

Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Stephen M. Dickson, of Georgia, to be Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration for the term of five years.

James M. Inhofe, John Hoeven, Mike Rounds, Joni Ernst, Kevin Cramer, Pat Roberts, John Boozman, Mike Crapo, Steve Daines, John Cornyn, James E. Risch, Roger F. Wicker, Richard Burr, Thom Tillis, Roy Blunt, Shelley Moore Capito, Mitch McConnell.

#### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

##### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 45.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Wendy Williams Berger, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Florida.

##### CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

##### CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on nomination of Wendy Williams Berger, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Florida.

Mitch McConnell, Bill Cassidy, David Perdue, John Thune, Roy Blunt, Thom Tillis, Roger F. Wicker, Mike Braun, James E. Risch, Mike Rounds, John Cornyn, Mike Crapo, Johnny Isakson, John Boozman, Marco Rubio, Kevin Cramer, Pat Roberts.

#### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

##### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 53.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Brian C. Buescher, of Nebraska, to be United States District Judge for the District of Nebraska.

##### CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

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

##### 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 Brian C. Buescher, of Nebraska, to be United States District Judge for the District of Nebraska.

Mitch McConnell, Roger F. Wicker, Pat Roberts, Chuck Grassley, John Cornyn, Tom Cotton, David Perdue, Ron Johnson, Joni Ernst, Mike Braun, Martha McSally, John Boozman, Richard Burr, Lindsey Graham, Shelley Moore Capito, Johnny Isakson, Thom Tillis.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum calls for the cloture motions be waived.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

##### UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—H.R. 1327

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, the men and women who responded to the horrific events of September 11, 2001, are among the great heroes of American history. Whether fighting the deadly flames, rescuing people who were injured or dying, or removing the destructive debris from the 9/11 attack sites, the 9/11 volunteers and rescue workers displayed the courage and the sacrificial service that has earned them universal respect and admiration.

Tragically, their heroism came at a cost. Their heroism, at exactly these same dangerous sites we are describing, earned them, in addition to great respect, also health challenges in the years since.

In 2001, in response to those challenges, Congress established the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund to compensate both the survivors of the attacks and also the residents who lived near the site. It was authorized for 2 years, and it paid out about \$7 billion in benefits and then closed.

In 2011, Congress revived and expanded the program to cover a larger universe of victims and responders, and

it authorized that fund to spend \$2.7 billion over 5 years.

In 2015, citing a growing need, Congress reauthorized the fund for another 5 years and an additional \$4.6 billion. Of that \$7.4 billion authorized since 2011, the fund has now paid out \$5.2 billion.

With money getting tight, in February of this year, the fund began temporarily reducing the claimants' benefits until Congress reauthorized and replenished it until such time as we can make those beneficiaries whole.

I support that effort. I support it wholeheartedly. The bill before us today authorizes the program not for 2 years, as it was in 2001, or for 5 years, as we did in 2011 and 2015, no, it authorizes the program for an additional 72 years and does not specify a dollar amount.

In Washington, this is a recipe for trouble. As we all know, finite authorizations are how Congress ensures that taxpayer money actually gets to its intended beneficiaries and not simply lost in government bureaucracy somewhere. It is how we make sure this is about protecting those who are supposed to benefit rather than government bureaucrats themselves.

Since 2011, the 9/11 victims fund has always had finite authorizations, and, by all accounts, it has had an excellent record of avoiding waste and abuse. These two things are not coincidental. They go together, and 9/11 survivors and first responders deserve no less moving forward. They deserve no less than to make sure the program created in their honor for their benefit, in fact, benefits them. This is why I would like to offer a simple amendment to this bill that would authorize \$10.2 billion in additional funding for the 9/11 victims fund over the next 10 years. That is the amount the Congressional Budget Office has estimated is necessary for covering all valid claims between now and 2029.

My amendment would further authorize an additional \$10 billion beyond that time. My amendment would not block or delay the bill's consideration, let alone its passage.

This is something we could vote on in a matter of minutes, 15 minutes or so, and then move on to final passage. We could, in fact, accomplish this today before we adjourn for the weekend. This is, in fact, what I prefer. I think finishing our work on this bill to protect victims and first responders is worth 15, 20, 30 minutes of our time. That is what I prefer.

I have had conversations with my colleagues, including colleagues across the aisle. In order to accommodate requests from some of my colleagues, I have agreed, with their mutual assent, to negotiate a different arrangement—one that would make sure we get to final passage on this bill and that we consider my amendment and that of Senator PAUL's within the next few days.

## ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at a time to be determined by the majority leader, in consultation with the Democratic leader, on or before Wednesday, July 24, the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 153, H.R. 1327; that the only amendments in order be Lee amendment No. 928 and Paul amendment No. 929 to be offered; that there be up to 2 hours of concurrent debate equally divided between the leaders or designees; that the Senate then vote in relation to the amendments in the order listed, with no second-degree amendments in order prior to the votes; that there be 2 minutes equally divided prior to each vote; and that each amendment be subject to an affirmative 60-vote threshold. I further ask that upon disposition of the amendments, the bill be read a third time and the Senate vote on H.R. 1327, as amended, if amended, all with no intervening action or debate, notwithstanding rule XXII.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from New York.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Mr. President, I reserve the right to object.

I am grateful that we now have this agreement on timing so that we can get to the floor next week and have an up-or-down vote on the 9/11 first responders bill and the healthcare they desperately need.

I just want to go to the merits of Senator LEE's amendment because I think there is a misunderstanding. I understand that there is a concern about 72 years and that my colleague believes it is a recipe for trouble, but the truth is, the timing is limited for this bill because these men and women aren't going to survive. So many of them are already sick and dying, and all they care about is just being able to provide for their families.

There is nothing about this bill that is trying to play politics with the lives of men. There is going to be no fraud. There is going to be no disuse. This is literally all that is necessary for families to survive during these horrible times when their loved ones are dying.

I will not support my colleague's amendment because it will cap the bill needlessly, and it will mean that if there are survivors who still need healthcare, they will have to come back and walk these halls again. The gravest concern I have is that we dare ask these brave men and women to do this all over again. To watch someone come to the Capitol with an oxygen tank, in a wheelchair, unable to breathe or talk properly because of their cancer and their illness, is something I cannot accept.

I am grateful that we now have a time agreement for Wednesday, and I am grateful that we now have a chance to get an up-or-down vote and to get this done.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I will not object. First, I just want to thank both my colleagues from New York and Utah for working out this agreement with the leader and me.

What this does is it paves the way, finally, for what we have been waiting on for a very, very long time—an up-or-down vote on H.R. 1327. There will be two amendments offered. We will oppose them. I don't think they have much of a chance of winning, but there is a right to offer them.

I want to thank my colleague from Utah for moving forward here, as well as, of course, my colleague from New York for the great work. Right now, for the first time, we can not only see the light at the end of the tunnel, we are getting very close to getting out of the tunnel. I expect that by Wednesday, we will be out of that tunnel, the bill will head to the President's desk, having already passed the House, he will sign it, and our first responders can go do the job they have been intending to do all along, which is to take care of themselves, take care of their loved ones, and take care of their brothers and sisters who have these injuries or who will get these injuries.

It has been a long, long and hard, hard struggle for over a decade, but now, finally—finally—it looks quite certain that this bill will pass the Senate, go to the President's desk, and at long last become law, and those first responders who made this happen more than anybody else will not—will not—have to come back again.

I do not object to the offer by my colleague from Utah.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I am grateful to the Democratic leader and to both Senators from New York for working with me on this and for getting this, along with my amendment and Senator PAUL's amendment, set up for a vote.

To be very clear—I want there to be no ambiguity—I would be willing to vote on this right now. There is no reason we should have to delay that. I am taking into account scheduling requests that were made by other Members of this body. As far as I am concerned and, as far as I am aware, as far as Senator PAUL is concerned, we would be happy to vote on these immediately. There is no additional reason for delay.

This is how the Senate is supposed to work. Each Member is supposed to have the opportunity to bring forward amendments to offer up improvements to legislation, to make sure that they happen and that they happen right.

I respectfully but strongly disagree with my colleagues on the merits of

some of the issues we have been discussing. We will debate those more in the coming days.

I would reiterate that it is not unreasonable to suggest that a program that takes the unprecedented step of authorizing funding for something until 2092—that, coupled with language authorizing the expenditure of such sums as may be necessary, creates problems. It is one of the reasons we opt to vote on this amendment and one of the reasons I believe in this amendment.

In any event, this is the kind of thing that ought not to be difficult. When any Member of any political background sees a potential weakness or defect in a piece of legislation, the rules of our body are such that we are supposed to be able to offer that up and cast an amendment. In this circumstance, I am pleased that it worked out the way it did, and we will be able to get votes on these amendments.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

## THE ECONOMY

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, just another day on Wall Street and just another news story. The New York Times' headline today was "Big Banks Are Earning Billions of Dollars. Trump's Tax Cuts Are A Big Reason."

So Congress can continue to do tax cuts for Wall Street. Congress can continue to weaken rules on Wall Street. Congress has forgotten. They have this collective amnesia about what happened 10 years ago when this country's economy almost imploded because of Wall Street greed. So now Congress—because of the tax cut and because of continued relaxation of Wall Street financial stability safety rules, Wall Street is doing really well again.

However, Congress can't pass an overtime bill—I mean, sorry. Congress can't pass a minimum wage bill. The last minimum wage increase in this Congress was signed by President Bush in 2007. President Obama never did it, and President Trump continues to oppose a minimum wage increase.

President Trump has rolled back an overtime rule, which in the State of Indiana—the Presiding Officer's State—almost 100,000 workers were going to get a raise because of the overtime rule we passed a couple years ago. So people, if they work more than 40 hours, they ought to get paid for more than 40 hours—President Trump rolled that back—and 130,000 workers in my State alone would have gotten a big bump in their wages because they were working 45, 50, or 60 hours a week.

This Congress will not pass an infrastructure bill. Look at the conditions of the roads in Cleveland, Toledo, Mansfield, Findlay, Akron, Youngstown, Gallipolis, Chillicothe, and Portsmouth, in my State, and all kinds of communities in Indiana, which the Presiding Officer represents. Congress can always find the time and can always find the money to help the richest 1 percent and help the big banks, but we can't turn around and do what

we ought to do on the minimum wage, what we ought to do on the overtime rule, and what we ought to do to expand the earned income tax credit. I do appreciate the Presiding Officer's interest, especially in the earned income tax credit—what he has tried to do there. We just simply can't find the time to do that.

We always help the people who have much in this society, and we just never get around, in this Congress, to helping the people who need a break.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BRAUN). The Senator from Texas.

TEXAS VETERANS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I am proud of the fact that 1 out of every 10 persons who wears the uniform of the U.S. military calls Texas home. It is no surprise that with more than a dozen military installations in the State, many servicemembers choose to live in Texas when they return to civilian life. We have the second highest veteran population of all of the States, with an estimated 1.6 million veterans living in Texas.

As you might suppose, in having the honor of representing these 1.6 million veterans, I talk to them quite a bit and hear from them often. I hear about the challenges they face when they transition back to civilian life. Whether the challenges are the big ones or the little ones, whether the challenges are of navigating complicated trails of paperwork, getting the timely healthcare they need, or finding employment when they return to civilian life, I am eager to help them identify solutions.

Over the last few years, we have made some major progress. In the last Congress, for example, we passed the historic VA MISSION Act, which modernized the veterans' appeals process and the electronic health records system. The bill reformed GI benefits, improved accountability within the VA Administration, and provided the largest funding increase in history for veterans' care and services.

We have also passed other bills to help veterans transition from military service. For example, our Jobs for Our Heroes Act made it easy for veterans to get commercial driver's licenses. Believe it or not, it is hard for the private sector to find the truckdrivers it needs. After somebody has driven a large vehicle in the military as part of his daily duties, you can imagine that his transitioning to a commercial driver's license would be a relatively simple thing. Given the paperwork and the bureaucracy and the challenges of one's applying for a commercial driver's license, we were able to pass legislation to facilitate that transition.

We also passed the American Law Enforcement Heroes Act, which ensures that veterans get hired by local law enforcement agencies. If you think about that, it is a skill set that many learn in the military, whether they served in the military police or otherwise. If you talk to one of your local

police departments, one of the things the department is short on is the number of people who work for local law enforcement. That is also true for Federal law enforcement agencies, particularly for the Border Patrol. Many military servicemembers come out of the military with the very skills that are needed most by the police agencies that work to keep our communities safe.

To improve the educational opportunities that are available to these men and women, in the last Congress, we passed a bipartisan bill called the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act, also known as the Forever GI Bill. President Trump signed it into law in August of 2017. With a stroke of a pen, he enhanced and expanded education benefits for veterans, servicemembers, and their families.

The Forever GI Bill made much needed updates for veterans who face school closures while they are enrolled. It expanded work study activities. It also created a scholarship program for students who pursue degrees in science, technology, engineering, and math, the so-called STEM fields.

It established the Edith Nourse Rogers STEM Scholarship, which provides student veterans with an additional 9 months of GI bill eligibility to ensure they have the time and the financial assistance they need in order to complete their studies in some of our most needed fields. We later learned that there is an issue, though, that prevents many students from taking full advantage of that program. The current law mandates that students must be enrolled in a STEM program for more than 128 credit hours, but the Department of Veterans Affairs found that there are only three States in which the average STEM degree exceeds that minimum. That places many students in an unfair position of either picking from a limited list of schools or forgoing the scholarship money, which can provide up to \$30,000 in financial assistance. That is a Hobson's choice for our veterans, and it is time for Congress to fix that error.

To ensure that all veterans who want to take advantage of the Nourse scholarship are able to, on a bipartisan basis with several of my colleagues, I recently introduced legislation called the Veteran STEM Scholarship Improvement Act, which would lower the 128 credit hour requirement to the more common 120 credit hour requirement. Now, changing a number from an eight to a zero may not seem like a big deal, but for the veterans who have been frustrated by this impediment that prevents them from using the benefits they were promised, it can be life-changing. This would ensure that Texas's veterans who are interested in pursuing STEM programs that are offered in their communities are able to do so while they receive their GI benefits.

I just want to say a word about the GI bill because it is personal to me and

my family. My dad, who was a B-17 pilot in the Army Air Corps and was stationed at Molesworth Air Force base in England, flew a total of 26 bombing missions over the English Channel into the industrial heartland of Germany to try to end that terrible, terrible war. Unfortunately, he was shot down and was captured as a prisoner of war on his 26th mission, and he served the last 4 months of World War II as a prisoner of war. Thankfully, he survived that experience.

To my point here, when he came back to Corpus Christi, TX, he took advantage of the GI bill so he could continue his education. He received a 2-year associate of arts degree from, as it was called then, the Del Mar Community College. He also met my mother at about that time, and they married. Lo and behold, he ended up deciding, I think I want to go to dental school. So, after he had been shot out of the sky by German anti-aircraft guns, maybe a nice, placid dentist's life sounded pretty good, and that is what he chose.

It was thanks to the GI bill that the whole generation of that so-called "greatest generation" was able to come back from the war and get the tools and the education they needed in order to contribute to our country and help make our economy and our country as strong as we inherited it and welcome it today.

Even for this next greatest generation of veterans who fought in Iraq and Afghanistan and for those who still serve today, it is important for us to keep this opportunity of the modern GI bill benefits when they take off the uniform as Active-Duty servicemembers and transition to civilian life.

I thank my colleagues—particularly Senators RUBIO, CRUZ, MANCHIN, and SINEMA—for supporting the STEM bill I described a little earlier. The House passed the legislation this last month, and I hope the Senate will do the same soon so we can get this bill to the President's desk for his signature.

In addition to this legislation, I am eager to vote on the final passage of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020. Last month, the Senate passed our version of the bill with broad, bipartisan support. As a matter of fact, only eight Senators voted against it. It is hard to find many things that are that bipartisan in the Senate or in Washington, DC, today.

In addition to investing in military modernization and in providing the largest pay raise in a decade for our troops, this legislation also included other provisions to support our veterans.

A bill I introduced with Senator BALDWIN, of Wisconsin, called the HAVEN Act, was included as a provision of the NDAA. This bill would shield VA and Department of Defense disability benefits in bankruptcy proceedings in the same way Social Security disability is exempted. Veterans shouldn't be penalized for receiving

disability compensation that they are rightly due.

I hope this provision will be included in the final version, which will follow the conference committee on the national defense authorization bill. The House passed its version of the NDAA last week, and I hope the conference committee will quickly iron out the differences between the two bills so we can approve this legislation.

Like all of my colleagues, I am grateful for the dedicated service and sacrifice of millions of men and women across our country who defend our freedoms. I want to make sure, as we all do, that their transitioning to civilian life after their military service is as smooth as possible.

By improving access to healthcare, employment, and education, the Senate is working hard to support America's veterans, and we are demonstrating in a country that has an all-volunteer military that we will keep our commitments to our military members while they wear the uniform and keep our commitments to our veterans when they transition to civilian life. This is an important part of our continuing to recruit and retain the best and brightest to serve in the U.S. military.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

#### BORDER SECURITY

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I start this afternoon with a topic we are all talking about—the horror that we saw and heard last night at a rally when there was a chant over and over again—we have seen the footage of it—of “send her back.”

I condemn this—as I did earlier today—in the strongest possible terms, and I want to reiterate my condemnation of that chant. I know that condemnation is widely shared on both sides of the aisle. I hope folks in both Chambers and both parties will condemn and reiterate the condemnation of that kind of chant but also what is underneath it. It is racist, for sure, and it is not who we are. That is not America.

I am glad the President said that if it happens again, he will try to stop it. I wish he had done that in real time last night, but let's see what happens at the next rally.

There is no excuse for any public official to do anything other than condemn that kind of language. Representative OMAR is a Representative in the Congress of the United States who came here as a child, and for anyone to utter those kinds of words against her or anyone else, of course, should be condemned.

Fortunately, I think most Americans agree with me, and we have to be very clear when we have that kind of senti-

ment expressed, especially when it is repeated across the country, as we saw last night.

I want to talk about our asylum system, a legal asylum system that was established in the wake of the horrors of World War II. We as a Nation—the United States of America—vowed after that conflict to do better, to be better, to serve as a refuge for those fleeing violence and persecution in their home countries.

Today, families from Central America are arriving at our southern border, hoping to avail themselves of this system because of the violence in their home countries. The three we have heard so much about—Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador—rank in the top 10 countries in the world for homicide—homicide. According to a report issued by Doctors Without Borders in 2017, Northern Triangle countries, these three countries, are experiencing—and this is a direct quote from the Doctors Without Borders report, 2017—“violent displacement, persecution, sexual violence, and forced repatriation akin to the conditions found in the deadliest armed conflicts in the world today.” So said Doctors Without Borders.

In the face of violence and other such circumstances, the choice to move in search of opportunity and safety is one that the vast majority of families would make, even when that journey can further subject them to violence and danger.

Late last month, the Nation was horrified—indeed, the world was horrified—by a photograph of a 2-year-old girl and her father, her small arm clinging to her father as they lay facedown in a river, dead.

That is not the picture I am showing here. We all know that picture. I don't need to show it again. So many Americans, so many people around the world remember that picture.

But the picture I put up is a picture of that little girl and her father as they lived, a picture of the two of them that appeared in the Washington Post in an article dated Thursday, June 27, 2019, on page 3.

Here is the article that the picture was taken from. The headline reads, “Pair who died at border were desperate for a better life”—desperate for a better life.

That is the story of so many of these families—desperate for a better life, free from violence or the threat of violence, free from or at least distant from death threats, and free from poverty, grinding poverty, the likes of which so many of us have never had to experience. That is what they are desperate for when they say “desperate for a better life.”

Rather than simply focus on this father and his daughter and how they died and the picture of them facedown in a river, I wanted to make sure we saw their faces, to celebrate their lives but to remind us of our obligation, our enduring obligation, to make sure that

we at least—at least—take steps to reduce the likelihood that we will ever see again a horrific picture like the one of the two of them dead in a river, facedown.

Here is what part of the story is of this little girl and her father. The little girl's name was Valeria. Quoting from the Washington Post story:

Valeria was a cheery child. Not even 2 years old, she loved to dance, play with her stuffed animals and brush her family members' hair. Her father, Oscar Alberto Martinez Ramirez, was stalwart. Nearly always working, he sold his motorcycle and borrowed money to move his family from El Salvador to the United States. Martinez and his wife, Tania Vanessa Avalos, wanted to save up for a home there. They wanted safety, opportunity.

“They wanted a better future for their girl,” Maria Estela Avalos, Vanessa's mother, told The Washington Post.

They traveled more than 1,000 miles seeking it. Once in the United States, they planned to ask for asylum, for refuge from the violence that drives many Central American migrants from their home countries every day. But the farthest the family got was an international bridge. . . . On Sunday—

This would be the Sunday before June 27.

On Sunday, they were told that the bridge was closed and that they should return Monday. Aid workers told The Post the line to get across the bridge was hundreds long.

Then we know what happened next to this father and his daughter.

There was also another story in the New York Times the day before, June 26. The headline read “Girl was Safe but Tried to Follow Father Back.”

I will not go through all of it, but here is what they were facing in terms of their own economic circumstances. At the end of the New York Times story it reads as follows:

Mr. Martinez quit his job at Papa Johns, where he had earned about \$350 a month. By then, his wife had already left her job as a cashier at a Chinese restaurant to take care of their daughter.

The couple lived with Mr. Martinez's mother in the community of Altavista, a massive housing complex of tiny concrete houses east of San Salvador, according to [someone referred to earlier in the story].

Though Altavista is under the control of gangs, the couple was not fleeing from violence, [Ms. Ramirez] told him. Rather, the grind of surviving as a family on \$10 a day had become unmanageable.

So we have a lot of families fleeing for reasons based on violence and death threats and that horror, and then we also have families fleeing because they, in this case, had \$10 a day to live on.

So these families risk danger as they cross through—what could only be said by way of understatement—treacherous terrain. They risk that danger because the graver risk is not to make that journey.

The administration has not sought, in my judgment, to address the root causes of migration, such as what we just talked about: violence, poverty, and corruption. Rather, the administration has repeatedly attempted to walk back our Nation's solemn vow

and close the door on refugees and asylum seekers.

Over the past couple of weeks, reports have surfaced of children held in squalid conditions without adequate medical attention, sanitation, or even food and water.

A law professor who spoke with children at a Texas CBP facility was quoted in the Washington Post as saying, "It's the worst conditions I have ever witnessed in several years of doing these inspections."

That is a law professor, not a casual observer but someone who has experience and training, recognizing what is happening in these facilities.

In May, the Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General issued a report stating that the El Paso Del Norte Processing Center, a facility with a maximum of 125 detainees, was holding 900—capacity 125, holding 900 detainees.

Some migrants were held in standing-room-only conditions for days and weeks with limited access to showers and clean clothing. These conditions were dangerous and posed an immediate risk to both migrants and personnel.

The administration has sought to use inhumane policies like separating families, just one example, as a deterrent—as a deterrent.

They recently canceled English classes, recreational programs, and legal aid for unaccompanied minors at shelters across the country, and an attorney for the Department of Justice argued that the government should not be required to give detained migrant children toothbrushes, soap, towels, or showers.

Does that make any sense at all? Is that consistent with our values?

The administration is seeking to relax standards for holding children, when, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics—also not casual observers but a set of experts on what a child needs to survive and thrive—Department of Homeland Security facilities already do not meet the basic standards for the care of children in residential settings.

Earlier this week, the administration issued an interim final rule that essentially bars Central American migrants from claiming asylum by making them ineligible for asylum, including unaccompanied children who enter the United States at the southern border after passing through another country. This is just the latest in many attempts to restrict our asylum system and bar those fleeing violence, persecution—and for other reasons—from exercising their legal right, a legal right that is not just grounded in United States law but international law, the right to petition the U.S. Government for protection consistent with what we did after World War II because of the horrors we saw in World War II. This wasn't just some concept that was dreamed up. It was meant to deal with the horrors that World War II brought, to say to the world that we are going

to make sure that if someone is fleeing violence and persecution, they will at least have a shot to make their case, to have due process to make their case. Most don't make the case; we know that. Most end up not being successful. But we should let them make the case because we are, on our best days, a nation of laws. We are also, of course, a nation of immigrants, and both of these principles are intertwined and undergird our values.

President Kennedy said it pretty well:

Immigration policy should be generous; it should be fair; it should be flexible. With such a policy, we can turn to the world and to our own past with clean hands and a clear conscience.

It is entirely possible to create an immigration system that reflects not just President Kennedy's vision but our values as Americans—a system that respects the rule of law, that treats all individuals with human dignity, and reflects our values as a Nation.

When we think of not just what our immigration system must be about but what our asylum system must be about, let us think of those families who put their lives at risk because of what they are fleeing, who simply want to make their case.

Let's also remember two people whose faces we didn't see much of except in this one picture—a father and a daughter, little Valeria and her father, Oscar Martinez Ramirez—and remember what they were trying to do. I realize some will debate this: What happens when someone presents themselves at our border based upon poverty? I understand that will be the argument against it, but we are a big enough country and a great enough country to be able to develop a system to make sure that child and that father have a shot to come here.

One of the problems we are having now at the border is that when you tell the world that you want to push people away, by way of rhetoric or by way of extreme policies at the border—inhumane policies, which might be an understatement—and by telling the world, or at least sending the message to the world, that you want to greatly restrict immigration, you are going to have people choosing a different system to try to make their case. We need to fix both. We have a broken immigration system which this body dealt with in 2013—68 votes in the Senate—to fix the system and to deal with all the tough issues. We can't get 68 votes around here to adjourn for lunch or to move on to the next part of the day sometimes. That is only a slight exaggeration—but 68 votes.

What happened? Because there are extreme voices in this town that told the House of Representatives, "Don't even vote on it; just end it right here," the best attempt in maybe decades to secure the border, to deal with citizenship, to deal with the guest worker program, to deal with all the difficult issues with immigration, and with 68

votes here, died in the House. It didn't even get a vote in the House, and this Chamber and the House have done basically nothing since then, at least the way I see it—nothing in terms of dealing with this system, trying to fix this broken system so you have rules and order and certainty, but also based upon and founded upon our values.

Some people say: You can't do it. It is just too hard. Congress isn't equipped for that.

We are the greatest country in the world for a lot of reasons. One of them is because of our values. Another reason is when we are at our best, we tackle tough problems. Fixing this broken immigration system is a tough problem. Many Presidents and many Congresses have wrestled with it, but we got as close to getting to a fix as anytime in recent American history when that bill passed. The faster we get back to something that comprehensive, that bipartisan, and that grounded in fact and law, the better off we will be.

While we are doing that on immigration, we should have a conversation about asylum—how to do it right and how to make sure that system is working so well that it will be an example to the world.

We have a long way to go. We have work to do, but I think these difficult issues are indeed a great mission—a difficult mission, but I think they are a mission worthy of a great country.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that following leader remarks on Tuesday, July 23, the Senate proceed to the consideration of H.R. 1327, as under the previous order; I further ask that notwithstanding rule XXII, at 12 noon, the Senate proceed to executive session and, if cloture has been invoked on the Esper nomination, all postcloture time be considered expired 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. Finally, that following the cloture vote on the Dickson nomination, the Senate resume legislative session and consideration of H.R. 1327 with all debate time considered expired at 2:30 p.m.

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

## LEGISLATIVE SESSION

## MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

## HONORING TROY CHISUM

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, on August 10, Fulton County Sheriff Deputy Troy Chisum should be turning 40 years old. He should be spending the day watching his daughters play softball, or he should be playing football with his friends and excitedly discussing the upcoming Minnesota Vikings football season.

But, sadly, he won't be doing these things. Deputy Chisum was killed in the line of duty on June 25. I want to honor him today.

Deputy Chisum was answering a call about a domestic disturbance in Avon, IL. He was 4 minutes closer than any other deputy. When he arrived at the scene, he saw the suspect on the porch. As he moved back for safety, he was shot in the back and killed. The suspect barricaded himself in the house for the next 19 hours before the stand-off ended.

Deputy Chisum was the fifth law enforcement officer in America in an 8-day period to be shot and killed while on duty. Another police officer has been shot and killed since then. Their deaths are a heartbreaking reminder of the dangers officers face every day.

Troy Chisum loved his community. He always answered the call to help. He worked as a paramedic with the Fulton County EMA and as a firefighter with Northern Tazewell County. He also was a member of the West Central Illinois Special Response Team and the Illinois Law Enforcement Alarm System Weapon of Mass Destruction/Special Response Team, Region Six. He had formerly worked for Lewistown Police Department. He was a consummate public servant.

His family was always his No. 1 priority. He loved any activity with his wife Amanda and his time with his three daughters. He helped inspire his daughter Kyleigh to pursue a medical career. He made his girls so proud.

Deputy Chisum's wife Amanda, their three daughters Kyleigh, Abigail, and Gracie, his father, Phil Chisum, his mother and stepfather, Debra and Mike Wheeler and too many relatives, colleagues and friends to name; they were all proud of Troy.

Deputy Chisum was one of the good ones. His colleagues knew him as the first one in every morning and the last one out every night. His legacy and sacrifice will be remembered.

## VERGENNES, VERMONT'S, ROLE IN THE APOLLO 11 MOON LANDING

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, this week America celebrates the fiftieth anniversary of a monumental achievement for our country and all of humankind, the *Apollo 11* mission that landed the first human beings on the Moon.

Like families across America and across the world, our family gathered in front of the television in our living room that Sunday night of July 20, 1969, to watch this history unfold. I was State's attorney then, and we lived in a duplex in Burlington.

Our 5-year-old son Kevin asked if he could stay up late to watch, and of course, Marcelle and I agreed. He stretched out on the floor in his PJs. He had nodded off by the time the images from the Moon started to come across, and we roused our little fellow.

We knew this was a night we would always remember.

The next day, I went to court for an arraignment. Then I met with police officers about several matters, and we all had a hard time concentrating as we excitedly discussed what we had seen the night before.

As Neil Armstrong so famously said, his one small step was a giant leap for all of humanity.

As he and other astronauts often noted, that leap was made possible not just by his step, but by the small steps of thousands of men and women across America who participated in the space program, including some from the town of Vergennes, VT.

Today, 50 years ago, the *Apollo 11* mission was hurtling toward the moon, but getting to the Moon is not a matter of just pointing the nose of a craft and igniting the powerful engines. First, the command module had to dock with the lunar expeditionary module, then leave Earth's orbit, then navigate to get into lunar orbit, and then return. Throughout the process, Michael Collins needed to use the craft's engines, known as a burn, to adjust the heading.

But with no option to refuel, these burns had to be precise and effective, and any deviation from the planned fuel usage had to be worked into future plans. Otherwise, there would be no return for America's heroes. This is where Vergennes came in.

Vermont has a long tradition of building precision tools and machinery, and NASA turned to Simmonds Precision of Vergennes, VT, to ensure that the *Apollo 11* crew and Mission Control knew exactly how much fuel they had. The fuel probes and valves had to be as nearly perfect as possible, and they had to perform perfectly in varying levels of microgravity. It was an immense technological challenge, which the engineers and workers in Vergennes met.

Fifty years later, the company is still there. Now operating under the name Collins Aerospace, they still make fuel probes, along with other aerospace technology that seems to be able to do the impossible. When you

enter the factory, along their wall of history, the Apollo Program commands a special place of pride. It is a reminder of how the small steps taken by Americans everywhere, when working together, can accomplish tremendous leaps.

I ask unanimous consent that a recent article about one of the engineers from Vergennes, published by the Burlington Free Press, be printed into the RECORD.

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

[From the Burlington Free Press, July 17, 2019]

## VERMONT COMPANY PLAYED KEY ROLE IN APOLLO MOON MISSION

(By Joel Banner Baird, Free Press Staff Writer)

A FORMER ENGINEER WITH VERGENNES-BASED SIMMONDS PRECISION DESCRIBES THE COMPANY'S ROLE IN THE APOLLO SPACE PROGRAM

Something clicked when Dominique St. Pierre heard President John F. Kennedy declare, in 1962, that the U.S. would land men on the moon by the end of the decade.

"It was gutsy," St. Pierre, now 74, remembers.

JFK's challenge prompted St. Pierre, then an 18-year-old in St. Albans, to hone his engineering skills at Vermont Technical College, sign on with Simmonds Precision in Vergennes in 1965 and help design and build a fuel system for the Apollo moon mission.

Three years later, the first-ever astronauts to orbit the moon were measuring their craft's precious propellant with Vermont-made gauges, valves and meters.

His collaboration with more than 200 employees at Simmonds yielded a tool that performed flawlessly throughout the Apollo program, St. Pierre said.

A thrilling, disruptive American decade Simmonds, subsequently bought by Goodrich and then United Technologies, went on to design and build fuel sensors for Boeing and Airbus, among other customers. St. Pierre stayed with the company until he retired in 2019.

But the fast-paced years leading up to the successful moon landing on July 20, 1969—and Apollo 11 crew's safe return—remain vivid for St. Pierre.

The space program offered a welcome, uplifting message for Americans shocked by the Chicago riots of 1968, as well as the assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy in that year, St. Pierre said.

"We had a schedule to meet" Engineers at NASA kept the Simmonds crew very busy and focused, he added: "We worked long, long days. Come hell or high water, we had a schedule to meet."

St. Pierre remembers the dust-free workplace in Vergennes, bustling with technicians in white smocks and surgical caps.

But, despite America's global, cold-war rivalry with the Soviet Union that extended into those countries' space programs, there was little secrecy at Simmonds—beyond the safekeeping of papers that documented test results, St. Pierre said.

Excitement built when NASA flew him to Cape Kennedy (now Cape Canaveral), where he joined hundreds of other engineers in fitting together thousands of interconnected pieces of a never-before assembled puzzle.

"To this day, 50 years later," St. Pierre said, "it's still viewed as the greatest technological achievement of mankind."

(At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)