specialized instructional support personnel encourage multidisciplinary collaboration to promote student and school success;

Whereas specialized instructional support personnel provide educational, social, emotional, and behavioral interventions and activities that support—

- (1) student learning; and
- (2) teaching;

Whereas specialized instructional support personnel help to create environments that are safe, supportive, and conducive to learning;

Whereas safe and supportive school environments are associated with improved academic performance;

Whereas specialized instructional support personnel support—

- (1) student communication;
- (2) the development of social skills by students;
- (3) the physical wellness of students;
- (4) the physical development of students; and
- (5) the behavioral, emotional, and mental health of students; and

Whereas specialized instructional support personnel serve all students who struggle with barriers to learning: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the designation of April 8 through April 12, 2019, as “National Specialized Instructional Support Personnel Appreciation Week”;

(2) recognizes that specialized instructional support personnel implement evidence-based practices to improve student outcomes;

(3) commends—

(A) those individuals who work as specialized instructional support personnel; and

(B) the individuals and organizations that support the efforts made by specialized instructional support personnel to promote and improve the availability of specialized instructional support services;

(4) encourages Federal, State, and local policymakers to work together to raise awareness of the importance of specialized instructional support personnel in school climate and education efforts;

(5) recognizes the important role of specialized instructional support personnel in efforts to improve mental health, reduce drug use, and improve overall community safety for students; and

(6) encourages experts to share best practices so that others can replicate the success of those experts.

SENATE RESOLUTION 182—RECOGNIZING THE DUTY OF THE SENATE TO CONDEMN MODERN MONETARY THEORY AND RECOGNIZING MODERN MONETARY THEORY WOULD LEAD TO HIGHER DEFICITS AND HIGHER INFLATION

Mr. PERDUE (for himself, Mr. BRAUN, Ms. ERNST, Mr. MORAN, and Mr. TILLIS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs:

S. RES. 182

Whereas noted economists from across the political spectrum have warned that the im-

plementation of Modern Monetary Theory (referred to in this preamble as “MMT”) would pose a clear danger to the economy of the United States;

Whereas, on March 4, 2019, former Secretary of the Treasury Lawrence H. Summers said that—

- (1) MMT is fallacious at multiple levels;
- (2) past a certain point, MMT leads to hyperinflation; and

(3) a policy of relying on a central bank to finance government deficits, as advocated by MMT theorists, would likely result in a col-lapsing exchange rate;

Whereas, on February 26, 2019, Jerome Powell, Chair of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, said: “The idea that deficits don’t matter for countries that can borrow in their own currency I think is just wrong”;

Whereas, on March 25, 2019, Janet Yellen, former Chair of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, disagreed with those individuals promoting MMT who suggest that “you don’t have to worry about interest-rate payments because the central bank can buy the debt”, stating: “That’s a very wrong-minded theory because that’s how you get hyper-inflation”;

Whereas the March 2019 report entitled “How Reliable is Modern Monetary Theory as a Guide to Policy?” by Scott Sumner and Patrick Horan of the Mercatus Center at George Mason University found that—

(1) MMT—
(A) has a flawed model of inflation, which overestimates the importance of economic slack;

(B) overestimates the revenue that can be earned from the creation of money;

(C) overestimates the potency of fiscal policy, while underestimating the effectiveness of monetary policy;

(D) overestimates the ability of fiscal authorities to control inflation; and

(E) contains too few safeguards against the risks of excessive public debt; and

(2) an MMT agenda of having fiscal authorities manage monetary policy would run the risk of—

(A) very high debts;

(B) very high inflation; or

(C) very high debts and very high inflation, each of which may be very harmful to the broader economy;

Whereas the January 2019 report entitled “Modern Monetary Theory and Policy” by Stan Veuger of the American Enterprise Institute warned that “hyperinflation becomes a real risk” when a government attempts to pay for massive spending by printing money; and

Whereas the September 2018 report entitled “On Empty Purses and MMT Rhetoric” by George Selgin of the Cato Institute warned that—

(1) when it comes to the ability of Congress to rely on the Treasury to cover expenditures, Congress is, in 1 crucial respect, more constrained than an ordinary household or business is when that household or business relies on a bank to cover expenditures because, if Congress is to avoid running out of money, Congress cannot write checks in amounts exceeding the balances in the general account of the Treasury; and

(2) MMT theorists succeed in turning otherwise banal truths about the workings of contemporary monetary systems into novel policy pronouncements that, although tantalizing, are false: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) realizes that deficits are unsustainable, irresponsible, and dangerous; and

(2) recognizes—

(A) that the implementation of Modern Monetary Theory would lead to higher deficits and higher inflation; and

(B) the duty of the Senate to condemn Modern Monetary Theory.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 15—EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE DESIGNATION OF OCTOBER 28, 2019, AS “HONORING THE NATION’S FIRST RESPONDERS DAY”

Ms. WARREN (for herself, Mr. COTTON, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. PETERS, Ms. ROSEN, and Mr. LANKFORD) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs:

S. CON. RES. 15

Whereas first responders include professional and volunteer fire, police, emergency medical technician, and paramedic workers in the United States;

Whereas, according to a 2017 compilation of data on the Emergency Services Sector in the United States by the Department of Homeland Security, “The first responder community comprises an estimated 4.6 million career and volunteer professionals within five primary disciplines: Law Enforcement, Fire and Rescue Services, Emergency Medical Services, Emergency Management, and Public Works.”;

Whereas first responders deserve to be recognized for their commitment to safety, defense, and honor; and

Whereas October 28, 2019, would be an appropriate day to establish as “Honoring the Nation’s First Responders Day”: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That Congress—

(1) supports the designation of October 28, 2019, as “Honoring the Nation’s First Responders Day”;

(2) honors and recognizes the contributions of first responders; and

(3) encourages the people of the United States to observe Honoring the Nation’s First Responders Day with appropriate ceremonies and activities that promote awareness of the contributions of first responders in the United States.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. CORNYN, Mr. President, I have 8 requests for committees to meet during today’s session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today’s session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, May 1, 2019, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled “Policy principles for a Federal data privacy framework.”

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, May 1, 2019, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, May 1, 2019, at 10:15 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled "Humanitarian impact in the Syrian war."

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

The Committee on Indian Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, May 1, 2019, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, May 1, 2019, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, May 1, 2019, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, May 1, 2019, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing on the nomination of Christopher Scolese, of New York, to be Director of the National Reconnaissance Office.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON STRATEGIC FORCES

The Subcommittee on Strategic Forces of the Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, May 1, 2019, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

PUBLIC SERVICE RECOGNITION WEEK

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 180, submitted earlier today.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 180) expressing the sense of the Senate that, during Public Service Recognition Week, public servants should be commended for their dedication and continued service to the United States.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 180) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to. (The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

NATIONAL SPECIALIZED INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT PERSONNEL APPRECIATION WEEK

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 181, submitted earlier today.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 181) supporting the designation of the week of April 8 through April 12, 2019, as "National Specialized Instructional Support Personnel Appreciation Week".

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I know of no further debate on the measure.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. There being no further debate, the question is on the adoption of the resolution.

The resolution (S. Res. 181) was agreed to.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the pre-

amble be agreed to and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, MAY 2, 2019

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m., Thursday, May 2; 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, morning business be closed, and the Senate proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the Ruiz nomination under the previous order.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. McCONNELL. If there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:18 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, May 2, 2019, at 9:30 a.m.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate May 1, 2019:

THE JUDICIARY

J. CAMPBELL BARKER, OF TEXAS, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS.
ANDREW LYNN BRASHER, OF ALABAMA, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF ALABAMA.