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Senate

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

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal Father, the source of light and life, we praise Your Holy Name. Because of You, we live and move and have our being. Remind us that we are not adequate for our daily task without Your strength and abiding presence.

Lord, empower our Senators this day to think clearly, speak wisely, and live faithfully. May they strive to do their best and then leave the results to You.

Eternal God, we are trusting You to fulfill Your purposes for our Nation and world.

We pray in Your powerful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH). The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 1 minute as in morning business.

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

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, a 5-year decline in farm income, retaliatory tariffs on U.S. ag commodities, disrupted renewable biofuel policies, devastating natural disasters, and now shortages of LP gas needed to dry harvested grain add to the growing burdens weighing heavily on the minds of Iowans and American farmers.

Mounting pressure to pay the bills, to get the crops out, and to make ends meet can be overwhelming. We have lately expressed lots of worries and pressures that come from the increase in farm bankruptcies and the increase in rural and farm suicides.

There are many uncertainties in farming that are beyond human control, but there are other areas where Congress can help. As a farmer and as a Senator representing the No. 1 agricultural State, I am fighting to build mental health resources—as an example, there is the Grassley-Tester bill to help preempt suicides—to uphold the RFS by fighting with the EPA, and to pass the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement.

These are issues that are tops on the minds of Iowans and not just the farmers.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, while our Senate Democratic colleagues continue blocking this body from considering funding for our Armed Forces, the Senate has taken advantage of the time to confirm more of President Trump's well-qualified nominees for Federal service, as well as the judiciary.

Yesterday, we confirmed Chad Wolf to serve at the Department of Homeland Security. Following President Trump's decision to designate him Acting Secretary, he is now heading up the Department.

I want to take a moment to thank the outgoing Acting DHS Secretary, Kevin McAleenan. His tenure leading the Department of Homeland Security capped off a distinguished career in

public service, including nearly two decades rising through the ranks of the Customs and Border Patrol.

His leadership at DHS saw significant progress in mitigating major aspects of our border security and humanitarian crisis, a strong focus on cyber security, and hard work to strengthen the Department all across the board. So I thank the outgoing Acting Secretary for his years in public service and, particularly, for his leadership in this recent chapter.

Now, today, we will vote on the confirmation of Steven Menashi to the Second Circuit Court of Appeals. Mr. Menashi won majority support on the Judiciary Committee on the basis of strong academic and legal qualifications—degrees from Dartmouth and Stanford, clerkships on the appellate level and the Supreme Court, and experience in both teaching and practicing law.

I would urge all of our colleagues to vote to confirm this impressive nominee this afternoon.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, as my colleagues know, I have no qualms about spending floor time on the personnel business. Our Democratic colleagues have made it necessary by subjecting this President's nominees to unprecedented, systematic delays and obstruction. The majority has been willing to do things the hard way. We are giving the American people the government they voted for, as chosen by the President they elected.

My Republican colleagues and I wish that we could also be spending floor time on productive, bipartisan legislation that the American people need to actually become law. We want to pass the USMCA and the 176,000 new American jobs it would create, but Speaker PELOSI continues to block it. The far left objects to their passing anything—anything—that the President likes.

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



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We want to pass a conference report for the NDAA, critical legislation for our national defense. Congress has passed a bipartisan NDAA every single year since 1961. Now it is another casualty of the impeachment obsession.

House Democrats steamrolled Republicans in order to pass a wholly partisan bill. I believe this may be the first time ever that either Chamber has passed a purely partisan NDAA. Now they are stalling the conference committee and jeopardizing the whole process.

We want to pass the defense funding bill that our Democratic colleagues have now filibustered twice so that our servicemembers and commanders get what they need. Back in the summer, the Republican and Democratic leaders in the House and Senate all agreed and all signed onto an agreement with President Trump—a bicameral, bipartisan agreement. Everybody signed it. We brokered this deal to make sure the appropriations process did not—did not—get bogged down with bickering over policy issues. We all agreed to keep poison pills out so that government funding could move forward.

But just a few months later, our Democratic colleagues are now insisting on exactly the kinds of poison pills they foreswore when they signed onto the agreement this summer. They are holding up funding for our men and women in uniform because they disagree with the President's views on border security. They want to chip away at the exact Presidential authorities that they specifically agreed not to be touched. Let me say that again. They want to chip away at the exact Presidential authorities that they specifically agreed not to be touched. In short, my friends in Democratic leadership smelled an opportunity to pick a political fight.

Our servicemembers need their funding. American workers and small businesses need their new trade deal. Our Armed Forces need the authorizing legislation that has been a bipartisan slam dunk every year for almost 60 years—60 years.

We cannot cease all legislation just because Democrats would rather fight with the President. We will not neglect the business of the American people just because a House committee is holding some public hearing. If they are going to keep plowing ahead with their impeachment obsession, they cannot abdicate their basic government responsibilities at the very same time.

ELECTION SECURITY

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, now, on another matter, last Tuesday was election day in dozens of States and localities, including in my home State of Kentucky. There was one important aspect of election day that didn't get much attention. Unlike in 2016, last week's elections were not marred to the same extent by foreign

interference from our Nation's adversaries, and neither were the 2018 midterm elections last year.

As of now, there are no reports of foreign intrusion into voter records and no reports of significant and successful disinformation efforts on social media or anywhere else. By any reasonable standard and by all available evidence, the past two elections have gone a whole lot more smoothly than back in 2016.

Now, this wasn't for lack of trying. Russia and our other adversaries have tried for decades to interfere in our politics and to undermine the competence of the American people in our democracy, and they will not likely let up anytime soon. This fight is nowhere near over. But make no mistake, our defenses are a whole lot stronger.

A massive coordinated effort to confront this threat has brought together the Congress, the Trump administration, all 50 States, the private sector, and more than 2,000 local jurisdictions. We have worked to address the weaknesses Russia sought to exploit during the Obama administration and have proactively strengthened our defenses.

Last week, the Attorney General, the Secretary of Defense, the Acting Homeland Security Secretary, the acting DNI, and the heads of the FBI, the NSA, the U.S. Cyber Command, and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency issued a statement. Here is what it said:

Election security is a top priority. . . . In an unprecedented level of coordination, the U.S. government is working with all 50 states and U.S. territories, local officials, and private sector partners to identify threats, broadly share information, and protect the democratic process.

Now, I know my colleagues already know about these significant efforts thanks to the groundwork laid by the Intelligence Committee's painstaking investigation. We know about it because we have provided \$380 million to help modernize State election systems. Back in September, I cosponsored an amendment in committee that will bring the total to more than \$600 million.

We know about the progress because we have had a bipartisan, all-Members briefing from administration experts. Senators literally broke into applause in appreciation for what the administration was doing to protect our election. The story is not finished. The crucial work continues, but the progress is undeniable.

No longer is threat intelligence siloed within the Federal Government. This administration has moved to share vital information systematically with everyone, from States and localities to social media companies. No longer is interference cost-free for adversaries. The administration has sanctioned and prosecuted Russians engaged in election interference and issued an Executive order that paves the way for additional sanctions on those who seek to interfere.

The Department of Homeland Security now runs a National Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Center—a physical war room of sorts—on election day for sharing information and coordinating action. That is along with an online platform that 200 jurisdictions reportedly tapped into last week.

Long before election day, this administration was connecting with all 50 States and more than 2,000 localities to deploy new cyber security tools, new training for election workers, and to provide threat alerts, and the list goes on and on.

Our adversaries are still at the door, but for two election days in a row now, we have benefitted from stronger defenses. Progress like this should earn bipartisan applause. Like I said, behind closed doors, it did, but in public our Democratic colleagues have not loudly cheered the successes. Instead, they are trying to use the very serious issue of election security to repackage their long-held liberal view that Washington, DC, needs far more power over elections.

Look, nobody really believes that all the partisan proposals from Speaker PELOSI and company are some kind of tailored response to Russian meddling, not when they transparently serve the same goals the Democrats have wanted since way before 2016.

For goodness' sake, the New York Times was editorializing for federalizing elections right after election day 2012, even when they liked the outcome. That was the same election cycle, by the way, in which President Obama mocked—mocked—his Republican opponent for being too tough on Russia.

So let's not mistake these long-held liberal policy goals as some new, targeted response to Russian meddling. Election security is too important to become a Trojan horse for ideological goals that Democrats have wanted for many years.

We need to continue the serious work that Federal, State, and local officials are engaging in every day—work that is already yielding results—and we need to stay vigilant because our adversaries will not stop.

So I want to salute the Federal, State, and local professionals who helped make last week an apparent election security success. I urge Senate Democrats to stop blocking a bipartisan appropriations process so that we can secure hundreds of millions of dollars more for the folks out there on the frontlines.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Steven J. Menashi, of New York, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Second Circuit.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

REMEMBERING KAY HAGAN

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, last month, we lost Kay Hagan after a long illness.

Kay was always a fighter, starting with her days in the North Carolina State Legislature and continuing to when she answered the call of serving the Senate during the perilous days of the great recession. Kay was the right person to fight for North Carolina when she was needed the most.

She came from a family who knows service and sacrifice. Her uncle was Lawton Chiles, a Korean war veteran and former Representative, Senator, and Governor of Florida. Her father and brother served in the Navy. Her father-in-law was a major general in the Marine Corps. Her husband is a Vietnam veteran who used his GI bill to pay for law school. When Kay talked about veterans' issues, she spoke from the heart.

Kay was born into politics. As a young girl, she was putting bumper stickers on cars for her uncle. Her father won an election to become mayor of Lakeland, FL. While interning for her uncle, Kay learned about the ups and downs of Congress, literally. She operated the Senators-only elevator in this building.

North Carolina Governor Jim Hunt first encouraged Kay to run for office when she served as his Guilford County campaign chairman. In 1998, she unseated a Republican incumbent and won a seat in the North Carolina State Senate. For 10 years, Kay Hagan earned a reputation as a commonsense hard worker, interested in results, not partisan fighting. As cochair of the State budget committee, she increased the State's rainy day fund and balanced five straight budgets. She helped make record investments in education, raised the pay for teachers, and increased the minimum wage.

She was one of the most versatile women in her State. She juggled Girl Scout events, winning reelection four times, raising her growing family, and

serving as a Sunday school teacher and a Presbyterian Church elder.

In 2008, Kay ran for and won a U.S. Senate seat, becoming the Senate's first female Democratic Senator. With her family's military background, it surprised no one that Kay fought hard in the Senate for military families and veterans. When she heard about 9-year-old Janey Ensminger—daughter of a retired marine—passing away from leukemia because of contaminated water on the base of Camp Lejeune, she worked to pass the Janey Ensminger Act to help those affected receive healthcare.

Kay also introduced a bill that was close to my heart. It would ban for-profit colleges from using the phrase "GI bill" in their aggressive marketing efforts aimed at separating veterans and servicemembers from their hard-earned education benefits.

Kay was fearless with her voting. She made the toughest votes count, knowing the consequences to her own career. As long as it helped people of North Carolina and the United States, she was always a crucial partner. The Affordable Care Act and the 2009 economic stimulus package were politically difficult for many, but Kay stepped up and supported them. She was brave to the highest degree. Historians will remember that bravery. She stepped up when America needed her. Today, because of it, America is stronger and better.

We will all remember Kay Hagan for her friendship and that we had the privilege to call her a friend and colleague.

She is survived by her husband Chip, her three children—Jeanette Hagan, Tilden Hagan, Carrie Hagan Stewart—her father Joe P. Ruthven, two brothers, and five grandchildren.

It was my honor to serve with Kay Hagan and to memorialize her service to North Carolina and the United States in this statement today.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, November is National Adoption Month. Later this morning, I will be spending time with a family I nominated to receive an Angels in Adoption Award this year. The Angels in Adoption Program is designed to bring recognition to individuals and organizations who are, in the words of the program, "making extraordinary contributions to adoption, permanency, and child welfare."

Angels in Adoption is a program in the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute, and each year Members of Congress are invited to nominate an individual or family to receive an Angels in Adoption Award. I have been making these nominations for more than a decade now. It has been a privilege and an inspiration to meet South Dakota families who have opened their hearts and homes to children in need.

This year, I nominated Mike and Kim Adams, fellow residents of Sioux Falls,

SD. Mike and Kim have a tremendous heart for children. They have five biological children, but as they learned more about the plight of children in poverty, they were drawn to adoption.

God put the country of Ethiopia on their hearts in a particular way. In 2008, they adopted a daughter from Ethiopia—Eva. Within a few years, they had adopted three more children—Selena and Amanuel from Ethiopia and Shakira from Uganda—making them a family of 11. The story doesn't end there. Seeing the poorest of the poor in Ethiopia deeply moved them, and in addition to adoption, they sought ways to help communities stuck in poverty.

The needs of children were particularly close to their hearts. In 2013, Mike and Kim agreed to take over two schools in Ethiopia when the agency running them was forced to pull out of the country. The Adams family formed the Adams Thermal Foundation to support the schools. Today the foundation supports more than 1,000 students in two schools in Ethiopia. The schools' mission is to serve children most in need—those who might otherwise miss out on the opportunity for an education. In addition to academic instructions, schools provide other resources in an effort to alleviate some of the effects of poverty and to make it easier for the children to stay in school.

To name one example, at the end of last year, the foundation completed a project to provide a permanent source of clean water to its school in Ottoro, Ethiopia, as well as to seven local villages. In addition to providing essential health and sanitation benefits, the new pipeline also frees children from the hours-long task of fetching water for their families, meaning more children can attend school.

In learning Mike and Kim's story, I was struck by how love multiplies and expands. Mike and Kim's willingness to open their hearts has led not only to four children finding a forever home but to hope and opportunity for hundreds more. I feel privileged to have learned their story and to be able to nominate them for an Angels in Adoption Award this year.

National Adoption Month is a chance to honor all those who, like the Adams, chose to welcome a child in need of a home. Sadly, not every child is born into a safe and loving home. Some are born to parents who are unable to take care of them. Some lose their parents to war, accident, or illness, and, tragically, some are born to parents who refuse to take care of them or actively seek to damage the great gift in their care.

Thankfully, there are parents out there eager to receive these children. Across our country, there are countless parents whose homes and hearts are already prepared to welcome a child in need. They may not yet know the names of their future sons or daughters, but they are ready and waiting to meet them.

National Adoption Month is a good time to rededicate ourselves to caring for children in need and helping them find loving families to receive them.

In the gospel of Mark, Jesus says, "Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me."

There are few actions more worthy of admiration than a decision to welcome a child in need and to create for that child a secure and loving home.

I am so grateful for all of the generous families across this country who have opened their hearts and found sons and daughters through adoption. I am also thankful for all of the birth mothers who have chosen adoption for their children to give them better lives in loving families.

I am honored to recognize the Adams family today for their embrace of their own adopted children, as well as everything they have done to make life better for children in Ethiopia.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

SENATE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, for the past few weeks, including this morning, the Republican leader has amazingly accused the Democrats of being uninterested in making progress for the American people because we are so distracted by the impeachment inquiry into President Trump. It is a ludicrous charge, not the least because Leader MCCONNELL has shuttered the Senate when it comes to legislative business.

The House has passed over 250 bills that Leader MCCONNELL has taken no action on here in the Senate. Leader MCCONNELL proudly called himself the Grim Reaper and blocked just about everything that came through the House long before impeachment was even being talked about. So this idea that impeachment is blocking us from doing things belies Senator MCCONNELL's record. Let me repeat it. The House has passed 250 bills, and Senator MCCONNELL has taken no action on them from January forward.

There are lots of these bills we could have put on the floor this week, but there has been not a one. The Republicans just block and block. They block legislation to protect Americans with preexisting conditions, to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act, and even to secure our elections from foreign interference.

A few minutes ago, I heard Leader MCCONNELL say that everything was fine with the elections and that we don't need any more legislation. Go talk to the election officials around

the States. The States are the ones that have the say. The bottom line is they think we need to do more, and the experts think we need to do more. Only Leader MCCONNELL doesn't. Again, he is blocking that. If Russia interferes in 2020—and I hope it will not—all eyes will be on the Republican leader, who has repeatedly prevented us from moving forward on bipartisan legislation to make our elections safer.

To show another example of the legislative graveyard, in a few minutes, the two Senators from Connecticut—MURPHY and BLUMENTHAL—will be moving forward on bipartisan background checks, H.R. 8. It is overwhelmingly supported by the American people. Senator MURPHY and Senator BLUMENTHAL will ask for unanimous consent, and the Republicans will object. So, while the Republican leader accuses the Democrats of being too distracted to make progress, he has turned the Senate into a legislative graveyard, where we hardly ever vote on legislation, where we hardly ever have an open amendment process, where we hardly ever debate major issues. This is despite commitments that have been made by the Republican leader in the past. At one point, he said—and I am sure my colleagues from Connecticut will point this out—yes, we ought to do something on background checks. Yet nothing has happened—nothing.

You don't even have to ask me. My friend the Republican Senator from Pennsylvania, Mr. TOOMEY, said something last week that caught my attention. He and I may not agree on much, but here is what he said: "Our Democratic colleagues have frequently criticized the Republican leadership and Republican majority for not legislating. Sometimes they have a point." Those are his words, not mine.

I was here on the floor yesterday with the senior Senator from Texas, and we talked about how the Senate might go about trying to lower the costs of prescription drugs. I disagreed with the Senator's unanimous consent request, as it was too narrow a rifle shot. We need to do a whole lot more. Yet we agreed we could work through the issues if the Republican leader would only allow a debate on the floor whereby both sides could offer amendments and receive votes. We Democrats very much want to vote on legislation that would maintain protections for the people who have preexisting conditions. We Democrats very much want to have a vote on allowing Medicare to negotiate with the drug companies to dramatically lower drug prices. Let's have a debate on all of these. Who is stopping that? It is not the Democrats. It is the Republican leader.

The fact of the matter is, the kinds of open debates for which we wish and the American people wish have not happened in Leader MCCONNELL's legislative graveyard. The man who proudly called himself the Grim Reaper goes far too far in accusing the Democrats

of stifling progress. Instead, he should take a hard look in the mirror.

IMPEACHMENT

Madam President, in the House impeachment inquiry into President Trump, public hearings began yesterday with the testimony of George Kent and William Taylor.

Ambassador Taylor, who is a career public servant and a war hero who has long served Presidents of both parties, provided a startling new revelation—that his aide overheard a conversation between President Trump and Ambassador Sondland, during which the President made clear he cared more about Ukraine's investigating the Bidens than he did about helping Ukraine. The aide is reportedly set to appear before the House for a deposition later this week, and Mr. Sondland is set to appear before the Intelligence Committee for a public hearing next week.

All Senators will have an obligation to seek and review the full facts that will be developed by this inquiry to be able to render impartial justice. However, some of my Republican friends in the Senate have said they are not even paying attention to the hearings in the House. The distinguished chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary—a former House manager of an impeachment case, who, at the time, repeatedly urged Senators not to make up their minds before the case was in—recently said that he has made up his mind, that there is nothing there. This is before a single bit of evidence has been presented in the Senate. Alice in Wonderland: First is the verdict, then the trial. That is not becoming for the chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary.

While my Republican colleagues may not have been paying attention, I have been paying attention, and my Democratic colleagues in the Senate, who know they might have to act as judges and jurors in this case, are paying attention. America is also paying attention. The evidence we all heard from Mr. Taylor and Mr. Kent has cast a troubling portrait of a President who is trying to use the powers of his office for personal political gain. As the public hearings continue, we have a responsibility here in the Senate not to prejudge the case but to examine the evidence impartially. At the very least, Senators should be paying attention.

NOMINATION OF STEVEN J. MENASHI

Madam President, the Senate will vote today on the confirmation of Steven J. Menashi to serve on the Second Circuit Court of Appeals.

In all my time in this body, Mr. Menashi has been one of the most contemptible nominees to have come before the Senate. He would be a disgrace to the seat once held by the great Thurgood Marshall.

While sitting before the Committee on the Judiciary, Menashi refused to answer simple questions. He showed a breathtaking contempt for Senators on both sides of the aisle. His record on

race, women's equality, LGBTQ rights, and the rights of immigrants should be disqualifying. At the Department of Education, he helped to cook up an illegal scheme to use the Social Security data of students who had been swindled by for-profit colleges in order to deny them debt relief. A judge ruled this scheme violated Federal privacy laws.

At the very least, a candidate for a judgeship should show respect for the law. That is the lowest possible bar. A judge is supposed to revere the law, uphold it, and apply it with an even hand. How can anyone trust Mr. Menashi to come even close to doing that? Mr. Menashi is a textbook example of someone who does not deserve to sit on the Federal bench, particularly with a lifetime appointment.

My Republican colleagues, in my view, have rubberstamped too many of these extreme, unqualified nominees—nominees, in Mr. Menashi's case, who have been almost craven, but on few occasions, a small group has stood up and said: Enough. This is too far.

Well, my colleagues, if there were ever anyone who was too far, it is Menashi. There is no reason President Trump couldn't find a more suitable nominee for the Second Circuit Court of Appeals. I urge my Republican colleagues to do the right thing today and reject the Menashi nomination.

TAX RETURNS

On tax returns, yesterday a Federal appeals court ruled that Congress can seek 8 years of the President's tax returns. No doubt, the President will appeal the ruling to the Supreme Court in an effort to keep hidden what the President has been hiding for as long as he has been in public life—his tax returns.

Why the President has engaged in such an astounding breach of transparency is still unknown.

President Trump, what are you hiding?

The DC Circuit's decision—an 8-to-3 ruling—was clearly the correct legal result. It should be upheld.

FARMERS AND VETERANS

Last but not least, on farmers and veterans, President Trump has long fashioned himself a champion of everyday Americans—workers, farmers, veterans. This week has been a grim reminder that despite the President's promises, almost every week his administration undermines the very people he claims to champion.

Take our veterans whose service we commemorated earlier this week on Veterans Day. The Department of Veterans Affairs decided in 2017 to help Vietnam-era veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange by expanding the list of diseases that were eligible for health benefits to include bladder cancer, hypertension, Parkinson's-like symptoms, and hypothyroidism.

There are tens of thousands of veterans whose lives would be changed by this decision. It was the right decision based on research done by the VA. Unfortunately, it was recently revealed

that OMB Director and Acting White House Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney blocked funding for these new health benefits because of what it would cost. Think about that. Mick Mulvaney, who thought adding \$1.5 trillion to our deficit was an acceptable cost for tax cuts to the rich, believes the cost of health benefits for sick veterans is just too high. So wrong. So wrong. It is shameful that Mulvaney could actually be in the position he is.

The next time the President claims to be a champion for our Nation's veterans, the American people should remember what he is doing here—denying benefits to men and women who were in our Armed Forces, exposed to Agent Orange, and are now sick. It is too expensive to help them but not too expensive to give tax cuts to the wealthiest of Americans. Shame on the administration, shame on Mulvaney, and shame on President Trump.

What about our farmers? It is no secret that America's farmers have struggled as a result of President Trump's trade policies and retaliatory tariffs from other countries. The administration even created a new program through USDA to help offset the losses farmers were facing.

Well, now it turns out that the Trump administration has grossly mishandled that program. A report by the Democratic minority on the Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee, led by its ranking member, Senator STABENOW, revealed that the lion's share of Federal aid has gone to large agricultural conglomerates scattered across the South, not to small family farms in the Midwest who have suffered the most. Ninety-five percent of the largest per-acre payments have gone to Southern States, while the lowest payments have disproportionately gone to the farmers who are suffering in the Midwest. The administration lifted the limits on aid to row crops but kept the limits for other crops, meaning that more aid has gone into the pockets of the largest and wealthiest farms in America. The report even showed that tens of millions of dollars have gone to foreign-owned entities, including a beef factory in Brazil.

President Trump has claimed to look after our farmers, and he has claimed to look after our veterans, but he has instead turned his back on them. More and more Americans—farmers, veterans, others—are starting to notice.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCOTT of Florida). The Senator from Washington.

H.R. 8

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I want to thank Senators MURPHY and BLUMENTHAL for their tremendous leadership that we are here on the floor today to speak about.

I come today not just as a Member of the Senate representing my home State of Washington but as a former educator, as a mother, and as a grand-

mother devastated by how the gun violence epidemic is tearing apart our families and ravaging our communities in every State.

I am furious at Republican leaders who continue to stand by and do nothing while more and more lives are lost, just as I was after Newtown, Parkland, Sutherland Springs, and Marysville in my home State of Washington. I could go on.

We don't have to continue this cycle of violence, heartbreak, and inaction, and we are here today to emphasize that there is action we can take right now because earlier this year, the House passed H.R. 8—meaningful, bipartisan gun safety legislation—to address this terrible crisis through universal background checks and other popular reforms. But in the 260 days since H.R. 8 passed the House, it has languished here in the Senate despite repeated calls from myself and my Democratic colleagues for a vote.

That is why 58 days ago, following the tragic events at El Paso, Dayton, and Midland, I joined my Senate Democratic colleagues here on the floor to try to break the cycle and demand that we address the scourge of gun violence in this country by taking a vote here in the Senate on H.R. 8, which would install universal background checks—a policy that, by the way, is supported by an overwhelming majority of Americans.

In the face of Republican apathy, people across the country raised their voices even louder, demanding action to end the endless wave of gun tragedy, so much so that after this summer's string of horrors, President Trump bowed to public pressure and made a commitment to finally act to address the gun violence epidemic.

After months and years of inaction and far, far too many lives lost, it was the first sliver of hope in a long while—that the President and Senate Republicans would finally put the safety of our families over their allegiance to the NRA and do something substantive about ending this Nation's gun violence epidemic, working with Democrats toward commonsense reforms to end gun violence and keep people safe.

Now, more than 2 months later, President Trump has betrayed his pledge to address this tragic epidemic as if the past summer never even happened. Once again, he has chosen to abdicate his responsibility to keep our families and our communities safe and has broken yet another promise he made to the American people, kowtowing to the NRA and its unpopular, hard-right agenda to stymie commonsense gun reform as soon as mass shootings were out of the headlines.

Well, I can assure you, Senate Democrats and I are going to keep fighting for commonsense gun safety reforms, like universal background checks, even when gun violence isn't making a headline that day, because while President Trump continues carrying water for the NRA and Senate Republicans continue hiding behind President Trump,

Democrats here understand that Congress has a duty to act to protect lives, and that the President's cowardice absolutely should not set Congress's agenda.

While President Trump's backtracking on this serious issue is disgraceful, I ask my Republican colleagues to remember that we are not beholden to the President or to the gun lobby and that we do not need President Trump's permission to vote on bills or to act to save lives.

In fact, in States across the country, we have been able to take on the gun lobby and make meaningful progress to address this crisis.

In my home State of Washington, we have closed background check loopholes, and we have enacted extreme risk protection orders. We were able to accomplish those things because of the advocacy of groups like Moms Demand Action across my State, the Washington State Alliance for Gun Responsibility, Everytown for Gun Safety, March for Our Lives, and so many more, as well as the dedicated volunteers and activists behind those organizations, the brave people who have been out making their voices heard and putting pressure on lawmakers to do their jobs to end this senseless epidemic, people like Jane Weiss, who lives in Mill Creek, WA. After she tragically lost her niece to gun violence, Jane joined the fight to pass lifesaving legislation in Washington State by putting pressure on her State lawmakers and won.

There are people like Jane all across the country who are speaking up and fighting back, even when it means reliving some of the hardest moments of their lives, in order to prevent others from suffering as much as they have. That is hard and brave work to do, but there is absolutely nothing hard or brave about simply having a vote on bipartisan, House-passed legislation to ensure universal background checks. To the contrary, it is the height of cowardice not to hold that vote while families across the country wonder which movie theater or shopping mall or synagogue or mosque or church or community space is next and while students spend their time in school on active shooter drills while they should be learning. Unfortunately, cowardice is what we are seeing from far too many Republicans here in the Senate and in the White House when it comes to protecting families from this scourge of gun violence.

I want to be clear. I hope my Republican colleagues allow this legislation to pass today, but if they don't, for Jane and so many others, Senate Democrats are going to keep shining a spotlight on the inaction on gun violence here in the Senate and the broken promises coming out of the White House. We are going to keep making the case, building support, and we will not give up until this is done.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 8

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, as Senator MURRAY noted, 100 people die from gunshot wounds every single day. We can't go 24 hours without news of another mass shooting somewhere in America. My kids and millions of others hide in corners of their classrooms or in their bathrooms preparing for a mass shooting at their school, and this body does nothing about it.

The good news is, we have a piece of legislation that enjoys 95 percent support in the American public and will undoubtedly make an enormous impact on gun violence rates in this country.

I will give more extensive remarks after I make this unanimous consent request, but my request will be that the Senate immediately take up H.R. 8, the universal background checks bill which was passed in a bipartisan way in the House of Representatives and which has received no action, no debate here in the U.S. Senate since that time.

As in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 29, H.R. 8; further, that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there an objection?

The Senator from Mississippi.

Mrs. HYDE-SMITH. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, legislation that would affect the rights of American citizens under the Second Amendment should not be fast-tracked by the Senate. Efforts to criminalize otherwise lawful conduct with firearms by law-abiding gun owners should not be exempt from consideration by the appropriate committee of jurisdiction. It should not be exempt from debate on the Senate floor.

If this so-called commonsense, bipartisan legislation was indeed crafted with strong bipartisan input, it shouldn't have any problems advancing by regular order.

Many questions about this legislation need to be answered before it is forced upon law-abiding gun owners. If I wanted to give my best friend's son or grandson my hunting rifle, would we first have to appear before a licensed gun dealer and go through a lengthy and potentially expensive background check? This is my understanding. We have many questions like this.

My constituents would like to have an opportunity to weigh in on measures like these, which is why we can't fast-track legislation that affects America's Second Amendment rights.

I object to this unanimous consent.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I appreciate the good-faith objection from my friend from Mississippi, but the good

news that I can convey to her is that my Republican Senate friends who want to have some impact into the consideration of the future of American gun laws have ample opportunity to do that because they are in the majority.

Senate Republicans control the Judiciary Committee. Senator MCCONNELL can decide to bring any measure to the floor. If the concern is that there hasn't been enough Republican input into the question of whether criminals or terrorists or people who are seriously mentally ill get guns, then, convene a discussion on this, bring a debate to the floor, have a process in the Judiciary Committee. Don't just stay silent. It doesn't pass the straight-face test to come down here and say: Well, we can't take up H.R. 8, despite the fact it has 90 percent public approval because we haven't had input on it. You are in the majority. You have the ability to pass legislation that you support and that Democrats can support as well.

The idea that we are just going to sit here and twiddle our thumbs week after week as 100 people are killed by guns through suicides and homicides and accidental shootings is an abdication of our basic responsibility as U.S. Senators. There is nothing that matters more to our constituents than their physical safety.

There are kids who are walking to school in cities in every single State in this Nation who fear for their lives, whose brain chemistry is changed by the trauma they go through because of that fear for their safety, and they can't learn, they can't cope, and they can't build strong relationships.

My kids go through active shooter drills at school because they, in fact, expect that someday someone will walk through their doors and start firing a military-style assault weapon in one of their classrooms.

I get it that there is a difference of opinion on exactly how we should expand background checks. I understand that maybe my Republican colleagues don't want to support H.R. 8. But you are in the majority. You have the ability to lead a conversation that can find that common ground on expanding background checks.

I am not going to accept this argument that we can't bring H.R. 8 to the floor because we have some concerns about it. I can't get a piece of legislation to the floor any other way than to offer this motion.

The American public is not going to accept silence from this body week after week, month after month, in the face of this epidemic carnage that is happening across this country. Parents know their kids aren't safe, and they expect us to act.

The President's Attorney General said the other day that we made some progress on the issue of background checks over the summer, but now we have the impeachment proceedings, and so that stops all of this discussion.

That is not true. The impeachment proceedings right now are in the House of Representatives. The discussion on the future of a background checks bill was in the Senate. It was happening between myself and Senator MANCHIN and Senator TOOMEY. We are still at the table, ready to negotiate a compromise version of the Background Check Expansion Act. We, frankly, have lots of time on our hands in the Senate because we are not doing anything other than approving an appointee here, a judge there. We have plenty of time. We have plenty of bandwidth in the Senate to negotiate with the White House over a universal background checks bill.

You can't say that we can't take up H.R. 8 because we haven't had input. Republicans are in charge. You have the ability to have as much input as you want. The White House can't say the impeachment is stopping a debate on background checks from happening. I am ready to talk. Senator TOOMEY is ready to talk. Senator MANCHIN is ready to talk.

We have evidence from this summer about how important universal background checks are. On the last day of August, a gunman fled from police in Odessa, TX. He hijacked a U.S. Postal Service van. He killed its driver and then randomly fired on people as he drove through the streets. During his shooting spree, the gunman killed seven people and wounded over 20 others—a reign of terror throughout the streets of this Texas town.

The current background checks law worked as it was intended to work. The shooter tried to buy a gun in January 2014, but he was denied. Why? Because he had been found to be so seriously mentally ill when he was committed to an inpatient institution that his name was placed on the list of individuals who were prohibited from buying weapons.

The problem is, Texas doesn't have universal background checks, meaning that it was as easy as pie for the shooter, after he got denied a gun purchase at a brick-and-mortar store, to just go find a private seller who would sell him a military-style weapon without a background check. In this case, it resulted in 20 people getting hurt and seven people being wounded—this easy way to find loopholes through the Nation's background check system. But that happens every single day. Every single day, somebody buys a gun at a gun show or online or through a private sale because that is the way they can get a gun without having to go through a background check.

I am deeply troubled. I am profoundly aggrieved by my body's reluctance to even take up a conversation about the future of gun policy in this country. I wish there wasn't an objection. I wish we had an opportunity to be able to discuss the future of background checks and the future of our gun laws on the Senate floor. Our constituents expect us to have that debate.

This will not be the last time we come down to the floor to try to force a debate, to force a conversation in this body so that we can find bipartisan consensus on an issue that enjoys 95 percent public support, 80 percent support from gun owners, and 70 percent support from NRA members. There is almost nothing else that is less controversial in America today than the issue of universal background checks, and we will continue to press that case on behalf of the American people.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, we ought to be aggrieved, we ought to be angry, and we ought to be furious—not just frustrated but furious—at this sad, even pathetic, objection to moving forward with a bill that is supported by 95 percent of the American people. The simple fact is that our Senate colleagues have been talking to us in good faith, not only about a background checks bill but also about emergency risk protection orders, because we know there is no single solution, no panacea, and that emergency risk protection orders are the other side of the coin to background checks.

Last week, the Washington Post reported that President Trump has given up on passing lifesaving gun violence legislation. The reason is fierce lobby by the NRA.

Let's face the stark truth here. The objection on the floor today is not the result of any lack of clarity about the need for background check legislation. It is the result, purely and simply, of the President saying no.

We need to do our job. We have continued talks, in fact, with members of the White House staff after the impeachment proceedings began. My hope is that the Washington Post article is untrue. I believe it, certainly, in no way forestalls or prevents these discussions from continuing. I think there is a reason to hope, but it will take courage and strength to do it.

The President said yesterday that he was too busy doing his job meeting with the President of Turkey—an individual who has potentially enabled war crimes in northern Syria. If he wasn't too busy to do that kind of meeting, he shouldn't be too busy to do gun violence prevention.

The fact is that the stakes are simply too high for there to be delay, and 36,000 Americans are killed every year, or more. That is 100 every day. Gun deaths are, in fact, rising, not declining.

The trends are absolutely alarming and appalling, and we are complicit in these deaths if we fail to act. As I speak on the floor right now, there is a school shooting in Santa Clarita, CA. How can we turn the other way? How can we refuse to see that shooting in realtime, demanding our attention, requiring our action? We are complicit if we fail to act. It is not just a political

responsibility. It is a moral imperative. The unconscionable loss of life is our responsibility.

This problem is one that we can solve. We may not be able to prevent all the deaths that occur—all 100 every day in America—but we can save lives. Our goal has to be to save as many lives as quickly as possible.

I have been hopeful for the first time in a long time, as I have talked with my colleague Senator GRAHAM. He and I have worked together conscientiously and closely on "extreme risk protection order" legislation. There have been a series of encouraging conversations with the White House, and all seemed to be proceeding well, until there was a report of the President talking to Wayne LaPierre of the NRA. Apparently, it takes only a phone call—or a couple of them—with the NRA to turn around the White House and stop the progress we have been making and throw out the window all the good work we have done.

Over these past several months, Senator GRAHAM, the White House, and my office have made important strides on emergency risk protection. We know that they work. They enjoy broad popular support. At least 70 percent of the American people support some type of "extreme risk protection" legislation, including two-thirds of Republicans and 60 percent of gun owners.

States like Connecticut, which was the first to adopt them, have shown they have a palpable, tangible, measurable effect. They are a crucial tool for law enforcement. The full implementation of Connecticut's "emergency risk protection order" law was associated with a mere 14-percent decline in firearm suicide rates, and the passages of Indiana's law in 2005 is associated with a 7.5-percent decline in the firearm suicide rate.

We know these laws work. In the 17 jurisdictions that have passed them, there has been a decline in suicides and homicides and domestic violence shootings. We can save lives. We can put together a measure that combines background checks, emergency risk protection orders, and other sensible steps. We can work through this body. The objection that we are bringing it to the floor precipitously is absolutely ridiculous. There is no reason we have to give up now and throw away all our work simply because the House is doing something unrelated, on impeachment.

There has been too much good work as well by groups doing the grassroots task of mobilizing public support—Moms Demand Action, Students Demand Action, and all of the groups that have rallied around for gun safety. In Connecticut, the Newtown Action Alliance, Connecticut Against Gun Violence, and Sandy Hook Promise show us the way.

In the last election, gun violence was on the ballot. Gun violence prevention won. That is the reason the House has passed H.R. 8. That is the reason why

we should do it here. History will judge my Republican colleagues harshly if they fail that, and the voters will judge them even more immediately equally harshly.

The NRA is imploding. Its vice-like grip should be crumbling in this body. They may have the ear of the President, but they should not have the ear of my Republican colleagues.

To the President, I say: The NRA is telling the American public they own you and that all they have to do is snap their fingers, and you fall into line. Prove them wrong. All you need to do is take the final steps on this legislation. Give us a green light. Tell us that we can move forward and that you will sign this bill.

To the majority leader I say, whether or not the President gives us that green light, we need to do our job. Please do your job. Let us have this vote.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

DIRECTING THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE TO MAKE A CORRECTION IN THE ENROLLMENT OF H.R. 2423

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H. Con. Res. 72, which was received from the House.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the concurrent resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 72) directing the Clerk of the House to make a correction in the enrollment of H.R. 2423.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to proceeding to the measure?

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 72) was agreed to.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, unfortunately, this Congress has been defined by previously unprecedented political antics. Things that used to be far above the political fray are now getting roiled in controversy.

One example is yesterday, when the minority leader blocked the bipartisan bill that I introduced to reduce drug prices—a bill that received unanimous support in the Judiciary Committee. I recognize my friend from Connecticut Senator BLUMENTHAL, who is the chief Democratic cosponsor of that bill.

I think the most egregious example of politicalization of things that used

to be nonpartisan has to be the politicalization of the Violence Against Women Act, or VAWA. For 25 years, this program has supported survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault through a range of critical programs and resources.

As a longtime victims' rights advocate myself, I am a proud supporter of the Violence Against Women Act, and I have consistently fought not only to continue it but to strengthen it as well.

I think there is more we can and should do to support victims, and I know folks on the other side of the aisle feel the same way. It is safe to say, though, that we have had our fair share of disagreements on how exactly to accomplish that.

Earlier this year, our Democratic colleagues allowed VAWA to get caught in the crosshairs of a funding debate when they insisted we should not fund this vital program because it is overdue for updates. This is a rash move, to be sure. It lines up with the "my way or the highway" legislative strategy sometimes deployed by our friends on the other side, but that hasn't stopped my Republican colleagues, led by Senator JONI ERNST from Iowa, from pursuing a compromise.

For many months now, Senator ERNST has been working with DIANNE FEINSTEIN, the Senator from California, to find ways to make improvements that both sides can agree on. That is the way things get done around here: You try to build consensus, and maybe you don't get everything you want, but if you can get 80 percent of what you want, you ought to take it and run.

Last week, unfortunately, Democrats walked away from the negotiating table when it came to the Violence Against Women Act. Rather than continuing the discussions with people of opposing views, they took the easy way out and simply walked away and introduced their own partisan reauthorization—one they know has no chance of passing.

Just like the version that passed the House earlier this year, this is a messaging document, worth no more than the paper it is written on. It is not going to reauthorize VAWA or make the program better, and it is not going to support victims because it stands no chance of becoming law.

I am truly disappointed that our Democratic colleagues, once again, have chosen to play politics rather than deliver real results, this time for the victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Despite the games being played here, my Republican colleagues and I are working to put in the hard work it takes to actually accomplish something and legislate.

Senator ERNST said she will soon be introducing a good-faith proposal that actually has the chance to become law. It is not a partisan document. It really

is a return to where we used to be, where the Violence Against Women Act enjoyed broad support on both sides of the aisle and was truly not just bipartisan but nonpartisan. It is a shame that something as urgent and undeniably important as combating domestic violence and sexual assault has somehow fallen prey to Washington, DC, politics.

I hope our colleagues will reconsider and return to the negotiating table so we can reach a compromise and finally reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act.

E-CIGARETTES

Mr. President, on another matter, in recent months, there has been a lot of coverage in the news and in social media about the health consequences of e-cigarette use. The "e" stands for electronic—electronic cigarette use.

We have seen alarming headlines about vaping-related illnesses that have led to severe health consequences and dozens of deaths. I find it particularly concerning that an increased number of children in middle school and in high school are using these products, even though it is inconsistent with the law. It is against the law.

The National Youth Tobacco Survey estimates that more than 5 million middle and high school students currently use e-cigarettes, up from 3.6 million last year. Five million middle and high school children are using this product that the law says they should not be using.

Folks at home are certainly dealing with the fallout. Last year, 19 percent of Texas high school students had used an e-cigarette in the last 30 days, and news reports lead me to believe the number has done nothing but go up.

Certainly, there are negative health consequences associated with it. A teen in Michigan was recently hospitalized, as my colleague from Michigan well knows. He was recently hospitalized after vaping and then had to have an incredibly rare double lung transplant because of the damage done to the lungs.

This is causing alarm for parents, for educators, for health professionals, and just about everybody else who has heard about it. It certainly caught my attention.

Yesterday the HELP Committee—the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee—in the Senate held a hearing to look into the government's lackluster response to these public health concerns. I am seriously concerned with how, compared to traditional cigarettes, this industry is able to evade countless government regulations, especially through online sales.

Consumers are able to purchase traditional cigarettes online, but there are clear guardrails in place to prevent minors from using online purchases to skirt the age restrictions.

At the time of delivery, if you buy cigarettes online, you have to sign and show an ID proving your age. That just

makes sense to me. You have to show ID when you purchase cigarettes at a gas station or convenience store, and buying them online should be no different, but in the case of e-cigarettes, it is different. Anyone, no matter how old or how young, could go online and buy e-cigarettes and have them delivered to your front door, no questions asked.

You better believe underage kids are taking advantage of that loophole. A recent survey found that about one-third of underage e-cigarette users bought them online.

What people need to understand is that e-cigarettes are essentially a nicotine delivery device. Nicotine, of course, is an addictive drug, so it is not as if there aren't negative health consequences. Even if they are not smoking tobacco, if they use e-cigarettes, there are true risks to the health of these young people.

Now, while an adult, I believe, ought to be able to do things that maybe negatively impact their health, I think we have an obligation to protect children, particularly those who are making bad decisions, before they are prepared to understand what the consequences really are.

So while it is important for us to understand the health impact of these devices and have serious conversations with our own children about the risks, we should do something to prevent children from getting their hands on e-cigarettes in the first place.

I have introduced a bill with Senator FEINSTEIN and Senator VAN HOLLEN that prevents the online sale of e-cigarettes to minors using the same safeguards that stop them from being able to use regular cigarettes and smokeless tobacco products on the internet. The law is the same with regard to who can legally purchase them, so we ought to have the procedures in place that prevent underage smokers from buying cigarettes online without a signature and without an identification card proving their age. We ought to have the same procedures in place for e-cigarettes.

This bill, thankfully, has broad bipartisan support, with one-quarter of all Senators serving as cosponsors, and it has recently passed the House by a voice vote.

When we talk about passing consensus legislation in the Senate, this is about as easy as it comes. I hope we can bring this legislation to the Senate floor soon so we can prevent the next generation from using legal loopholes to get their hands on e-cigarettes.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

VA MISSION ACT

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, this week, America is paying tribute to more than 19 million people in our country and a half million people in Michigan who show us every day what service is all about.

America's veterans have served in many ways and on many different

fronts. However, I think they all have a couple of things in common.

The first is that they love our Nation so much that they are willing to put their lives on the line for our Constitution, our democracy, our values, and our ideals for our country. The second is that they understand that patriotism is a lot more than a feeling of pride. Instead, it is a way of life.

Veterans don't finish their military service, hang up their uniforms, go home, never to be heard from again. Instead, these are the people around us who take a good look at their community, their State, our country, see what needs to be done, and step up.

Not all of us have what it takes to serve in our Armed Forces. Yet all of us do have the ability to follow the example of those who have served us, see a need, and raise our hands. Imagine how much better off our Nation would be if we all had that same dedication to give something back.

As we have been celebrating Veterans Day this week, we should all remember that when American men and women sign up to serve in our armed services, they really sign a blank check to our country—a check that could include everything, including losing their life. When our Nation accepts that check, we need to make sure we are holding up our end of the bargain.

Unfortunately, the Trump administration is failing to provide veterans with the benefits they have earned, especially when it comes to healthcare.

Congress passed the VA MISSION Act last year to improve veterans' access to healthcare and to expand benefits to caregivers, which is so important. Yet the VA missed the October deadline—missed the October deadline—to include Vietnam and Korean war veterans in the expansion.

The VA has kicked eligible veterans out of the caregiver program without explaining why. Meanwhile, more than 60,000 veterans who received emergency care at non-VA facilities in 2017 are still waiting for the VA to pay their medical bills.

Perhaps worst of all, this administration turned their backs on more than 80,000 Vietnam-era veterans who developed illnesses because of toxic exposure to Agent Orange. We have known for a long time that Agent Orange exposure has caused many serious health issues.

In fact, I first started working on this issue regarding Agent Orange and fighting for our veterans when I was in the Michigan State legislature, trying to get the Federal Government to recognize and provide VA health coverage for these illnesses. Over the years, some things have changed and improved, but it has been way, way too slow.

Veterans who have been suffering for years were offered hope in 2017 when then-Veterans Affairs Secretary David Shulkin added bladder cancer, underactive thyroid, high blood pressure, and Parkinson's-like symptoms to the list of diseases eligible for Agent Or-

ange benefits without going through a lot of bureaucracy in order to get their healthcare coverage. He did so at the urging of the National Academy of Medicine based on the science—medical science—of the connection.

Unfortunately, veterans with these conditions are still waiting. This was back in 2017. They are still waiting to get that healthcare, and that is because the Office of Management and Budget Director, Mick Mulvaney, quietly ignored the science and rejected the coverage expansion. Why? We now know, through emails that have been made public, that he thought it was too costly.

Really? Let me remind you that these veterans each signed a blank check to our Nation. For veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange, the check they signed is in the amount of their health and well-being.

A number of colleagues in this Chamber, led by Senator TESTER and Senator BROWN, whom I see on the floor, have repeatedly asked the VA to explain the delay in coverage. Their questions, over and over again, have gone unanswered.

We only now know what really happened when a veteran trying to get help, trying to get treatment, finally filed a FOIA request—Freedom of Information Act request—to get information about who was holding it up and what was going on. Just recently, we have found out that the Office of Management and Budget—that Mick Mulvaney blocked the care because he thought it was going to cost too much.

It is now November of 2019, and Vietnam veterans are still not getting treatment for these diseases. Yesterday, my friend Senator BROWN from Ohio requested unanimous consent on his resolution, which I am pleased to be a cosponsor of, that expands the diseases covered by the VA for Agent Orange exposure. It would fix this and say to the OMB Director: We want to make sure we are keeping our end of the bargain for our Vietnam vets who were exposed to Agent Orange.

Once again, Leader MCCONNELL and Republicans chose to stand with the Trump administration and Mick Mulvaney to stop veterans from getting this critical healthcare coverage. I was amazed to actually hear the objection include the words, "It costs too much."

It is not enough to praise our veterans with words. We do that all the time, especially around the 11th of November. Praise doesn't pay the medical bills. Praise doesn't give a veteran a healthy life, a job, a home, or opportunities.

This administration, Congress, and our country must keep each and every promise our country has made to those who have served, period. Each and every one of them signed that blank check to our country.

Leader MCCONNELL, it is time to hold up our country's end of the bargain.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I thank Senator STABENOW. She is exactly right. A couple of times, she used the term “blank check.” When people join the Army, people become marines, people go off to a service academy, and people enlist in the National Guard, essentially they sign a blank check cashed by all of us who care so much about protecting our country.

Senator STABENOW has been, with Senator TESTER, one of the real leaders on this. You know, it used to be, many years ago, when it became clearer that veteran after veteran after veteran—young veterans in those days, 20 years ago, not that far removed from Vietnam—were coming down with these illnesses, Congress decided bipartisanship, almost unanimously, that rather than make every single veteran, every soldier, every marine, and every sailor prove to the government, prove to the VA that they should be eligible for healthcare coverage based on the illness they got because of Agent Orange—Congress decided that we shouldn't make every single person go through proving this—through that process. So what did we do? We made a list of illnesses that typically come from exposure to Agent Orange, and any veteran who was sick from one of these illnesses, no questions asked, got healthcare. That is what we did. That was then.

Today, in this time when I hear my colleagues who sit over here—I don't want to make this partisan, but it has become that because it is President Trump, Vice President PENCE, and Senator MCCONNELL who say no to this. We have the Secretary of the VA, appointed by the President of the United States, President Trump—the Secretary of the VA came up with these four additional illnesses around which there is scientific consensus saying that these illnesses are caused by Agent Orange, and individual veterans shouldn't have to, one at a time, prove that they got sick, that they got this kind of Parkinson's or they had bladder cancer based on Agent Orange. We ought to just accept that. That is how we serve those who served us.

But do you know what Senator MCCONNELL does? You know, his office is down the hall, as my colleagues know. Senator MCCONNELL apparently says that we should do tax cuts for rich people, but we can't afford to spend a few billion dollars. It is a lot of money, but these are our people, and these are people who served in Southeast Asia mostly in the 1960s and 1970s.

Senator MCCONNELL wants to turn his back on them. President Trump turns his back on them. The new Secretary of the VA, appointed by President Trump, turns his back on these soldiers. There are 80,000 of them. Does President Trump just want to wait till all 80,000 are dead, and then we will not have to worry about this anymore? Or do we serve those who served us?

Every time I think about this, I just can't believe that the President of the United States, who didn't serve—I didn't either. I understand that. But you know, because I didn't serve in Vietnam and I am just slightly on the young side of this generation, because I didn't serve, maybe I should work a little harder, as a member of the Veterans' Committee, to make sure the people who did serve are taken care of.

This President, who didn't serve—I don't judge him for that. No matter what he said, I don't judge him for that. But maybe he ought to work a little harder, not just making speeches about how much he loves veterans but actually coming to the table and telling Senator MCCONNELL: Quit blocking our attempts to take care of these 80,000 veterans. It is just outrageous.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the remainder of my remarks be placed at a different point in the RECORD.

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

HONORING DETECTIVE JORGE “GEORGE” DEL RIO

Mr. President, I rise to honor a dedicated Ohio public servant, Detective George Del Rio. For three decades, Detective Del Rio served his community in Dayton with honor and integrity.

On November 4, a few days ago, he was working as part of a local DEA drug task force, and he made the ultimate sacrifice to keep his fellow Ohioans safe. He laid down his life while doing his job. He was working with fellow Dayton officers to protect the people he was sworn to serve in Miami Valley.

In the days since his passing, we have heard story after story after story of Detective Del Rio's service to his community and to his family.

As he was hospitalized, officers from around Miami Valley packed the hospital hallways and parking lots to show their support and their respect for Detective Del Rio and his wife Kathy and their children and grandchildren.

Detective Del Rio was beloved by friends and colleagues. He was devoted to his family. He was kind. He was funny. He was fair. He was a good cop even while spending his days undertaking dangerous work, often undercover.

Detective Del Rio's career is a reminder of the contributions that immigrants make to our great country and to my State. He came to this country as a child from Mexico. His decades of teamwork as part of the Dayton Police Department and the DEA saved lives and changed lives. He embodied the Dayton PD's motto of “Honor through service and service with honor.”

Chief Richard Biehl—whom I have gotten to know on a number of occasions because of the tragedies of the shooting and the tornado and the KKK's attempted rally in Dayton—said that Detective Del Rio had an impact regionally, nationally, and internationally. His legacy will live on through the many lives he touched, and, not

surprisingly, he continues to serve through his wishes to be an organ donor.

In times of tragedy, Ohioans always rise to the occasion. We have witnessed an outpouring of community support in the days since Detective Del Rio was taken from us. While no gesture, of course, can ever repay him or Kathy and his children and grandchildren for their sacrifice, today we honor this hero's memory, and we lift up the entire Dayton community.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH). Without objection, it is so ordered.

EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT

Mr. CARDIN. “Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.” Most Americans believe that the Equal Rights Amendment is part of our Constitution today, but it is not.

Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg stated:

Every Constitution written since the end of World War II includes a provision that men and women are citizens of equal stature. Ours does not.

The State of Maryland has a provision very similar to that in its State constitution. Many of our States have acted on the Equal Rights Amendment, but, as Justice Scalia said, “Certainly the Constitution does not require discrimination on the basis of sex. The only issue is whether it prohibits it. It doesn't.”

We need to pass the Equal Rights Amendment in the Constitution of the United States for many reasons. The most basic reason is that it provides additional protection against discrimination against women. It has a higher standard to prevent discrimination. It shows America's leadership globally on human rights.

In 1972, Congress started the process by passing the Equal Rights Amendment. We passed it in 1972. Now, of course, it requires 38 States to ratify it before it can become law. To date, 37 States have ratified the Equal Rights Amendment. We are one short of accomplishing our objective of putting the Equal Rights Amendment at long last in the Constitution of the United States. But there is an additional potential hurdle; that is, when Congress passed the resolution in 1972, it put a 7-year time limit for the States to act. They extended that to 10 years. This is strictly a provision that is discretionary to Congress. Article V of the Constitution puts no limit on the time for ratification of a constitutional amendment proposed by Congress for the States to ratify. In fact, the 27th Amendment was ratified in 1992. That

deals with congressional pay raises. It was first proposed in 1789 to be part of the Bill of Rights, and over 200 years later, it was ratified. So there is no time limit in the Constitution for the ratification of a constitutional amendment.

To remove any doubt, Congress should extend the time, as it did once before. In order to accomplish that, I joined with Senator MURKOWSKI, the Senator from Alaska, in a bipartisan effort on S. Res. 6 that removes the deadline, the time limit on the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD an op-ed piece written by Senator MURKOWSKI and myself in regard to why we need to get that resolution passed.

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

[From the Washington Post, Jan. 25, 2019]

IT'S TIME TO FINALLY PASS THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT

(By Lisa Murkowski and Ben Cardin)

Lisa Murkowski, a Republican, represents Alaska in the Senate. Ben Cardin, a Democrat, represents Maryland in the Senate.

Men and women should be treated equally under the law. It seems pretty basic, right?

As we approach the 100th anniversary of women's suffrage, it comes as a shock to so many that the U.S. Constitution does not guarantee women the same rights and protections as men.

We come from different ends of the political spectrum, but we agree that this needs to change. Women compose a majority of the American population but continue to be underrepresented in government, elected office, the courts and business world. A level playing field should not be a euphemism but rather a reality for women (and men) from Anchorage to Annapolis and everywhere in between.

"Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex."

This is the full substance of the Equal Rights Amendment. It's a little less than a tweet, but it will make a positive difference in the lives of millions of women.

Why is this still necessary? During a 2011 interview, Justice Antonin Scalia summed up the need for an Equal Rights Amendment. He said: "Certainly the Constitution does not require discrimination on the basis of sex. The only issue is whether it prohibits it. It doesn't."

On the other side of the spectrum, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg laid out the rationale for the ERA in simple terms: "Every constitution written since the end of World War II includes a provision that men and women are citizens of equal stature. Ours does not."

Why has it taken this long? Per the Constitution, an amendment must be ratified by three-fourths of the states to be enacted. While most amendments are put forward without a time limit, this one came with a seven-year deadline. The original was extended to 10 years, but still, only 35 states had ratified the ERA by 1982.

While the clock stood frozen at the federal level, today, nearly half of the states—including Maryland and Alaska—have a version of the ERA written into their constitutions. Gender-based equality represents the present-day views of the vast majority of people across the United States, and is the spirit that underpins our bipartisan legislation.

The deadline passed in 1982, so isn't this effort futile? Not at all.

Nationally, momentum began to shift about two years ago, as women across the country began to raise their voices again in calls for solidarity and equality. The ERA had never gone away, but the #MeToo movement gave it a jolt of energy and a new spotlight for inequalities in U.S. law.

In March 2017, 45 years to the day after Congress overwhelmingly approved the ERA, Nevada became the 36th state to ratify the amendment. And then, in May 2018, Illinois became the 37th.

What had for years been referred to as a three-state plan—working to have Congress remove the ratification deadline so that three more states could ratify the ERA, and it would become enshrined in our constitution—had suddenly become a one-state plan.

Earlier this month, Virginia started the ratification process in their state legislature. Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina and Utah could also become state No. 38. Congress can do its part by explicitly removing the deadline it once set.

Article V of the Constitution contains no time limits for ratification of amendments. The states finally ratified the 27th Amendment in 1992 regarding congressional pay raises more than 200 years after Congress proposed it in 1789 as part of the Bill of Rights.

The original deadline for ERA ratification was not in the amendment itself but only in the text of the joint resolution proposing the amendment. This is to say the amendment itself has no arbitrary deadline attached.

Whether on purpose or not, Congress handcuffed itself at the time it passed the ERA. But this Congress can and should easily amend that language to remove the deadline for ratification.

We are proud to work together on a bipartisan basis to move this essential legislation over the finish line and finally make the ERA part of the Constitution—guaranteeing equality under the law for women.

Women should not be held back or provided less opportunity, respect or protections under the law because of their gender. This is not a partisan issue but one of universal human rights. Gender equality should be an explicit, basic principle of our society.

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, on November 13, the House Judiciary Committee took up a very similar resolution, H.J. Res. 79 by Representative JACKIE SPEIER, and it has now been reported out favorably. So we now have moving through the House of Representatives a resolution that would remove this time limit that was imposed in the 1970s on the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment.

What I am imploring upon my colleagues is, we are very close to getting this done. We know there was a change in leadership in Virginia. Virginia could very well be the 38th State. But let's remove the ambiguity as to a time limit.

We will celebrate in this Congress the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, the women's suffrage amendment that passed in 1920. Why did it take so long for women to have the right to vote? Well, people are asking: Why is it taking so long to put the Equal Rights Amendment into the Constitution of the United States?

We have a plan to get this done by passing the resolution I talked about, the 38th State to ratify it, and that at long last, the United States will provide the leadership on universal human rights by placing the Equal Rights Amendment in our Constitution.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

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

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

HEALTHCARE

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, as President Trump and the Senate Republicans continue to press forward with their relentless attacks on families' healthcare, the Democrats are going to continue to make clear just what is at stake by lifting up stories of patients and families across the country, starting with Natasha from my home State of Washington.

Because of a diagnosis she received when she was young, Natasha had long believed she could not conceive, so she and her partner were particularly surprised last year to get the news that she was pregnant. With that unexpected news, came all sorts of questions, including whether they could handle the cost of things like maternity care, postpartum care, and newborn care. Fortunately, Natasha's family had coverage through Medicaid, so all of the medical costs she had been so concerned about were completely covered. Instead of worrying about how they would pay for the healthcare she needed, she and her partner were able to focus on getting ready to welcome the newest addition to their family.

Natasha's story shows why families across the country are so worried as the Republicans continue down the damaging path they have been on for years. Since day No. 1 of the Trump administration, the Republicans have been working to raise families' healthcare costs, take away their coverage, and make healthcare lower quality.

In the Senate, the Republicans have stood with President Trump as he has tried to implement draconian caps on Medicaid through his Trumpcare bill and has proposed budgets that slash funding for Medicaid. They have also stood by as President Trump has implemented a gag rule on title X-funded clinics—jeopardizing reproductive healthcare for millions of patients. The Republicans are also opposing the Democrats' efforts to lower skyrocketing prescription drug prices by

allowing Medicare to negotiate on behalf of patients and to reverse President Trump's steps to promote junk insurance plans that do not protect patients with preexisting conditions and do increase families' healthcare costs.

The Republicans are even cheerleading a partisan lawsuit that will be catastrophic to families across the country. We could get a ruling on this lawsuit any day now. If the Republicans get their way, protections for the over 100 million people in this country with preexisting conditions could be thrown out the window. Millions of families who are covered through the exchanges and Medicaid expansion could be thrown off of their healthcare, and young adults could be kicked off of their parents' plans before they turn 26. Patients could also be stuck paying tens of thousands of dollars for their care as caps on their out-of-pocket costs are eliminated, as caps on their lifetime and annual benefits come back—even for those, by the way, who are covered through their employers' plans—and as essential benefits that make sure their coverage includes things like prescription drugs and emergency care go away.

For patients like Natasha, the Republicans' healthcare agenda would be a disaster. Not only would it gut Medicaid, which helped her to get the help she needed, but if the Republicans succeed in this lawsuit, insurance companies could discriminate against patients like her for having preexisting conditions, including, by the way, being pregnant, and insurance companies could choose not to cover essential health benefits like maternity care.

The junk plans President Trump is already promoting leave patients facing similar problems today. In fact, as part of their application process, many of those junk plans ask patients whether they are pregnant or are planning to become pregnant. That is because these junk plans are already allowed to deny coverage, exclude benefits, or charge higher premiums for patients with preexisting conditions.

The Republicans' approach to patients' healthcare—making it more expensive, harder to get, and lower quality—is clearly designed to work for big insurance companies, not for people like Natasha. Her story is one of many. In fact, it is one of tens of millions. There are so many other families across the country who are seeing their well-being being put at risk by the Republicans' harmful healthcare agenda. Yet we have seen before what can happen when people share their stories, when we lift those stories up, and when we put faces or names to the people the Republicans could hurt with their policies. When the Republicans tried to jam through their Trumpcare bill, we stopped it because people across the country fought back, and they spoke up.

As President Trump and the Republicans continue using every tool they can to try and undermine families'

healthcare, the Democrats are going to be here to continue to remind our colleagues on the other side of the aisle that everything we do and don't do in the Capitol has real consequences for real families, especially when it comes to issues like healthcare, which every family has to deal with.

Whether it is losing coverage right as you finally have the chance to start a family or whether it is being rejected because you have a preexisting condition, we are going to continue lifting up those voices who aren't on the Senate floor, and we are going to continue making clear what the GOP's healthcare plan would actually mean to people's lives. This isn't a matter of politics for families; it is a matter of life and death, and we aren't going to let the Republicans forget it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

NOMINATION OF STEVEN J. MENASHI

Mr. REED. Madam President, I have serious philosophical disagreements with many of the judicial nominees put forth by this administration, but I believe Mr. Menashi is especially unfit to serve on the Federal bench. His record indicates an inability to serve as a fair and impartial judge. And so I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to reject his nomination to a lifetime appointment on the bench.

Steven Menashi's public record demonstrates a deep contempt for a wide spectrum of Americans, and particularly some of the most vulnerable amongst us. In his own writings and as editor in chief of the *Dartmouth Review*, he has directly expressed or condoned disturbing views on issues such as LGBT rights, racism, and student aid.

Even if we were to cast these sentiments aside, Mr. Menashi's recent work in the Trump administration provides ample evidence that he is unfit for a lifetime appointment to the bench. Consider his performance as acting general counsel at the Department of Education. Mr. Menashi oversaw the rollback of regulations designed to protect students and taxpayers from predatory for-profit institutions of higher education.

More egregiously, Mr. Menashi wrote the memo outlining the administration's scheme to provide only partial debt relief to students defrauded by for-profit colleges—a scheme that a Federal judge ruled violated Federal privacy laws. Under this scheme, the Department of Education used data that was collected to hold institutions accountable for providing education leading to gainful employment to further punish their victims. The Department has still failed to comply with the court's orders, resulting in the Secretary of Education being held in contempt.

Mr. Menashi supervised the legal work on the administration's proposal to rewrite the rules dealing with sexual assault and sexual harassment on col-

lege campuses. The administration's own analysis concluded that the new rules would dramatically reduce the number of sexual assault investigations.

Mr. Menashi worked on the rule rolling back efforts to address disparities in the discipline of students of color and those with disabilities. In March, a Federal court ruled that the Department had engaged in an illegal delay and had acted arbitrarily and capriciously.

During Mr. Menashi's time at the Department of Education, the administration argued that it was appropriate to use Federal education funds to purchase guns for schools.

Also consider Mr. Menashi's time as a White House counsel where he helped Stephen Miller in crafting some of the administration's most draconian immigration policies. While he was an advisor, the White House cut refugee admissions to a historic low, effectively banned asylum for refugees traveling through Mexico, and threatened to end birthright citizenship.

His views and work experience call into question how his personal biases would color his rulings, and whether he has the judicial temperament and political independence necessary to serve on the Federal bench. This is not the kind of legal judgment that deserves a lifetime appointment to the Federal judiciary.

SENATE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

While the Senate has spent considerable time and hours on Mr. Menashi's nomination, one can't help but notice the fact that the majority leader seems to scrupulously avoid calling up votes on legislation that would help working Americans and working families.

I hear from my Rhode Island constituents every day about countless pressing issues that the Senate should be debating and voting on. We could be considering an infrastructure bill that would provide robust investment to enable the rebuilding of our crumbling roads, bridges, schools, and other critical infrastructure. We could be working to increase Pell grants and lower the cost of college.

I think every Member of this body would agree that another vital issue that we hear often from our constituents about is the need to address skyrocketing prescription drug costs. According to Families USA, nearly 3 in 10 American adults—nearly 80 million people—have not taken required medicine due to its costs. In fact, addressing prescription drug costs alone would go a long way toward bringing down healthcare costs overall.

There are dozens of proposals from Senators on both sides of the aisle that would help to address this issue. Yet Republican leadership has refused to allow any debate on prescription drug prices or on healthcare costs more broadly this year. Something I, and many of my colleagues, have proposed numerous times would be to require Medicare to negotiate drug prices with

the drug companies to ensure seniors and taxpayers get the best price. The Department of Veterans Affairs already does this. While there is no silver bullet in solving rising drug costs, this would be a commonsense first step in the right direction.

There are also more than 250 bills passed by the House that Majority Leader McCONNELL refuses to bring up and that have been left in the legislative graveyard. Let me repeat that. More than 250 bills are awaiting action here in the Senate. The House is doing its part to look out for the people's business, and the Senate should follow suit.

These include the Enhanced Background Checks Act, which would expand the national firearms background check system to include virtually all gun transfers, and block the illegal sales that currently happen through gun shows and private transfers. They include the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act, which is the primary law to provide services for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. They include the American Dream and Promise Act, which would provide a pathway to citizenship for DACA recipients, TPS holders, and those with DED. That's Deferred Enforced Departure.

Furthermore, Republicans continue to block Democratic-led efforts to pass commonsense election security legislation. This is despite warning after warning from our intelligence and national security agencies that Russia undertook an unprecedented effort to interfere in our 2016 elections and that the Russians are actively working to do it again in 2020.

Instead of elevating someone with an extreme record like Mr. Menashi to one of the highest courts in the land, we should be debating and voting on legislation that will protect healthcare, expand educational opportunity, secure our elections, fully fund the census, and prevent gun and domestic violence—in addition to many, many other important priorities.

The majority has refused to allow the Senate to vote on and address the pressing issues that Americans care about. And this body is failing to get its appropriations work done on time. So I urge the majority leader to end this partisan paralysis and let the Senate get to work on issues that can improve the lives of Rhode Islanders and all Americans.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Madam 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 REQUEST—S. 1573

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Madam President, as in legislative session, I ask unani-

mous consent that the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. 1573 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration. I further ask that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam President, reserving the right to object, while we very much appreciate what Senator DUCKWORTH is trying to accomplish, I must object to the request for unanimous consent.

The bill has only one cosponsor and has not gone through regular order, the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee has not considered the policy implications of the legislation, and the Appropriations Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs that I chair has not been given an opportunity to understand the budgetary impacts the bill would have.

This legislation would be a significant policy change for VA and would reduce revenue to VA medical centers by eliminating certain copayments. Policy changes such as this should be thoughtfully considered through full committees before being considered by the full Senate.

I look forward to working with Senator DUCKWORTH to see if we can get this resolved, but based on these facts, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Illinois.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Madam President, I am disappointed that the majority has objected to passing our bipartisan legislation.

Every Senator should support a simple fix to assure veterans enrolled in the VA system can obtain preventive medications without out-of-pocket costs.

All Americans deserve access to the best healthcare possible, especially the veterans who signed up to defend our Nation. Yet, because of this objection, our veterans will continue to pay more for essential preventive medications compared to every other insured American.

One of the Affordable Care Act's critical patient protections was prohibiting insurance companies and other health systems, including the Department of Defense's own TRICARE, from charging copayments for drugs that are designated as preventive by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force.

The ACA recognized that preventing serious illness, such as heart disease and breast cancer, may help avoid complex and costly medical treatments down the line.

Most importantly, preventive medicine may also increase patient survival odds. That is why the ACA required every insurer to cover preventive medications at no additional cost to enrollees.

The time has come to expand this vital patient protection to cover veterans enrolled in VA healthcare. Congress has the power to stop veterans from being the only ensured Americans who are charged copays and out-of-pocket fees for essential drugs and potentially lifesaving preventive health medication. This includes everything from critical vaccinations to common medications such as aspirin to lower the risk of heart disease and more advanced drugs such as tamoxifen inhibitors to lower the risk of breast cancer.

The question is simply, Does the Senate majority in this Congress have the will to exercise this power to swiftly fix the problem?

Unfortunately, today's objection provided a disappointing answer. I hope the majority will reconsider its opposition to passing the bipartisan Veterans Preventive Health Coverage Fairness Act by unanimous consent.

I am confident that a Democratic House majority would act swiftly to pass S. 1573 if we can get this commonsense bill to that Chamber. After all, I am confident that if asked, the majority of Americans—if not all Americans—would agree it is simply wrong to force veterans to pay more for essential preventive medications that are critically important to heart disease and building bone density.

This should not be controversial. It is certainly viewed as a commonsense legislative update by the veterans community.

That is why my bipartisan bill has been endorsed by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, the American Legion, the Disabled American Veterans, and the Paralyzed Veterans of America.

Making sure veterans enrolled in the VA system can obtain preventive medications without paying out of pocket should be something every Senator can agree on.

Senate Democrats certainly share this conviction. That is why every Member of the Democratic caucus agreed to pass the bipartisan Veterans Preventive Health Coverage Fairness Act right now.

Unfortunately, today's objection proves that not every Member of the Republican conference shares this conviction.

With deep disappointment, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

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

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

VETERANS DAY

Mr. GARDNER. Madam President, this week across this country, we celebrated Veterans Day. Veterans Day in

Colorado and across the country means a lot of different things to so many people across our Nation, but one thing it has always stood for is a day of thanks to share and celebrate the men and women in our families and our communities who have done so much for our country so that it continues to be the greatest Nation on the face of this Earth.

In Colorado, we celebrated with parades, parties, charity fundraisers, races and marathons, and events all over the Centennial State to recognize the work of our veterans and the sacrifice of our veterans and their families. Admission to all of our State parks was free so veterans and their families could enjoy the land they have defended.

In Colorado Springs, where we have a number of veterans and Active-Duty military members, three of the largest school districts didn't take the day off for Veterans Day but, instead, they held veteran appreciation events, breakfasts and lunches with local veterans, invited special speakers, wrote letters to men and women who have served, and had other opportunities for students to learn about the sacrifices our veterans have made for our country.

We in Colorado—we in this country take great pride in our veterans and our veteran community. In Colorado, our six military bases, including the U.S. Air Force Academy, all play a critical role in defending our Nation and keeping the world a safer place. Colorado is home to more than 400,000 veterans who have bravely served our country.

Earlier this year, I was fortunate enough to meet more than 100 Colorado heroes as part of the High Plains Honor Flight, a tradition that has been carried on for a number of years. It is an incredible tradition every year—bringing Colorado veterans to our Nation's Capital, touring the war memorials, and taking the opportunity to meet these veterans, look them in the eye, shake their hands, and say thank you.

I could spend all week talking on the floor about Colorado's veterans and their incredible acts of service, but if you get the chance, I hope you will visit Pueblo, CO. The Home of Heroes Medal of Honor Memorial is in Pueblo, CO. The memorial pays tribute to more than 3,400 people who have received our country's highest award for military valor.

Outside the memorial, there are four statues, one for each of Pueblo's Medal of Honor recipients.

One of these men, Lt. Raymond G. Murphy, was a U.S. marine who was serving in Korea in 1953. After a failed raid with heavy casualties, Lieutenant Murphy organized and led his platoon in a heroic rescue effort to save his fellow marines. Providing cover and driving back the enemy, he rescued his fellow men who were under intense enemy fire. He sustained numerous wounds but refused treatment until everyone

else had been treated. Lieutenant Murphy stayed on the battlefield until every marine was accounted for.

When President Eisenhower presented Murphy with the Medal of Honor, he was quoted as saying:

"What is it about the water out there in Pueblo? All you guys turn out to be heroes!"

That is our Pueblo, CO. Whatever it is, there must be a lot of it in Colorado's water.

U.S. Army CPT Florent Groberg—another Coloradan—was based out of Fort Carson. He received the Medal of Honor for his heroic actions in Afghanistan. In 2012, his patrol was ambushed by an individual wearing a suicide vest. Captain Groberg rushed to the individual and grabbed him, driving him away from his fellow troops and down to the ground. The bomber's vest exploded, severely wounding Captain Groberg. He miraculously survived the blast, and his heroic actions and selflessness saved many of his patrol members' lives. His actions were certainly extraordinary, and they showed the character of the men and women who serve. They would do anything to protect those they love.

I am also reminded of a Coloradan I have had the honor of working with and meeting over the last several years. Two years ago, in fact, I had a Veterans Day experience I will never forget with another veteran who refused to give up on his fellow brothers and sisters in arms. I was visiting Donald Stratton, who was a seaman 1st class on the USS *Arizona* when the Japanese launched a surprise attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

Mr. Stratton was one of the last five remaining survivors stationed on the USS *Arizona*. Since that time 2 years ago, we have lost Lauren Bruner. There are even fewer today than there were.

He told me how a young sailor named Joseph George disregarded the orders to abandon ship in order to save his life and the other sailors. Joseph George never received a medal for his actions, and Donald Stratton didn't think that was fair. It didn't sit well. Mr. Stratton and I and his family worked together to finally convince the Navy to honor Joe George, to give this hero the recognition he deserves.

Donald Stratton's story sticks with me because he had already fought one war for his country, and then he had to spend another 16 years fighting government bureaucracy in order to honor the man who saved his life and the lives of others. It is a reminder that our veterans need our help and our support to receive the recognition and the care they continue to deserve.

All of the stories I have shared and the individuals I have talked about are extraordinary, but there are so many other—countless acts of heroism. Every single person in our armed services today is extraordinary. Every day, they perform heroic acts of service and make sacrifices that may not make the national news or the front page of newspapers, but we shouldn't lose sight

of the fact that they sacrifice for our country every day. They have put their bodies and their minds through vigorous training, boot camps, and deployments. They have given up valuable time with their loved ones. They are away from home for months at a time, if not longer. There are the holidays they will never get back and the important milestones they have missed with their families as they placed their civilian lives on hold to serve our country. And too many people return with wounds of war, both physical and mental. All of these sacrifices and their willingness to place their lives on the line for the country they love add up to a debt we can never repay—never pay back.

I hope that the Veterans Day celebration this week serves as a reminder that it is our responsibility to take care of those who have taken care of us. We owe it to our Nation's veterans to ensure that they can receive the best possible care and that they have the tools and support necessary to navigate civilian life.

The Senate and the House have taken great steps to improve the lives of veterans and the care they receive, but we can always do more, and we must do more. We must do more and never give up. We can do better than the status quo.

For veterans living in rural areas like the Western Slope or Eastern Plains of Colorado, long drive times and a shortage of doctors and nurses at the VA facilities make it difficult to receive the care we promised. There has never been a fight too dangerous or a task too difficult for these men and women who have served our country, and that is the approach we need to take. We have to be in this fight to make sure we approach veterans' care with the same commitment and find creative solutions to ease the transition to civilian life, to make sure they have the care they need, and to make sure we have enough physicians and nurses and doctors in these places to provide the best possible care.

Earlier this year, I introduced my VA Readiness Initiative, which is a comprehensive package of improvements and reforms to ensure we are following through on every one of these promises to veterans. The VA Readiness Initiative focuses on four pillars to support veterans: expanding access to services, encouraging innovation, VA accountability, and empowering transitioning servicemembers.

It introduces more oversight and more transparency and accountability at VA facilities to eliminate fraud and increase the quality of care.

In order to ease the transition to civilian life, it enhances programs that help veterans start small businesses and train for future careers in the science, technology, engineering, and math fields.

It promotes innovative approaches to suicide prevention, which is a heart-breaking problem in the veteran community.

In Colorado, we are losing one of our own nearly every 7 hours to suicide. In recent years, we have lost more veterans to suicide than we lost in combat. Think about that. We have lost more veterans to suicide than we have lost in combat. In Colorado, we lose roughly 200 veterans a year to suicide.

I am working with my colleague Senator TAMMY BALDWIN from Wisconsin to designate 9-8-8 as a national suicide hotline that veterans and anyone else in crisis can call when they need help. Veterans answered our call when we needed them; we need to answer their call when they need us.

When somebody is suffering from a heart attack or a medical emergency, a crisis, we all know to call 9-1-1, but how many people know a number to call if they find themselves in a time of mental health crisis? Is there a 10-digit hotline? Yes, there is. How many people can know that and know that now off the top of their heads? How many people can tell a friend in need what that hotline number is? Let's simplify it. Let's make it a three-digit number like 9-1-1 for health crisis emergencies. Let's make sure we have 9-8-8 for mental health needs.

The current suicide hotline number is 10 digits long. This is an easy-to-remember hotline—9-8-8—to connect people in crisis with professional help. When a veteran is in need, a phone call is made, and they will receive specialized care for veterans. Press 1 to be directed to the veterans support line, where they can receive mental health support specific to the unique needs of our veterans.

I also hope every veteran in Colorado will look to our offices—my office in Colorado and my colleagues' offices—Senator BENNET and others—if there is anything we can do to help. Oftentimes, too many people don't know about the services that can help them.

Thanks to the outpouring of veterans who contact my office each and every year, we were able to help open the VA Medical Center in Aurora, CO, last year. It was long overdue but essential to their care and to making sure we have the finest medical care for Coloradans.

Senator JOHNNY ISAKSON from Georgia, chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee—somebody who is stepping down from this Chamber at the end of the year, and we will miss him greatly—was instrumental in making this happen and will be greatly missed when he leaves. JOHNNY is a true statesman and a champion for our veterans. We in Colorado are grateful for his work to make sure that the VA hospital in Aurora is the crown jewel of our support system in our State for veterans.

November is also Military Family Appreciation Month. I certainly want to express my gratitude to the military families who share the burden of service. This is not just an individual effort; it is indeed a family effort. When one member of the family serves, the entire family serves.

We all know this can be a difficult time of the year. The holidays are coming up for troops and their families. As all of us celebrate Thanksgiving, Christmas, Hanukkah, and other traditions in our families, I hope each one of our prayers will go to a military family in need, heroes who are placing their dreams on hold to protect the American dream.

To everyone who has served this country, thank you for the sacrifice you have all made, and know that our Nation is grateful. It is because of the commitment you bring that we can continue to live in a nation with unlimited opportunities, a nation founded in liberty and rooted in the principles that inspire hope and optimism around the world.

To every veteran, thank you from the bottom of my heart for everything you have done in service to our beloved country. May God bless you, and may God bless this great United States of America as you continue to serve and as we continue to serve you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. (Mr. YOUNG.) The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, Monday was Veterans Day, and it gave us all the opportunity to come together as Republicans and Democrats and Independents alike to express our immense gratitude to our veterans for putting on the uniform of the United States on behalf of our great country and on behalf of all of us.

I just listened to my colleague from Colorado talk about our cherished veterans and their service. He is a champion for our veterans. He is absolutely right—our veterans need to be at the front of the line for healthcare and getting access to the best care possible. That hasn't always been the case. We have made some improvements in the last few years, and those are now being implemented. They are not perfect, but thankfully it is much better. I heard that over Veterans Day.

He also talked about our families. The families of veterans also make sacrifices, and sometimes we forget that. In the last several years, as the up-tempo has been a little higher and families have had to sacrifice even more, we are particularly grateful for those families.

The Presiding Officer today is one of our veterans in the Chamber. As a marine, he has served our country with distinction, and we appreciate him and all the other veterans here in the Senate.

In my home State of Ohio, we have 850,000 veterans, roughly. It makes us a State that is particularly proud. We are a State that has produced some of the great American fighting men and women heroes, from Ulysses S. Grant to Neil Armstrong.

When I go to veterans' events, I am just inspired and overwhelmed by the families and the veterans I get to meet.

On Veterans Day, I was in Blue Ash, OH, at a memorial that has been set

aside for our veterans. It was a wonderful day in Blue Ash, but every day of the year this memorial park is there, and it is beautiful. It commemorates veterans from every single war. There are 11 soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen who are representing each of the conflicts America has been engaged in, all the way from the American Revolution to the heroes of the Global War on Terror. Behind a description of each of those conflicts is a separate statue of a fighting man or woman. Most importantly to me, on Monday, on the other side of those statues, were the veterans. They were there from every conflict—from World War II and right up to those soldiers who have recently come back from Afghanistan.

Today, as we are here on the floor talking about our great veterans, there are soldiers, marines, sailors, and airmen on Active Duty in places all around the world, including in Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq.

After this event in Blue Ash, OH, I then went to Columbus, OH, and had the opportunity to go to the National Veterans Memorial and Museum. This is a new, spectacular museum outside of Columbus, OH. It is something we are very proud of in Ohio. I took the lead in the Senate to try to be sure that we had the national designation. We have that now. It is the National Veterans Memorial and Museum. It was funded almost entirely with private sector dollars. Over \$75 million was raised just from the private sector in the Columbus-Central Ohio area. President Trump signed the legislation into law last year to designate it as the national memorial.

It is a beautiful way to pay tribute to our veterans, mostly by stories. You walk in, and there are story boards about different veterans' experiences. The facility itself is inspiring—one of the finest architectural designs, we are told, in the country the year it was built.

When I went around and thanked veterans at this memorial, I heard the same thing I heard in Blue Ash and that I hear every time I thank a veteran, which is more or less this: Thank you for your service. The response being: I was just doing my job. I was just doing my duty.

Duty. I am the son of a World War II veteran and the grandson of a World War I veteran. "Duty" is a word I heard a lot growing up and "service" and "honor." For our country today, those words are very important to remember.

Our veterans have played a key role in ensuring we have the freedoms we too often take for granted, but also there is a culture around veterans that we need to hear more and more of today, and we need to be sure more of our young people are hearing, which is this notion that service beyond self is important; that duty, honor, and sacrifice are part of the fundamental values of our country.

The fact that we have had such support for our veterans, to me, ought also

to be translated into support for those who are on Active Duty, because when I talk to our veterans about their concerns—yes, they talk about healthcare or disability and other issues that my office helps veterans with every day, and we are proud to do that—what they also tell me is that they want to be sure we are taking care of the troops. They want to be sure we are honoring our veterans by ensuring that the men and women in uniform today, who are out on the frontlines for all of us, are getting the support they need from the U.S. Congress.

Unfortunately, we are letting them down right now, whether it is with the National Defense Authorization Act—which is still in conference, which normally is a bipartisan bill that gets done quickly and that establishes the framework for how we provide readiness and how we provide the right weapons, being sure our soldiers, marines, airmen, and sailors have the very best—but, secondly, we are not even providing the funding bill this year.

We have tried. We have brought it to the floor of the Senate, and we have asked for a vote on it. We have not been able to get that vote. So right now we are operating on what is called a continuing resolution, which is not good for the military.

I was at the Youngstown Air Reserve Station last week, which is a reserve unit in Ohio that provides airlift capability and a spray mission for our military. They have about 1,500 airmen support people and pilots there. They are very worried about the continuing resolution and its impact. They can't plan for training exercises. They can't plan for upgrades in their equipment to keep the cutting-edge technology they want to have for the safety of their pilots and the crews.

I also heard, of course, a lot about the possibility of a government shutdown and how devastating that would be for our military. Wright-Patterson Air Force Base is in Ohio. That is their top concern.

Unfortunately, I will tell you that although our highest priority here in the Senate ought to be ensuring that at a minimum our troops have what they need, we haven't done that this year.

I would urge my colleagues on both sides: Let's figure out how to do what we typically do here, which is, if we can't agree on everything in the spending bills, let's at least agree on providing this funding for our troops.

By the way, it is particularly important this year because in that funding is a pay raise for the troops that they need badly. It is very important for Ohio.

I said earlier that we are one of those States that is proud of all the veterans who live there and all of the people from Ohio who have stood up and served their country, but we are also proud of our military facilities. Defense spending now accounts for 66,000 direct jobs in Ohio, more than \$4 billion in salaries, and more than \$14 bil-

lion of positive economic impact spread out over our 88 counties in Ohio.

We have some great facilities. I mentioned Wright-Patterson Air Force Base and the Youngstown Air Reserve Station. We also have the Joint Systems Manufacturing Center in Lima, OH, which is the place where we make our tanks. During the Obama administration, that facility was nearly shut down. A bunch of us led the fight, and I led the fight here in the Senate to keep it open. Thank goodness we did. Today, we need it. We need to be producing these tanks. We need to push back against the threats that we see. Our Army wants these vehicles—armored vehicles—including Strykers and tanks. We are very proud of that facility in Ohio. We want to be sure that we have the funding for it so we can move forward. In this appropriations bill there is funding for new tanks and new Stryker vehicles.

At the spray facility I talked about at the Youngstown Air Reserve Station, they need new airplanes. They need to have upgrades. Right now they need to be sure that the funding we have in this appropriations bill goes through because it actually enables them to construct a gate for the facility that is safe. The homeland security folks have told them that their current gate does not protect the base properly. So we have funding in this legislation to be able to do that.

I remain concerned that we are not coming together, as we do for our veterans, for our Active Duty.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle have repeatedly blocked these procedural motions to move the bill forward, but their disagreements seem to be more with broader issues—how we are going to fund other issues, maybe including the wall on the southwest border—from what they say. Let's deal with that bill separately, but let's not take it out on our troops. Let's not make our troops a pawn in these political fights.

The funding bill we have was drafted on a bipartisan basis. It also is bicameral, in the sense that the House bill for Defense appropriations this year is very similar to the Senate bill.

The United States and the defense framework we have built over the years with our allies is under siege in places like Iran, China, North Korea, Turkey, and Russia. While we fight over funding our defense this year, their arsenals—those countries' arsenals—continue to grow.

I have heard from every branch of the military on this. Again, they all say the same thing: Failing to pass this funding agreement and defaulting to a continuing resolution—God forbid we go to a government shutdown, but even a continuing resolution where the funding wouldn't increase—negatively affects their ability to carry out their missions.

For the Army, by the way, that means delaying procurement of critical equipment, like their Next Generation

Combat Vehicle and land-based hypersonic missiles. But it also means more than 4,000 military family and single-soldier dwellings would not be awarded to servicemembers, and that nearly 300 military housing units in desperate need of repair will not get the upkeep they need.

For the Navy, they tell me failing to pass the appropriations bill will mean delaying the start of 3 dozen new critical military construction projects, and it creates a nearly \$2 billion shortfall for research and development, among other things. By the way, that includes holding research into artificial intelligence development, or AI development, which is critical right now. China is making great strides in that area. We have to be sure we are more than keeping up.

For the Air Force, they tell me this funding is necessary to field the new F-15EX fighter plane, to maintain and improve, of course, the F-35 fleet, and to help recruit and train new pilots to operate these state-of-the-art aircraft.

In Ohio, a CR would negatively impact our operations at Wright-Patterson and the critical work we do for our Nation at NASIC, which is a counter-intelligence operation, among other things.

Again, failing to pass the agreement will also keep us from moving forward with the across-the-board 3.1-percent pay increase for our troops, which is key to ensuring they are fairly compensated for their hard work and the sacrifices we have talked about today. It would be the largest pay raise in a decade, and they shouldn't be prevented from getting it because of our political differences here on other issues.

Anyone who has read the Constitution will tell you that the very first stated purpose of the Federal Government is to "provide for the common defense." That is our fundamental responsibility here. If we can't put aside these partisan disagreements and reach an agreement to fund our Armed Forces, we are failing to carry out those duties.

I hope it doesn't come to that. I hope politics can be put aside, and we can agree soon to give our men and women in uniform the comprehensive support they need, because when you meet veterans, as I did on Veterans Day across our State, you can't help but wonder where they would be if they didn't have the funding they needed when they were out there putting their lives on the line for all of us.

Again, to honor our veterans, we also have to honor our Active Duty. It is critical to our men and women in uniform, and it is critical to our national security.

I yield back.

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.

REMEMBERING KAY HAGAN

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise today to recount the life of a colleague who recently passed away, Senator Kay Hagan from the State of North Carolina. I wish I didn't have to stand here to talk about her in the past tense. So many people who have served in the Senate with Kay Hagan, so many staff people across the Senate—and, in the context of both Members and staff, I would say both parties—recall serving with her fondly and also were very saddened by her passing.

It is very difficult to encapsulate someone's personality or their life in a few short remarks, but you could not have met Kay Hagan even for a short period of time or worked with her even for a short period of time without being captivated by her spirit, her energy, and her optimism, not only about her life but about work. You could also be captivated by her ability to connect with people and to demonstrate the kind of uncommon decency that we don't see enough of in politics and even public service. We are going to miss that energy, that optimism, and that decency. We are also going to miss her commitment to public service, even when she was not an elected public official.

My remarks today will not in any way encapsulate her whole life or her life of service, but I will try to provide some reflections.

One thing you knew about Kay Hagan when she got to the Senate was that she was very clear about the people she represented in the State from which she came. If you were in a short conversation with her or a long conversation—even a 30-second conversation—you were likely to hear the two words, "North Carolina," if not once in a short conversation, several times.

She was so proud of her State and so proud of the opportunities she had to represent the people of North Carolina. She, of course, understood her work and was faithful to the basic obligation to represent the Nation as well. She was fiercely loyal to and always concerned about the people of North Carolina.

She was a fierce advocate for working people in North Carolina and around the country. She also happened to serve at a time when the Senate was considering and then, ultimately, took a vote on the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. At that time, it was a long debate and a lot of contention, obviously, and there still is on healthcare. But Kay Hagan was very clear about where she stood.

We happened to serve as members of the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, known by the acronym HELP—one of the two committees in the Senate that considered healthcare. Both the HELP Committee and the Finance Committee had fierce debate about and then, ultimately, votes on the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Here is what Senator Kay Hagan said when the HELP Committee approved

similar or, I should say, related legislation, which at that time was called the Affordable Health Choices Act. That was the original healthcare bill that went through that committee, the HELP Committee. It ultimately changed when it was considered by the Finance Committee and then by the whole Senate, and the changes were made in negotiation and deliberation with the House.

But here is what she said. I guess this would have been sometime in 2009. She talked about this one particular healthcare bill as it stood at that moment. She said:

Our bill also ensures that a pre-existing condition will not prevent you from getting coverage. This compromise package focuses on prevention and wellness, which will keep our nation healthier and save taxpayers' money in the long run. I will continue working with my colleagues to get reform legislation to the President that stabilizes costs, expands coverage and improves the quality of care for all Americans.

That is what Senator Kay Hagan said at the time. Of course, we are still wrestling with a lot of those issues. She was predicting, in a sense, some of our future debates.

Kay Hagan wanted to get things done for the people she represented and really for the American people. One of the areas where she demonstrated that commitment to leadership and that commitment to getting things done was in the area of children's issues. In that same committee, the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, she was the chair of the Subcommittee on Children and Families. Later, I was able to follow in her footsteps.

That was so emblematic of Kay Hagan's service not to be concerned just about what is right in front of us—the issue of the day or the issue of the moment, as important as those issues are—but always thinking about what comes next, always focusing on the future, thinking about the future, and not just in a compassionate way, as it relates to children, but in a very strategic way. Kay Hagan knew that investing in our children was essential for building the economy of the future and having the kind of country we say we want to have.

So Kay Hagan was ahead of her time in that regard, focusing on America's future, which meant focusing on America's children—whether it was financial literacy and the curriculum for middle and high school students or whether it was from her earliest days in the Senate—to improve the lives of children in any way that she could.

When I think about Kay Hagan, I think of not just a Senator, not just a colleague and a friend, but a public servant, someone who cared very deeply about service. I have often quoted the inscription on a building in which I worked in the State capital of Pennsylvania—Harrisburg. It is called the Finance Building, and I served in that building for 10 years and worked in that building for 10 years. The inscrip-

tion on that building about public service is very simple. It says: "All public service is a trust given in faith and accepted in honor." That is what it says in that inscription. It is a great summation of what public service must be about and what an election must be about, that public service is a trust that is given to one person, given to a group of people, and that trust must be honored by the service that you render.

Here is another way of saying it by a predecessor of Kay Hagan, in a sense, because she was a Member of the Senate and, at the time, a real pioneer for women in the Senate. Margaret Chase Smith once said:

Public service must be more than doing a job efficiently and honestly. It must be a complete dedication to the people and to the nation.

That is what Senator Margaret Chase Smith once said, and I think Kay Hagan's service was totally consistent with that sentiment, that public service is more than just doing a job honestly and efficiently, as Senator Smith said at the time. It must be a complete dedication to the people in the Nation. Kay Hagan demonstrated that in her life and in her work.

I have joined so many Members of the Senate in expressing condolence and also commendation for the good work that she did. I express condolence, of course, to her family. I speak on behalf of my wife Terese and many people here in the Senate who served with Kay to offer condolence to Kay's husband Chip and to her three children—Jeanette, Tilden, and Carrie—and Kay's five grandchildren. We are thinking of them today and all these days since her passing, and we pray that she will rest in peace. I express again how much we will miss Kay Hagan not only in the Senate but also because of the person she was. God bless you, Kay.

With that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that unless there is objection, the 1:45 p.m. vote be held now.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

All postcloture time is expired.

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

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The bill clerk will call the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. JONES), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), and the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) are necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 51, nays 41, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 356 Ex.]

YEAS—51

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

NAYS—41

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

NOT VOTING—8

Bennet	Jones	Sanders
Booker	Klobuchar	Warren
Harris	Rounds	

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 actions.

The majority leader.

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. 487.

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 Robert J. Luck, of Florida, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eleventh Circuit.

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 the nomination of Robert J. Luck, of Florida, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eleventh Circuit.

Rick Scott, Steve Daines, Mike Crapo, Pat Roberts, Marco Rubio, Lindsey Graham, John Hoeven, Roy Blunt, Mike Rounds, John Thune, John Cornyn, Deb Fischer, John Barrasso, James E. Risch, John Boozman, Tim Scott, 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. 488.

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 Barbara Lagoa, of Florida, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eleventh Circuit.

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 the nomination of Barbara Lagoa, of Florida, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eleventh Circuit.

Rick Scott, Steve Daines, Mike Crapo, Pat Roberts, Marco Rubio, Lindsey Graham, John Hoeven, Roy Blunt, Mike Rounds, John Thune, John Cornyn, Deb Fischer, John Barrasso, James E. Risch, John Boozman, Tim Scott, 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. 454.

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 Adrian Zuckerman, of New Jersey, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Romania.

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 the nomination of Adrian Zuckerman, of New Jersey, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Romania.

Mitch McConnell, John Boozman, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Pat Roberts, James M. Inhofe, Chuck Grassley, Richard C. Shelby, Roger F. Wicker, John Cornyn, Cory Gardner, James Lankford, Mike Braun, John Hoeven, Roy Blunt, John Barrasso, James E. Risch, John Thune.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum calls 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.

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

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

AFRICA

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, this past weekend, I was the first Senator in a really long time to fly into Somalia's notoriously dangerous capital city. I will tell you, at first glance, it looks like things in Mogadishu have gotten back to normal. But the situation on the ground, after you fly in and get out of the plane and you get on the ground, you see it is really quite a different story.

There is a reason why our recollection of Somali history focuses on the Black Hawk Down incident—the terrible Battle of Mogadishu—and then—

President Bill Clinton's decision to evacuate American troops from the Horn of Africa.

Somalia's legacy is rooted in years of violence that overwhelmed the world's most elite military forces, froze the economy, and left the Somali people very much alone in the world—at least until 9/11, when Western powers were forced to focus on multiple fronts in the War on Terror.

I was fortunate enough last weekend to visit our Djibouti-based troops at Camp Lemonnier. Our base there was established in the wake of 9/11, and since then, has expanded to support AFRICOM's mission in the Horn of Africa. Their leadership is committed to not repeating the mistakes of the past. They have developed the best unmanned aerial system force in the world.

It is amazing what they are doing with these UAVs. Between that program and our impressive intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities, the military has stepped up their ability to keep our troops safer in the world's most volatile theater.

I was pleased to know that the 101st Airborne out of Fort Campbell—which is located in Montgomery County, TN, and also there on the Kentucky border—are supporting the vital post-Benghazi East Africa Response Force mission and that the Nashville-based 118th Air Wing unit of the Tennessee Air National Guard plays a vital role in regional security operations.

It brought home to me the point of why we have to get the NDAA finished, why we have to get these resources to our men and women in uniform who are fighting every day and need 21st-century warfare in order to keep us safe.

The work they are doing there—and of course I can't say exactly what it is that they are doing—should make us all really humbled and grateful for those who choose to serve.

Our mission in Africa is changing. Things are shifting a little bit. As we urge our local partners in Africa to take ownership over their own security, the chattering class is at it again and what we will hear from people is: Well, I think we have done enough for Africa. Don't you think we have given enough?

My response this week to those who have made that statement has been: No, we have not done enough. We have invested more than a decades' worth of time, money, and manpower. We have lost men, lost ground, regained that ground, expanded our abilities, and have achieved moderate regional stability. But most importantly, we have confirmed the Horn of Africa is still a geopolitical powder keg.

The same forces that swept the Horn into anarchy in the 1990s and allowed terrorism to metastasize in the 2000s are now triggering instability all across that continent.

For a long time, Somalia managed to limp along as a failed state because a

traditional government has never acted as their main arbiter. Powerful clans decided for themselves who would control territory and resources, and the clans are still very evident in that country. The victors, in turn, weaponized access to clean water, food, and healthcare in order to keep citizens in line.

Violent extremist organizations like al-Shabaab, ISIS, and factions of al-Qaida have been watching, and now they are employing the same tactics to destabilize existing governments in and beyond the Horn, in northeast Nigeria, and in the Sahel and the Lake Chad regions of West Africa.

We may have eradicated the physical caliphate, but mom-and-pop terror shops are thriving. What is more, the digital caliphate is alive and well, and it will take more than ground forces to wipe it out.

Many of my colleagues may be tempted to assume that these insurgent hotbeds have lowered Africa's stock in the eyes of global powers, but we shouldn't be fooled about that in this era of great power competition. It is going to sound mighty familiar to all of us, but China and, to a lesser extent, Russia are doing all they can to actually buy their way into strategic dominance. This is some of what we heard and what we learned this week. For example, China has made inroads by agreeing to hold 80 percent of the government of Djibouti's debt. Think about that. China has gone to this country and they have said: Look, we will hold this debt for you, 80 percent of it.

In turn, Djibouti has accommodated China's first overseas military outpost and granted them access to crucial shipping lanes. They have also bought into China's Smart City Program, those all-seeing cameras that I encountered at every intersection at Djibouti City. In other words, the Chinese must feel like they have struck gold. They have a huge port going in. They are helping to turn this into an intermodal transit system with a port, with a railway. By the way, we are going to put these cameras up to help you keep your community safe. And what is China doing? China is collecting all that data. They are scanning all of these faces. They are watching everything that comes into these ports and are monitoring everything that goes on the rails.

China is doing this not only with Djibouti but with other countries in Africa. They are trying to secure this coastline in Africa for themselves to expand their reach.

For 12 years, the United States and our partners have worked together to bring stability to the Horn of Africa. The State Department and USAID have laid the groundwork for education, for health development, institution building, and permanent democratic transition. Yet the region remains vulnerable. Our role is going to change because, yes, we look at it as great power

competition through the military. But we also look at the way China and Russia are pushing into their economic sectors. Great power competition is not just playing out in the Indo-Pacific or in Eastern Europe; it is playing out right now on the African Continent. Instead of playing defense, as we do in other theaters, we have the opportunity to be on offense when it comes to Africa.

If we decide that now we have had enough, these threats—from the military, that sector, and from the economic sector—will degrade American influence and will threaten the homeland and will imperil the delicate and completely reversible balance that we have fought so hard to gain. Our Nation's security cannot afford to give ground, to cede ground, on the Continent of Africa.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

AMERICA RECYCLES DAY

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I rise to talk about something that is really important, I think not only to our Nation and our planet but to me and my family personally.

As cochair and cofounder, along with Senator JOHN BOOZMAN of Arkansas, of the Senate Recycling Caucus, I am proud to stand side by side with all the Members of our caucus on the matter of recycling and its importance.

Today Senator BOOZMAN and I have introduced a resolution to commemorate tomorrow, November 15, as America Recycles Day. I would say that every day should be America Recycles Day. For a lot of our families, that is what it is. I don't have any idea how many millions or tens of millions of families recycle every day, but it is a lot of people, and we need even more.

For more than two decades, communities across our country have come together on November 15, and they do so to observe America Recycles Day and to celebrate their commitment to recycling.

First, I want to thank all of those who have worked hard to make America Recycles Day a success for all of these years. I have been a huge advocate of recycling for the past 50 years. I first recycled, I think, when I was a lieutenant JG in the Navy stationed in Moffett Field in California, which is close to Palo Alto. I took my recyclables to a warehouse there in Palo Alto and have never stopped. I don't go to the one in Palo Alto anymore, but we recycle all over Delaware. Frankly, when I go around the country, I recycle. I recycled on the train this morning, somewhere around Baltimore, coming down from Wilmington.

I really welcomed the opportunity to collaborate—I want to say more than a decade ago—with Senator Olympia Snowe of Maine. Together, we helped create the Senate Recycling Caucus in 2006. Since the retirement of Senator Snowe 6 years ago, I have been fortunate enough to have as my running mate and cochair Senator BOOZMAN of Arkansas.

In this year alone, our caucus has held four briefings to learn more about the current state of recycling in this country and to discuss ways in which the Federal Government might play an even more important role in encouraging additional recycling in the years to come.

The State and local governments are heavily involved in recycling, and there is a huge role for them—I say this as former Governor—a huge and important role for State and local governments to be involved in this, but there are also opportunities for the Federal Government to play a constructive role. We are doing that, and hopefully we will be able to do that even better in the days to come.

My sister and I were born in a coal mining town in West Virginia. We grew up later on in Virginia, where I was a Boy Scout and a Civil Air Patrol cadet. In scouting, we were taught to “leave no trace.” When we were hunting or fishing, my dad, a big hunter and fisherman, used to say basically to leave no trace behind so no one would actually know we were there. I think that admonition is one that has stuck with me throughout my life.

I believe we have a moral obligation to be devoted stewards of our environment and our planet and to leave our planet in even better shape than we found it.

Lately, I have been thinking about another quote. This one I really like is from Martin Luther King that a lot of people have heard. It goes something like this: “Everybody can be great, because anybody can serve.” This call to service reminds me of recycling because almost anyone can help better protect our environment by reducing the waste we produce, and we can do that, in part, by recycling.

I have a chart here that indicates just some of the things I recycled of late. This is not a green Ford Explorer. I bought my wife a car—actually, she bought it years and years ago, probably 15 years ago. We call it the Ford “exploder.” It never exploded. It was a great car. She used it for 9 or 8 years or so and passed it down to our son, Christopher. He used it for a couple of years and passed it down to Ben, who used it for about 3 years. Finally, it just gave up the ghost. I took it one day to a place where they recycled cars. I drove in. They put it on a huge machine that actually weighed it. I think of—you know, you get on a scale to weigh yourself. Well, this was like a scale for vehicles, including our Ford Explorer. They wrote out a check literally before I left to actually pay, I think \$900, for

recycling the Explorer. People do that every day in Delaware and other places as well.

We have a waste facility in our State of Delaware, and one of the things they oversee is recycling. About every month, from spring to the fall, they hold recycling events. A lot of times they are in school parking lots, maybe high school parking lots. They do them on Saturdays.

One Saturday I called ahead, and I asked: Do you guys recycle dehumidifiers? We had a dehumidifier. It was about 20 years old. It had been in our basement forever. They said: Yes, we do that—which is great, and we checked on paints, paint thinners, oil-based paints, and stuff. They said: We are doing hazardous materials recycling. So I took several cans of paint thinners.

We had all these outdoor lights from our house over the years that kind of died out on us, and I didn’t know what to do with them. Sure enough, they took these household lights, as well as all kinds of cords and everything, paints and stuff.

Every Monday in my neighborhood, we have big canisters outside where we can recycle all kinds of things. I always had water bottles in there and other kinds of cans and so forth, newspapers, you name it—actually, compost too. If you actually add up what we put in our big recycling bin every Monday for pickup, you look at what we put in our compost in our backyard, and you compare that to the actual amount of trash that is picked up at our house on Thursdays, there are many times more recyclables and compostables than there is actually trash.

We like to do that where I live. Hopefully, we will learn from other communities and States, and hopefully they will learn from us.

One of the reasons I love recycling so much flows from my belief that all of us can do our part to preserve limited resources and reduce landfill input, while at the same time helping our environment and creating jobs.

Mine is a little State. I tell people, even today, that we are the 49th largest State. That means only Rhode Island is smaller than us. We are about 100 miles long and 50 miles wide, so recycling is particularly important. We just doesn’t have a lot of space for landfills. We have about 1 million people, and it is just a matter of having enough space. That space limitation is actually what prompted Delaware to pass the Universal Recycling Law in 2010. It requires that all waste haulers who provide residential trash collection also have to provide for the collection of recyclables. Think about that. That was the law we passed about 9 years ago, I think under the leadership of either Governor Markell or Governor Minner. We started a little bit of recycling. We started getting serious about it when I was Governor. They really ramped it up in the last decade, which is wonderful.

Since the law’s passage, the First State—that is Delaware, if you didn’t know—has continued to recycle somewhere around 40 percent of all of our waste, most recently recycling a little bit more than 43 percent in 2017.

I have a friend who, when you ask him how he is doing, he sometimes replies: Compared to what? Well, compared to more than a decade ago, in 2006, the First State diverted about half as much—23 percent of our waste from landfills. So we pretty much doubled that over the last 10 years. Hopefully, we will come close to doubling it again in the years to come.

Today the recycling industry faces unprecedented challenges, especially with respect to plastics. The United States used to ship a lot of our recyclables, as you know, to China, but beginning in 2017, China decided to ban 24 types of what are called scrap imports and deployed strict contamination requirements for the scraps they will accept. They didn’t want to have glass mixed up with metals, mixed up with plastic and paper. They are looking to reduce contamination like that, and they made their rules a whole lot stricter in that regard.

Now, because of the policies China implemented in March of this year, local governments and municipalities are facing an uphill challenge to keep their recycling programs alive. According to the EPA, the United States recycles less than 22 percent of our discarded materials, which makes me feel better in Delaware because we are like twice the national average now.

According to a peer-reviewed study published in 2017, more than 90 percent of plastic has never been recycled. Let me say that again. According to a peer-reviewed study published in 2017—2 years ago—more than 90 percent of plastic has never been recycled. That means we have only recycled about 9 percent of our plastic around the world. Of the 8.3 billion metric tons of plastic produced, 6.3 billion tons—that is about three-fourths of all that is produced—becomes waste. The rest gets recycled; the lion’s share of it does not. Most of it ends up in landfills, and too much of it, unfortunately, ends up in our oceans and environment.

I have a couple of our colleagues on the Environment and Public Works Committee. The Presiding Officer is one of them, and we have Senator BOOZMAN. The three of us are all members on the committee. I think Senator DAN SULLIVAN from Alaska and Senator SHELDON WHITEHOUSE—a Republican and a Democrat—have been working hard, along with TOM UDALL from New Mexico, who is on the Commerce Committee, to try to address some of these plastic contaminations.

If we continue down this path, the world economic forum predicts that we are on track to have plastic pollution in our oceans outweigh the fish in our world’s ocean by 2050. Let that sink in for just a minute. By 2050, if we continue on the track we are on, we are

going to end up having more plastic pollution by weight than fish in our world's oceans. That is not a good thing.

Last time I checked, Delaware is blessed with more five-star beaches than any other State in America. If we don't begin to change our recycling habits, the waves that grace our pristine beaches will be better known for washing up plastic waste than giving surfers those big waves to ride.

Almost every year I participate in something called Delaware's Annual Coastal Cleanup, along with thousands of people. We start down at Fenwick Island—right in the southernmost part of Delaware, a great beach town, and right north of the Ocean City, MD, line—to clean up our beaches and our waterfronts, from the Delaware and Maryland line all the way up almost to Pennsylvania in the north.

While we are still waiting for the numbers from this year, last year, in 2018, my fellow volunteers and I—thousands of us—together collected 2.7 tons of waste, including plastic water bottles, straws, takeout containers, tires, and you name it. This was from just one weekend of work along 70 miles of coastline.

Sadly, those 2.7 tons of trash collected last year in Delaware pale in comparison to what we are seeing around the world. Our 2.7 tons of trash is like the tip of the iceberg, compared to all the rest of this washing up in places around the world.

I think we might have one more chart. Some of you have also heard of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, which now covers a surface area on the Earth 250 times larger than my whole State of Delaware and contains a whopping 80,000 tons of trash. Here it is. Can you imagine? Look at all that trash.

It is out in the Pacific Ocean, and I would like to say that it is getting smaller. I don't think it is, but it needs to, and we need to be a part of that in making some progress.

As we celebrate America Recycles Day tomorrow, I just want to encourage you to join Senator BOOZMAN and join our colleagues and their constituents and join us in looking for new ways to dramatically increase recycling in our country and around the world. We need solutions that are a win-win for our economy on the one hand and for our environment on the other hand. I believe recycling is one of those win-win solutions.

By the way, you may be surprised to learn that recycling and manufacturing industries are beneficial for our economy, accounting for more than 750,000 jobs and approximately \$6.7 billion in tax revenues. That reminds me of one of my favorite sayings: "It is possible to do good and to do well at the same time." It is possible to clean up our planet and make the planet safer and create jobs and economic opportunities.

It is not a Hobson's choice. It is not one or the other. We can do both. I be-

lieve that if we work hard, we work together, and we work to leverage points of consensus rather than points of disagreement, we will continue to make progress. Recycling is something that I think every American can do to make a difference.

I once read somewhere how many aluminum cans we drink and use and consume. It could be tea, it could be soda, it could be milk or variety of waters, but if people just would recycle their aluminum cans, it would have a terrific effect on, believe it or not, carbon dioxide. It is put up in the air. So that affects climate change as well.

There are a lot of good effects. Recycling is something that every American can do to make a difference. I would ask you to start today. If you have already gotten started, figure out how to do better. On America Recycles Day, our children and our grandchildren will be glad that we did it in the years to come.

Again, I am grateful to be here today with my dedicated cochair, my compadre, Senator BOOZMAN. I thank him for his leadership and for providing, with our staff, great ideas to make this particular America Recycles Day an even bigger and better thing than before.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I thank Senator CARPER and his staff and my staff for the tremendous job that they have done in recent years in really trying to educate, through the caucus, the rest of the staff and Members as to the importance of recycling. As a result of their efforts, it really is making a big difference.

We hear a lot about Republicans and Democrats not getting along on this and that, not getting anything done, and I think this is a great example of something that is very, very important. It is not glamorous, but it is things like this that really can make a huge difference, as Senator CARPER alluded to. We appreciate him and appreciate his friendship.

Well, tomorrow, November 15, is America Recycles Day. So we are asking Americans to join us as we come together and reaffirm the importance and the benefits of recycling on this occasion. We all know that recycling is a commonsense way for us to be responsible stewards of our environment. Recycling also strengthens our economy and creates hundreds of thousands of well-paying jobs throughout our country. This is something that I believe everyone can agree is truly a win-win situation.

Most Americans are familiar with traditional recycling efforts at their city and county levels, which encourage citizens to recycle household goods or business goods, such as paper, soda cans, and bottles. However, recycling is much broader than these common practices. Recycling is a \$200 billion industry in our country, and it entails much, much more than just traditional municipal recycling programs.

My State of Arkansas is home to many examples of companies that are contributing to a robust and growing commercial recycling industry. I will give you an example.

Nucor, a leading steel producer located in Blytheville, AR, has the capacity to recycle 6 million tons of steel per year—6 million tons—and over 27 million tons nationwide, making it North America's largest recycler. Nucor has also taken its efforts a step further by teaming with local recycling facilities to help tackle some of the biggest challenges associated with the practice in rural communities.

Nucor donated a recycled cardboard baler to Abilities Unlimited, a local nonprofit that runs a nearby recycling facility. This investment has proven mutually beneficial to Nucor and to the community. This facility now provides an outlet for the steel company and community members to recycle in a much more cost-effective manner.

In fact, Nucor plants in Arkansas have the capability to recycle about 60 tons of cardboard annually thanks to this baler. More than 195 tons of cardboard, 21 tons of paper, and 71 tons of mixed plastics have been recycled through this partnership.

Another industry leader leading the way is Walmart. As the world's largest retailer, Walmart has put recycling front and center by raising its packaging standards to include more recycled content and to eliminate specific nonrecyclable packaging materials by 2020. Earlier this year, Walmart announced its intention to achieve 100 percent recyclable, reusable, or industrially compostable packaging by 2025. Its leadership in this arena will help to create more demand for recycled content and open the door for other companies to follow suit.

Lastly, I want to highlight the recycling accomplishments of Bryce Corporation, a trailblazer in flexible packaging. This is the packaging commonly used for chips, juice pouches, pet food, lawn and garden materials, cleaning supplies, and many other products. Bryce employs about 750 people at its Searcy facility and has achieved an environmental footprint that the Central Arkansas community can be very proud of.

At this location alone, Bryce has maintained a 98-percent landfill-free status and has supported the circular economy by recycling over 15 million pounds of plastics each year. The material recycled from this facility is repurposed into other products, ranging from plastic pallets to automotive parts. Bryce Corporation's innovative efforts are a sterling example of recycling done right, and I am grateful for the example it has set for the rest of the country.

Our country has certainly faced its fair share of recycling woes and setbacks, but I have always maintained that in adversity lies opportunity. I believe there is much to be learned from

the meaningful work that these companies are doing in Arkansas, and I commend them on leading on the issue.

The United States has the ability now to improve its waste management and recycling infrastructure and better leverage the economic and environmental benefits of recycling.

I look forward to continue my work with my cochair of the Recycling Caucus, Senator CARPER. Again, I thank him and his staff and my staff, who are doing such a tremendous job, and the other members of the caucus who develop meaningful, long-term solutions that address the challenges facing the industry.

I encourage all Americans to use America Recycles Day as an opportunity to reflect on the critical importance of recycling and to consider what we can do to support our environment through our own individual efforts.

Mr. CARPER. Would the Senator yield for a moment?

Mr. BOOZMAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. CARPER. Thank you for sharing with us the terrific ideas of what businesses around Arkansas and the country are doing to recycle. They do it for a variety of reasons. It is the right thing to do, and a lot of them are committed to being good environmental stewards. It can also be to their economic advantage. Instead of having to pay to have stuff being carted away to a landfill, the ability to recycle materials is, I think, desirable.

We used to have a big Chrysler plant in Delaware, in Newark, close to the University of Delaware and close to the Maryland line. The plant was about 60 years old, and in the middle of the great recession, Chrysler went into bankruptcy, and we lost that plant. It closed, and about 3,000 jobs were gone. We had a GM plant as well about 15 miles from there, just outside of Wilmington, and the same thing happened. About 3,000 jobs were gone, which was just really, really tough.

Having said that—in your words again, in adversity lies opportunity—the folks at the University of Delaware called me. After Chrysler had gone into bankruptcy, they announced that they were selling the plant. They were looking to sell it, and the folks at the University of Delaware and the president of the university, Pat Harker, called me and said: Do you think the Chrysler people might be interested in selling that plant to the university?

It was just about a half mile south of the University of Delaware in Newark.

I called the people at Chrysler and said: You may have an interested buyer here.

They ended up coming to an agreement on the terms of the purchase, and that old Chrysler plant has been recycled. The plant was largely taken down—not entirely, but largely taken down. The money that the University of Delaware earned and generated from the sale of the recyclables—the construction stuff that the plant was made out of—more than paid for taking down and leveling the plant.

Now the University of Delaware has a site of several hundred acres, and they are redeveloping that as a science, technology, and manufacturing facility with a lot of tenants and more to come. So there really is opportunity in adversity.

The other thing I would say is that we got some shredding machines. I had a picture up there of an old shredding machine, and we bought a new one not long ago. So we ended up with a lot of shredded paper. As it turns out, the weekly recyclers, when they come through our neighborhood and collect, they are happy to take the paper, but they don't want to take the shredded paper. What they said that we ought to do is to put it in our compost.

My wife came up with this idea of composting 10 years ago. Somebody was nice enough to build a 4-by-6 and about 3-foot high bin and then lined it with materials, and we put grass in it, recyclables, leaves, and we ended up with this great mulch. We have, I think, taken what a lot of people have seen as waste product and ended up actually turning it into something to make our lawn and our trees and our shrubs even healthier.

It is all good. I am just thrilled to be on the floor with my friend and to be able to thank those who are recycling and remind others, if you are not, that you are missing out on the fun. Come and join us. You will be glad you did.

Mr. BOOZMAN. I think you make a great point in the sense that we do things for the right reasons. That is so important. Also, it is important, too, that not only can we do it for the right reasons and benefit our environment, but it also can be cost-effective to our businesses.

A good example of that is Walmart. Several years ago, they wanted to reduce their fuel cost and then also reduce the harm in the sense of the landfills and things like that. They looked and saw that on their trucks, the limiting factor was not weight. It was bulk. You know how you go to the store and you buy something and it has got this huge box or whatever and it has got the little bitty product in it. They said, you know, we don't need to be doing that.

So they told their vendors that they would like to go in that direction, and to their credit, the vendors cooperated.

As a result, they were able to put more products on the truck, thus reducing fuel costs—again benefiting the economy—and having less bulk for consumers to deal with eventually. That was putting less pressure on the environment because, you know, some people don't do a good job of recycling.

These things can be so good for not only doing the right thing but also improving the bottom line and making sure that we really are putting less pressure on the environment.

We appreciate your leadership. You have been doing this for a long time, as Governor and now as Senator, helping to put these things together. We very much appreciate it.

Mr. CARPER. If the gentleman would yield the floor for a moment, I said earlier in my remarks, to paraphrase it again, that it is possible to do good and do well at the same time. It really is. I am just happy that more and more people are doing that.

While we are having this conversation, I just want to mention that when we showed up at the recycling event at Glasgow High School last Saturday afternoon, they took a bunch of our stuff to recycle—papers, bottles, cans, paint thinners, a dehumidifier, and all kinds of stuff. One thing they wouldn't take was our Styrofoam. We have one place in Delaware—and we are not a big State; 100 miles long and 50 miles wide—we have one place in Delaware that will take Styrofoam.

What I would love to do in the months to come and in the new year is for us to start on recycling projects and focus on that because it is not a problem only in Delaware; there are a lot of places where it is hard to recycle Styrofoam. We can try to figure it out. Maybe somebody around the world or somebody in other States has figured this out and they are doing it. We need to learn from them, find out what works, and do more of that. In my State, we have a hard time dealing with it.

Mr. BOOZMAN. We look forward to having a robust bunch of programs.

It is so important to educate people on what is recyclable because not everyone knows. Different things are recyclable from one area to another area. So we need education on that, and that will make it much more efficient, with people putting in the correct things.

So we have some obstacles to overcome, but the good news is, there are people working together, and we are moving in the right direction.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I think I will yield back the time.

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

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. CRAMER. 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.

REDUCING PANDEMIC RISK

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, we do not have to be reminded of the more than

50 million lives lost in the 1918 influenza pandemic or the many thousands lost in the SARS, Ebola, MERS, and other recent infectious disease outbreaks to recognize that far more must be done to reduce the risk of catastrophic pandemics. Rather than waiting until disease outbreaks occur, then scrambling at great expense for 2 or 3 years or however long it takes to develop a vaccine while countless people die, we need to act proactively. It is worth noting that tens of millions of people have died, and we still lack a vaccine against HIV.

Viral threats will continue to emerge at a rapidly accelerating pace in response to expanding global populations in the least developed countries, international travel, and human encroachment into wildlife habitat. And we know that the vast majority of emerging viruses, like HIV, are zoonotic—infectious diseases that can spread between animals and humans.

In an effort to strengthen global capacity for detection and discovery of zoonotic viruses, the U.S. Agency for International Development, USAID, initiated the PREDICT project in 2009. Its goal was to identify new emerging viruses with pandemic potential and improve predictive modeling to better focus surveillance, data collection, and analytics to reduce the risk of animal viruses spilling over and spreading in human populations. Through the collection and analysis of wildlife samples in areas of the world most at risk for zoonotic disease, PREDICT was able to discover disease pathogens at their source, rather than waiting for human infection.

Over the past decade and through its work in more than 30 countries, PREDICT has identified hundreds of viruses and has estimated that there are more than 1.6 million unknown viral disease species in mammalian and avian populations, of which an estimated 600,000 to 850,000 have the potential to infect humans. PREDICT has proven the feasibility of a global, systematic viral discovery program and paved the way for continued progress toward a more proactive approach to reducing pandemic risk.

As the PREDICT project comes to an end next year, USAID is exploring ways to build on its successful analytical and modeling work and is in the process of designing the next phase of programming to continue this critical effort. It is my hope that others in the international community will use the lessons learned and techniques proven from PREDICT to inform their own efforts.

Currently, the international community often targets global health investments on infrastructure, institutions, and human resources. While that approach works to strengthen public health systems and to tackle existing diseases, reducing the risk of future pandemics will require a substantially different approach. As the PREDICT project has shown, there are ways to

use data, research, and technology to proactively identify viral threats. Using existing health science and technology to continue to fill the knowledge gap for unknown viruses will save precious lives and dollars in the future.

Thanks to the work of USAID, we have a strong basis of knowledge on which to expand this critical research. While the large pool of viral threats lying dormant in animals has not changed, human interaction with wildlife has. In this increasingly globalized and densely populated world, where it is easier than ever for zoonotic diseases to rapidly spread across regions and continents, it is essential that the international community focus on finding innovative ways to reduce pandemic risk.

One approach is through a global viral discovery effort, in which countries share data on previously unknown viruses, which will transform the fight against pandemic threats from a reactive to a proactive undertaking. This is not a technological challenge; it is matter of political will and resources. It will require commitments from governments around the world to collect and share data on previously unknown viruses. While I recognize that is easier said than done, better equipping humanity to protect itself against catastrophic pandemics is an investment we cannot afford not to make.

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SKIRACK

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, Vermont, the Green Mountain State, is filled with outdoor enthusiasts: people who ski, snowboard, mountain bike, hike, and do so much more. Outdoor enthusiasts who live in Chittenden County or who have visited the area are likely to have perused the walls, shelves, and aisles of the Skirack in Burlington, VT. Today I want to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Skirack, a small business that has become a staple of downtown Burlington.

Just a few blocks from its present location at the corner of Main and Pine Streets in downtown Burlington, the Skirack first opened its doors on November 22, 1969, driven by the vision of a group of University of Vermont students. The founders of the Skirack—Karen George, Zandy Wheeler, Spike Clayton, and John George-Wheeler—opened the shop with one goal in mind: to provide the finest outdoor goods and services. Over the next 50 years, their store has equipped Vermonters and visitors to our State with the essentials as they face the elements and reach new heights, both literal and figurative.

Vermont has a proud and prominent legacy of outdoor recreation. Vermonters, or those who visit, can cross country ski, swim in Lake Champlain, mountain bike, or go on a trek through any of Vermont's magnificent forest trails. Contrary to the store's name, the Skirack has been

Vermonters' one-stop shop for all of their outdoor recreational needs, regardless of the season.

Since its inception, the Skirack has been the recipient of numerous honors and accolades. The store has been named the Snowsports Retailer of the Year and Nordic Retailer by Ski Industries of America. But recognition of the Skirack goes far beyond their snow sport inventory. For 5 years in a row, from 2013 through 2017, it was named one of America's best bike shops by the National Bicycle Dealers Association and in 2018 was named one of the 20 Best Running Shops in America by Gear Patrol.

The Skirack has gone through many changes throughout its 50 years of operation. In 1974, Karen, Zandy, Spike, and John moved the Skirack from its small shop on Center Street to where it is currently located on Main Street in downtown Burlington. Over time, they were able to double the size of their store by expanding to the building next door. Then, in May 2011, they began a special partnership with Patagonia and opened a second store, Patagonia Burlington. And today, the Skirack employs more than 80 Vermonters.

Vermont's economy depends on small businesses like the Skirack. Over the years, those small businesses have become the backbone of Vermont's economy. In 2018, the more than 77,000 small businesses made up 99 percent of Vermont businesses—99 percent. In Vermont, almost 60 percent of employees, over 158,000 Vermonters, are employed by a small business. I am proud that small businesses such as The Skirack, have not only been able to not only survive but thrive.

With the holiday season approaching, it is important for Americans across the country to visit their hometown Main Street stores as they shop for friends and family. Holiday sales represent 20 percent of average annual sales across most industries and 30 percent or more for some businesses.

Marcelle and I congratulate Karen, Zandy, Spike, and John on an incredible 50 years of operations at the Skirack. We wish them all the best of luck, and we hope for 50 more strong years.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I rise to speak up for those who serve our country all around the world, courageously, selflessly, with great sacrifice. I rise on behalf of our diplomatic corps, our Foreign Service Officers, civil servants, and State Department personnel. I rise on behalf of patriotic Americans serving our country on the front lines of war zones and devastating conflicts, in countries with oppressive governments and societies hostile to our own.

Our national security is stronger because of them. American people are safer because of them. Our children's futures will be more secure, more prosperous, because of them. And because

of them and their hard work and sacrifice, our grandchildren may know a world with less pain, less strife, less conflict. And yet they have come under attack, simply for serving their country.

This week, three State Department witnesses are testifying during the House of Representatives' impeachment hearings on the Trump-Ukraine scandal. These individuals have, in many cases, spent their entire careers serving our Nation with distinction, on behalf of both Republican and Democratic administrations. Some have even worn the uniform of the U.S. Armed Forces.

These men and women are not partisans. They are patriots, patriots who put our country first. And for putting country first, for being willing to tell the truth, they have come under attack—not by a foreign regime bristling at their efforts to promote democracy, not by oligarchs and criminals who fear their effectiveness—though that has happened as well.

No. They have come under attack in our own country, by our own President, by the head of our government that they so bravely and selflessly serve. It pains me, and so I am standing before you today to speak up on their behalf, on behalf of each voice that has come forward in this time of need and tumult for our country. This is a time when we need truth—truth above party, truth above political loyalties and expediency, truth above self-interest. These diplomats, these professionals, these proud public servants are putting the country before themselves—if only this President could do the same, if only he—just once—could put the interests of others ahead of his own.

But frankly, I am not the one who should be standing up on behalf of our diplomatic corps, nor should it be only the Democrats on the Foreign Relations Committee. There is a job post that actually entails standing up for the men and women of our State Department each and every day. The job is called Secretary of State. It is a job held by Secretary Mike Pompeo. Yet under Secretary Pompeo's watch, the dedicated Americans who serve in the State Department have been thrown to the wolves.

Our Secretary of State should be the No. 1 defender of our diplomatic corps. He should come forward and tell the American people what he saw, what he heard, and what he did about it. He should defend the officials who serve in his own Department. And he could start by uttering just one word of support for Ambassador Taylor, Deputy Assistant Secretary Kent, and Ambassador Yovanovitch. But he has had plenty of time for that. We have seen very clearly where he stands.

So instead, I, along with my Democratic colleagues on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, are calling on other senior officials at the State Department to step up and do the right

thing. This week, we sent a letter to the Deputy Secretary of State, John Sullivan, and the Undersecretary for Management, Brian Bulatao, calling on them to do what Pompeo has not: to publicly support the brave officials who are putting their careers, their reputations, and terribly, even their personal finances on the line—all to serve their country. I hope that they do, even in the face of vicious and unfounded attacks unleashed by the President, his allies, and those who refuse to stand up for the truth.

Some have been called “disloyal,” “unpatriotic,” and “Never Trumpers.” In fact, yesterday morning, as State officials were about to begin testifying, the President tweeted, in all caps, “NEVER TRUMPERS!” These false attacks misunderstand the entire premise of public service. To be a career public servant means to work every day on behalf of the public, our government, our country, our Constitution, to check politics at the door. To argue otherwise demonstrates this President's warped view of how our government works. Our career Federal employees do not serve him. They serve our country. They serve the American people.

The only “loyalty” they pledge is loyalty to the oath they take to uphold our Constitution. In coming forward, in speaking the truth, in raising concerns about events that trouble them as guardians of our national security, they are carrying out an act of selfless patriotism and love of country that that this President is incapable of understanding, let alone doing himself.

I hope that some of our other senior officials will step forward and show just a sliver of the backbone that these individuals have shown. I hope they will do the right thing. I hope they will issue statements of public support for officials courageously coming before Congress and commit to protecting them from retribution or reprisal.

Our State Department employees deserve commendation, not retaliation. They deserve our thanks, not our scorn. Above all else, they deserve leaders who will defend them, not desert them when it matters most.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LAST GREEN VALLEY

• Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, today I rise to recognize The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor as it celebrates 25 years of protection and preservation of this environmentally sensitive, pristine area.

Originally designated as the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor, the valley was officially designated as a critical natural resource by President Clinton on November 2, 1994. Twenty years later, it was officially renamed The Last Green Valley.

For a quarter of a century, The Last Green Valley advocates have worked to care for the corridor through nonprofit stewardship. Overall, the valley comprises a 1,100-square-mile area, which ranges from eastern Connecticut to south-central Massachusetts. One of the most notable aspects of the valley is its rural characteristics despite its proximity to three of New England's largest urban areas. Among its 707,000 acres, 77 percent of this range is farmland and forest.

The Last Green Valley's designation as a national heritage corridor by Congress acknowledges its status as a unique national resource. Included in this designation are 26 towns in Connecticut and 9 in Massachusetts. The underdeveloped, green area so close to many large urban spaces makes it a point of special ecological interest and a great environmental asset to Connecticut and the nation.

Dedicated to preserving the natural beauty and resources of New England from development and despoilment, The Last Green Valley sets a positive example of environmental conservation and protection. I applaud its accomplishments and hope my colleagues will join me in congratulating The Last Green Valley on 25 years of excellence.●

RECOGNIZING K. NEAL TRUCK AND BUS CENTER

• Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, it is with great pride that I name K. Neal Truck and Bus Center the United States Senate Small Business of the Week.

K. Neal Truck and Bus Center is a family-owned business based in Hyattsville, MD. Following a decades-long career in the grocery business, Stephen Neal purchased a trucking business and renamed it after his son, Korey Neal.

Together, the father-son team has turned K. Neal into the second largest minority-owned truck and bus supplier in the country, with more than \$100 million in annual revenue and just under 100 employees.

On the Senate Small Business Committee, we often speak of small businesses as drivers of economic growth and innovation, but they are often also pillars in their communities, and K. Neal is no exception.

I had the privilege of meeting with Stephen, Korey, and several K. Neal executives last month, and I was impressed by the company's commitment to empowering all its employees and investing in its community.

Half of the executives at K. Neal are women, and for the past 5 years, the company has partnered with the Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation to train workers from underserved communities to become diesel technicians. I am proud to share that 14 individuals have completed the program, and 8 of them are currently employed by the company. The company also voluntarily banned

the box for returning citizens convicted of nonviolent crimes.

Thanks to K. Neal's history of business success and commitment to investing in their community and their neighbors, the U.S. Black Chambers of Commerce presented its 2019 Emerging Leaders & Influencers Award to the company.

I applaud Stephen and Korey for building a successful company and using their company to make a positive difference in the lives of so many. They have truly made Prince George's proud.●

TRIBUTE TO TONY HARBAUGH

● Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, this week I have the honor of recognizing Sherriff Tony Harbaugh of Custer County for his tremendous impact on the State of Montana.

In early October, Sheriff Harbaugh was awarded the Montana Board of Crime Control Lifetime Achievement Award at the 12th Annual Montana Crime Prevention Conference in Billings.

Harbaugh began his career at the Custer County Sheriff's Office in 1978 as the only jailer. He was then officially sworn in as a deputy with the sheriff's office in May of 1979. Harbough quickly climbed the ranks and was officially elected as Custer County Sherriff in 1986, holding that title until today.

Throughout his long career in law enforcement, Harbaugh has served in a number of leadership positions in law enforcement. Currently, Harbaugh is the Montana law enforcement representative on the Western States Sheriff's Board, chairman of the Peace Officers Standards and Training Council, chairman of the Eastern Montana Drug Task Force, and is the National Sheriffs liaison for Montana Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association.

It is my honor to recognize Sherriff Harbaugh for his extraordinary dedication to public service and public safety. His role as leader in the law enforcement community has made Montana a better place to live, and I am grateful for his selfless service to the Custer community and Montanans statewide.●

RECOGNIZING CRITICAL POWER PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

● Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, as a member and former chairman of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, each month I recognize and celebrate the American entrepreneurial spirit by highlighting the success of a small business in my home State of Idaho. However, in honor of Veterans Day on November 11, this month I will honor a veteran-owned small business for each of the 10 days the Senate is in legislative session. The personal sacrifices made by America's veterans have protected the very freedoms and values that give each of us and our children the ability to achieve

the American dream. The skills veterans learn as members of the military are invaluable and undoubtedly contribute to Idaho's flourishing veteran business community. I am proud of the sacrifices veterans have made to protect our country and that they are choosing Idaho to call home when they complete their service in the military.

As your United States Senator from the great State of Idaho, it is my pleasure to recognize Critical Power Products and Services in Post Falls as the Veteran-owned Idaho Small Business of the Day for November 14, 2019. Critical Power is owned and operated by U.S. Army veteran Will Alt. The company is a proven leader in backup power and cooling system recycling and redistribution. The company serves customers who want to dispose of and purchase backup diesel and natural gas generators, air-handling equipment, uninterrupted power supply systems, power distribution units, chillers, cooling towers, and raised access floors. The company provides its services to small regional firms as well as international Fortune 500 companies across all sectors.

Alt opened Critical Power Products and Services in Post Falls in 2018. Alt served in the U.S. Army for 5 years, which included multiple overseas tours attached to a multinational special operation team. Critical Power attributes much of its success to Alt's time serving our Nation, stating "it ingrained professionalism, discipline, and dedication into his work ethic that is second to none." The company employs several veterans and even has a Fallen Soldiers Memorial in front of their 18,000 square foot Post Falls facility.

Congratulations to Will Alt and all of the employees at Critical Power Products and Services for being selected as the Veteran-owned Idaho Small Business of the Day for November 14, 2019. You make our great State proud, and I look forward to your continued growth and success.●

REMEMBERING DR. WILLIAM "ED" KOIS

● Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I rise on behalf of the New Hampshire congressional delegation—Senator MAGGIE HASSAN, Congresswoman ANN McLANE KUSTER, and Congressman CHRIS PAPPAS—to pay tribute to Dr. William "Ed" Kojs, a passionate and caring provider at the Manchester Veterans Affairs Medical Center, whose life was tragically cut short in July of this year. Dr. Kojs was relentless in making sure that each patient coming through the hospital doors received the best medical care possible. He was often described, especially by the many veterans he served, as the quintessential "patient's doctor."

Dr. Kojs began his work at the Manchester VAMC in 2012 after two-and-a-half decades of private practice in Nashua, NH. He specialized in physiatry, a branch of medicine de-

voted to the treatment of medical conditions affecting the brain, spinal cord, nerves, and joints. His expertise made him a natural fit for the Manchester VAMC's Spinal Cord Clinic, and he began to treat many veterans whose mobility and well-being were impacted by spinal cord injury or dysfunction. Dr. Kojs sought to provide a standard of care consistent with the core values of the Veteran's Administration—integrity, commitment, advocacy, respect, and excellence—and his own strong moral compass.

This fierce devotion to his principles compelled Dr. Kojs to lead a team of 11 whistleblowers alleging inadequate care at the Manchester VAMC. Although soft-spoken among friends and colleagues, he became a powerful voice and a public face in the effort to expose substandard treatment and demand better care for America's veterans. The advocacy of Dr. Kojs and his colleagues caught the attention of the Boston Globe Spotlight investigative team, which published a story in July 2017 that directed public attention to the shortcomings at the Manchester VAMC. It prompted a top-to-bottom review that delivered needed changes and improvements at the site.

As with any whistleblower complaint, Dr. Kojs undertook significant risk in bringing these subjects to light. Yet, with an uncompromising spirit that many attribute to his amateur boxer father, he was willing to sacrifice his livelihood if it meant that veterans would receive the care they need and deserve. And he was eager to sit down with hospital administration and work with them to develop policies that fulfill that promise. His efforts benefited countless men and women in the Granite State and across the country.

Dr. Kojs is survived by his wife of 29 years, Pamela Greenley, as well as many loving family members, treasured colleagues, and cherished friends. Ms. Greenley will be on hand next week to accept the First Amendment Award on her husband's behalf from the Nackey S. Loeb School of Communications. This distinction honors Granite Staters who go above-and-beyond in their use of the freedoms guaranteed by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. We join the Loeb School, as well as the Boston Globe Spotlight team, in saluting the work and the life of a deserving recipient, Dr. William "Ed" Kojs.●

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:27 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 499. An act to amend the Small Business Act to clarify the treatment of certain surviving spouses under the definition of small business concern owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans.

H.R. 1615. An act to transfer the responsibility of verifying small business concerns

owned and controlled by veterans or service-disabled veterans to the Small Business Administration, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1663. An act to amend title 36, United States Code, to revise the Federal charter for the Foundation of the Federal Bar Association.

H.R. 1773. An act to award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the women in the United States who joined the workforce during World War II, providing the aircraft, vehicles, weaponry, ammunition and other material to win the war, that were referred to as "Rosie the Riveter", in recognition of the contributions to the United States and the inspiration they have provided to ensuing generations.

H.R. 3537. An act to amend the Small Business Act to codify the Boots to Business Program, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3661. An act to support entrepreneurs serving in the National Guard and Reserve, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3734. An act to require the Comptroller General of the United States to report on access to credit for small business concerns owned and controlled by covered individuals, to require the Administrator of the Small Business Administration to report on the veterans interagency task force, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4258. An act to authorize the Marshal of the Supreme Court and the Supreme Court Police to protect the Justices, employees, and official guests of the Supreme Court outside of the Supreme Court grounds, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 72. Concurrent resolution directing the Clerk of the House to make a correction in the enrollment of H.R. 2423.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 499. An act to amend the Small Business Act to clarify the treatment of certain surviving spouses under the definition of small business concern owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

H.R. 1615. An act to transfer the responsibility of verifying small business concerns owned and controlled by veterans or service-disabled veterans to the Small Business Administration, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

H.R. 1663. An act to amend title 36, United States Code, to revise the Federal charter for the Foundation of the Federal Bar Association; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

H.R. 1773. An act to award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the women in the United States who joined the workforce during World War II, providing the aircraft, vehicles, weaponry, ammunition and other material to win the war, that were referred to as "Rosie the Riveter", in recognition of their contributions to the United States and the inspiration they have provided to ensuing generations; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

H.R. 3537. An act to amend the Small Business Act to codify the Boots to Business Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

H.R. 3661. An act to support entrepreneurs serving in the National Guard and Reserve,

and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

H.R. 3734. An act to require the Comptroller General of the United States to report on access to credit for small business concerns owned and controlled by covered individuals, to require the Administrator of the Small Business Administration to report on the veterans interagency task force, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

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 Ms. SMITH (for herself, Mr. CRAMER, Ms. BALDWIN, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. DURBIN, and Mr. WICKER):

S. 2855. A bill to require the Secretary to conduct a study and issue a report on the affordability of insulin; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. HASSAN (for herself, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. KING, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. CASEY, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. CARPER, Mrs. SHAHEEN, and Mr. COONS):

S. 2856. A bill to establish the Office of Regional Greenhouse Gas Reduction Programs within the Environmental Protection Agency, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. CARPER (for himself, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. CASSIDY, and Mr. TESTER):

S. 2857. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to count military and veterans education benefits as Federal educational assistance, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. MORAN (for himself and Ms. BALDWIN):

S. 2858. A bill to require the Administrator of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration to establish an advisory board focused on creating opportunities for women in the trucking industry, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. SCHATZ (for himself and Mr. BARRASSO):

S. 2859. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act with respect to the designation of general surgery shortage areas, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. LANKFORD (for himself, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. COTTON, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. BRAUN, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. PAUL, and Mr. CRAPO):

S. 2860. A bill to repeal changes made by health care reform laws to the Medicare exception to the prohibition on certain physician referrals for hospitals, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself and Mr. MERKLEY):

S. 2861. A bill to amend the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 to clarify the prohibition on the use of certain Federal funds for lobbying, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. SINEMA (for herself and Mr. CORNYN):

S. 2862. A bill to direct the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a grant program to remove nonnative plant species that contribute to drought conditions, and for other

purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. LEE (for himself and Mr. GRASSLEY):

S. 2863. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to modify the eligibility criteria for E visas; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. SINEMA (for herself, Mr. TILLIS, Mrs. BLACKBURN, and Mrs. GILLIBRAND):

S. 2864. A bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program on information sharing between the Department of Veterans Affairs and designated relatives and friends of veterans regarding the assistance and benefits available to the veterans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. BROWN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. REED, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. CARPER, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. KAINÉ, and Mr. BOOKER):

S. 2865. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to prohibit smoking on the premises of any facility of the Veterans Health Administration, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mrs. CAPITO (for herself and Ms. HASSAN):

S. 2866. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow private activity bonds to be used for qualified broadband projects and to provide for tax credit payments to issuers of tax-exempt bonds used to finance broadband infrastructure projects; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. HASSAN (for herself and Mrs. CAPITO):

S. 2867. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide an investment credit for qualified broadband projects; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. MCSALLY:

S. 2868. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to ensure that veterans may attend pre-apprenticeship programs using certain educational assistance provided by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. INHOFE (for himself, Mr. COTTON, Mr. PERDUE, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. CRAMER, and Mr. CRUZ):

S. 2869. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide for extensions of detention of certain aliens ordered removed, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. HARRIS, and Mr. SCHATZ):

S. 2870. A bill to limit the use of solitary confinement and other forms of restrictive housing in immigration detention, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. UDALL (for himself and Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S. 2871. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exclude from gross income payments under the Indian Health Service Loan Repayment Program and certain amounts received under the Indian Health Professions Scholarships Program; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. COONS (for himself, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. KAINÉ, and Mr. PORTMAN):

S. 2872. A bill to amend title III of the Social Security Act to extend reemployment services and eligibility assessments to all claimants for unemployment benefits, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. UDALL:

S. 2873. A bill to amend the Clean Air Act to reform the renewable fuel program under

that Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. CRUZ (for himself, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. COTTON, and Mr. RUBIO):

S. 2874. A bill to terminate certain waivers of sanctions with respect to Iran issued in connection with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. MERKLEY (for himself and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 2875. A bill to amend the Smith River National Recreation Area Act to include certain additions to the Smith River National Recreation Area, to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate certain wild rivers in the State of Oregon, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. SCHUMER (for Mr. SANDERS (for himself, Mr. MERKLEY, and Ms. WARREN)):

S. 2876. A bill to provide economic empowerment opportunities in the United States through the modernization of public housing, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. TILLIS (for himself, Ms. SMITH, Ms. MCSALLY, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. PERDUE, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. CRAMER, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. MORAN, Ms. SINEMA, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. CRAPO, and Mr. BROWN):

S. 2877. A bill to reauthorize the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act of 2002, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. COONS (for himself and Mr. LEE):

S. 2878. A bill to limit the use of facial recognition technology by Federal agencies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Ms. CANTWELL (for herself and Mrs. MURRAY):

S. Res. 421. A resolution congratulating Seattle Sounders FC on winning the 2019 Major League Soccer Cup; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. CARPER (for himself and Mr. BOOZMAN):

S. Res. 422. A resolution recognizing November 15, 2019, as "America Recycles Day" and expressing the sense of the Senate that recycling promotes a healthy economy and responsible environmental stewardship; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. MANCHIN (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. LANKFORD, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. HASSAN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. COONS, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. PETERS, and Mr. REED):

S. Res. 423. A resolution recognizing November 2019 as "National Homeless Children and Youth Awareness Month"; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. GARDNER (for himself and Mr. BENNET):

S. Res. 424. A resolution recognizing the 100th anniversary of the Colorado Farm Bureau Federation and celebrating the long history of the Colorado Farm Bureau Federation representing the farmers and ranchers of Colorado; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. DAINES (for himself, Mr. BENNET, Mr. INHOFE, and Ms. WARREN):

S. Res. 425. A resolution designating October 2019 as "National Down Syndrome Awareness Month" and supporting the goals and ideals of National Down Syndrome Awareness Month; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. KENNEDY:

S. Res. 426. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that Members of Congress should substitute teach at least 1 day per year in a public school to gain firsthand knowledge on how to address the prevailing challenges facing educators and how to remove obstacles to learning for students; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. MENENDEZ, and Mr. CARDIN):

S. Res. 427. A resolution recognizing the historical, cultural, and religious significance of Sikh Americans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 283

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 283, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to improve access to, and utilization of, bone mass measurement benefits under part B of the Medicare program by establishing a minimum payment amount under such part for bone mass measurement.

S. 460

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 460, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the exclusion for employer-provided education assistance to employer payments of student loans.

S. 479

At the request of Mr. TOOMEY, the names of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) and the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) were added as cosponsors of S. 479, a bill to revise section 48 of title 18, United States Code, and for other purposes.

S. 610

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) was added as a cosponsor of S. 610, a bill to amend title 9 of the United States Code with respect to arbitration.

S. 642

At the request of Mr. ALEXANDER, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Ms. ERNST) was added as a cosponsor of S. 642, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to Master Sergeant Rodrick "Roddie" Edmonds in recognition of his heroic actions during World War II.

S. 696

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA) was added as a cosponsor of S. 696, a bill to designate the same individual serving as the Chief Nurse Officer of the Public Health Service as the National Nurse for Public Health.

S. 750

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from Louisiana

(Mr. CASSIDY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 750, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently extend the new markets tax credit, and for other purposes.

S. 753

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 753, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to count a period of receipt of outpatient observation services in a hospital toward satisfying the 3-day inpatient hospital requirement for coverage of skilled nursing facility services under Medicare.

S. 877

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, her name was added as a cosponsor of S. 877, a bill to prohibit the sale of shark fins, and for other purposes.

S. 880

At the request of Ms. STABENOW, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 880, a bill to provide outreach and reporting on comprehensive Alzheimer's disease care planning services furnished under the Medicare program.

S. 901

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) 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. 962

At the request of Ms. HASSAN, her name was added as a cosponsor of S. 962, a bill to provide funding for federally qualified health centers and the National Health Service Corps.

S. 1280

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the names of the Senator from Arizona (Ms. MCSALLY) and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) were added as cosponsors of S. 1280, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to establish a system to notify individuals approaching Medicare eligibility, to simplify and modernize the eligibility enrollment process, and for other purposes.

S. 1476

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1476, a bill to waive the 24-month waiting period for Medicare eligibility for individuals disabled by Huntington's disease.

S. 1622

At the request of Mr. JOHNSON, the name of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1622, a bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act to list fentanyl-related substances as schedule I controlled substances.

S. 1657

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. ROMNEY) was added as a cosponsor of S.

1657, a bill to provide assistance to combat the escalating burden of Lyme disease and other tick and vector-borne diseases and disorders.

S. 1728

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1728, a bill to require the United States Postal Service to sell the Alzheimer's semipostal stamp for 6 additional years.

S. 1810

At the request of Mr. TOOMEY, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1810, a bill to amend the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to allow schools that participate in the school lunch program to serve whole milk, and for other purposes.

S. 1822

At the request of Mr. WICKER, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1822, a bill to require the Federal Communications Commission to issue rules relating to the collection of data with respect to the availability of broadband services, and for other purposes.

S. 1838

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the names of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD), the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. SASSE) and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) were added as cosponsors of S. 1838, a bill to amend the Hong Kong Policy Act of 1992, and for other purposes.

S. 1907

At the request of Ms. SMITH, the name of the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1907, a bill to amend the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to prohibit the stigmatization of children who are unable to pay for school meals, and for other purposes.

S. 1941

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1941, a bill to amend the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to establish a permanent, nationwide summer electronic benefits transfer for children program.

S. 1982

At the request of Mr. SULLIVAN, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1982, a bill to improve efforts to combat marine debris, and for other purposes.

S. 2059

At the request of Mr. TILLIS, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2059, a bill to provide a civil remedy for individuals harmed by sanctuary jurisdiction policies, and for other purposes.

S. 2160

At the request of Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, the names of the Senator

from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM) and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2160, a bill to require carbon monoxide alarms in certain federally assisted housing, and for other purposes.

S. 2321

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2321, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint a coin in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the establishment of Negro Leagues baseball.

S. 2394

At the request of Mr. VAN HOLLEN, the names of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) and the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL) were added as cosponsors of S. 2394, a bill to require certain reports and briefings to Congress relating to the expiration of the New START Treaty, and for other purposes.

S. 2451

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2451, a bill to amend chapter 171 of title 28, United States Code, to allow suit against the United States for injuries and deaths of members of the Armed Forces caused by improper medical care, and for other purposes.

S. 2599

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the names of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. JONES) were added as cosponsors of S. 2599, a bill to amend the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 to provide assistance to manage farmer and rancher stress and for the mental health of individuals in rural areas, and for other purposes.

S. 2627

At the request of Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2627, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow an above-the-line deduction for attorney fees and costs in connection with civil claim awards.

S. 2628

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2628, a bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to remove a limitation on an individual's eligibility for medical assistance under the State Medicaid plan while the individual is in custody pending disposition of charges.

S. 2671

At the request of Mr. COONS, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 2671, a bill to build safer, thriving communities, and save lives by investing in effective violence reduction initiatives.

S. 2680

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2680, a bill to impose sanctions with

respect to foreign support for Palestinian terrorism, and for other purposes.

S. 2695

At the request of Mr. ROBERTS, the names of the Senator from Mississippi (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH), the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN), the Senator from Colorado (Mr. GARDNER) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) were added as cosponsors of S. 2695, a bill to authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to provide for the defense of United States agriculture and food through the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility, and for other purposes.

S. 2739

At the request of Mr. TILLIS, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2739, a bill to provide for the effective use of immigration detainers to enhance public safety.

S. 2741

At the request of Mr. SCHATZ, the names of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING), the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO), the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN), the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN), the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER), the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI), the Senator from Virginia (Mr. KAINE), the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES), the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) and the Senator from Arizona (Ms. MCSALLY) were added as cosponsors of S. 2741, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to expand access to telehealth services, and for other purposes.

S. 2805

At the request of Mr. WICKER, the names of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED) were added as cosponsors of S. 2805, a bill to improve transit-oriented development financing, and for other purposes.

S. 2850

At the request of Mr. LEE, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2850, a bill to focus limited Federal resources on the most serious offenders.

S. RES. 98

At the request of Mrs. BLACKBURN, the names of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS), the Senator from Colorado (Mr. GARDNER) and the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 98, a resolution establishing the Congressional Gold Star Family Fellowship Program for the placement in offices of Senators of children, spouses, and siblings of members of the Armed Forces who are hostile casualties or who have died from a training-related injury.

S. RES. 409

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the names of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) were added

as cosponsors of S. Res. 409, a resolution requesting information on Turkey's human rights practices in Syria pursuant to section 502B(c) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961.

S. RES. 411

At the request of Mr. TOOMEY, the names of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) and the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 411, a resolution affirming that States maintain primacy for the regulation of hydraulic fracturing for oil and natural gas production on State and private lands, that the President has no authority to declare a moratorium on the use of hydraulic fracturing on State and private lands, and that the President should not attempt to declare a moratorium on the use of hydraulic fracturing on Federal lands (including the Outer Continental Shelf) or lands held in trust for an Indian Tribe, unless the moratorium is authorized by an Act of Congress.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. BROWN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. REED, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. CARPER, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. KAINE, and Mr. BOOKER):

S. 2865. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to prohibit smoking on the premises of any facility of the Veterans Health Administration, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' 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. 2865

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. PROHIBITION ON SMOKING IN FACILITIES OF THE VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION.

(a) PROHIBITION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 1715 of title 38, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

“§ 1715. Prohibition on smoking in facilities of the Veterans Health Administration

“(a) PROHIBITION.—No person (including any veteran, patient, resident, employee of the Department, contractor, or visitor) may smoke on the premises of any facility of the Veterans Health Administration.

“(b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) The term ‘facility of the Veterans Health Administration’ means any land or building (including any medical center, nursing home, domiciliary facility, outpatient clinic, or center that provides readjustment counseling) that is—

“(A) under the jurisdiction of the Department of Veterans Affairs;

“(B) under the control of the Veterans Health Administration; and

“(C) not under the control of the General Services Administration.

“(2) The term ‘smoke’ includes—

“(A) the use of cigarettes, cigars, pipes, and any other combustion or heating of tobacco; and

“(B) the use of any electronic nicotine delivery system, including electronic or e-cigarettes, vape pens, and e-cigars.”.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of subchapter II of chapter 17 of such title is amended by striking the item relating to section 1715 and inserting the following new item:

“1715. Prohibition on smoking in facilities of the Veterans Health Administration.”.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 526 of the Veterans Health Care Act of 1992 (Public Law 102-585; 38 U.S.C. 1715 note) is repealed.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. HARRIS, and Mr. SCHATZ):

S. 2870. A bill to limit the use of solitary confinement and other forms of restrictive housing in immigration detention, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

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. 2870

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the “Restricting Solitary Confinement in Immigration Detention Act of 2019”.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

Sec. 2. Definitions.

Sec. 3. Solitary confinement reforms.

Sec. 4. Reassessment of detained alien mental health.

Sec. 5. Oversight responsibilities.

Sec. 6. Rulemaking.

Sec. 7. Authorization of appropriations.

Sec. 8. Effective date.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) ADMINISTRATIVE SEGREGATION.—The term “administrative segregation” means a nonpunitive form of solitary confinement that removes a detained alien from the general population of a detention center or other facility in which the alien is being detained for—

(A) investigative, protective, or preventative reasons because of a substantial and immediate threat to the safety or security of the detained alien, other detained aliens, staff, or the public; or

(B) temporary administrative reasons.

(2) APPROPRIATE LEVEL OF CARE.—The term “appropriate level of care” means the appropriate treatment setting for mental health care that a detained alien with mental illness requires, which may include outpatient care, emergency or crisis services, day treatment, supported residential housing, infirmary care, or inpatient psychiatric hospitalization services.

(3) INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY.—The term “intellectual disability” means a significant mental impairment characterized by significant limitations in intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior.

(4) MULTIDISCIPLINARY STAFF COMMITTEE.—The term “multidisciplinary staff committee” means a committee—

(A) composed of staff at the facility at which a detained alien resides who are responsible for reviewing the initial placement of the alien in solitary confinement and any extensions of time in solitary confinement; and

(B) that includes—

(i) not fewer than 1 licensed mental health professional;

(ii) not fewer than 1 medical professional; and

(iii) not fewer than 1 member of the leadership of the facility.

(5) PROTECTION CASE.—The term “protection case” means a detained alien who, by the request of the alien or through a staff determination, requires protection.

(6) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Homeland Security.

(7) SERIOUS MENTAL ILLNESS.—The term “serious mental illness” means—

(A) a finding by a qualified mental health professional that the detained alien is at serious risk of substantially deteriorating mentally or emotionally while confined in solitary confinement, or already has so deteriorated while confined in solitary confinement, such that diversion or removal is deemed to be clinically appropriate by a qualified mental health professional; or

(B) a current or recent diagnosis by a qualified mental health professional of 1 or more of the following disorders described in the most recent edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders:

(i) Schizophrenia or another psychotic disorder.

(ii) Major depressive disorder.

(iii) Any type of bipolar disorder.

(iv) A neurodevelopmental disorder, dementia or other cognitive disorder.

(v) Any disorder commonly characterized by breaks with reality or perceptions of reality.

(vi) Any type of anxiety disorders.

(vii) Trauma or stressor related disorder.

(viii) Severe personality disorders.

(8) SOLITARY CONFINEMENT.—The term “solitary confinement” means confinement characterized by substantial isolation in a cell, whether alone or with other detained aliens, including administrative segregation and disciplinary segregation.

(9) SUBSTANTIAL AND IMMEDIATE THREAT.—The term “substantial and immediate threat” means any set of circumstances that require immediate action in order to combat a significant threat to the safety of a detained alien, other detained aliens, staff, or the public.

(10) U.S. IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT FACILITY.—The term “U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement facility” means—

(A) a detention facility owned and administered by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement; or

(B) a Federal, State, local, or private facility that has contracted (directly or indirectly) with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement to detain aliens in Federal custody, including a U.S. Marshals facility that houses alien detainees, and regardless of any time limits that exist for the duration of the detention in such a facility.

SEC. 3. SOLITARY CONFINEMENT REFORMS.

(a) USE OF SOLITARY CONFINEMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—A detained alien may not be placed in solitary confinement within a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement facility unless such confinement—

(A) is limited to the briefest term and the least restrictive conditions practicable, including not fewer than 4 hours of out-of-cell time every day;

(B) is consistent with the rationale for placement and with the progress achieved by the detained alien;

(C) allows the detained alien to participate in meaningful programming opportunities and privileges that are similar to those available in the general population as practicable, either individually or in a classroom setting;

(D) allows the detained alien to have as much meaningful interaction with others, such as other detained aliens, counsel, visitors, clergy, or licensed mental health professionals, as practicable; and

(E) complies with the provisions of this section.

(2) SPECIFIC LIMITATIONS ON ADMINISTRATIVE SEGREGATION AND DISCIPLINARY SEGREGATION.—The Secretary—

(A) shall limit administrative segregation in U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement facilities—

(i) to situations in which such segregation is necessary to control a substantial and immediate threat that cannot be addressed through alternative housing; and

(ii) to a duration of not more than 14 consecutive days, and not more than 14 days in a 21-day period, unless—

(I) the detained alien is considered a protection case and requests to remain in administrative segregation under paragraph (3)(B)(i); or

(II) to address the continued existence of a substantial and immediate threat, a multidisciplinary staff committee approves a temporary extension, which—

(aa) shall be in writing and include a thorough explanation of the reasons for which the extension is warranted, including any factors weighing against the extension;

(bb) shall be reviewed—

(AA) by the multidisciplinary staff committee every 3 days during the period of the extension, in order to confirm the continued existence of the substantial and immediate threat;

(BB) by the appropriate Enforcement and Removal Operations Field Office Director within U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement after the initial extension and every 7 days thereafter during the period of the extension, in order to review the findings of the multidisciplinary staff committee and determine whether such extensions are permissible;

(CC) by a subcommittee of the Detention Monitoring Council within U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, which shall be chaired by the Custody Management Division and shall include representatives from Enforcement and Removal Operations Field Operations, the Health Service Corps, the Office of the Principal Legal Advisor, the Office of Professional Responsibility, the Office of Acquisition Management, and the Department of Homeland Security's Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, after any extension is approved by an Enforcement and Removal Operations Field Office Director; and

(cc) shall include additional out of cell time, socialization, and programming opportunities for the detained alien, so that each detained alien placed in solitary confinement for more than 14 days is given not fewer than 4 hours of out of cell time each day; and

(B) may not permit the use of solitary confinement as a form of discipline.

(3) PROTECTIVE CUSTODY.—The Secretary—

(A) shall establish policies to ensure that an alien who is considered a protection case, upon the request of the alien, is transferred to a safer alternative, such as—

(i) an alternative general population unit in the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement facility;

(ii) an alternative U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement facility; or

(iii) an alternative to detention; and

(B) may not place a detained alien who is considered to be a protection case in solitary confinement due to the status of the alien as a protection case unless—

(i) the alien requests to be placed in solitary confinement, in which case, at the request of the alien to be released from solitary confinement, the alien shall be transferred to a safer alternative, such as—

(I) an alternative general population unit;

(II) an alternative U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement facility; or

(III) an alternative to detention; or

(ii) such confinement is limited to—

(I) not more than 5 days of administrative segregation; and

(II) is necessary to protect the alien during preparation for transfer to a safer alternative, such as 1 of the alternatives described in subclauses (I) through (III) of clause (i).

(4) VULNERABLE POPULATIONS.—A U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement facility may not place a detained alien in solitary confinement if—

(A) the detained alien is younger than 18 years of age, unless—

(i) such confinement is a temporary response to the behavior of the detained alien, which poses a substantial and immediate threat;

(ii) all other options to de-escalate the situation have been exhausted, including less restrictive techniques such as—

(I) penalizing the detained alien through loss of privileges;

(II) speaking with the detained alien in an attempt to de-escalate the situation; and

(III) providing an appropriate level of care through a licensed mental health professional;

(iii) such confinement is limited to—

(I) 3 hours after the detained alien is placed in solitary confinement, if the alien poses a substantial and immediate threat to others; or

(II) 30 minutes after the detained alien is placed in solitary confinement, if the alien poses a substantial and immediate threat only to his self or her self; and

(iv) if, after the applicable maximum period of confinement under subclause (I) or (II) of clause (iii) has expired, the detained alien continues to pose a substantial and immediate threat described in that subclause—

(I) the detained alien shall be transferred to another facility or internal location where services can be provided to the alien without relying on solitary confinement; or

(II) if a qualified mental health professional believes the level of crisis service needed is not currently available, a staff member of the facility shall initiate a referral to a location that can meet the needs of the detained alien;

(B) the detained alien has a serious mental illness, has an intellectual disability, has a physical disability that a licensed medical professional determines is likely to be exacerbated by placement in solitary confinement or that solitary confinement is clinically contraindicated, is pregnant, or is in the first 8 weeks of the post-partum recovery period after giving birth, or has been determined by a licensed mental health professional to likely be significantly adversely affected by placement in solitary confinement, unless—

(i) the detained alien poses a substantial and immediate threat;

(ii) all other options to de-escalate the situation have been exhausted, including less restrictive techniques such as—

(I) penalizing the detained alien through loss of privileges;

(II) speaking with the detained alien in an attempt to de-escalate the situation; and

(III) providing an appropriate level of care through a licensed mental health professional;

(iii) such confinement is limited to the briefest term and the least restrictive conditions practicable, including access to medical and mental health treatment;

(iv) such confinement is reviewed by a multidisciplinary staff committee for appropriateness every 24 hours; and

(v) as soon as practicable, but not later than 5 days after such confinement begins, the detained alien is diverted, upon release from solitary confinement, to a general population unit, a mental health treatment program described in subsection (b)(2), or an alternative to detention;

(C) the detained alien is lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (as defined in section 115.5 of title 28, Code of Federal Regulations, or any successor regulation), intersex (as defined in section 115.5 of title 28, Code of Federal Regulations, or any successor regulation), or gender nonconforming (as defined in section 115.5 of title 28, Code of Federal Regulations, or any successor regulation), if such placement is based (in whole or in part) on such identification or status;

(D) the alien is HIV positive, if the placement is based (in whole or in part) on the HIV positive status of the alien;

(E) the placement is based (in whole or in part) on the alien's race, religion, or nationality; or

(F) the placement is based (in whole or in part) on a detained alien's report of an incident of abuse or misconduct, a detained alien's decision to engage in a hunger strike, or any other form of retaliation against a detained alien, unless the alien has been classified as a protection case under paragraph (3).

(5) ACCESS TO COUNSEL.—Aliens placed in solitary confinement shall be offered access to counsel to the same extent that detained aliens in the general population are offered access to counsel.

(6) RIGHT TO REVIEW PLACEMENT IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT.—The Secretary shall ensure that each alien placed in solitary confinement has access to—

(A) written and verbal notice provided in a language that the alien understands that thoroughly details the basis for placement or continued placement in solitary confinement not later than 6 hours after the beginning of such placement, including—

(i) thorough documentation explaining why such confinement is permissible and necessary under this subsection; and

(ii) if an exception under paragraph (2)(A)(ii), (3)(B), (4)(A), or (4)(B) is used to justify placement in solitary confinement, thorough documentation explaining why such an exception applies;

(B) a timely, thorough, and continuous review process that—

(i) occurs not fewer than 3 days after placement in solitary confinement, and thereafter at least on a weekly basis, unless required more frequently under this section;

(ii) includes private, face-to-face interviews with a multidisciplinary staff committee; and

(iii) examines whether—

(I) placement in solitary confinement was and remains necessary;

(II) the conditions of confinement comply with this section; and

(III) any exception under paragraph (2)(A)(ii), (3)(B), (4)(A), or (4)(B) used to justify placement in solitary confinement was and remains warranted;

(C) a process to appeal the initial placement or continued placement of the detained alien in solitary confinement;

(D) prompt and timely written notice of the appeal procedures; and

(E) copies of all documents, files, and records relating to the detained alien's placement in solitary confinement, unless such documents contain contraband, classified information, or sensitive security-related information.

(b) **MENTAL HEALTH CARE FOR ALIENS IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT.**—

(1) **MENTAL HEALTH SCREENING.**—Not later than 6 hours after a detained alien is placed in solitary confinement in a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement facility, the alien shall receive a comprehensive, face-to-face mental health evaluation by a licensed mental health professional in a confidential setting.

(2) **MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT PROGRAM.**—A detained alien diagnosed with a serious mental illness after an evaluation under paragraph (1)—

(A) may not be placed in solitary confinement under subsection (a)(4)(B); and

(B) shall receive an appropriate level of care to address the detained alien's mental health needs.

(3) **CONTINUING EVALUATIONS.**—After each 7-day period during which a detained alien is held in continuous placement in solitary confinement—

(A) a licensed mental health professional shall conduct a comprehensive, face-to-face, out-of-cell mental health evaluation of the alien in a confidential setting; and

(B) the Secretary shall adjust the placement of the alien in accordance with this subsection.

(c) **TRAINING FOR DETENTION CENTER STAFF.**—

(1) **TRAINING.**—All employees of a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement facility who interact with aliens on a regular basis shall be required to complete training in—

(A) recognizing the symptoms of mental illness;

(B) the potential risks and side effects of psychiatric medications;

(C) de-escalation techniques for safely managing individuals with mental illness;

(D) the consequences of untreated mental illness;

(E) the long- and short-term psychological effects of solitary confinement; and

(F) de-escalation and communication techniques to divert detained aliens from situations that may lead to the alien being placed in solitary confinement.

(2) **NOTIFICATION TO MEDICAL STAFF.**—An employee of a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement facility shall immediately notify a member of the facility's medical or mental health staff if the employee—

(A) observes a detained alien with signs of mental illness, unless such employee has knowledge that the alien's signs of mental illness have previously been reported; or

(B) observes a detained alien with signs of a mental health crisis;

(d) **REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.**—

(1) **DAILY TRACKING OF USE OF SOLITARY CONFINEMENT.**—Each U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement facility shall submit a daily report to the Director of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement that identifies, for the applicable day—

(A) any detained aliens who were placed in solitary confinement, including—

(i) the rationale behind each such placement; and

(ii) whether any exception under subsection (a) used to justify placement in solitary confinement or increased restrictive conditions in solitary confinement was applied;

(B) the continued detention of any aliens in solitary confinement, including—

(i) the number of days such aliens have been detained in solitary confinement; and

(ii) an explanation of the application of any exception under subsection (a) used to justify an adjustment to the alien's time or conditions in solitary confinement; and

(C) the release of any detained aliens from solitary confinement.

(2) **PUBLICATION OF USE OF SOLITARY CONFINEMENT.**—Without revealing personally identifiable information, the Secretary shall publish online weekly updates regarding—

(A) the number of aliens in solitary confinement at each U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement facility; and

(B) any instances in which a facility has placed a detained alien in solitary confinement for more than 15 days.

(3) **INTERNAL REVIEW OF DATA.**—

(A) **WEEKLY REVIEWS.**—The appropriate Enforcement and Removal Operations Field Office Director within U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement shall—

(i) on a weekly basis, review the daily reports from each U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement facility under his or her jurisdiction to ensure that each facility is in compliance with this Act;

(ii) report any instances in which a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement facility failed to comply, or is suspected of failing to comply, with this Act to the subcommittee established under subsection (a)(2)(A)(ii)(II)(bb)(CC) for review; and

(iii) direct a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement facility that failed to comply, or is suspected of failing to comply, with this Act to immediately address any such failures to comply, including by immediately removing a detained alien from solitary confinement if the alien's placement or continued detention in solitary confinement was not in compliance with this Act.

(B) **MONTHLY REPORTS.**—The subcommittee established under subsection (a)(2)(A)(ii)(II)(bb)(CC) shall—

(i) promptly review any reports received pursuant to subparagraph (A)(ii); and

(ii) submit monthly reports to the full Detention Monitoring Council and the Director of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement that identify areas of concern regarding particular cases or facilities that warrant further examination.

SEC. 4. REASSESSMENT OF DETAINED ALIEN MENTAL HEALTH.

Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall—

(1) assemble a team of licensed mental health professionals, which may include licensed mental health professionals who are not employed by the Department of Homeland Security, to conduct a comprehensive mental health reevaluation for each alien held in solitary confinement for more than 14 days (as of the date of enactment of this Act), including a confidential, face-to-face, out-of-cell interview by a licensed mental health professional; and

(2) adjust the placement of each alien in accordance with this Act.

SEC. 5. OVERSIGHT RESPONSIBILITIES.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Section 705 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 345) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(c) **IMMIGRATION DETENTION.**—

“(1) **DEFINED TERM.**—In this subsection, the term ‘U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement facility’ has the meaning given the term in section 2 of the Restricting Solitary Confinement in Immigration Detention Act of 2019.

“(2) **INTERNAL REPORTING.**—The Secretary shall ensure that each U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement facility provides multiple internal ways for aliens and others to promptly report violations of section 3 of the Restricting Solitary Confinement in Immi-

gration Detention Act of 2019 to the Officer for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, including—

“(A) not less than 2 procedures for aliens and others to report violations of section 3 of such Act to an entity or office that is not part of the facility, and that is able to receive and immediately forward reports to the Officer for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, allowing the alien to remain anonymous upon request; and

“(B) not less than 2 procedures for aliens and others to report violations of section 3 of such Act to the Officer for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties in a confidential manner, allowing the alien to remain anonymous upon request.

“(3) **NOTICE TO DETAINEES.**—The Secretary shall ensure that each U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement facility provides aliens with—

“(A) notice of how to report violations of section 4 of the Restricting Solitary Confinement in Immigration Detention Act of 2019 in accordance with paragraph (2), including—

“(i) notice prominently posted in the living and common areas of each such facility;

“(ii) individual notice to aliens at initial intake into a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement facility, when transferred to a new facility, and when placed in solitary confinement;

“(iii) notice to aliens with disabilities in accessible formats; and

“(iv) written or verbal notice in a language the alien understands; and

“(B) notice of permissible practices related to solitary confinement in U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement facilities, including the requirements under section 3 of such Act.

“(4) **ACCESS.**—The Officer for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties—

“(A) shall have unrestricted access to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement facilities;

“(B) shall be able to review documents, request and review information, and speak privately with aliens, contractors, volunteers, and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement facility staff.

“(5) **ANNUAL ASSESSMENT OF SOLITARY CONFINEMENT USE IN IMMIGRATION DETENTION.**—

“(A) **OBJECTIVES.**—Not later than 90 days after the last day of each fiscal year, the Officer for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties shall submit an assessment to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate, the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate, the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives, and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives that analyzes the use of solitary confinement in U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement facilities during such fiscal year.

“(B) **DATA.**—Each assessment submitted under subparagraph (A) shall include aggregated and disaggregated data reported by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement facilities, to be provided by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement to the Officer for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties not later than 30 days after the last day of each fiscal year, including—

“(i) the policies and regulations of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, including—

“(I) any changes in policies and regulations, for determining which aliens are placed in solitary confinement; and

“(II) a detailed description of the conditions and restrictions of solitary confinement;

“(ii) the number of aliens in U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement facilities who were housed in solitary confinement for any period and the percentage of all aliens who

spent at least some time in solitary confinement during the reporting period;

“(iii) the demographics of all aliens housed in solitary confinement, including race, ethnicity, religion, age, and gender;

“(iv) the policies and regulations of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement facilities, including any updates in policies and regulations, for subsequent reviews or appeals of the placement of a detained alien into or out of solitary confinement;

“(v) the number of reviews of and challenges to the placement of a detained alien in solitary confinement during the reporting period and the number of reviews or appeals that directly resulted in a change of placement;

“(vi) a detailed description of the conditions and restrictions for solitary confinement, including the number of hours spent in isolation and the percentage of time these conditions involve 2 aliens celled together in solitary confinement;

“(vii) the mean and median length of stay in solitary confinement, based on all individuals released from solitary confinement during the reporting period, and any maximum length of stay during the reporting period;

“(viii) the cost for each form of solitary confinement described in subparagraph (A) in use during the reporting period, including as compared with the average daily cost of housing a detained alien in the general population;

“(ix) the policies for mental health screening, mental health treatment, and subsequent mental health reviews for all detained aliens, including any update to the policies, and any additional screening, treatment, and monitoring for detained aliens in solitary confinement;

“(x) a statement of the types of mental health staff that conducted mental health assessments for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement facilities during the reporting period, a description of the different positions in the mental health staff of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement facilities, and the number of part- and full-time psychologists and psychiatrists employed by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement facilities during the reporting period;

“(xi) data on mental health and medical indicators for all detained aliens in solitary confinement, including—

“(I) the number of aliens requiring medication for mental health conditions;

“(II) the number diagnosed with an intellectual disability;

“(III) the number diagnosed with serious mental illness;

“(IV) the number of suicides;

“(V) the number of attempted suicides and number of aliens placed on suicide watch;

“(VI) the number of instances of self-harm committed by aliens;

“(VII) the number of aliens with physical disabilities, including blind, deaf, and mobility-impaired aliens; and

“(VIII) the number of instances of forced feeding of aliens;

“(ix) any instances in which an Enforcement and Removal Operations Field Office Director reported that a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement facility in his or her jurisdiction failed to comply with or was suspected of failing to comply with the Restricting Solitary Confinement in Immigration Detention Act of 2019; and

“(xiii) any other relevant data.

“(C) CONTENT.—Each assessment submitted under subparagraph (A) shall include—

“(i) an analysis of the data provided under subparagraph (B);

“(ii) recommendations for reform offered to the Director of U.S. Immigration and Customs

Enforcement and the Secretary under paragraph (6); and

“(iii) the response from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Department to such recommendations for reform.

“(D) AUTHORITY ON FINAL REPORT.—Each assessment submitted under subparagraph (A) may be reviewed by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Secretary before submission, but the Officer for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties has final authority on the text and release of the assessment.

“(6) REGULAR MEETINGS WITH THE SECRETARY AND THE DIRECTOR OF U.S. IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT.—The Officer for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties shall meet regularly with the Secretary and the Director of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement—

“(A) to identify problems with the solitary confinement policies and practices in U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement facilities, including overuse of solitary confinement; and

“(B) to present recommendations for such administrative action as may be appropriate to resolve problems relating to solitary confinement policies and practices in U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement facilities.”.

(b) ANNUAL REPORT.—Not later than December 31 of each year, the Inspector General of the Department of Homeland Security shall issue a report analyzing—

(1) the use of solitary confinement in U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement facilities; and

(2) the Department’s compliance with this Act and the amendments made by this Act.

SEC. 6. RULEMAKING.

The Secretary and the Director of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement shall prescribe rules, in accordance with section 553 of title 5, United States Code, to carry out this Act and the amendments made by this Act.

SEC. 7. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary such sums as may be necessary to carry out this Act and the amendments made by this Act.

SEC. 8. EFFECTIVE DATE.

Except as otherwise provided, this Act and the amendments made by this Act shall take effect on the date that is 18 months after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 421—CONGRATULATING SEATTLE SOUNDERS FC ON WINNING THE 2019 MAJOR LEAGUE SOCCER CUP

Ms. CANTWELL (for herself and Mrs. MURRAY) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation:

S. RES. 421

Whereas, on November 10, 2019, Seattle Sounders FC won the 2019 Major League Soccer Cup;

Whereas that win on November 10, 2019, is the second Major League Soccer championship won by Seattle Sounders FC in the 11 years that Seattle Sounders FC has been in Major League Soccer;

Whereas Seattle Sounders FC beat the Toronto Football Club 3-1 in the 2019 Major League Soccer Cup;

Whereas Seattle Sounders FC—

(1) dominated the competition in the regular season, with 16 wins and 10 losses;

(2) qualified for the Major League Soccer Cup Playoffs for an unprecedented 11th straight season; and

(3) earned the number 2 seed in the Major League Soccer Western Conference;

Whereas Seattle Sounders FC plays home games at CenturyLink Field in Seattle, Washington, and, on November 10, 2019, 69,274 Seattle Sounders FC fans from across the State of Washington packed CenturyLink Field and set the record for the largest crowd at a sporting event in the 17-year history of the stadium;

Whereas the 2019 roster of Seattle Sounders FC players includes—

(1) Saad Abdul-Salaam;

(2) Xavier Arreaga;

(3) Will Bruin;

(4) Handwalla Bwana;

(5) Jonathan Campbell;

(6) Emanuel Cecchini;

(7) Jordy Delem;

(8) Justin Dhillon;

(9) Stefan Frei;

(10) Bheem Goyal;

(11) Jovelin Jones;

(12) Kim Kee-hee;

(13) Kelvin Leerdam;

(14) Danny Leyva;

(15) Nicolás Lodeiro;

(16) Chad Marshall;

(17) Bryan Meredith;

(18) Jordan Morris;

(19) Trey Muse;

(20) Alfonso Ocampo-Chavez;

(21) Víctor Rodríguez;

(22) Cristian Roldan;

(23) Alex Roldan;

(24) Raúl Ruidiaz;

(25) Harry Shipp;

(26) Luis Silva;

(27) Brad Smith;

(28) Gustav Svensson;

(29) Nouhou; and

(30) Román Torres;

Whereas Seattle Sounders FC defender Kelvin Leerdam scored the first goal in the 57th minute of the championship game;

Whereas Seattle Sounders FC midfielder Víctor Rodríguez—

(1) scored the second goal in the 76th minute; and

(2) received the 2019 Major League Soccer Cup Most Valuable Player award;

Whereas Seattle Sounders FC forward Raúl Ruidiaz scored the third and final goal in the 90th minute;

Whereas Seattle Sounders FC forward Jordan Morris—

(1) scored a career-high 13 goals and a career-high 8 assists throughout the 2019 season; and

(2) received the 2019 Major League Soccer Comeback Player of the Year award after suffering a torn anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) in 2018;

Whereas Seattle Sounders FC Head Coach Brian Schmetzer won his second Major League Soccer Cup;

Whereas the 2019 Seattle Sounders FC coaching and technical staff includes—

(1) Head Coach Brian Schmetzer;

(2) Assistant Coach Gonzalo Pineda;

(3) Assistant Coach Djimi Traore;

(4) Assistant Coach Preki;

(5) Club Director of Goalkeeping Tom Dutra;

(6) General Manager and President of Soccer Garth Lagerwey; and

(7) Vice President of Soccer Chris Henderson;

Whereas the owners of Seattle Sounders FC, Adrian Hanauer, Drew Carey, Jody Allen, and Peter Tomozawa, and the 11 families that joined the ownership contingent in 2019, have built a culture of success and contributed greatly to Seattle, Washington, and the surrounding region through philanthropy;

Whereas Seattle Sounders FC has exhibited dedication to positive social impacts by strengthening communities through the RAVE Foundation partnership with organizations in Seattle, Washington, and the surrounding region; and

Whereas the dedication and hard work of Seattle Sounders FC has inspired and empowered girls, boys, women, and men of all ages: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes Seattle Sounders FC for winning the 2019 Major League Soccer Cup;

(2) applauds the people of Seattle, Washington, and the surrounding region for their enthusiastic support of Seattle Sounders FC;

(3) supports equity in men's and women's professional sports; and

(4) respectfully requests that the Secretary of the Senate transmit an enrolled copy of this resolution to Seattle Sounders FC Head Coach Brian Schmetzer, Assistant Coach Gonzalo Pineda, Assistant Coach Djimi Traore, Assistant Coach Preki, Club Director of Goalkeeping Tom Dutra, General Manager and President of Soccer Garth Lagerwey, Vice President of Soccer Chris Henderson, and the existing ownership contingent of Adrian Hanauer, Drew Carey, Jody Allen, and Peter Tomozawa and the 11 families who shall be mentioned by name below:

(A) Terry Myerson and Katie Myerson.

(B) Russell Wilson and Ciara.

(C) Benjamin Haggerty "Macklemore" and Tricia Davis.

(D) Satya Nadella and Anu Nadella.

(E) Amy Hood and Max Kleinman.

(F) Joe Belfiore and Kristina Belfiore.

(G) Soma Somasegar and Akila Somasegar.

(H) Chee Chew and Christine Chew.

(I) David Nathanson and Sabina Nathanson.

(J) Brian McAndrews and Elise Holschuh.

(K) Mark Agne and Tomoko Agne.

SENATE RESOLUTION 422—RECOGNIZING NOVEMBER 15, 2019, AS "AMERICA RECYCLES DAY" AND EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE THAT RECYCLING PROMOTES A HEALTHY ECONOMY AND RESPONSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Mr. CARPER (for himself and Mr. BOOZMAN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 422

Whereas recycling is among the top actions that people in the United States can do to improve the environment and the economy of the United States;

Whereas, according to the Environmental Protection Agency, in the United States, only 21.4 percent of recyclable waste is recycled;

Whereas, in the United States, recycling is an industry valued at approximately \$200,000,000,000;

Whereas diverting 75 percent of waste in the United States from landfilling and incineration to recycling by 2030 would result in the creation of approximately 2,300,000 recycling jobs, nearly 2 times the number of recycling jobs that existed in the United States in 2008;

Whereas the 2016 Recycling Economic Information Report by the Environmental Protection Agency found, using 2007 as a base year, that recycling and reuse activities—

(1) accounted for approximately 757,000 jobs, 0.52 percent of all jobs in the United States;

(2) produced approximately \$36,600,000,000 in wages, 0.62 percent of total wages paid in the United States; and

(3) produced approximately \$6,700,000,000 in tax revenue, 0.90 percent of total tax revenue in the United States;

Whereas recycling conserves natural resources and fresh water;

Whereas recycling prevents waste and discarded materials from ending up in oceans and waterways and harming water and wildlife;

Whereas, in 2015, approximately 67,800,000 tons of municipal solid waste were recycled, in contrast with 137,700,000 tons of municipal solid waste that were landfilled; and

Whereas, with respect to the 67,800,000 tons of municipal solid waste that were recycled, paper and paperboard accounted for 67 percent, metals accounted for 12 percent, and glass, plastic, and wood accounted for between 4 and 5 percent: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes November 15, 2019, as "America Recycles Day";

(2) acknowledges that recycling benefits and strengthens the economy, environment, and communities of the United States; and

(3) encourages the people of the United States to be cognizant of their environmental footprint and to incorporate additional recycling practices into their daily lives.

SENATE RESOLUTION 423—RECOGNIZING NOVEMBER 2019 AS "NATIONAL HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH AWARENESS MONTH"

Mr. MANCHIN (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. LANKFORD, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. HASSAN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. COONS, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. PETERS, and Mr. REED) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 423

Whereas, in the United States, public schools identified approximately 1,300,000 homeless children and youth during the 2016-2017 school year;

Whereas an estimated 1,200,000 children younger than 6 years of age in 2014 and approximately 4,200,000 youth and young adults in 2017 experienced homelessness, with many such youth and young adults staying on couches, in motels, in shelters, or outside;

Whereas infants who are homeless are at a higher risk for developing certain illnesses and health conditions, homeless families are more likely to experience involvement in the child welfare system, and homeless children are more likely to experience difficulty with school attendance;

Whereas a recent survey found that more than 1 in 3 high school students experiencing homelessness had attempted suicide, and nearly 1 in 4 high school students experiencing homelessness had experienced dating violence;

Whereas individuals without a high school degree or general educational development certificate (GED) are more than 3 times more likely to report homelessness than their peers, making lack of education the leading risk factor for homelessness;

Whereas, in 2016, the high school graduation rate for homeless students was 64 percent, compared to 77 percent for low-income students and 84.6 percent for all students;

Whereas the rate of youth homelessness is the same in rural, suburban, and urban areas;

Whereas 29 percent of unaccompanied homeless youth between 13 and 25 years of age have spent time in foster care, compared to approximately 6 percent of all children;

Whereas homelessness among children and youth is a complex issue that often co-occurs with deep poverty, low education and employment levels, substance misuse and abuse, mental illness, lack of affordable housing, and family conflict; and

Whereas awareness of child and youth homelessness must be heightened to encourage greater support for effective programs to help children and youth overcome homelessness: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the efforts of businesses, organizations, educators, and volunteers dedicated to meeting the needs of homeless children and youth;

(2) applauds the initiatives of businesses, organizations, educators, and volunteers that—

(A) use time and resources to raise awareness of child and youth homelessness, the causes of such homelessness, and potential solutions; and

(B) work to prevent homelessness among children and youth;

(3) recognizes November 2019 as "National Homeless Children and Youth Awareness Month"; and

(4) encourages those businesses, organizations, educators, and volunteers to continue to intensify their efforts to address homelessness among children and youth during November 2019.

SENATE RESOLUTION 424—RECOGNIZING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE COLORADO FARM BUREAU FEDERATION AND CELEBRATING THE LONG HISTORY OF THE COLORADO FARM BUREAU FEDERATION REPRESENTING THE FARMERS AND RANCHERS OF COLORADO

Mr. GARDNER (for himself and Mr. BENNET) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 424

Whereas, on March 22, 1919, a group of 10 local counties and farmers met to form what was termed a "Farm Bureau", with the goal of "making the business of farming more profitable and the community a better place to live";

Whereas W.G. Jamison, the first president of the Colorado Farm Bureau Federation, helped to lead a grassroots organization of farmers that represent all agricultural producers across the State of Colorado;

Whereas the Colorado Farm Bureau Federation, with a State farm bureau, 45 county farm bureaus, and 23,000 member families, is 1 of the largest farmer-led organizations in the State of Colorado;

Whereas the mission of the Colorado Farm Bureau Federation is "to promote and protect the future of agriculture and rural values";

Whereas the Colorado Farm Bureau Federation fulfills that mission—

(1) by representing farm and ranch families united for the purpose of formulating action to support rural communities;

(2) by improving agricultural production, economic opportunity, leadership development, and public policy; and

(3) by promoting the well-being of the people of the State of Colorado;

Whereas the Colorado Farm Bureau Federation has represented the interests of

farmers with respect to the consideration and enactment of all major legislation impacting farmers since the founding of the Colorado Farm Bureau Federation; and

Whereas the Colorado Farm Bureau Federation plays a vital role in promoting the well-being of the people of Colorado—

(1) by analyzing the problems faced by farm and ranch families; and

(2) by formulating action to achieve the goals of farm and ranch families: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) commemorates the 100th anniversary of the Colorado Farm Bureau Federation;

(2) recognizes the Colorado Farm Bureau Federation for 100 years of promoting farm and ranch interests for the benefit of the people of the State of Colorado; and

(3) applauds the Colorado Farm Bureau Federation for its past, present, and future efforts to advocate for farm interests that are critical to the State of Colorado.

SENATE RESOLUTION 425—DESIGNATING OCTOBER 2019 AS “NATIONAL DOWN SYNDROME AWARENESS MONTH” AND SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF NATIONAL DOWN SYNDROME AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. DAINES (for himself, Mr. BENNET, Mr. INHOFE, and Ms. WARREN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 425

Whereas 1 in every 691 babies born in the United States has Down syndrome;

Whereas Down syndrome affects people of all ages, races, and economic levels and is the most frequently occurring chromosomal abnormality;

Whereas the life expectancy of people with Down syndrome has increased dramatically in recent decades, from 25 years of age in 1983 to 60 years of age in 2019;

Whereas people with Down syndrome attend school, work, participate in decisions that affect them, have meaningful relationships, can vote, and contribute to society in many ways;

Whereas advancements in education, medical care, and research and advocacy, and positive support from family, friends, and the community enable people with Down syndrome to live healthy and fulfilling lives;

Whereas parents of babies and children with Down syndrome should receive the education and support they need to understand the condition and acquire new hope for the future of their children;

Whereas there are lifespan and health care disparities for minorities, such as African Americans with Down syndrome, that should be understood and addressed;

Whereas people with Down syndrome have a dramatically different health profile than other individuals, as people with Down syndrome are predisposed to develop major diseases (such as autoimmune disorders, leukemia, and Alzheimer’s disease) and may be protected from other major diseases (such as solid tumor cancers, certain heart attacks, and stroke);

Whereas advancing research and medical care for people with Down syndrome can not only increase life expectancy and improve health outcomes for this unique population, but also holds great promise for treating and perhaps curing life-threatening diseases affecting millions of other people in the United States;

Whereas people with Down syndrome should have access to health care providers

who have easy access to updated, evidence-based medical care guidelines for children and adults with the condition;

Whereas, on October 8, 2008, the Prenatally and Postnatally Diagnosed Conditions Awareness Act (Public Law 110-374; 122 Stat. 4051) was enacted to increase referrals to providers of key support services for mothers who have received a positive prenatal diagnosis for Down syndrome or a positive diagnosis for other prenatally or postnatally diagnosed conditions;

Whereas promoting the acceptance and inclusion of individuals born with Down syndrome, a genetic condition, will help those individuals achieve their full potential in all aspects of their lives;

Whereas, on September 28, 1984, President Ronald Reagan signed a joint resolution (Public Law 98-437; 98 Stat. 1683) proclaiming October 1984 as “National Down’s Syndrome Month”, and similar resolutions were enacted annually through 1989; and

Whereas the inherent dignity and worth of people with Down syndrome, the valuable contributions of people with Down syndrome as promoters of well-being and diversity within their communities, and the importance of the individual freedom and independence of people with Down syndrome should be recognized: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates October 2019 as “National Down Syndrome Awareness Month”;

(2) supports the goals and ideals of National Down Syndrome Awareness Month;

(3) celebrates the significant contributions that people with Down syndrome make to their families, their communities, and the United States;

(4) is committed to promoting the health, well-being, and inherent dignity of all children and adults with Down syndrome;

(5) supports the advancement of scientific and medical research on Down syndrome at the National Institutes of Health, including through the INCLUDE project, focused on improving health outcomes for people with the condition; and

(6) encourages awareness and education regarding Down syndrome, including for new and expectant parents.

SENATE RESOLUTION 426—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE THAT MEMBERS OF CONGRESS SHOULD SUBSTITUTE TEACH AT LEAST 1 DAY PER YEAR IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL TO GAIN FIRSTHAND KNOWLEDGE ON HOW TO ADDRESS THE PREVAILING CHALLENGES FACING EDUCATORS AND HOW TO REMOVE OBSTACLES TO LEARNING FOR STUDENTS

Mr. KENNEDY submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:

S. RES. 426

Whereas teachers play a critical role in shaping the minds and lives of children;

Whereas there are projected to be 3,200,000 full-time public school teachers in 2020;

Whereas approximately 200,000 teachers leave the profession each year;

Whereas in the 115th Congress, there were more than 2 times as many Members of Congress that had backgrounds in public service or politics than Members of Congress that had backgrounds in education; and

Whereas Members of Congress should be on the ground in public schools to understand

the challenges that educators and students face, including challenges relating to—

(1) a growing shortage of teachers;

(2) issues of teacher pay;

(3) a lack of resources in both urban and rural areas;

(4) teacher preparedness;

(5) chronic absenteeism among students;

(6) poverty; and

(7) parental involvement: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the contributions of teachers to the United States;

(2) thanks teachers for their service; and

(3) recommends that each Member of Congress spend at least 1 day per year serving as a substitute teacher in a public school.

SENATE RESOLUTION 427—RECOGNIZING THE HISTORICAL, CULTURAL, AND RELIGIOUS SIGNIFICANCE OF SIKH AMERICANS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. MENENDEZ, and Mr. CARDIN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 427

Whereas Sikhs have been living in the United States for more than 120 years, and during the early 20th century, thousands of Sikh Americans worked on farms, in lumber mills and mines, and on the Oregon, Pacific, and Eastern Railroad;

Whereas Sikhs in the United States and around the world live the values and ideals of equality, service, and devotion to God first preached by the first of the ten living gurus and the founder of Sikhism, Guru Nanak;

Whereas the devotion of Guru Nanak to spiritual matters led him to embark on a 24-year spiritual journey throughout South Asia and to places outside South Asia, including Tibet, Baghdad, and Mecca;

Whereas Guru Nanak was the first of the ten living gurus whose wisdom is now contained in the Guru Granth Sahib, and the teachings of Guru Nanak became the basis of Sikhism;

Whereas 2019 is the year of the 550th birthday of Guru Nanak, and Guru Nanak’s Gurpurab, which is one of the most important dates in the Sikh calendar, is celebrated across the United States and worldwide;

Whereas Vaisakhi, which is one of the most historically significant days of the year for Sikhs, is celebrated every April;

Whereas Sikhism is the fifth largest religion in the world, and there are more than 25,000,000 Sikhs worldwide and more than 750,000 Sikh Americans;

Whereas Sikh men and women have notably contributed to the society of the United States since their arrival in the United States in the late 1800s;

Whereas Sikh Americans pursue diverse professions that add to the social, cultural, and economic vibrancy of the United States, including by serving as members of the Armed Forces and making significant contributions in the fields of agriculture, information technology, small business, hospitality, trucking, medicine, and technology;

Whereas Sikh Americans, such as Bhagat Singh Thind, served in the Armed Forces during World War I and World War II;

Whereas the first Asian-American Member of Congress, Dalip Singh Saund, was a Sikh American elected to office in 1957;

Whereas Gurbir Singh Grewal became the first Sikh-American State attorney general

in the history of the United States when he was confirmed by the State Legislature of New Jersey on January 16, 2018;

Whereas Lieutenant Sandeep Singh Dhaliwal was the first observant Sikh to serve in the Harris County Sheriff's Office and was one of the first observant Sikhs in the State of Texas to receive a policy accommodation to practice his religion while serving as a police officer, and on Friday, September 27, 2019, in Houston, Texas, Lieutenant Dhaliwal was killed by gunfire while serving in the line of duty;

Whereas Sikh-American women, such as Grammy-winning artist Snatam Kaur, Officer Gursoach Kaur of the New York City Police Department, and Professor Supreet Kaur of the University of California, Berkeley, continue to make diverse contributions to the United States;

Whereas the inventor of fiber optics, Dr. Narinder Kapany, and the largest peach grower in the United States, Didar Singh Bains, are Sikh Americans;

Whereas Sikh Americans distinguish themselves by fostering respect among all people through faith and service;

Whereas the Senate is committed to educating citizens about the religions of the world, the value of religious diversity, tolerance grounded in the principles of the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, a culture of mutual understanding, and the importance of reducing violence; and

Whereas the Senate seeks to further the diversity of its community and afford all residents the opportunity to better understand, recognize, and appreciate the rich history and shared experiences of Sikh Americans: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the historical, cultural, and religious significance of the 550th birthday of Guru Nanak;

(2) recognizes that the teachings of Guru Nanak on equality and service have inspired millions of people and can serve as an inspiration for people of all faiths;

(3) recognizes the invaluable contributions and sacrifices made by Sikh Americans;

(4) recognizes the discrimination that Sikh Americans have faced in the United States and around the world; and

(5) expresses its respect for all Sikhs who practice their faith.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I have 6 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 ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, November 14, 2019, at 10:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing on the nomination of Dan R. Brouillette, of Texas, to be Secretary of Energy.

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

The Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of

the Senate on Thursday, November 14, 2019, at 9:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing on the nomination of Peter Gaynor, of Rhode Island, to be Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, November 14, 2019, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing on the following nominations: Patrick J. Bumatay, of California, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit, Lawrence VanDyke, of Nevada, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit, Philip M. Halpern, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of New York, Bernard Maurice Jones II, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Oklahoma, and Barbara Bailey Jongbloed, to be United States District Judge for the District of Connecticut.

COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

The Committee on Rules and Administration is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, November 14, 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 Thursday, November 14, 2019, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, November 14, 2019, at 2 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the following five interns in my office be granted floor privileges for the remainder of the year: Madison Malin, Chris Brown, Britt Jacobovich, Devon Bradley, and Alanna Van Nostrand.

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

WHITE HORSE HILL NATIONAL GAME PRESERVE DESIGNATION ACT

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. President, Sullys Hill is a national game preserve that is located entirely within the Spirit Lake Nation in North Dakota. I have a bill, S. 2099, that I want to ask to be voted on shortly. If enacted, my bill would change the game preserve's name from "Sullys Hill" to the English translation of its traditional Dakota name, "White Horse Hill."

The name change has the full support of the Spirit Lake Nation and all of the leadership of the local, State, and national government in North Dakota, including the entire North Dakota con-

gressional delegation: my colleague, Senator HOEVEN, chairman of the Indian Affairs Committee, and Congressman KELLY ARMSTRONG, who has an identical bill introduced in the House.

In 1904, the game preserve was named after GEN Alfred Sully. Unfortunately, General Sully gained notoriety by committing several massacres of Native Americans, most notably on September 3, 1863, in the Dakota Territory. As reprisal for the Dakota conflict of 1862, his troops destroyed a village of over 500 teepees that lodged the Yankton, Dakota, and Lakota people, killing hundreds of Native Americans. Many of the descendants of his victims live on the very Tribal lands that surround this hill.

With the issues that our Federal Government is dealing with today, changing the name of a game preserve in North Dakota may seem like a small matter, but let me assure you, Mr. President and colleagues, this is no small matter to the people of the Spirit Lake Nation. I am sorry it has taken us so long to correct this wrong. It has taken us over 100 years to correct this mistake.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 223, S. 2099.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2099) to redesignate the Sullys Hill National Game Preserve in the State of North Dakota as the White Horse Hill National Game Preserve.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The bill (S. 2099) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 2099

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 "White Horse Hill National Game Preserve Designation Act".

SEC. 2. DESIGNATION OF WHITE HORSE HILL NATIONAL GAME PRESERVE, NORTH DAKOTA.

(a) REDESIGNATION.—The first section of the Act of March 3, 1931 (46 Stat. 1509, chapter 439; 16 U.S.C. 674a), is amended by striking "Sullys Hill National Game Preserve" and inserting "White Horse Hill National Game Preserve".

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 2 of the Act of March 3, 1931 (46 Stat. 1509, chapter 439; 16 U.S.C. 674b), is amended by striking "Sullys Hill National Game Preserve" and inserting "White Horse Hill National Game Preserve".

(c) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other

record of the United States to the Sullys Hill National Game Preserve shall be considered to be a reference to the "White Horse Hill National Game Preserve".

Mr. CRAMER. Thank you, Mr. President.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. 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.

ONDCP TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS ACT OF 2019

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 3889 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The clerk will report the bill by title. The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3889) to amend the Office of National Drug Control Policy Reauthorization Act of 1998 to make technical corrections.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which was reported from Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The bill (H.R. 3889) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE THAT THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE SHOULD ISSUE A COMMEMORATIVE POSTAGE STAMP SERIES HONORING WOMEN VETERANS OF THE ARMED FORCES

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 415 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 415) expressing the sense of the Senate that the United States

Postal Service should issue a commemorative postage stamp series honoring women veterans of the Armed Forces and that the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee should recommend to the Postmaster General that such a stamp series be issued.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and 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. 415) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to. (The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of November 7, 2019, under "Submitted Resolutions.")

RECOGNIZING THE HISTORICAL, CULTURAL, AND RELIGIOUS SIGNIFICANCE OF THE 550TH BIRTHDAY OF GURU NANAK AND THE CONTRIBUTIONS AND SACRIFICES MADE BY SIKHS OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 393 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 393) recognizing the historical, cultural, and religious significance of the 550th birthday of Guru Nanak and the contributions and sacrifices made by Sikhs of the United States.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and 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. 393) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to. (The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of October 31, 2019, under "Submitted Resolutions.")

RESOLUTIONS SUBMITTED TODAY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Sen-

ate now proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following Senate resolutions, which were submitted earlier today: S. Res. 422, S. Res. 423, S. Res. 424, and S. Res. 425.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolutions en bloc.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the resolutions be agreed to, the preambles be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, all en bloc.

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

The resolutions (S. Res. 422, S. Res. 423, S. Res. 424, and S. Res. 425) were agreed to.

The preambles were agreed to. (The resolutions, with their preambles, are printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

ORDERS FOR MONDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2019

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 3 p.m., Monday, November 18; further, that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; further, that following leader remarks, the Senate proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the Luck nomination; finally, that the cloture motions filed during today's session ripen at 5:30 p.m. on Monday.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL MONDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2019, AT 3 P.M.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 4:01 p.m., adjourned until Monday, November 18, 2019, at 3 p.m.

CONFIRMATION

Executive nomination confirmed by the Senate November 14, 2019:

THE JUDICIARY

STEVEN J. MENASHI, OF NEW YORK, TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE SECOND CIRCUIT.