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## Senate

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

### PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Holy God, You make the clouds Your chariot and walk upon the wind. We see Your works in the rising of the Sun and in its setting. For the beauty of the Earth and the glory of the skies, we give you praise.

Today make our lawmakers heirs of peace, demonstrating that they are Your children as they strive to find common ground. May they take pleasure in doing Your will, knowing that by so doing, they are fulfilling Your purposes in our world. Lord, you are never far from us, but often we are far from You, so show us Your ways and teach us Your paths.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

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

### APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,  
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,  
Washington, DC, December 4, 2019.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable KEVIN CRAMER, a Senator from the State of North Dakota, to perform the duties of the Chair.

CHUCK GRASSLEY,  
President pro tempore.

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

### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Richard Ernest Myers II, of North Carolina, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of North Carolina.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

#### HONG KONG

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on Sunday, as we Americans savored the holiday weekend and gave thanks for our liberty, the people of Hong Kong took to the streets to demand their own. Many waved American flags.

Hongkongers are continuing to speak up for the freedoms and the autonomy that Beijing has slowly tried to erode. As long as Beijing does not relent, it looks like the people of Hong Kong are

not going to relent either. In local elections last week that were largely symbolic, pro-democracy candidates literally blew away the candidates the Chinese Communist Party would have preferred in a literal landslide. Not even Beijing's propagandists can credibly blame this massive display of popular revulsion at their authoritarianism on the "black hand" of the West. In spite of China's propaganda, the West should not stay silent as Beijing sneaks to snuff out dissent in Hong Kong.

Just a few days prior, the Congress and President Trump had sent our clearest signal yet that, yes, the United States of America stands with Hong Kong. The Senate unanimously passed the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act, and the President signed it into law. It delivered important updates to the original U.S.-Hong Kong Policy Act, which I authored back in 1992. Preserving freedom and promoting democracy has required constant vigilance with Hongkongers since Communist China assumed control of the region.

I have been proud to stand with that effort. With my original legislation, we paved the way for cooperation between Hong Kong and the United States, codifying and strengthening economic ties and facilitating the robust exchange of ideas and support of greater democracy in the autonomous region. We have laid the foundation for a U.S.-Hong Kong relationship that has strengthened both their society and ours and created leverage to hold Beijing accountable.

Back in 1992, I observed that democracy was "finally gaining a tenuous foothold in Hong Kong." Recent months certainly have reminded us just how tenuous that foothold can be when an authoritarian country flexes its muscles. They reminded us just how intent Beijing remains on exporting its oppressive surveillance state not just within mainland China but also into Hong Kong and, frankly, all around the world.

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



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The unanimous Senate vote for expanded oversight and firm responses to Beijing was welcomed news on the streets of Hong Kong, not because the U.S. Senate or international nonprofits or anybody else is ginning up these protests, as Beijing wants people to believe, but because those speaking out for freedom recognize a friend of freedom when they see one.

It has been funny to see how invested Beijing is in these conspiracy theories that this organic protest movement is actually the work of shadowy puppeteers. Just a few days ago, the Chinese Communist Party's Foreign Ministry took the panicked and laughable step of "sanctioning" several American nonprofits and NGOs, such as the International Republican Institute, the National Democratic Institute, and the National Endowment for Democracy. Like I said, it is laughable. I admire the heck out of these organizations, but they aren't exactly in the business of commanding millions of people from Hong Kong to Beirut, to Baghdad, to Tehran to take to the streets. They are not that good.

Here is the business they are in: speaking up for the timeless and universal principles of basic human freedom. They help keep the torch lit. It is the brave souls around the world who want better lives for themselves and their children who pick up the ball and run with it for themselves.

The junior varsity tantrum that Beijing is throwing against these U.S.-based organizations is literally comical. It puts the Communist Party's hypersensitivity on full display. It is the same flailing that we see from other regimes from Moscow to Tehran, driven by the same aggressive, authoritarian instincts that push social media propaganda, street corner surveillance, police violence, and the modern-day gulags where China is imprisoning and brutalizing the Uighur people. These are the forces history never judges kindly. I am proud of the people of Hong Kong. I am proud of the Senate's latest action to support them, and I am proud to continue standing alongside them in their journey to true self-determination.

#### APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. President, nearly every day I have come to the floor to talk about the key pieces of legislation that we will only be able to complete with bipartisan cooperation—essential things like funding for the entirety of our Federal Government, something we have to do, including funding for our men and women in uniform; the money for the tools and the training and the weapons that our volunteer servicemembers need to complete their missions; things like the National Defense Authorization Act, which Congress has passed every single year, always on a bipartisan basis, for the last 58 years. This is literally the bill that reauthorizes the U.S. military. It could not be more basic or fundamental.

So it is dismaying that my Democratic colleagues have seen fit to hold

these basic duties hostage for the sake of picking fights with the White House, for advancing a partisan domestic agenda. It is disappointing that Speaker PELOSI and the Democratic leader have abandoned their own written promises that they would not make our bipartisan appropriations processes conditioned on poison pills, policy riders, or changes to Presidential transfer authorities. All those commitments were made in the summer. Even though they put that in writing, they have chosen to shoehorn partisan demands right back into the process. So we are stalled. We are stalled because the agreement we all reached in the summer has not been honored by the other side.

Today I want to keep this really simple. The Senate's dispensation on that Hong Kong legislation proves that we can still work together when our core principles and our national interest are at stake. Of course, those things are exactly what is at stake with defense funding and the NDAA. So it is way past time—we are in December—to get serious.

Chairman SHELBY and Chairwoman LOWEY have agreed on subcommittee allocations. Chairman INHOFE and Senator REED have made strides on our bipartisan NDAA. I would implore my Democratic friends: Please stop gambling our national security on the roulette wheel of domestic politics. Please stop that. Stop putting political theater ahead of our troops.

We all know this is a heated political moment, but domestic politics do not excuse our men and women in uniform from doing their duties. So they cannot excuse our Democratic colleagues from doing theirs. Our servicemembers need Congress to have their backs. We can only fund the government if it is bipartisan. We can only pass an NDAA if it is bipartisan.

The roadmaps are in hand. We have the same traditions that have yielded 58 bipartisan NDAAs in a row, and we have the bipartisan agreement that everyone signed just a few months ago when Speaker PELOSI and the Democratic leader promised in writing they wouldn't throw partisan wrenches into appropriations.

Our country can't afford for the Democrats to obsess over impeachment and obstruct everything else. Look, let's use these roadmaps. Let's get these things accomplished for the American people.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### 5G TECHNOLOGY

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, 4G technology is pretty amazing. When I talk

about 4G technology, that stands for fourth generation. On your smartphone, it might say LTE, but it is the fourth generation of technology that we have available to us on our wireless devices. We can FaceTime with family members across the country, order dinner or groceries without leaving our couches, watch a football game on the go with our phones, adjust the heat in our houses before we actually get home, carry around an entire library on a tablet the size of one small book, deposit a check without actually visiting the bank, and the list goes on.

As amazing as 4G technology is, it can't hold a candle to 5G, or fifth generation technology. 5G mobile broadband technology will deliver speeds that will be up to 100 times faster than what today's technology can deliver. Think about that—downloads that will be 100 times faster than what we have today. It will be vastly more responsive than 4G technology. It will be able to connect 100 times the number of devices that can be connected with 4G. That is pretty hard to imagine, really. Our phones and computers today seem pretty fast and responsive, but 5G will be much, much faster.

While that will make it even easier to do the things we do today, like check our email or stream our favorite shows, the biggest benefits of 5G will lie in the other technologies it will enable. For example, 5G will have the potential to pave the way for the widespread adoption of precision agriculture, which uses tools like robotics and remote monitoring to help farmers manage their fields and boost their crop yields. The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates that precision agriculture will reduce farmers' operational costs by up to \$25 per acre and increase farmers' yields by up to 70 percent by the year 2050.

5G will pave the way for automated vehicles, which will have the potential to dramatically reduce traffic injuries and fatalities. There are 37,000 people lost every year on America's highways due to traffic accidents. Over 90 percent of those are as a result of human error—driving while under the influence, driving while distracted. 5G technology and the enablement of automated vehicles will go a long way toward saving lives on America's highways.

It will facilitate surgical innovations and new ways to treat chronic illnesses or heal injuries and so much more.

The technology for 5G is already here. Several cities around the United States, including my hometown of Sioux Falls, have already unveiled limited 5G networks, but there is more work to do before we all can start to see the benefits of 5G on our phones.

The widespread deployment of 5G will require two things: adequate spectrum and adequate infrastructure. While 4G relies on traditional cell phone towers, 5G technology will also require small antennas called small

cells that can often be attached to existing infrastructure like utility poles or buildings.

Earlier this year, I introduced legislation called the STREAMLINE Act to make it easier for companies to deploy these small cells so that we can get the infrastructure in place for 5G technology. I have also spent a lot of time focusing on securing adequate spectrum for 5G.

Last year, the President signed into law my bipartisan bill called the MOBILE NOW Act. It was legislation that I introduced to help secure adequate spectrum and to facilitate next-generation infrastructure. Tomorrow, in my role as chairman of the Commerce Subcommittee on Communications, Technology, Innovation and the Internet, I will be chairing a hearing looking at the progress that has been made in implementing the MOBILE NOW Act. We have a great slate of witnesses testifying tomorrow, including Sioux Falls Mayor Paul TenHaken, who has driven the implementation of advanced mobile broadband technology in Sioux Falls, SD.

The MOBILE NOW Act has helped us make progress toward the deployment of 5G, particularly in identifying licensed spectrum that can be used to support 5G deployment in more rural areas of the country.

MOBILE NOW also recognized the critical role that unlicensed spectrum plays in the development of 5G and in the larger communications landscape. Wi-fi operating on unlicensed spectrum will have an increasing role as we continue to connect more devices in the 5G era.

There is more work to be done, though. While we have made good progress on securing low- and high-band spectrum, China and South Korea are ahead of us in opening up mid-band spectrum for 5G. We don't want to lose out to China and South Korea on 5G, so we need to substantially increase the amount of mid-band spectrum available to U.S. companies.

Senator WICKER and I recently introduced legislation to facilitate the rapid acquisition of mid-band spectrum. Our 5G Spectrum Act would bring a substantial amount of mid-band spectrum to market for U.S. companies ready to deploy robust 5G networks.

In addition to fostering tremendous technological breakthroughs in everything from agriculture to energy, 5G has the potential to add \$500 billion to the economy and to create literally millions of new jobs. But in order to achieve those economic benefits, we need to stay at the head of the 5G revolution.

The United States lagged behind other countries in deploying 2G and 3G technology, which had real economic consequences. Europe, for example, took the lead in 2G and cornered most of the market in sales of networking equipment and telecom hardware.

As 4G emerged, however, the U.S. wireless industry stepped forward, in-

vesting billions in 4G deployment. The government also took steps to support the wireless industry, freeing up spectrum and making it easier to deploy the necessary infrastructure. That is what we have to do again today. If we want to stay at the head of the race to 5G, the government needs to make sure that wireless companies have access to the necessary spectrum and the ability to efficiently deploy small cell infrastructure.

We are right on the edge of the 5G revolution, and I am confident that the United States can lead the world in 5G, just like we did with 4G. We just need to take the last few steps to enable widespread 5G deployment.

I look forward to talking with individuals on the frontlines of 5G deployment at the hearing tomorrow. I will continue to work with my colleagues to ensure that both the spectrum and the infrastructure are in place for 5G technology.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

#### IMPEACHMENT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, yesterday afternoon, the majority on the House Intelligence Committee released a report on the evidence it has examined thus far in the impeachment inquiry into President Trump. The report asserted that the inquiry has "uncovered a months-long effort by President Trump to use the powers of his office to solicit foreign interference on his behalf in the 2020 election," going on to say that the "President placed his own personal and political interests above the national interests of the United States."

Those are extremely serious charges, and the conduct they describe is undoubtedly worthy of congressional investigation, which is precisely what the House impeachment inquiry is designed to do.

Whatever your party affiliation, it is up to us in Congress—and particularly in the Senate—to examine the evidence, remain impartial, and treat this matter with the seriousness it deserves. But at the moment, too many Members of the President's party are stretching the bounds of truth in an attempt to defend the President's behavior. Certain Members on the other side have parroted the fiction invented by Vladimir Putin's intelligence services that Ukraine, not just Putin, interfered in the 2016 elections. One Member repeated this falsehood, recanted on

live television, and then went back to making similar comments a few days later.

Yesterday, Leader MCCONNELL, when asked to set the record straight, said that it was a matter for the intelligence committees to look into.

Well, Leader MCCONNELL, the intelligence committees have looked at it. In fact, according to reports, the Republican-led Senate Intelligence Committee investigated the allegations that Ukraine interfered in the 2016 election and found no evidence to support the claims. The Republican-led Intelligence Committee found no evidence, and Leader MCCONNELL and so many of our Republican friends, in febrile obeisance to Donald Trump and his falsehoods and lies, have refused to even rebut that.

It is a dark day for America when a foreign leader who is our enemy can spread a false truth and is either defended or there is a lack of rebuttal from our Republican colleagues. What the heck is going on here in this America?

David Hale, the No. 3 official at President Trump's State Department, was asked by Senator MENENDEZ yesterday whether he was aware of any evidence of Ukrainian interference in 2016. He said: I am not. He was not aware. Fiona Hill, another Trump appointee and a former NSC official, testified under oath that it was "a fictional narrative."

There is no doubt that the idea of Ukrainian interference in 2016 is a hoax perpetrated by Putin's intelligence services, echoed by FOX News and acolytes of President Trump's, who similarly have shown no regard for truth—none.

The fact that Republican Senators are repeating and amplifying this fiction or playing coy about it, as Leader MCCONNELL is, is just wrong for America, wrong for the future of our country—a turning point, a dark point, in our history. And in my view, it shows the extreme depths—the febrile depths—to which certain Members on the other side will stoop to provide cover to a President accused of serious wrongdoing—a President who almost no American believes is credible any longer.

#### APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. President, on another matter where we could use some bipartisanship, in 16 days, funding for the government will expire. We have several important pieces in place to avoid a shutdown, including the recent agreement on allocations known as 302(b)s. Several sticking points remain, but overall, this is good news because I believe, left to our own devices, Congress could work through the final issues and make sure the government stays open.

However, a report came out yesterday suggesting President Trump may refuse to sign any funding agreement without securing funding for his border wall first. If all of this seems a little familiar, it is because it is. Nearly a

year ago exactly, the President torpedoed bipartisan negotiations by demanding the very same thing—funding for his border wall—and the result was the longest government shutdown in history.

Funding for a border wall was a non-starter for Democrats then, and it remains a nonstarter for Democrats now. The votes did not exist even within the President's own party then, and they have not materialized now.

We had hoped the President had learned his lesson, but it appears that exactly a year after losing this same battle, the President is considering a repeat of history and another Trump shutdown.

I hope cooler heads will prevail—I believe they will—but I would warn President Trump and my Republican colleagues, the last Trump shutdown was terrible for the American people and terrible for Republicans. It is in all of our interests to keep the President away from the appropriations process and avoid another Trump shutdown before Christmas.

SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Mr. President, finally, on SNAP, today the Trump administration announced it had completed a new rule that would potentially throw hundreds of thousands of needy Americans off food assistance.

Let me repeat. Hundreds of thousands of people who need food and have struggled to find employment would be kicked off Federal food assistance under a new Trump administration rule.

Right now, there are about 37 million Americans who receive benefits under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. The vast majority of them work, but they don't earn enough to feed their families, and those who don't qualify for assistance for 3 months out of every 3 years.

Under the new rule, the Trump administration would trample on States' abilities to request waivers to these strict time limits in areas of great unemployment. Nearly every State in the Union has requested a waiver at one point or another.

The Trump administration is driving the vulnerable into hunger just as the Christmas season approaches. It is heartless, it is cruel, and it exposes a deep and shameful cruelty and hypocrisy in this administration.

One of the Trump administration's justifications for these cuts is that they will save the government money. Well, 2 years ago this very month, the Trump administration blew a more than trillion-dollar hole in our deficit with a gargantuan tax cut for corporations and the ultra-rich. The Trump administration argued it was money well spent. Now, the same administration says we have to pinch pennies when it comes to helping the hungry, particularly around Christmastime? This makes the Grinch look charitable. The same Trump administration that

has steered millions of dollars to wealthy agribusinesses and foreign-owned entities is now saying they need to save money by cutting off food aid to poor families who need it. This is jarring hypocrisy, and it shows clear as day where this administration's priorities clearly lie—with the rich and powerful, not the most vulnerable members of our society.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Oklahoma.

NATIONAL DEBT

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, we have a debt issue in America. For some reason, we are losing track of that. The economy is so good right now. Unemployment is at historic numbers. The inflation numbers have stayed down. More Americans are bringing home more take-home pay, which means they can buy more stuff. More job opportunities are out there. In fact, we literally have 1.5 million more job openings in America than we have people looking for work in America.

With the economy going so well right now, everyone is losing track of the debt and deficit, which are not going well right now. Last year, the Federal Treasury received more tax revenues than it has ever received in the history of the United States, which is surprising to some folks I have talked to who said that there was a big tax cut in 2017, so that would mean tax revenue would go down. It didn't. It went up.

When that tax cut occurred, more people were able to bring home more money and to spend more, which created more jobs. There was more investment, and the economy charged up. So we actually have more revenue coming in now than we used to have, but we still have a trillion-dollar deficit. That is the amount of overspending in a single year. We have the highest amount of revenue we have ever had. Yet we have epic levels of deficit spending, adding to \$23 trillion in total debt as a nation—\$23 trillion. It is a number none of us can even fathom.

We are approaching a time when it would take the income of every single American for the entire year to be collected as taxes to pay off our debt. We are at 95 percent total debt to GDP. These kinds of numbers can't be sustained, and everyone quietly knows it in the back of their mind, but dealing with debt and deficit seem to be something we will deal with in the future—someday, someday, someday.

I am here to encourage this body to say that we should be taking on the issues of debt and deficit now. The two things that have to occur in order to get on top of our debt and deficit are to get a growing economy with growing revenues—we have that now—and then we have to deal with Federal spending.

What would it take to manage Federal spending? We are so far out of balance. A trillion dollars—literally we could shut down the entire Department of Defense, the Department of Education, the State Department—we

could close down every single one of those, and we still wouldn't balance in a year. And no one would propose doing that. There is no 1-year fix to trying to get on top of our deficit; this will be a multiyear process.

Just to state how bad it has become, if we chipped away at our deficit for the next 10 years—for 10 years, chipped away at our deficit to get us back to just balance—and then we had a \$100 billion surplus the next year, which would be an enormous surplus, with a \$100 billion surplus—it would take us 230 years in a row of having a \$100 billion surplus in our Treasury just to deal with our debt. It would take 230 years in a row of \$100 billion surpluses.

Again, we are not just out of balance; we are way out of balance. There is no one secret thing we can do to get us back on track, but we do need to get started. That is why our team puts out something we call "Federal Fumbles." The "Federal Fumbles" guide is something we put out every single year. It is just a group of ideas. It is no magic bullet. It is just something our office puts out that looks at areas of inefficiency across the Federal Government and ask: Why is this happening the way it is happening, and what would happen if we continue doing the same things we are doing? Are there areas where we can save money and that we would be OK with as a group?

We are not trying to put out partisan ideas; we are just putting out ideas. Quite frankly, the "Federal Fumbles" guide is not a confrontation for this body; it is the opening salvo in a conversation. We are bringing our ideas. You may have different ideas. Great. Bring yours. Let's try to figure out how to solve this together because this last year, we paid \$371 billion just in interest payments on our debt. This fiscal year, we paid \$423 billion just in interest. That is \$423 billion that is not going to healthcare, transportation, the basic structure of our government, or the national defense. It is \$423 billion spent on interest payments, and it just goes away.

We are asking questions as we put out this Federal Fumbles guide. How do we solve this? What are some ideas?

We have simple questions such as, why did the Social Security office pay \$11.6 million to deceased beneficiaries in Puerto Rico?

We ask questions such as, why did the government pay almost half a billion dollars last year on temporary tents—not buying them, renting temporary tents—along our southern border? Was there a better way that could have been done other than half a billion dollars in cost?

We have some questions about the 21 government shutdowns that have occurred in the last 40 years, including the one earlier this year. That shutdown cost the Federal taxpayer over \$4 billion.

We ask straightforward questions about things like tax credits. If you like the Tesla that you pull up next to

at a stoplight and you gaze at its beauty and think that is a beautiful car, well, great, I am glad you like it because you helped pay for it. All of those Teslas that are on the road—\$7,500 of the cost of that Tesla was paid by you, the Federal taxpayer. So what you should do at a stoplight is roll down your window and say to the person driving the Tesla: It is my turn. I helped pay for the car. Why don't you let me drive it for the rest of the day?

We ask questions about grants for such things as sea lions in Russia because the U.S. taxpayer gave almost \$2 million to study sea lions in Russia last year. We spent \$600,000 doing a documentary on Joseph Stalin. We spent a big chunk of money actually studying the Russian flu in 1889. Why did we do that?

Some of these things are small, and some of them are large.

We laid out a proposal dealing with prescription drugs because the way the tiering is done on prescription drugs now costs the Federal taxpayer \$22 billion. That is because generic drugs were placed on a higher cost branded tier, so the Federal taxpayer and the consumer end up paying not the generic price but the more expensive branded price when they could have paid the lower price. That is a cost of \$22 billion for just that one piece.

We laid out a whole set of ideas and said: Let's just look at them together.

This Congress passed \$380 million that was sent out to the States to help with election security. After the Russians were clearly trying to interfere with our elections in 2016, we decided to do something about it to help our States. So \$380 million was sent out to the States to do the work that was needed to be done to upgrade election security equipment and to be prepared for 2020.

As of this last July, of the \$380 million sent to the States, the States have only spent a little over \$100 million. They have literally banked the other \$250 million and just saved it and said: We will use it sometime. The 2020 elections are coming. The money was allocated, but it has not actually been spent and used for election security.

We want to highlight issues and find ways to solve them. We didn't try to bring partisan ideas; we just brought ideas.

This is our fifth volume. We have had other editions that dealt with other issues that need to be resolved. In the back of the book, we actually put out what we call the "Touchdowns" and the forward progress. These are some of the things we listed in previous versions that we actually looked at and can say we have made some progress on these things in trying to actually solve them. That is because at times we complain about what is happening in government, but we don't identify the good things, and there are a lot of good things that are actually happening.

This Senate passed the GREAT Act. The GREAT Act dramatically in-

creases the way we handle data on grants. About \$600 billion a year in the Federal Government is spent just on grants. We think there needs to be greater oversight on that, and this Senate has agreed. This Senate has sent the GREAT Act over to the House and has said: Let's try to resolve how we can be more effective in how we do grants and be more transparent in the process and streamline the data itself to make it easier on those requesting a grant, as well as allowing for more transparency in where the Federal dollars are going. We don't want to just complain about the way grants are done; we want to try to actually fix it.

We highlight multiple other areas where we have made real progress in the past year tackling some of the things we have listed in previous versions of "Federal Fumbles."

But I do want to remind this body that while we talk about some of these hard issues, we often break into Republican-Democratic fights over hard issues. America is more than an economy, and while the economy is extremely important, we are Americans. We are Americans together. While we struggle to deal with hard issues, such as debt and deficit and what is going to be done to resolve this, we just can't conveniently go into our corners and make speeches and say that we have tried; we have to sit down and do hard things and do hard things together.

That is why we are opening this conversation. That is why we keep this conversation going, because I do believe that while the economy is important, who we are and how we value each other is just as important because we have the responsibility to solve this. Again, other offices may have other ideas on how to resolve it. Great. Let's bring all those ideas together. Let's get 100 books like this, and everyone bring their ideas. Then let's actually do the work to solve this in the future.

We are Americans. We do hard things. This one is going to be hard, and it is going to take a long time, but it doesn't get easier if we don't start, and it doesn't get done until we begin. So I am challenging us today to begin. Let's deal with the ways we have fumbled the ball in the past, and let's solve our debt and deficit together over the years into the future.

With that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The Senator from Ohio.

UNITED STATES-MEXICO-CANADA TRADE AGREEMENT

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I am on the floor today to urge the U.S.

Congress to do the right thing, and that is to allow a vote on this new agreement between Mexico and Canada and the United States.

Unbelievably, this agreement was negotiated a year ago—they signed it at the end of November last year—and yet for a year now, Congress has refused to take it up. It has got to go to the House of Representatives first, and Speaker PELOSI and the House Democrats who control that body have not been willing to at least take it to the floor for a vote.

The agreement is such a big improvement over the status quo. The status quo is the NAFTA agreement, which is 25 years old. The new agreement, which was negotiated a year ago, gives something that Canada wants, Mexico wants, and the United States wants. We want it because it is really important to us.

It is particularly important to my home State of Ohio. I will tell you our No. 1 trading partner by far is Canada. We send about 40 percent of our exports to one country: Canada. So to have a better agreement with our biggest trading partner—and our second biggest trading partner, which is Mexico—is really important. Alongside Mexico, our trade with Canada accounts for about \$28 billion a year.

I am hearing a lot about it. I am hearing from Ohio farmers. They have had a tough time. A combination of bad weather, a combination of shrinking markets for them in China, and a combination of low commodity prices going in to the bad weather period last year has made it really tough for farmers. A lot of them are having a very difficult time making ends meet this year.

They see the USMCA for what it is, an expansion of their market. They can sell more stuff to Canada and to Mexico, and that will help them improve their prices and help them to be able to get through this tough period, so for them, it is a light at the end of the tunnel. If we can get this new trade agreement passed, it means expanded markets for dairy products, for pork, for corn and soybeans, and other commodities. Get those prices up, and give our farmers a chance to compete on a level playing field. This is a good thing. That is why they are all for it.

Businesses really want the USMCA passed. By the way, I hear mostly from small businesses about this because they increasingly have looked to markets overseas—particularly Canada and Mexico in the State of Ohio—and they are concerned that if we do not put this agreement forward, we are going to have a lot of uncertainty out there, and they are going to sell less stuff, rather than more stuff, to these countries.

So a lot of small manufacturers in particular sell a lot from Ohio to Canada and to Mexico, and they tell me they want this agreement passed—and passed now—because it will really help them. My colleagues here in the Senate

have to be hearing the same thing. When they go home, they have to be hearing from these same people because all around the country, when people look at this agreement, they say: Of course, this is better than the status quo for my business. Workers, farmers, service providers will all benefit.

Taken together, our neighbors in Canada and Mexico now make up the biggest foreign market for U.S. goods anywhere, so these two countries together combined are the biggest market anywhere in the world. One-third of all American exports in 2019 have gone to Canada or Mexico, way ahead of all foreign markets. It is about 12 million jobs, so 12 million jobs nationally depend on trade with Canada and Mexico.

I am a former trade lawyer myself—a recovering trade lawyer—and I do not practice it today, but I did at one time. I am also a former member of the trade committee in the House of Representatives, called the Ways and Means Committee, and today, I am a member of the Senate Finance Committee, which is the trade committee over here. In the interim, I was U.S. Trade Representative for President George W. Bush. I will tell you, from all the experiences that I have had in trade, I have learned one lesson, which is, yes, it is complicated, trade has a lot of nuances, it is politically difficult, but it is really important to our economy.

Why? Because we have got about 5 percent of the world's population and about 25 percent of the economy here, so it is in our interest to access that other 95 percent of consumers outside of America in order to keep America as a prosperous country.

That is what these trade agreements tend to do. The problem with the NAFTA agreement, the current one, is that it is 25 years old, and it needs to be updated. You know, it is one of the oldest trade agreements we have, and it is one that is fraught with problems right now, some of which are fixed in this USMCA.

The USMCA, the successor to it, is a lot better. It creates a more balanced and more healthy trade relationship with Mexico and Canada for us. Again, for the workers and farmers and service providers that I represent and other people that this body represents, the level playing field is important because, while trade works if it is done properly and fairly, it does not work well when you have big trade deficits, when other countries cheat, when they do not play by the rules. Everything in this agreement helps to level that playing field.

As an example, right now, our trade agreement with Canada and Mexico does not have a lot of things you would expect in a modern agreement, like provisions relating to the digital economy. So much of our economy now operates on the Internet, yet there is nothing in the NAFTA agreement that protects data from tariffs, for example.

Another one would be labor and environmental standards which are weak and unenforceable under the current NAFTA. All of our new trade agreements have labor and environmental agreements, and they are enforceable. Well, guess what, USMCA does too. It includes a lot of the modern provisions that we have in our more recent trade agreements. I have got a handy chart here to talk about some of the specific changes between USMCA and NAFTA. First, the USMCA means more jobs. The independent International Trade Commission said it will add 176,000 new jobs. New jobs? USMCA, yes; NAFTA, no.

By the way, from my home State of Ohio, which is a big auto State, thousands of those jobs are going to be created in the auto industry, which is a great opportunity for us in America to help to bolster our manufacturing—176,000 new jobs is significant, 20,000 in the auto industry.

In fact, it is going to grow our economy by double the gross domestic product of that which was projected in the Trans-Pacific Partnership. That was the agreement that was done with countries in the Pacific region, Asia, and Latin America. It is an agreement that many Democrats have praised and a few years back criticized the administration for not going into the Trans-Pacific Partnership. But as much as they thought that the Trans-Pacific Partnership was going to be good for our economy, this is even better for our economy. Again, it more than doubles the GDP growth, the economic growth, as compared to the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

Second, the agreement does level the playing field we were talking about. It has enforceable labor and environmental standards—USMCA, yes; NAFTA, no—so another big difference. By the way, these standards are one reason why we have lost so many jobs to Mexico over the years.

Third, the USMCA, like I said, it has new rules for the Internet economy. Those new rules of the road are really important, particularly to small businesses in Ohio and around the country that rely on Internet sales for their businesses.

Unlike all our modern trade agreements, right now, there is no chapter in NAFTA—none at all—as it relates to the digital economy. Fortunately for Ohio online businesses, the USMCA has these protections. As an example, small businesses that rely on access to Canada and Mexico are going to have an easing of their customs burden for small values of their products, so both countries have agreed to raise their cap. I frankly wish they had agreed to raise it even more. But this is important both for small businesses that are in the Internet economy to save some money from customs and tariffs, but also it simplifies their business, which is fair because the United States has a higher cap.

The USMCA also prohibits requirements that data be localized in Mexico

and Canada. This is a big concern around the world. The country says: Okay, you can do it, but you have to localize your data here. In other words, you have to have your servers and your data here in our country. That is not required now. Under USMCA, that can be huge for our small businesses, and USMCA helps.

If I may, it does prohibit tariffs on data, which NAFTA does not do. So these are key provisions to keep the modern economy moving. And voting against USMCA—or not allowing it to come up, which is what is happening right now—really means that you believe these burdens and uncertainties should continue for our small businesses.

Fourth, USMCA goes further than any agreement we have toward leveling the playing field on steel. Steel production in this country is an incredibly important manufacturing sector. In Ohio, we are big steel producers. We are proud of that. It is one of the core industries we need to keep in this country. USMCA requires that 70 percent of the steel in vehicles that are produced under NAFTA in North America has to be steel from North America—so USMCA, 70 percent requirement; NAFTA, nothing, nothing.

Fifth, there is also an unprecedented requirement in the USMCA that is not in any other agreement in the world and that helps to level the playing field considerably by saying that between 40 and 45 percent of vehicles have to be made in NAFTA countries by workers earning at least \$16 an hour. We have heard a lot about, well, it is not fair in our dealings with Mexico in particular because they have lower wage rates. Well, this is being addressed very directly in a way that it has never been addressed in any previous agreement.

Democrats have been talking about this for years. They should hail this as a great breakthrough and allow the NAFTA agreement to end and the USMCA to take its place because this is better.

Voting for USMCA will also help to level the playing field on labor costs between the United States and Mexico because this new agreement requires that USMCA-compliant autos and auto parts have a higher percentage of U.S. and American content.

Under the NAFTA agreement, that requirement for content is 62.5 percent. So if you want a car within the NAFTA agreement that gets the advantages of NAFTA and that gets to come into the United States at a lower tariff from Canada or Mexico, 62.5 percent of it has to be from NAFTA countries. Under USMCA, we raised that 62.5 percent up to 75 percent. This means more autos and more auto parts are going to be made here in the United States and you have fewer imports and fewer jobs in other countries, like China or Japan or Germany. So this is good for us.

By the way, that 75 percent is the highest content requirement of any trade agreement we have. That is in USMCA.

All of these things are going to ensure that we have more manufacturing jobs in Ohio and across the country.

Frankly, the Trump administration, and particularly U.S. Trade Representative Bob Lighthizer, has listened to Democrats' concerns—listened very carefully—and then incorporated these concerns into this agreement.

Some of the concerns have also been raised by Republicans over the years, but, frankly, when I was U.S. Trade Representative, it was Democrats who mostly raised these concerns about the labor standards being enforceable and ensuring that you had something like the minimum wage that is now in this agreement.

These are provisions that Democrats have demanded for years. Yet now we can't get a vote. They will not even let it be voted on. How does that make sense? How do you explain it? I don't believe any Democrat thinks the status quo, NAFTA, is better than the USMCA. If they do, I would challenge them to explain to the American people why they think the status quo, NAFTA, is better than USMCA.

Blocking this trade agreement hurts so many sectors of our economy, as I have talked about. It hurts our auto industry and the hard-working men and women who are on the assembly lines. It hurts our farmers. They aren't going to be able to gain new access to markets in Canada and Mexico. That is why nearly 1,000 farm groups from our country have now come out strongly to support USMCA. Blocking USMCA means blocking our farmers out of these markets.

With all of these new requirements and all of these new improvements, it should be clear to everyone that this is not an effort to rebrand NAFTA. This is new. It is different. It is not your father's Oldsmobile. They are big and meaningful changes that will benefit all of us.

In short, USMCA is good for jobs. It is good for small businesses. It is good for our farmers. It is good for workers, and it is good for the economy.

This is a rare opportunity, my colleagues, to do something that is good for America and to do it in a bipartisan way. It can have such a positive impact at a time when our country needs to have us come together and do something that is good for everybody.

To Speaker PELOSI and the House Democrats: The ball is in your court. We realize that. Under the rules up here in Congress as to how you deal with trade agreements, this has to start in the House of Representatives. If it were to come to the floor here in the Senate, I believe it would pass and pass with a good bipartisan margin because it just makes so much sense. But it has to go through the House first.

If that agreement did come to the House floor, I believe logic would prevail, and it would pass there, as well, because I believe Members would say: Here is my choice, and it is a binary choice: Do I go with the status quo,

NAFTA, that I have been complaining about for years, or do I go with the new and improved USMCA? I think that is a pretty easy vote for a lot of Members who look at this objectively and with the interests of their constituents in mind.

A vote for USMCA, quite simply, is a vote for improved market access, more U.S. manufacturing, and a more level playing field for American workers, farmers, and service providers.

A vote against USMCA and blocking it from coming to the floor is a vote to keep NAFTA. It is as simple as that. A vote against USMCA is a vote for the status quo, which is NAFTA.

Supporting NAFTA today means supporting unenforceable labor and environmental standards, nonexistent digital economy provisions, and outdated rules of origin provisions that allow more automobiles and auto parts to be manufactured overseas rather than in America. We have a chance to fix all of this by passing USMCA.

I am confident that this new agreement will pass if we can get it up for a vote because the American people will demand it. There is plenty of time for politics between now and the 2020 election. Right now, let's focus on what is best for the American people. Let's work together and put them first, and, by doing so, let's pass USMCA.

I yield back my time.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SASSE). The Senator from Utah.

NOMINATION OF DAVID B. BARLOW

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to discuss my friend, my former colleague, and soon-to-be confirmed Federal District Judge David Barlow.

Last night, the Senate voted to invoke cloture as to Mr. Barlow's nomination. We will be voting later today to confirm him. Based on the support we have, I expect the vote to be overwhelming, and with really good reason.

David Barlow is someone I have known for a long time. He is someone I have known, in fact, for more than 30 years.

David Barlow and I first met when we were both in high school. Oddly enough, we met in Washington, DC, while we were both participating in an event known as American Legion Boys Nation. We had both attended Boys State in our respective States—I in Utah and he in Idaho—and we were both selected to go to Boys Nation to represent our respective Boys States.

Shortly after we convened as Boys Nation senators, David Barlow was elected to be the President pro temp of the Boys Nation senate. As a result, when we visited the White House a few days later, it was David Barlow who got to stand right next to Ronald Reagan as he greeted us in the Rose Garden and addressed Boys Nation.

David Barlow was someone who seemed to have been born for public service, and he was born for public service for all of the right reasons, in all of the right ways. He had a certain

enthusiasm about the workings of government—not in a partisan way, not in a self-interested way but in a way that was infectious and made all around him want to build a better country, want to find common ground, and want to come to know more about our country's rich histories and tradition.

Mr. Barlow and I became reacquainted about a year after we first met, when we first enrolled as freshmen students at Brigham Young University in the fall of 1989. David Barlow was there on a full academic scholarship and did not disappoint with his academic performance. As I recall, he graduated with a 4.0 grade point average from Brigham Young University with highest honors. Here again, David was smart but in a way that didn't make other people feel less smart. He made other people feel smart and eager to learn more, eager to be more enthusiastic about the academic process. He isn't someone who would have ever talked to other people about his outstanding grades or about his wonderful accomplishments.

A few years later, we both graduated from BYU. He graduated in 1995 from Brigham Young University and enrolled at Yale Law School, where he received his jurist doctorate degree in 1998.

After he graduated, David Barlow started his legal career as an associate at the law firm then known as Lord, Bissell & Brook in the firm's Chicago office. Just a couple of years later, David joined Sidley and Austin LLP as an associate in the firm's Chicago office. He later became a partner starting, I believe, in 2006, and he remained a partner at Sidley up until 2010.

During much of that time, I was an associate at Sidley and Austin in the firm's Washington, DC, office. I got to know David again through this process, this time as a lawyer, as a professional. Although we worked in different offices, as part of the same firm, we knew the same people.

The network of lawyers with whom I worked quickly identified David Barlow as one of the lawyers in the firm who could be trusted with everything, one of the lawyers in the firm who, even as a young associate, could be given any task, and any lawyer giving him that responsibility could do so with the full assurance that the client would be well served, that no ball would be dropped, and that every stone would be turned over in an effort to properly handle the case.

Mr. Barlow worked on a wide variety of litigation matters, including complex civil litigation, class actions, and products liability cases. He also handled a number of domestic violence cases on a pro bono basis.

Among many of his clients, David Barlow became known as Dr. Barlow. It was a name assigned to him by some of his clients when he was working on some liability cases involving the medical field. He became so immersed in the subject matter of the litigation

that over time he acquired more knowledge in some cases than some of the doctors who were consulting with the client on that same matter. To this day, I occasionally refer to him as Dr. Barlow just for fun.

In 2011, shortly after I had been elected to the U.S. Senate, David Barlow joined my team as my chief counsel and chief staffer on the Judiciary Committee. He is someone who had never worked in the U.S. Senate prior to that time but, literally, within a matter of weeks, had learned the ropes of this body to a degree sufficient that no one would have been able to discern the difference between Mr. Barlow and somebody who had worked in the Senate for many, many years.

He quickly became a favorite within my office. David Barlow was someone who we could always turn to in a moment if someone had a question. In a moment of crisis, he would figure out how to solve it. In a moment where we needed an answer to a legal question, he either knew the answer or, if he didn't know the answer, he could find it in a short period of time, and we could proceed with the correct understanding that, when he gave us an answer, it was right and we could rely on it.

The fact that he was so beloved within my office extended far beyond his legal acumen or his professional abilities. He is also just a delight to be around. He is really funny, and he is equally conversive in a wide variety of material, from Shakespeare to Chaucer, from the Old Testament to old episodes of "30 Rock" and Saturday Night Live." He had a sophisticated sense of humor that managed to be outrageously funny, while never inappropriate. That is a skill that we in Utah particularly strive to attain and very few are able to achieve.

Later in 2011, President Obama chose David Barlow to serve as the U.S. attorney for the District of Utah. This was a bittersweet moment for me and my staff, having learned to rely on his skill, but we were very happy for David and especially happy for the people of Utah, who were the beneficiaries of his outstanding service as the U.S. attorney. Having previously worked in that U.S. Attorney's Office myself as an assistant U.S. attorney, I stayed in contact with many of my former colleagues, all of whom came to absolutely love this outstanding public servant.

David served as U.S. attorney through 2014, at which point he returned to his partnership at Sidley Austin and worked in the firm's Washington, DC, office. In 2017, he joined Walmart as vice president over compliance for the company's health and wellness business. I still remember the moment when someone reviewing him for that position, prior to the time he had been offered the job, called to ask me what I thought about his qualifications for that job. I explained at the outset to this reviewer that my com-

ments regarding David Barlow would be so overwhelmingly positive that she would think I was joking. I was, in fact, not.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to deliver my remarks to an extent not to exceed 4 minutes.

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

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, needless to say, he got the job. He flourished there as he has everywhere else.

Then, in 2018, David Barlow, to the great happiness of many of us in Utah who know and love him, decided to return to Utah, and he joined Dorsey & Whitney, LLP, as a partner in the firm's Salt Lake City office. For the past several years, David Barlow has had a practice that has focused on handling government enforcement actions and internal investigations, which have typically been large multijurisdictional matters. He is someone who knows how to handle complex litigation.

I would also like to note that since I first met David Barlow, I have also gotten to know David Barlow's family. They are extraordinary people—David's wife Crystal and their children. David's parents, Bruce and Emily Barlow, in fact, used to live just a couple of doors down from me in Utah. They are as kind and decent a people as you could ever hope to meet. While one's parents certainly can't independently qualify one for service in a lifetime article III judicial appointment, if ever one could qualify through that route, that would probably qualify him here simply because Bruce and Emily Barlow are perhaps the most kind and decent people I have ever met and the warmest and loveliest neighbors anyone could ever hope to have.

For all these reasons, and based on Mr. Barlow's mastery of the law, his professionalism, his kindness, his demeanor, his collegiality, which I have never heard questioned or in any way called into question, David Barlow is qualified to be a U.S. district judge, and I am grateful that he will be serving once he is confirmed as judge on the U.S. District Court for the District of Utah.

I urge my colleagues to support his confirmation and look forward to voting for him later today.

#### CLOTURE MOTION

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

#### CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Richard Ernest Myers II, of North Carolina, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of North Carolina.

Mitch McConnell, John Boozman, Richard Burr, Shelley Moore Capito, John Cornyn, Mike Crapo, John Barrasso, Roy Blunt, John Thune, Steve Daines, Thom Tillis, Kevin Cramer, Chuck

Grassley, Tom Cotton, Rand Paul, Roger F. Wicker, Cindy Hyde-Smith.

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

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Richard Ernest Myers II, of North Carolina, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of North Carolina, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS).

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

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 72, nays 22, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 375 Ex.]

#### YEAS—72

Alexander	Feinstein	Paul
Barrasso	Fischer	Perdue
Blackburn	Gardner	Peters
Blunt	Graham	Portman
Boozman	Grassley	Reed
Braun	Hassan	Risch
Burr	Hawley	Roberts
Capito	Hoeben	Romney
Cardin	Hyde-Smith	Rosen
Carper	Inhofe	Rubio
Casey	Isakson	Sasse
Cassidy	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Collins	Jones	Scott (SC)
Coons	Kaine	Shaheen
Cornyn	Kennedy	Shelby
Cotton	King	Sinema
Cramer	Lankford	Sullivan
Crapo	Leahy	Tester
Cruz	Lee	Thune
Daines	Manchin	Tillis
Duckworth	McConnell	Toomey
Durbin	McSally	Warner
Enzi	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Murphy	Young

#### NAYS—22

Baldwin	Hirono	Smith
Bennet	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Blumenthal	Markey	Udall
Brown	Menendez	Van Hollen
Cantwell	Merkley	Whitehouse
Cortez Masto	Murray	Wyden
Gillibrand	Schatz	
Heinrich	Schumer	

#### NOT VOTING—6

Booker	Murkowski	Sanders
Harris	Rounds	Warren

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 72, the nays are 22.

The motion is agreed to.

#### CLOTURE MOTION

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

The 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 Sherri A. Lydon, of South Carolina, to be United States District Judge for the District of South Carolina.

Steve Daines, Roy Blunt, John Thune, Richard Burr, John Cornyn, Chuck Grassley, Tom Cotton, Rick Scott, Mike Crapo, Shelley Moore Capito, John Boozman, Roger F. Wicker, Cindy Hyde-Smith, David Perdue, Mike Rounds, John Hoeven, Mitch McConnell.

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

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Sherri A. Lydon, of South Carolina, to be United States District Judge for the District of South Carolina, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON), the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI), and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS), 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 yeas and nays resulted—yeas 79, nays 14, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 376 Ex.]

YEAS—79

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

NAYS—14

Bennet	Hirono	Schatz
Blumenthal	Klobuchar	Schumer
Brown	Markey	Smith
Cantwell	Merkley	Van Hollen
Gillibrand	Murray	

NOT VOTING—7

Booker	Murkowski	Warren
Harris	Rounds	
Isakson	Sanders	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 79, the nays are 14.

The motion is agreed to.

CLOTURE MOTION

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

The senior legislative clerk read the motion, 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 M. Duncan, of Kentucky, to be a Governor of the United States Postal Service for a term expiring December 8, 2025. (Reappointment)

Kevin Cramer, David Perdue, Ben Sasse, Rob Portman, Johnny Isakson, John Thune, Mike Rounds, Roy Blunt, Mitch McConnell, Chuck Grassley, John Boozman, Tom Cotton, Pat Roberts, Richard Burr, Rick Scott, James E. Risch, Shelley Moore Capito.

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

The question is, Is it the sense the Senate that debate on the nomination of Robert M. Duncan, of Kentucky, to be a Governor of the United States Postal Service for a term expiring December 8, 2025, (Reappointment), shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The yeas and nays are ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON), the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI), and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS), 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 yeas and nays resulted—yeas 91, nays 1, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 377 Ex.]

YEAS—91

Alexander	Cornyn	Heinrich
Baldwin	Cortez Masto	Hoeven
Barrasso	Cotton	Hyde-Smith
Bennet	Cramer	Inhofe
Blackburn	Crapo	Johnson
Blumenthal	Cruz	Jones
Blunt	Daines	Kaine
Boozman	Duckworth	Kennedy
Braun	Durbin	King
Brown	Enzi	Lankford
Burr	Ernst	Leahy
Cantwell	Feinstein	Lee
Capito	Fischer	Manchin
Cardin	Gardner	Markey
Carper	Gillibrand	McConnell
Casey	Graham	McSally
Cassidy	Grassley	Menendez
Collins	Hassan	Merkley
Coons	Hawley	Moran

Murphy	Sasse	Thune
Murray	Schatz	Tillis
Paul	Schumer	Toomey
Perdue	Scott (FL)	Udall
Peters	Scott (SC)	Van Hollen
Portman	Shaheen	Warner
Reed	Shelby	Whitehouse
Risch	Sinema	Wicker
Roberts	Smith	Wyden
Romney	Stabenow	Young
Rosen	Sullivan	
Rubio	Tester	

NAYS—1

Hirono

NOT VOTING—8

Booker	Klobuchar	Sanders
Harris	Murkowski	Warren
Isakson	Rounds	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The yeas are 91, the nays are 1.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Robert M. Duncan, of Kentucky, to be a Governor of the United States Postal Service for a term expiring December 8, 2025. (Reappointment)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

SUPPORT FOR VETERANS IN EFFECTIVE APPRENTICESHIPS ACT OF 2019

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, when I travel across Michigan, one issue comes up regularly in my conversations with business owners, workers, and families, and that issue is the need to close the skills gap.

There are good-paying jobs available all across my State but not enough workers who have the specific skills needed to fill them. That is why one of my top priorities in the Senate is to expand access to quality skills training programs, like registered apprenticeships, that are connected to today's in-demand jobs.

Effective apprenticeships are good for business. They are good for workers in both urban and rural areas in Michigan, as well as all across our country.

I have also heard from veterans, like Rick Donovan in Oakland County, about how there is a lack of apprenticeships available for veterans who qualify for them to use their GI benefits.

The GI bill offers veterans an approved apprenticeship, additional financial support for housing, and other training materials as they progress through the program. Unfortunately, only a small portion of apprenticeship programs registered by the Department of Labor are also approved by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

In Michigan, for example, there are over 1,000 registered apprenticeship programs but only a couple hundred in which veterans can use their VA educational assistance in connection with that program. This is simply unacceptable. Veterans should have access to as

many opportunities as there are available.

That is why Senator CAPITO and I introduced a bipartisan bill to ensure veterans' interests are not falling through the cracks between Federal agencies as they pursue apprenticeships to launch their career. Our Support for Veterans in Effective Apprenticeships Act takes three commonsense steps to expand opportunities for veterans to use their financial assistance for quality training programs that lead to good-paying jobs.

First, the bill will ensure that every program applying to become a registered apprenticeship is proactively thinking about ways to support veterans. Programs would need to provide written assurance to the Department of Labor that they are aware of GI bill assistance and are committed to taking the steps necessary to enable benefits to use these benefits as apprentices.

Second, the bill will clarify that skills and training that veterans gain during their military service would be a factor into how they are placed in the program. Many veterans may qualify for advanced placement with higher apprenticeship wages due to their unique experiences while bravely serving our country, and our bill will recognize those skill sets.

Third, the bill will improve coordination between Federal agencies. It would direct the Department of Labor to notify the VA of newly registered apprenticeship programs. It is a simple, straightforward action to actively update new apprenticeship opportunities.

Our Nation's returning heroes deserve every opportunity to pursue their professional dreams after their service. By expanding qualified apprenticeships, this bill will make a real difference in the lives of our veterans.

Rick, a veteran advocate from Michigan, said he would never have known that he could use his GI bill benefits for on-the-job training had he not crossed paths with a more senior veteran who told him about it. It was a conversation that literally changed his life. With the support of the GI bill, Rick was now able to pursue an apprenticeship following his military service. He then used that training toward a college degree and has built a successful career as a union sheet metal worker in Michigan.

We need to listen to and partner with veterans like Rick who are tirelessly advocating to open doors to help fellow veterans, Michiganders, and Americans so they can achieve economic success in the 21st century.

As in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be discharged from further consideration of S. 760 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 760) to enable registered apprenticeship programs to better serve veterans, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged and the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Peters amendment at the desk be agreed to and that the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time.

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

The amendment (No. 1254), in the nature of a substitute, was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: In the nature of a substitute)

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

**SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

This Act may be cited as the "Support for Veterans in Effective Apprenticeships Act of 2019".

**SEC. 2. IMPROVED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM COORDINATION BETWEEN THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this Act:

(1) REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM.—The term "registered apprenticeship program" means an apprenticeship program registered under the Act of August 16, 1937 (50 Stat. 664; commonly referred to as the "National Apprenticeship Act").

(2) SECRETARY.—The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of Labor.

(b) ADDITIONAL REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, for any program applying to become a registered apprenticeship program on or after the date that is 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall—

(1) acquire from the program sponsor a written assurance that the sponsor—

(A) is aware of the availability of educational assistance for a veteran or other individual eligible under chapters 30 through 36 of title 38, United States Code, for use in connection with a registered apprenticeship program;

(B) will make a good faith effort to obtain approval for educational assistance described in subparagraph (A) for, at a minimum, each program location that employs or recruits a veteran or other individual eligible for educational assistance under chapters 30 through 36 of title 38, United States Code; and

(C) will not deny the application of a qualified candidate who is a veteran or other individual eligible for educational assistance described in subparagraph (A) for the purpose of avoiding making a good faith effort to obtain approval as described in subparagraph (B);

(2) in accordance with paragraphs (5) and (12) of section 29.5(b) of title 29, Code of Federal Regulations (as in effect on the day before the date of enactment of this Act), require the program sponsor, to the extent practicable, to provide standards that contain provisions to grant advanced standing or credit, and provide increased wages commensurate to such standing or credit, for any veteran or other individual eligible for educational assistance under chapters 30 through 36 of title 38, United States Code, who—

(A) is enrolled in the registered apprenticeship program; and

(B)(i) has a demonstrated competence applicable to the apprenticeship occupation; or (ii) has acquired experience, training, or skills through military service that is applicable to the apprenticeship occupation; and

(3) when the Secretary approves the registered apprenticeship program, provide a copy of the program's certificate of registration to the State approving agency designated under chapter 36 of title 38, United States Code, in the State where the program is located.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading and was read the third time.

Mr. PETERS. I know of no further debate on this bill, as amended.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no further debate, the bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill pass?

The bill (S. 760), as amended, was passed, as follows:

S. 760

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

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(3) when the Secretary approves the registered apprenticeship program, provide a copy of the program's certificate of registration to the State approving agency designated under chapter 36 of title 38, United States Code, in the State where the program is located.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

UNITED STATES-MEXICO-CANADA TRADE AGREEMENT

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, there is something we can do in Congress today, right now, right this very minute, that would lift a burden and provide peace of mind for millions of people across this great country.

As we all busy ourselves making holiday plans, Iowa's farmers and manufacturers are struggling to confidently look to the future. Many of the tools they need to feel confident and secure in the months ahead are laid out in the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement. The USMCA trade agreement was signed by President Trump 369 days ago—369 days ago. That is over 1 year ago.

Speaker PELOSI and her House colleagues have had more than enough time to pass this important agreement. Yet they have failed to do so. Instead, House Democrats are fixated on impeaching the President. Let's not forget, though, when the House Democrats decided to go down this impeachment path, the American people were guaranteed that the House Democrats would be able to walk and chew gum at the same time. They promised that they could process this impeachment inquiry while continuing to do the work of the people. Well, folks, there is not much walking and chewing gum going on. Instead, that gum seems to be stuck under some park bench somewhere. That is where we are today, while millions of Americans whose livelihoods are tied to trade wait for the Democrats to get serious.

It is really unthinkable that USMCA is not already ratified by the United States. Folks, the USMCA is written. It is signed. It is agreed to by our partners. All we have to do is vote to pass it. It really is that simple. As I mentioned, it has been over 1 year since the trade agreement was signed. That means Iowa farmers have now gone through an entire cycle of planting, harvesting, and selling their crops without a finalized trade agreement with our two biggest trade partners. Yes, they are our two biggest trade partners—Mexico and Canada.

I spent all year crisscrossing Iowa to visit all of my 99 counties. I do that every year, just as Senator GRASSLEY

does, and not once did I hear someone say: Hey, Senator ERNST, let's wait on the USMCA.

It was quite the opposite. Whether I was at one of my 35 townhalls that I held just last year or during a farmer roundtable or a visit to a small manufacturer, I heard consistently and across the board that Iowans want USMCA right now. They want it now. These hard-working folks know the impact the USMCA will have on our Iowa economy and the U.S. economy as a whole. There is no reason Iowans should have to wait any longer. There is no reason the American workers shouldn't have the certainty that they need.

My House colleagues have not been able to offer any reasonable explanation for their inaction. I beg to say, though, folks, that it is because of who sits in the White House, and it would be a sad reality that, once again, Democrats would choose to put their own politics ahead of what is best for the American people. The USMCA is not partisan. It is not about President Trump. It is about what is best for hard-working Iowans. It is what is best for the American people.

The work has been done for Congress. The trade agreement has been written. All we have to do is say yes for the American people. That is it. It is so simple. Let's get serious. Let's do the simple task that folks back home are asking us to do, and that is to pass the USMCA.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I rise today alongside my Republican colleagues to once again voice my strong support for the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Trade Agreement. This agreement has been on the minds of Nebraskans for well over a year now.

Nebraska and rural America as a whole were dealt a tough hand in 2019. However, every time that I meet with Nebraska's farm families, ranchers, ag producers, and manufacturers, they reassure me that they can endure these challenges. They will sacrifice short-term anxiety for long-term certainty and predictability, but they need to know that there is going to be a light at the end of this tunnel. One important thing Congress can do to meet their needs is simple—pass the USMCA. This agreement is a victory for Nebraska and for America.

I will give you a glimpse into what this means for my State. Currently, Canada and Mexico receive 44 percent of Nebraska's total exports. In 2017 alone, our State sent nearly \$900 million of ag products to Mexico and nearly \$450 million of ag products to Canada. These exports include our world-class corn, soybeans, ethanol, and beef. As I have said before, America's heart beats in the same rhythm as agriculture. When our ag producers succeed, entire communities reap the benefits.

The Nebraska Department of Agriculture reports that our State's \$6.4 billion in agricultural exports in 2017 led to nearly \$8.2 billion in additional economic activity in our State. That is why it is so important that Nebraska's top two markets, Mexico and Canada, are protected. We all know that the USMCA is the product of bipartisan good-faith work. Both sides agree that this deal not only updates but strengthens our environmental responsibilities, and it places enforceable labor obligations at the core of the agreement.

All former Secretaries of Agriculture since the Reagan administration, both Republicans and Democrats, have voiced their strong support. Even the Washington Post editorial board conceded that the deal is "a real improvement over the status quo."

Last July, a group of 14 House Democrats sent a letter to Speaker PELOSI urging her to move forward with USMCA immediately. The President of Mexico made his own plea to the Speaker in a letter last week. Canada is still waiting for us to act. The senior Senator from Iowa noted that a deal between House Democrats and the Trump administration must be struck this week if ratification of the USMCA is to take effect this year. Time is running out. Meanwhile, House Democrats are distracted by impeachment proceedings when they should be focused on passing this very meaningful agreement.

In the final weeks of 2019, we will see if the needs of hard-working men and women in the heartland take priority over political theater. I urge my colleagues to follow through on our Nation's priorities and end the months of needless stalling. We must act now. The passage of USMCA would be an incredible win for Nebraska, and it would be an undeniable victory for America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I come to the Chamber today to rise with my colleagues to talk about the USMCA, or the United States-Mexico-Canada Trade Agreement.

But before I talk about the vote that I hope is in this Chamber on fairly short order, I would like to go back to December of 1993. In December of 1993, President Clinton signed NAFTA. A month later, it was ratified, and, to be honest with you, it started a period of time in North Carolina where we suffered. We had a challenge to actually determine how we were going to react to a very different North Carolina, where there are textiles and a number of other industries that suffered initially under the NAFTA implementation. But today, North Carolina is one of the greatest benefactors of NAFTA. As a matter of fact, we are one of the top States in the country for job creation and commerce, and Canada and Mexico are our two most important export markets.

The problem is, NAFTA was implemented in 1994. I think that was back when the Backstreet Boys were topping the charts and MC Hammer was popular. It was a long, long time ago. It is time to modernize it. It was before the internet was even invented.

We have so many opportunities to modernize our trade relationship with our two most important trade partners, and the USMCA is the opportunity to do that. While it only took about a month to ratify the NAFTA agreement—knowing that there was a lot of work to be done before we completely benefited from it—we waited a year to ratify an agreement that will be immediately beneficial to the American economy. It will create more than 170,000 new jobs and \$70 billion a year in additional economic activity, putting us on a level playing field.

Our automotive industry, which has grown over the last 20 years, with several automotive manufacturing facilities in the South, and many businesses in my State support it.

It will open up the markets for our farmers. North Carolina is the ninth largest agriculture economy in the United States, with nearly \$90 billion a year in agriculture products. We want those markets open in Canada and Mexico so that we can grow our farm economy in North Carolina.

We also want to recognize that the USMCA agreement is a very, very important step in getting China to come to terms with fair trade with the United States. When we settle an agreement with two of our most important trade partners, then, China will take notice and they will follow the President's lead and understand that we no longer are going to allow them to compete unfairly.

There are provisions in the USMCA that I hear Speaker PELOSI talking about that, frankly, give me some concern. The House is entitled to make changes to the baseline agreement that both the Mexican Government and the Canadian Government have ratified, as proposed and as signed by the President. They give me concern, and we hope that Speaker PELOSI will keep to the baseline agreement.

But now we have to get to work to get this agreement ratified so these kinds of things continue to be positive stories that come out of North Carolina and positive stories that come out of Nebraska and Iowa and across this Nation. There is no downside to this agreement. As a matter of fact, one of the reasons I know there is no downside is that there are dozens of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle in the House who are prepared to vote for it in the form in which the President will sign.

This is a very, very important agreement. I do have to agree with my colleagues in that the only reason I can imagine we didn't have this agreement ratified last year was due to the focus on all things impeachment. This is a good deal. I have no doubt that if

President Clinton had signed this agreement in 1993, it would have been ratified a month later. Yet we have waited a year for this agreement to get any airtime in the House Chamber.

We need the USMCA signed today. We need the USMCA put into place so that we can realize the immediate economic advantage for hard-working farmers, for small businesses, and for the 170,000 new jobs that will be created so that we continue this economic recovery that started with tax reform and regulatory reform.

This is another step in the right direction, and no reasonable Member of Congress should be holding off on what is a great decision on the President's part. It is a great decision, and it is a great policy for the American people. It is going to help my farmers in North Carolina, and it is going to help my small businesses. It is going to continue to make the U.S. economy the envy of the world.

I ask Speaker PELOSI and my colleagues in the House to get to work. You can walk and chew gum. Go ahead and focus on impeachment if you want to, but from time to time, why don't you take some Chamber time and some of your resources to do right by the American people. That is what the USMCA does, and that is what we need the House to do. I guarantee you, when it comes to the Senate, we will quickly send it to the President's desk.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, once again, I rise to voice support for the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement.

The time to pass the USMCA is now. This agreement will increase exports, expand consumer choice, raise wages, and boost innovation throughout North America and especially here in the United States.

It is clear that the USMCA is good for the country and good for our economy. The U.S. International Trade Commission estimates that the USMCA will raise the GDP by nearly \$63 billion and create more than 175,000 jobs in the United States.

No one knows agriculture better than American farmers and ranchers, and technology has made them more efficient than ever. They have maintained an ag trade surplus for the last 50 years by exporting the best products around the world. American agriculture needs access to foreign markets to reach its full potential.

The same is true for my State of North Dakota, which is a powerhouse in terms of ag product. We shipped \$4.5 billion worth of ag products around the globe in 2017, which made us the country's ninth largest exporter of ag goods. Our farmers and ranchers depend on free and fair trade in order to sell the highest quality, lowest cost food supply to the world.

We lead the Nation in the production of a variety of crops, including that of

hard red spring wheat. Every summer, about 7.5 million acres—one-fifth of North Dakota's farmable acres—are carpeted with rows of wheat.

Currently, Canada automatically downgrades imports of U.S. wheat to the lowest designation—for animals only—regardless of the quality of the wheat. We grow the highest quality wheat in the world, and this unfair trade practice puts growers at a disadvantage when sending wheat to Canada.

Having access to Canadian markets is a big win for growers, for a quarter of our State's wheat is grown within 50 miles of a Canadian grain handling facility. By eliminating the automatic downgrade of U.S. wheat, growers have access to an additional market where they will receive a premium price for their high-quality products. The USMCA ensures that North Dakota wheat growers will be compensated fairly when selling their products in Canada.

These are the types of provisions that are provided for in the agreement—making it very clear that we need to get it passed.

In addition to wheat, U.S. dairy products will see increased access in the Canadian market, which is estimated to be worth more than a quarter of a billion dollars. The agreement also provides for increased access to the Canadian market for other ag products, like poultry exports—chicken, eggs, and turkey—as well as others.

These examples are just some of the many benefits for American agriculture in the USMCA. By maintaining all zero-tariff provisions on ag products, the USMCA will secure critical market access for U.S. farmers and ranchers. Canada and Mexico are critical markets for U.S. agriculture, and passing the USMCA will give our producers certainty that these markets will remain open for business.

Our farmers and ranchers are facing real challenges right now. Severe weather has destroyed crops or has made it impossible to harvest, and unjustified retaliatory tariffs have disrupted markets and driven prices lower. That is why Congress needs to approve the USMCA.

Now more than ever, farmers and ranchers depend on stability in our trading relationships with Canada and Mexico—our Nation's two largest trading partners. The failure to ratify this agreement would be detrimental to agriculture producers across the country, including in the Presiding Officer's home State.

I believe the USMCA has strong, bipartisan support in the Senate, but the implementing legislation must originate in the House. That is why I urge my colleagues in the House to do what is best for the American people: take up and pass the USMCA as soon as possible. That means agreeing to the provisions in the USMCA and putting it on the floor for a vote in the House to get this process started. We need the leadership in the House to agree to take

the implementing legislation and put it to a vote on the floor of the House. I think it would pass with a large bipartisan majority. Then and only then can we take up that legislation here in the Senate, which, I believe, would pass with a large bipartisan majority. We are ready to go.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

Mr. SASSE. Mr. President, farmers and ranchers are in a tough spot. There are a lot of families who are on the edge of bankruptcy in my State and in ag country more broadly. As we get closer to Christmas and to the new year without having a trade deal with Canada and Mexico, the situation is getting bleaker.

Let's be blunt about this. By needlessly stonewalling the USMCA trade agreement, Speaker NANCY PELOSI and the House Democrats are taking Nebraska's agriculture hostage. This is petty, stupid politics at its worst.

The USMCA trade deal is a free-trade win for our farmers and ranchers, and they desperately need this win right now. With hard work and grit, Nebraskans have cultivated one of the most powerful agricultural economies in the history of the world. We literally feed the world, and we do it with free trade because we grow so much more food than we could ever consume. We need export markets, and lots of people around the world want to be consuming our ag products.

It is pretty simple: Trade with Canada and Mexico is a win-win-win. In 2018, Mexico and Canada bought more than \$40 billion worth of American agricultural products. The U.S. International Trade Commission expects the USMCA to increase that trade by more than \$33 billion. The USMCA trade deal is designed to reinforce those partnerships in ways that make sense for an economy that has changed a lot since NAFTA was passed in the 1990s.

In the 1990s, "Seinfeld" was still on TV; we still watched movies on VHS tape; and we took our pictures with these things of which the pages probably don't know—cameras that had film. I will be honest. At my house, we still watch "Seinfeld," but we have happily moved on from VHS tapes. My teenage daughters set us up on Hulu streaming, but I can't make the remote work.

Over the last 20 years, we have seen a massive digital revolutionary change in nearly every sector of our economy. Farmers are using new tech to increase our productivity and to get more out of the most fertile land on God's green Earth than people have ever assumed possible. The USMCA trade deal makes that kind of basic improvement in our trading relationships with our neighbors, and we need that in this rapidly changing, evolving, and developing economy. For example, it scraps the old rules about importing cars that still have cassette tape players. CHUCK GRASSLEY, apparently, still has a car

that has a cassette tape player, but he is proud of it, so we won't make fun of him here.

Passing the USMCA would secure long-term stability in our trade agreements with our partners across North America, and it would also send a signal to other potential partners around the world that the United States is open for business. We need to bring Japan, the European Union, and others to the negotiating table, and passing the USMCA would strengthen our position significantly in setting up those trade agreements. Time is running out.

If we don't pass the USMCA this year, we are going to send a very different signal to our potential partners. If Speaker PELOSI and the House Democrats can't get their act together on the USMCA, they will be telling the whole world that we may or may not be open for business—it all depends on short-term political posturing. That is the message they are sending now, and that is the message that might be cemented if this calendar year ends without our passing the USMCA. Try running a convenience store like that, and you will be out of business in a month.

A lot of folks in San Francisco and New York City may not think much about beans and corn prices, but every farmer and rancher in Nebraska is beyond baffled that this no-brainer trade deal hasn't been passed yet. It is simply in the best long-term interests of everyone involved in this conversation. This is not something that should be slipping beyond this year; this is something that should pass now. We should call the vote on Christmas morning if that is what it takes. The Congress should not be leaving DC without passing the USMCA.

Time is running out, and we don't want to let our farmers and ranchers face 2020 with the uncertainty and the confusion they now feel. These Nebraskans want to do business; they want to trade; and we want to win.

Congress is the place where Americans deliberate about the long-term challenges we need to face for the future of our country, but instead of deliberation, right now what they see when they turn on their TVs or pick up their newspapers is just vicious partisanship and short-term posturing. The American people deserve better than this.

The clown show in the House of Representatives shouldn't bring everything to a grinding halt. It shouldn't stop us from doing right for farmers and ranchers. The USMCA trade agreement would pass by large majorities if introduced on the House floor, and I speculate that it would get between 85 and 90 votes on this floor. Obviously, we can't take it up until the House votes. The House would pass it with a big majority. That means only NANCY PELOSI stands in the way of USMCA's certainty for the world's greatest producers. Everyone knows this, and Speaker PELOSI should be scheduling the vote.

We have only 28 days left in 2019, but that is plenty of time to vote on the USMCA. That is plenty of time to get a win for our farmers and ranchers.

Speaker PELOSI, please schedule the vote.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PERDUE). The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of John L. Sinatra, Jr., of New York, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of New York.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Sinatra nomination?

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON), the Senator from Arkansas (Ms. MURKOWSKI), and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS), 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 75, nays 18, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 378 Ex.]

YEAS—75

Alexander	Feinstein	Peters
Baldwin	Fischer	Portman
Barrasso	Gardner	Reed
Bennet	Graham	Risch
Blackburn	Grassley	Roberts
Blunt	Hassan	Romney
Boozman	Hawley	Rosen
Braun	Hoeben	Rubio
Burr	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Capito	Inhofe	Schumer
Cardin	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Carper	Jones	Scott (SC)
Casey	Kaine	Shaheen
Cassidy	Kennedy	Shelby
Collins	King	Sinema
Coons	Lankford	Stabenow
Cornyn	Leahy	Sullivan
Cortez Masto	Lee	Tester
Cotton	Manchin	Thune
Cramer	McConnell	Tillis
Crapo	McSally	Toomey
Cruz	Moran	Warner
Daines	Murphy	Whitehouse
Enzi	Paul	Wicker
Ernst	Perdue	Young

NAYS—18

Blumenthal	Heinrich	Murray
Brown	Hirono	Schatz
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Smith
Duckworth	Markey	Udall
Durbin	Menendez	Van Hollen
Gillibrand	Merkley	Wyden

## NOT VOTING—7

Booker	Murkowski	Warren
Harris	Rounds	
Isakson	Sanders	

The nomination was agreed to.

## EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the next nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Sarah E. Pitlyk, of Missouri, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Missouri.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I oppose the nomination of Sarah Pitlyk to be a Federal district court judge in the Eastern District of Missouri.

I believe that people who are nominated to serve as Federal trial judges ought to know their way around a courtroom. There are basic levels of experience and qualifications that a person needs in order to be an effective trial judge. I have no doubt that there are plenty of experienced, qualified Republican attorneys and State court judges in the Eastern District of Missouri, but Ms. Pitlyk is not one of them.

She has never tried a case. She has never taken a deposition. She has never argued a motion in court. She has never picked a jury. She has never participated at any stage in a criminal matter. The American Bar Association's peer review process rated her "unanimously not qualified." The ABA said that "Ms. Pitlyk's experience to date has a very substantial gap, namely the absence of any trial or even real litigation experience."

The Senate is not doing our justice system any favors by confirming trial judges who lack courtroom experience. My Republican colleagues should stop rubber-stamping judicial nominees who lack basic qualifications and experience.

Ms. Pitlyk also has made many statements in her career that indicate that she has prejudged certain issues. For example, she wrote an article describing the Supreme Court's decision to uphold the Affordable Care Act as "an unprincipled decision." She also gave a speech earlier this year in which she described the Supreme Court's jurisprudence on abortion as "thoroughly activist," and "politically biased," and as containing "gross defects."

She has spent much of her legal career advocating against reproductive rights, including a 2017 article in which she wrote that "surrogacy is harmful to mothers and children, so it's a practice society should not be enforcing." She also said in a 2017 press release that "surrogacy diminishes respect for motherhood and the unique mother-child bond, encourages exploitation of women, and it commodifies pregnancy and children. Surrogacy also weakens society's natural abhorrence of eugenic abortion."

My colleague Senator TAMMY DUCKWORTH wrote a powerful letter in response to Ms. Pitlyk's attacks on surrogacy. Senator DUCKWORTH's letter talked about her two beautiful daughters and her use of assisted reproductive technology to start a family. She wrote: "No American should be denigrated and insulted for starting a family with the help of assisted reproductive technology or opting to use surrogacy, which is often a last resort." She went on to write: "As a mother who struggled with infertility for years and required IVF to start my family, I would be one of the many Americans who could never enter Ms. Pitlyk's courtroom with any reasonable expectation that my case would be adjudicated in a fair and impartial manner. . . . Not after Ms. Pitlyk accused families who opt for surrogacy of contributing to 'grave effects on society' including disrespecting motherhood."

I want to commend Senator DUCKWORTH for this powerful and personal letter. I hope my colleagues pay attention to it.

I appreciate that at least one Republican Senator, Ms. COLLINS of Maine, has said she will vote no on the Pitlyk nomination because of Ms. Pitlyk's lack of qualifications and extreme views. I hope more Republicans will join her.

I will vote no on the Pitlyk nomination, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the remaining votes in this series be 10 minutes in length.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Pitlyk nomination?

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON), the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI), and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) would have voted "no."

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS), 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 49, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 379 Ex.]

## YEAS—49

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

## NAYS—44

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

## NOT VOTING—7

Booker	Murkowski	Warren
Harris	Rounds	
Isakson	Sanders	

The nomination was confirmed.

## EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the next nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Douglas Russell Cole, of Ohio, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Ohio.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Cole nomination?

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON), the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI), and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS).

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

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

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

The result was announced—yeas 64, nays 29, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 380 Ex.]

YEAS—64

Alexander Ernst Paul
Barrasso Fischer Perdue
Blackburn Gardner Portman
Blunt Graham Reed
Boozman Grassley Risch
Braun Hassan Roberts
Brown Hawley Romney
Burr Hoeven Rubio
Capito Hyde-Smith Sasse
Carper Inhofe Scott (FL)
Casey Isakson Scott (SC)
Cassidy Jones Shelby
Collins Kennedy Sinema
Coons King Sullivan
Cornyn Lankford Thune
Cotton Leahy Tillis
Cramer Lee Toomey
Crapo Manchin Whitehouse
Cruz McConnell Wicker
Daines McSally Young
Durbin Moran
Enzi Murphy

NAYS—29

Baldwin Hirono Schumer
Bennet Kaine Shaheen
Blumenthal Klobuchar Smith
Cantwell Markey Stabenow
Cardin Menendez Tester
Cortez Masto Merkley Udall
Duckworth Murray Van Hollen
Feinstein Peters Warner
Gillibrand Rosen Wyden
Heinrich Schatz

NOT VOTING—7

Booker Murkowski Warren
Harris Rounds
Johnson Sanders

The nomination was confirmed.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the next nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of R. Austin Huffaker, Jr., of Alabama, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Alabama.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Huffaker nomination?

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON), the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI), and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS).

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

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS), 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 89, nays 4, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 381 Ex.]

YEAS—89

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

NAYS—4

Gillibrand Markey
Klobuchar Merkley

NOT VOTING—7

Booker Murkowski Warren
Harris Rounds
Johnson Sanders

The nomination was confirmed.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the next nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of David B. Barlow, of Utah, to be United States District Judge for the District of Utah.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Barlow nomination?

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON), the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS), and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS).

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

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

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

The result was announced—yeas 88, nays 4, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 382 Ex.]

YEAS—88

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

NAYS—4

Gillibrand Markey
Klobuchar Merkley

NOT VOTING—8

Booker Murkowski Tillis
Harris Rounds Warren
Johnson Sanders

The nomination was confirmed.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session for 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.

AFGHANISTAN

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I come to the floor today having just spent Thanksgiving Day with our troops serving in Afghanistan. It was an incredible honor to join President Trump in a surprise visit to the soldiers stationed at Bagram Air Force Base. We served Thanksgiving dinner to our dedicated servicemembers. Those are the individuals who serve us every day. Our troops were absolutely thrilled to receive the thanks of our grateful Nation directly delivered from the Commander in Chief. They know President Trump has their back.

The photo shows a number of members of the Wyoming National Guard, the 2-300th, the Cowboy Calvary. My

father-in-law, Bob Brown from Thermopolis, WY, was a member of this group when he served in Korea.

It was such a privilege to introduce the President to some of my home State's Wyoming National Guard members. He actually had two of them up on the stage with him. They are doing a tremendous job on behalf of Wyoming's largest deployment overseas right now in about a decade. We told all of our servicemembers how grateful the Nation is for their service and their sacrifice and their dedication.

Meanwhile, here in Washington, the Democrats continue to block the bills that we need to have passed to keep our Nation secure. Incredibly, they are blocking both the Defense authorization and the Defense funding bills. The whole funding of our national defense expires in 2 weeks, but still the Democrats continue to waste time—precious legislative time—on their partisan, obsessive approach to impeachment.

Their holiday season impeachment is hurting the American people, and especially, it is hurting our military. The defense funding measure includes a well-earned and well-deserved pay raise for the troops. The President told the troops about that on Thanksgiving evening after serving dinner and after eating with them. It makes you wonder why on Earth Democrats would block the pay raise right before Christmas. It is amazing. They seem to be blocking all of the things that need to be done for our country to move ahead. The truth is, they are so focused on giftwrapping an impeachment process for the far left that they have left the rest of us in this country out in the cold.

Besides that, they are slow-walking so many of the pro-worker and pro-farmer USMCA trade deals that are so critical for our Nation. It certainly means a lot for the breadbasket of America. It means so much for us in the Rocky Mountain West. They are preventing us from lowering drug costs.

Above all, people expect us to support our troops. One thing after another after another, the Democrats continue to obstruct. The Republicans are fighting to fully fund the military.

Democrats are in the process of waging war against the Commander in Chief. Remember, both parties came to the table, and they completed a bipartisan budget deal this past summer. The Democrats went back on their word. In doing so, they broke faith with the troops and with all Americans. Democrats—they filibuster, they impeach, and they neglect the troops.

Really, they are hurting the American people, not the President. The President is busy doing his job. This week, he attended NATO's 70th anniversary summit and is also meeting with the U.N. Security Council members. U.S. forces, meanwhile, are facing heightened threats with last year's funding levels.

While necessary, the stopgap spending resolution we have right now is

taking a toll on the military, and here is why. The short-term funding means that a \$22 billion cut has occurred from the summer's bipartisan budget deal. It is harming military readiness. It is harming the training of our troops. It has delayed and suspended weapons systems and programs. Now, that hasn't stopped the House Democrats and the Senate Democrats from blocking the full-year defense measures. They continue to obstruct.

Republicans need Democratic support to pass these bills. These need to be bipartisan bills. The National Defense Authorization Act has a long history of strong bipartisan support. Yet House Democrats continue to delay final passage.

Let's not forget, our troops in harm's way are far away from home this holiday season. They are on the frontlines. They are defending our freedoms. They sacrifice 365 days a year. They do it to protect our Nation. U.S. servicemembers never complain and never quit, and Republicans won't quit supporting them.

Democrats remain too obsessed with impeachment to finish important business. The question is, Why are Democrats fast-tracking impeachment and filibustering defense legislation? Their partisan impeachment production is choreographed down to the final curtain call. It is simply a costly, chaotic waste of time. I believe most Americans know it. That is certainly what I hear in Wyoming.

Democrats turn out to be the party of no—no positive ideas, no positive vision, no positive agenda for America. All they want to do is focus on impeachment. Some ran on it, and others didn't. Whether or not they ran on it, that is what they are doing, and they are neglecting the American people and the wishes and desires of American families for jobs; for a strong and healthy economy, a growing economy; for infrastructure, roads and bridges; for all of the things that are important; for lowering the cost of medical care and lowering the cost of drugs. They are ignoring it all, and certainly they are ignoring national security.

It is time for the Democrats to stop stonewalling. It is time to pass the Defense bills. It is time to give our troops the raise they have earned and deserve. Let's send the right message to our troops as well as to our adversaries. It is time to pass these Defense bills now.

#### U.N. CLIMATE CONFERENCE

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I also come to the floor today to talk about another issue, and that is that there is a climate conference meeting right now in Europe, the United Nations climate conference. Earlier this week, House Speaker PELOSI and 14 other Democrats traveled to Europe for the conference. To me, they went there to undermine the President and to push their radical Green New Deal.

They told the international group that the United States is committed to

the Paris climate deal. That is just not true. Secretary of State Pompeo said that the Paris climate deal imposed an unfair economic burden on American workers, on American businesses, and on American taxpayers. President Trump began formally withdrawing from the Paris climate deal last month.

It may appeal to Democrats' liberal elite to talk about climate in Europe. Republicans, however, are going to stay focused on the work ahead of us at home. We have a packed year-end agenda here in Congress. Americans expect us to continue the progress we have made on jobs and on the economy—incredible success. This means passing better trade deals, funding the government, improving our roads—the things we were elected to do. The Speaker is nowhere to be found—certainly not on this continent. Rather than pass American priorities, the Speaker is sidelined in Spain.

Republican pro-growth policies have led to a worker boom. Wages are up, and unemployment is down. Wages are up to a 50-year high. Unemployment is down to a 50-year low. I mean, think about that. As a result of Republican tax cuts and regulatory relief and unleashing the American energy, right now, today, we have the lowest African-American unemployment in history. People have more take-home pay, more money in their pockets, and costs are lower because of the regulatory relief. And we have seen this with shopping over the Thanksgiving weekend in terms of people feeling that confidence in the economy and in their futures.

Democrats' message is more regulation and higher costs, which lead to fewer jobs. It is not going to work at home, and it is certainly not going to work in Wyoming. Maybe they think it will work in Europe.

But just to clear up any confusion, President Trump has gotten us out of the Paris Agreement. Republicans' pro-growth agenda has us producing and exporting more energy at home, and we are seeing millions of new jobs.

Republicans are going to stay clear-eyed and focused on the economy. We are going to continue to deliver real results, tangible results, results that people can understand and see and hold on to. We need to do that for the people who elected us, and we will continue to do it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

#### CHINA

Mr. KING. Madam President, there is a wonderful guy who lives in Maine named David Mallett. He has a keen ear and an eye for the rural parts of our country, and one of his most famous songs starts out like this: "Inch by inch, row by row, gonna make this garden grow. All it takes is a rake and a hoe and a piece of fertile ground."

The problem is, what we have now is rakes, hoes, a piece of fertile ground,

and we have seeds and crops, but we have an administration that ties the hands of our farmers at every turn, particularly the blueberry farmers in Maine.

Blueberries have been exported from Maine since the 1840s, and the people who are in this farming business are tough and resilient. They don't want bailouts; they want to be able to sell their product on the market.

It is a wonderful product, by the way. If you ever have an opportunity to choose between blueberries and wild blueberries, choose wild blueberries. They are better for you, and they taste better.

In recent years, the market for blueberries has been very difficult because of imports from Canada and additional cultivated blueberries from around the country, so our farmers, being entrepreneurial and doing what we have been telling them to do for years, have gone big time into the export market. Where is a great place to export to? China.

I used to say as Governor that if we could get the Chinese hooked on blueberry muffins—just one a day—all of our problems would be over, and the Maine wild blueberries were getting to that point. Two years ago, \$2.5 million a year of blueberries were going to China and half of the budget of the Wild Blueberry Export Commission was going to develop the Chinese market. Hours and hours, days, dollars—a lot of effort went to develop this Chinese market. Then all of a sudden came the Trump administration tariffs.

Not surprisingly—it seems surprising to the administration—but not surprising to anybody who has paid attention to 500 years of trade, the immediate response to those tariffs was retaliatory tariffs by the Chinese, and one of the first ones was an 80-percent tariff on wild blueberries. We were doing pretty well. From 2014 to 2017, exports to China quadrupled to \$2.5 million. This year they are \$61,000. We have the trade war. It is well known that we have tariffs that are applying to all kinds of agricultural products.

The response from the administration was a massive bailout—a bailout which has now reached something like three times the dollar value of the bailout of the automobile industry back at the beginning of the Obama administration when we almost lost that entire industry. We are now heading toward three times that amount. A lot of the bailout to the automobile industry was paid back. This is not a bailout that is going to be paid back. It has continued to just be paid out to various farmers across the country.

I am sure the farmers in the Midwest, just as the farmers in Maine, don't want bailouts. They want sales. They want to sell their product in the market, which they have been doing, but what has happened is we have this bailout, and I call it the farm bailout lottery. I don't have a spinner on here, but it is a lottery because we don't

know and we don't understand and nobody can tell us why certain crops are in and certain crops are out. Round and round she goes; where she stops, nobody knows—and that is the problem. What is in? Well, let's see. Cranberries are in. Blueberries are out—zip, zero, nothing. Soybeans are in. Wheat is in. Apples are out. Here is what else is in, and tell me if this makes any sense: dairy, hogs, almonds, cranberries, ginseng, grapes, cherries. All these are in. These are getting the bailout money. Some farms are getting over \$500,000: hazelnuts, macadamia nuts, pecans, pistachios, and walnuts but not blueberries and, for some reason, not apples.

We have a double whammy here on this proud industry from Maine. First, there is the Chinese tariff war, of which we are collateral damage. By the way, the same problem is going on with lobsters. They were one of the first products to be retaliated against by the Chinese. We lost that export market, and now the same thing is happening in these agricultural products. It is a double whammy. No. 1, we got hit by the retaliatory tariffs, and No. 2, we are not in on the bailout. We are not in on the funds that are being distributed. Nobody can tell us what the formula is, what the rationale is. Is it who has the biggest, most powerful lobby in Washington? Is it if you are from a State that voted for the President in 2016? What is the rationale? We can't tell what that is.

The President just said yesterday this trade war with China may go on for another year. That means another crop. We have third- and fourth-generation blueberry farmers in Maine leaving the land. It is heartbreaking. These aren't big enterprises. These aren't big operations. These are people with 100-acre farms.

The administration knows about this because I and my colleagues from Maine wrote them in July and asked this question. Wild blueberry should be included in what is called the Market Facilitation Program. It didn't happen. We still don't really know what the criteria is. Just to put a fine point on it, if you are a wild blueberry harvester with a 100-acre farm, you get zip, zero, nada, zilch. If you are a cranberry farmer with a 100-acre bog, you get \$61,000. How is that fair? How is the distinction made? That is the question we are asking.

I have written again today to the Department of Agriculture asking them, A, why we aren't in and, B, how these distinctions are made. I don't think that is an unreasonable question when you are talking about people's livelihoods going back generations. These are tough people. These are resilient people. These are hard-working people. These are people who have given their lives to the land, and they deserve to be supported by their government—not undermined, not challenged, not undercut by their government.

"Inch by inch, row by row, gonna make this garden grow. All it takes is

a rake and a hoe and a piece of fertile ground" and a government that supports your right to make a living at your chosen profession.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I appreciate the Senator from Maine speaking about the virtues of wild Maine blueberries. They happen to be one of my favorite foods—obviously, the lobsters as well.

I agree with him that there appears to be an arbitrary distinction with these support payments that are supposed to compensate farmers for the trade war with China, which I think, unfortunately, is necessary to get China to conform to a rules-based system when it comes to international trade.

Certainly, in the interest of preserving the wild Maine blueberry, I am happy to offer any services I might be able to provide to support our colleagues from Maine.

#### UNITED STATES-MEXICO-CANADA TRADE AGREEMENT

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, over the weekend, we marked 1 year since the leaders of the United States, Mexico, and Canada signed the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Trade Agreement. This modern trade agreement will replace the North American Free Trade Agreement, or NAFTA, which has been the guiding force for North American trade for the past quarter of a century.

When NAFTA was created, its goal was to remove barriers that impede free and fair trade and provide economic benefits to all three countries. By any measure, NAFTA has been an overwhelming success, but a lot has changed in 25 years since NAFTA went into effect, and it is time to bring North American trade into the 21st century. That is precisely what the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Trade Agreement, USMCA, will do. It preserves the hallmark provisions of NAFTA, like duty-free access to Mexican and Canadian markets, and adds measures to modernize the agreement. The USMCA provides strong protections for intellectual property, which is critical to protecting the incredible innovation that Americans do right here at home. It also cuts redtape that is preventing countless small businesses from tapping into foreign markets, and it accounts for e-commerce and digital products, something unheard of 25 years ago, at a time when governments around the world are proposing all kinds of new taxes on e-commerce.

It is actually the first free-trade agreement with a digital trade chapter. That is why a lot of folks call this NAFTA 2.0. It is better. It is stronger. It modernizes the original NAFTA.

We have been told by the experts that the USMCA will lead to increased wealth and jobs here in the United States—about 176,000 new jobs. That is

on top of the 13 million jobs currently supported by trade between Canada, the United States, and Mexico.

It is expected to have a positive impact on every industry sector of the U.S. economy and a more than \$33 billion increase in our exports—things we grow, like wild Maine blueberries, and sell overseas, things we make and manufacture.

This isn't just a win for our farmers, manufacturers, and consumers; it is a win for our entire country. Coincidentally, it is also a big win for Texas. Our State has the 10th largest economy in the world, and it is the engine behind much of our country's trade. In 2018, we exported more than \$137 billion in goods and services to Canada and Mexico. With the passage of the USMCA, that number will go up.

I think the only question left is, When will we get a chance to vote on it? Mexico approved the deal in June. Canada is moving toward ratification soon, so the only remaining hurdle is the green light from Speaker PELOSI and the House of Representatives. We heard early on that House Democrats had some concerns with the agreement, but we were told by the administration—Ambassador Lighthizer, for example—that he thought the negotiations with the House were going well and were being done in good faith. Mexico has made commitments related to some of the labor provisions that were a concern to our Democratic colleagues. President Lopez Obrador even wrote a letter to the Speaker last week affirming that they will fulfill the promises they made. Speaker PELOSI has said repeatedly over the last year that progress was being made and that we are close to a deal and that she hopes we will vote soon. We have heard that over and over and over but still no vote.

Here we are. More than 365 days have gone by since this agreement was signed, and the House still hasn't had a vote. Rather than working to iron out the final details so we can get the USMCA moving before Christmas, the Speaker kicked off the week in Spain talking about the Paris accord and climate change. Unfortunately, our Democratic colleagues seem to want to talk about anything and everything other than the priorities we should have in the Congress. Whether they want to be absorbed by impeachment mania or they want to talk about climate change in London, in Paris, they want to talk about anything other than the work that is right here in front of us that we need to get done: things like the USMCA, things like lowering drug prices for consumers, things like an infrastructure bill and improving our highways and bridges, reducing traffic—which we all hate on a bipartisan basis—addressing some of the root causes of the mass violence incidents, including mental health challenges that many people face who are a danger to themselves and others, and things like how can we get people who

should be conducting background checks on firearm purchases—making sure that the laws on the books are being enforced. Those are all things we can and should be doing.

Apparently, that is not the priority for the Speaker. For an entire year now, House Democrats have kept American farmers, businesses, workers, and consumers waiting. With each day that goes by, while the USMCA waits in purgatory, the American people are missing out. We know that the longer this goes on, the closer this gets into the active election season of 2020, the less likely it is that we are actually going to have the bandwidth to get it done. I don't understand why our Democratic colleagues are putting new American jobs on hold. Are they saying we don't need this increased wealth that this trade agreement will bring? Is that really their argument? Are they telling the American businesses that they really don't care about leveling the playing field? Is that the message we are supposed to get from this lack of activity, this inaction?

With House Democrats working overtime in the futile effort to remove the President from office and undo an election, they are squandering what may be our biggest opportunity this Congress. Unfortunately, partisanship has broken out and obstructed bipartisan desire to get our work done, including the USMCA.

I mentioned some of the other things we could and should be doing. A few weeks ago, the minority leader, the Democratic leader, singlehandedly blocked a bipartisan bill that the Senator from Connecticut, Senator BLUMENTHAL, and I introduced that would bring down prescription drug prices. This bill passed—sailed through—the Senate Judiciary Committee on a bipartisan, unanimous vote. Yet, when we brought it to the floor, our Democratic colleague the minority leader, who called this a good bill and well-intentioned, objected to its passage.

Then there is the appropriations process that had been thrown into chaos. In August, we had an agreement on spending caps for the next 2 years. We thought we had overcome the biggest hurdle to getting our work done in order to make sure our military was funded and to make sure that we were meeting the other financial obligations that the Federal Government has to meet, but our Democratic colleagues walked back on the commitment they had made in August over a 0.3-percent disagreement on Federal spending. That is right—0.3-percent of what the Federal Government spends. That is what caused them to backtrack on their agreement. They have now kept our military waiting for the funding and the stability it needs to keep our Nation safe.

They have also defeated, at least temporarily, a bipartisan—nearly unanimous—prescription drug bill that would bring down prescription drug

costs, and it is hard for me to understand why.

I would like to be able to head home for the Christmas holidays with some good news—good news for the Texans who are eager to see the USMCA ratified. Generally speaking, I am a “glass half full” kind of guy, not a “glass half empty,” but I am losing confidence that we will see progress on the USMCA before Christmas. The longer this goes on, the less likely we will actually find the opportunity to get it done.

It seems to me that impeachment mania has consumed this Congress and rendered our colleagues on the other side incapable of focusing on anything other than removing President Trump from office. Time is running out, and I hope the USMCA doesn't become the latest casualty to land in Senator SCHUMER's legislative graveyard.

At some point, we have to put politics aside and do what we were sent here to do, which is to make progress that will benefit the American people. Let's hope we can do that during this holiday season before it is over.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, I have just come on the floor and have to chuckle about my friend from Texas in his deciding that it is the minority in the Senate that is holding up legislation that needs to be brought up when we have been coming to the floor every day after Senator MCCONNELL has indicated he is probably the Grim Reaper and after we have indicated very clearly that he has turned this into a legislative graveyard. So I have to smile when I hear the words from my friend.

Let me set the record straight before I talk about what I came to the floor to talk about.

Amazingly, the House of Representatives, even with the challenge that it has in front of it—that it didn't ask for, that it didn't welcome, that was brought to it by the continued abuse of power and other actions of the President of the United States—is fulfilling its constitutional responsibilities. It has passed over 300 different pieces of legislation and has sent them over to the U.S. Senate. It is my understanding that 250 of those bills are bipartisan bills; yet we can't get any of them to be taken up on the floor of the Senate.

We come to the floor every week. I am involved in efforts every week to say: Let's pass the bill that will protect people's pensions. People who have worked their whole lives and are close to retirement or are already retired in my State who have put money in pensions are getting 50, 60, 70 percent cuts in their pensions because they got caught in the financial crisis. When Wall Street collapsed, the big banks were bailed out, but when it came time to bail out the pensions that were invested in those big banks—or the IRAs or 401(k)s—somehow, we couldn't get the Republican support to do that. I

would love to see that brought up. It could be brought up any day. It could be brought up today, and—bingo—we would pass it.

The other thing that we could be doing is passing legislation the House sent us months ago. There is legislation on preexisting conditions. Everybody says we don't want people to lose their preexisting conditions coverage on their healthcare. Great. Let's pass the legislation that came over from the House in order to protect that. Let's make sure that it happens.

There is the Violence Against Women Act, which has been waiting for over 200 days, and there are the efforts on gun safety—things we all agree to. There are issues on gun safety and background checks, and well over 90 percent of the American public agrees with it. This legislation came over from the House months ago, but we can't get any action on the Senate floor. There is legislation that deals with carbon pollution and the climate crisis. It goes on and on and on.

There are over 300 different pieces of legislation that have been passed by the House while it is also having to address what is clearly a constitutional challenge that is very serious for our country. We have not had that in front of us, so we could have easily been bringing bills forward every week that would make a difference in people's lives. We could have been lowering their healthcare costs, lowering their prescription drug costs, making sure people's pensions are protected, focusing on jobs and education and safety for their children while they are in school.

We welcome it. Let's do it today and tomorrow. Let's go. We have over 300 bills that the House has sent to the Senate on which there has been no action.

#### HEALTHCARE

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, let me speak more specifically about healthcare.

I come to the floor every week and say the same thing, which is that healthcare is personal, not political, for each one of us. That is really true in our own families. We want whatever it takes to make sure our children have what they need, that our moms and dads and grandpas and grandmas have what they need, and that we have what we need with healthcare. It is pretty basic. It is a common, human need that we all share. Unfortunately, this has become a political issue here in DC. Nowhere else is it a political issue. It is personal for people in Michigan and around the country.

If a senior can't afford the medication she needs for a chronic condition, that is personal. If parents don't have trusted doctors to call when their children wake up with coughs and high fevers and they don't know what is happening, that is personal. If a woman is charged more for healthcare coverage

than she needs to be just because she is a woman and has detected cancer or if she wants to have it detected early but doesn't have the healthcare with which to do that, that is very personal.

Healthcare for each one of us is something very personal. Unfortunately, the law that helps seniors afford their medications, that provides families health insurance, that covers lifesaving preventive care, and that protects people with preexisting conditions is under political attack over and over.

From the very beginning, the Trump administration has been undermining the healthcare of millions and millions of Americans. It is now open enrollment season, and, unfortunately, the administration is at it again—what it couldn't do here in this body when we voted no. We would not repeal the Affordable Care Act. We would not rip apart the healthcare system. This is what happened right here. It couldn't achieve this through Congress—the legislative body, the people's body—so it is now, through the backdoor, trying to find ways to unravel and rip apart the healthcare system and have costs go up so it can say: See? Look, costs are going up—because of what they are doing behind the scenes to unravel everything.

So here we are. It is open enrollment to sign up for an Affordable Care Act plan, and the administration is at it again. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services is using taxpayer funding to promote third-party insurance brokers. I would encourage people to go to the website [healthcare.gov](http://healthcare.gov). You have until December 15 to do it. There used to be a longer signup time. One of the things the administration has done is to cut back the signup time, but you have until December 15.

When you go there now, though, it is a little tricky, a little confusing. You have [healthcare.gov](http://healthcare.gov), and then, depending on what button you click, it takes you outside of [healthcare.gov](http://healthcare.gov), the government system, to private insurance brokers. The insurance brokers are allowed to enroll people in quality, comprehensive plans, which are what the Affordable Care Act provides, and you know what essential services are covered. If they do that, they get paid, but if they sign you up through an insurance company for what we call a junk plan, which doesn't cover anything, then they get paid up to four times more. So they get paid more if you get less coverage.

The problem is it is going to look good because it will probably cost less for many folks, and you will not know what it covers until you get sick. I don't know how many times it was before the Affordable Care Act was passed that someone would call me and say: I have paid into my insurance plan all my life, and I have never been sick. I got sick. What do you mean it only covers 1 day in the hospital? What do you mean it doesn't cover the ambulance? What do you mean I only get two treatments?

That is what we mean by a junk plan—a plan that does not cover what you would expect it to cover in terms of your care. So it is very important that you go to [healthcare.gov](http://healthcare.gov) if this is something that you are interested in, if you need insurance, or if you want to change your plan. It is important that you go into the system, in fact, in which you are going to be given quotes on comprehensive care and in which there is accountability for the coverage.

Late last month, I released a report that outlined the many ways the Trump administration has been undermining healthcare. It has nearly eliminated the funding for what is called healthcare navigators, who are people who can help you sign up for health insurance coverage. It doesn't matter what it is or if you have a lot of questions, as it is complicated; having somebody who can get on the phone to answer your questions and walk you through it is important. Yet the funding for the folks to do that—to help you, to answer your questions—has basically been eliminated.

The administration has slashed the budget for advertising so that people don't know it is open enrollment now. They don't know where they can go to sign up or how many days they have in which to do that and how to do it online.

As I mentioned before, the administration has cut the time in half that you have to sign up.

The worst thing is, any day now, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, which is backed by the Trump administration, could announce a ruling that overturns the entire Affordable Care Act. This would take away what we call Healthy Michigan, which is our Medicaid expansion. It would take away the ability for your children to stay on your insurance until they reach the age of 26. It would take away protections for people with preexisting conditions. It would put back into place or allow insurance companies to put back into place caps on the number of treatments you can receive. It would also put back into place all of the other restrictions that insurance companies had on care but that had been eliminated with the Affordable Care Act.

I have to say, recently, when we looked at how this would impact people with the possibility of eliminating the Affordable Care Act in this court decision, we also realized that not only would it take away healthcare for millions of Americans, but it would have the perverted result of actually providing a tax cut to the wealthiest individuals and to prescription drug companies and insurance companies that each chip in to help pay for the tax cuts that average citizens have used in order to get lower cost care.

It seems as though it doesn't matter what it is that our Republican colleagues or this President supports, for it always ends up as another tax cut for the wealthy. Unfortunately, with the

repeal of health insurance and all it would do to average families in taking away their capacity to get care and the confidence that they can get care for their families, it, too, would provide another tax giveaway to the wealthy.

The court case and all it would do in repealing the Affordable Care Act would have life-changing consequences for millions of people in Michigan, including someone I would like to tell you about.

Henry is an outgoing 9-year-old who lives in Grosse Pointe, MI. Henry loves people. He greets everyone he meets with a big hug. He also loves performing. His favorite activity is dance class, and he enjoys singing karaoke at home.

Henry, we have something in common. I like to sing too.

Henry is also living with a number of preexisting conditions, including Down syndrome, autism, and severe reflux.

Henry's mom explains why comprehensive health insurance is so important for her family. Henry was hospitalized at 8 months for an infection that nearly took his life. Saving his life cost over \$1 million. She added this: If we didn't have access to affordable healthcare coverage, we would have been bankrupt before Henry was 1 year old.

No family should go bankrupt because a child was born with a genetic condition or hospitalized with a serious illness. I want to remind my colleagues that this could happen to any of us at any time.

Almost 4 years ago, my nephew and his wonderful wife, Mac and Allie, had their firstborn girl, and she was born with only half a heart and spent most of the first year of her life in the children's hospital at the University of Michigan. She had incredible care. She is now almost 4 years old. Little Leighton is our miracle baby, but she came out with a whole laundry list of preexisting conditions, ongoing challenges, and a huge healthcare bill that I know, if we hadn't had healthcare coverage, if they weren't able to get coverage, they would have done anything—anything—including losing their home, in order to keep Leighton alive and thriving. That is what we do for our kids. That is what we do for our families. Too many people have been put in that position.

That is one of the reasons the Affordable Care Act was put in place, to give some options so that you wouldn't have to focus on losing everything in order to protect your child's life. So that is what is at stake right now.

Unfortunately, this administration is trying to turn the clock back to a time when filing for bankruptcy or not being able to get your child the lifesaving medical care they need was all too common. All people with preexisting conditions deserve to know that their health insurance will be there when they need it, just like Henry's was.

Half of the people in Michigan have preexisting conditions, and they want

to know that they are going to be OK, that their healthcare coverage is not going to be ripped away. I want that for them too. I want that for all of us.

Healthcare isn't political; it is personal. It is time to stop playing politics with people's health and work to protect Henry and his family and all of our families.

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.

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

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

#### HONG KONG

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, over the past few months we have all watched as the pro-democracy protesters in Hong Kong turned the tables on Beijing, and, indeed, we have passed legislation in this Chamber and the President has signed that, addressing the issue.

Hong Kong's recent elections really were a stunning rebuke to Beijing.

Seven in 10 eligible voters risked persecution to speak out at the ballot box, and the government's allies' political control over Hong Kong collapsed. Hong Kong wants their freedom. We are proud of those freedom fighters. We continue to support them. But we also must recognize that Beijing's crimes spread far beyond the world of cellphone cameras and fearless journalism.

In the far west Xinjiang region, Chinese officials are perpetrating a different and even more horrific human rights violation. Xinjiang is home to 11 million Uighurs, an indigenous Turkic Muslim ethnic minority that the Chinese Government has tormented for decades. Although the Uighurs built their lives and a booming economy in China, they feel more culturally and ethnically close to their neighbors living in Central Asian nations.

Much like Tibet, Xinjiang is an autonomous region that, after the Communists subjugated the area in 1949, the central government increased its control over the lives of Uighurs by oppressing commercial, religious, and cultural activity deemed inconsistent with state doctrine. Think about that; the Chinese Communists said these activities are inconsistent with state doctrine.

In the wake of 9/11, China seized on the actions of Uighur separatists to create a propaganda campaign comparing the separatists to Al Qaeda. They use these accusations to blame the Uighur population at large for unrest and crack down mercilessly on even peaceful protest. In 2016, the government further ramped up persecution of Uighurs under the guise of repressing antigovernment activity.

Their current playbook really looks familiar: arbitrary detention of over a million Uighurs and other ethnic minorities in concentration camps that they have labeled "political re-education centers;" torture for those who fail to tell the Communist Party what the Communist Party wants to hear; compulsory digital and physical surveillance and the merciless eradication of free expression, freedom of religion, and basic expectations of privacy.

The camps have garnered widespread international attention, in spite of Chinese officials' uncompromising repression of foreign journalists, but the government's pervasive digital surveillance programs are putting the Communist Party in a position to racially profile and persecute those who threaten China's plans for dominance.

Yesterday's New York Times featured a story detailing how Chinese Government officials are forcibly collecting blood samples from the Uighurs with the ultimate goal of using DNA to improve facial recognition capabilities. Although the government claims that these capabilities will place a new tool in law enforcement's tool box, human rights watchdogs rightfully fear that Beijing will use it to justify even more intense racial profiling and persecution.

These violations are all committed by a member of the United Nations Human Rights Council. These are going almost completely ignored by the international community. The EU and the European academic institutions have supported China's research and development of facial recognition technology, often without verifying that the necessary DNA samples were not forcibly obtained.

Unfortunately, American technology companies have supported and profited from China's increasingly sophisticated surveillance capabilities. Tourists and corporate partners will once again flock to Beijing for the 2022 Olympic Games, even though they are fully aware—fully aware—that the Chinese Government will track them, record them, surveil them, and analyze their every move.

The Trump administration's crackdown on tech exports to Huawei and other Chinese entities, that sent a strong message to Beijing. Just last month, I joined my colleagues in a letter to Secretaries Pompeo, Mnuchin, and Ross urging them to sanction individual Chinese officials responsible for ordering and coordinating mass internment and forced labor in Xinjiang.

But most leaders and executives even in the West fail to realize that China's bad behavior is an indication of their global ambitions. China thinks power and the almighty dollar—not freedom—rule the day. Everything China does, from their military activity in the South China Sea and the Horn of Africa, to the flood of Chinese-made products into the global market, is done with the goal of exporting their destructive, repressive ideology.

What they are doing to the Uighurs, to the Hong Kong people, and even to their own supposedly loyal comrades, they intend to do to you. The Chinese surveillance state is an essential means to their end game of absolute control of the thought, movement, and relationships with other global powers.

How far must China go before we reject the notion that their influence will stop at our border? I ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to consider their answer carefully, as questions will inevitably rise about the relevance of free speech and the Constitution or the importance of a strong national defense.

We are in the midst of great power competition, and we do not have a National Defense Authorization Act. It would be the first time in 58 years. I encourage my colleagues to work with us. Let's get this complete because the threats are real, and the more we compromise our own values, the easier it will become for foreign influence to take hold in our society.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Rhode Island.

#### CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, atmospheric carbon dioxide just hit new records in our atmosphere, the highest in the history of humankind, and I rise for the 260th time to call this Chamber to wake up.

As we venture further into uncharted dangerous climate change, the National Council for Science and the Environment issued this report, "Climate Science Research in the United States and U.S. Territories." This report surveys climate research papers from public universities across all of our 50 States—every single one of them—to highlight the breadth and the depth of climate science coming out of our State universities and to showcase the climate science centers and institutes that they host.

Some colleagues pay no attention to the threat of climate change, but their home State universities sure do. Ten thousand peer-reviewed research papers published out of 80 universities from 2014 through 2018, that is, on average, 185 peer-reviewed articles published on climate change in each State.

The report says this: "In every State, public universities invest in scholarship and education to advance fields such as climate modeling, climate impacts, adaptation, and more. Increasingly, they go on, climate science has been integrated into course work on sustainability, energy, engineering, architecture, business, and even political science." One wonders what is the hold the fossil fuel industry has over the Republican Party that causes colleagues to ignore the research from their own home state universities?

The report continues: "Climate scientists are studying a wide diversity of topics. They measure carbon dioxide

and other greenhouse gas emissions. They are studying carbon and the impacts of a changing carbon cycle. They are studying impacts of climate change on the Nation's food security, crop yields, heat-stress, health impacts, soil erosion; on water resources, including water quality, balance, river basins, drought, precipitation, mountain snowpack; on impacts to critical infrastructure, such as sea level rise on coasts and on subtropical islands, to the impact of permafrost thaw on sub-Arctic rivers."

"Finally, researchers are also studying the social science of climate change, including changing attitudes, polarization, opinions, beliefs, and their impacts on framing in the media and on decision-making."

Region by region in every State, the report shows our State universities tracking climate change's consequences in fine detail. Quoting from the report, in the Midwest, "Agriculture is a major focal area for climate-related research . . . [with] more occurrences of the word 'agriculture' in climate-related papers from the Midwest between the 2014 and 2018 than in any other region."

In the Southwest, "A key focus of scientific research in the Southwest region is on the impact to people and ecosystems from heat, drought, wildfires, and flooding."

In the Southeast, "The impacts of climate change in the Southeast are becoming most visible through the increase of flooding, temporal and geographic shifts that affect human health, and growing risks of wildfires."

In the Southern Great Plains States, "Scientists in the Southern Great Plains are studying climate impact on food systems, sea level rise, as well as impacts to unique ecosystems in this region, such as a tall grass prairie in Oklahoma."

Across all of these regions, red and purple State universities are churning out climate research. In fact, conservative States' universities are home to some of the most prolific climate science departments and institutions. I wish they were listened to by our Members here.

Texas A&M University, the alma mater of climate-change-denying former Energy Secretary Rick Perry, produced 256 papers—256 papers—covering topics like shifting summer monsoons in the Lone Star State, local surface temperature increases, atmospheric changes, and climate adaptation strategies.

North Carolina State University produced 223 climate papers examining climate change and atmospheric chemistry, surface ozone, regional water research and precipitation, and it is home to the Southeast Climate Adaptation Science Center, which helps coastal North Carolina grapple with rising sea levels, erosion, and flooding.

Go to Idaho. Researchers from Boise State and the University of Idaho issued 164 climate science papers cov-

ering threats like wildfires, bark beetles, shifting precipitation, rising temperatures, and disruption to ecosystems in National Parks like Yellowstone. Idaho also has two academic centers focused on climate change, the Hazard and Climate Resiliency Consortium and the Center for Resilient Communities. For the staff at these two centers, it is all climate, all the time. For the Idaho delegation, it is never climate, ever.

Let's look at what is happening in the home State universities of Republican Senators on our Environment and Public Works Committee. Here is what they will find in their university backyards. The University of Wyoming produced 124 climate change papers on wildfires, endangered species, Yellowstone National Park, and other climate topics—124. The university is home to both the State climatology office and an atmospheric science department, which does modeling and empirical climate research. Its faculty are working on subjects like—quoting here the report here—"the role of climate and variability on vegetation and fire. Using moderate climate analogs to understand past environmental disturbances. Developing Web-based animated maps of climate, and development of 3D climate visualization tools to enhance learning approaches in the classroom." I wonder if our Wyoming delegation has visualized that.

The University of Oklahoma and Oklahoma State University published 183 climate change papers on things like Southern Plains grasslands, rising temperatures, soil respiration, and much more. OU is home to the Oklahoma University Climate Science Center and the Department of the Interior's South Central Adaptation Science Center.

Here is what the dean of the University of Oklahoma College of Atmospheric and Geographic Sciences said: "On the increasing strength of Earth sciences we can now state that global warming is 'unequivocal.'" He said: "The fact that the planet's warming, and the fact that CO<sub>2</sub>'s a greenhouse gas, and the fact that it's increasing in the atmosphere, and that it increases in the atmosphere due to humans—about those things, there's no debate."

I am not sure the Oklahoma delegation here has taken that in yet.

West Virginia and Marshall Universities have turned out dozens of climate change papers on precipitation, drought, tree growth, and much more. The West Virginia Mountaineers have a Mountain Hydrology Laboratory, which reports on climate change's "important implications for management of fresh water resources," which include that "the highlands region in the central Appalachian Mountains is expected to wet up" as warmer air carrying more moisture leads to what they call "intensification of the water cycle"—what you and I would call worse flooding. The laboratory warns that "the implications of this intensification are immense."

The University of Arkansas contributed 51 papers and hosts the University of Arkansas Resiliency Center. Arkansas researchers warned of the need to reduce greenhouse gases, particularly including carbon dioxide and methane because these gases' "absorption of solar radiation is responsible for the greenhouse effect." The university describes the greenhouse effect thus: "These gases are trapped and held in the Earth's atmosphere, gradually increasing the temperature of the Earth's surface and air in the lower atmosphere."

A University of Arkansas scientist predicts "that the spread of plant species in nearly half of the world's land areas could be affected by global warming by the end of the century." Yet what do we hear from Arkansas about climate change?

Alaska actually gets its own regional chapter in this report. In Alaska, "Researchers at public institutions . . . are studying changes in the marine environment and the impacts to the valuable marine resources Alaskan communities depend on."

There are papers on thawing permafrost and its effects on water quality, infrastructure, and habitat for fish and wildlife. There is research on what rapid ocean acidification, rising sea levels, and shifting fish stocks mean for Alaska's coastal communities. And there is research into challenges facing Alaska's indigenous people fighting to protect their ancient way of life in a rapidly changing landscape.

Alaska is home to not one, not two, but three climate institutes: the Alaska Climate Research Center, the Alaska Climate Adaptation/Resource Center, and the Ocean Acidification Research Center. Alaskan researchers have written papers titled "Permafrost is warming at a global scale" and "Climate Change and Future Wildfire in the Western United States." The Alaska researchers don't mince words. I quote: "Projections of warming suggest that considerable change will occur to key snow parameters, possibly contributing to extensive infrastructure damage from thawing permafrost, an increased frequency of rain-on-snow events and reduced soil recharge in the spring due to shallow end-of-winter snowpack." It is not hard to understand, but where is the action?

In the Dakotas, North Dakota State and the University of North Dakota are studying the effects of climate change on the Great Plains, the Mississippi River, land use and adaptation, and public policy. They are also home to North Dakota Agricultural Experiment Center, the Global Institute of Food Security and International Agriculture, and the Center for Regional Climate Studies. South Dakota State has issued dozens of studies on climate change, including what it will mean for the State's groundwater supply, maize and wheat crops, and precipitation levels.

Heading south, the University of Mississippi and Mississippi State are

studying what climate change will mean for sediment flows, droughts, watersheds, and water quality. They are looking at what climate change will mean for Mississippi's vitally important rice crop—a crop that supports hundreds of rice farms in the State. And they do good coastal climate work with the Sea Grant Program.

Auburn, the University of Alabama-Tuscaloosa, and the University of Alabama-Huntsville produced 140 climate papers that are in the council's study here. You would never know that from the Alabama delegation. Auburn has an International Center for Climate and Global Change Research, and the University of Alabama does climate change research at its Earth System Science Center.

All by itself, Iowa State is responsible for 117 papers on climate change: on agriculture—corn, grazing lands, yields; on weather—precipitation, droughts, temperature; and even on beliefs and behavior related to climate change.

Last but certainly not least among EPW Republican States is Indiana, home to two world-class universities that are doing extremely impressive work on climate change. Indiana University and Purdue combine for 289 papers. They are also home to the Center for the Study of Global Change at Indiana University and Purdue's Climate Change Research Center.

I hope it goes without saying that universities that study climate change and publish scientific papers on climate change also teach climate change in their coursework. Maybe we should spend a week here in the Senate getting a refresher on the home State climate change science. It might do us some good. But we don't. We waste week after week here as the danger looms, the warnings pile up, and the research keeps coming about climate change in our home States. We will be the most clearly warned body in history of disaster ahead. Yet we still sit here doing nothing. Never has a political body been more clearly warned of a more present looming disaster than this one—yet still nothing.

The council's report on State university climate research has these web diagrams, which show how climate change research focuses more on climate effects as they begin to manifest themselves in the States and not just predictions and science any longer. Now it is measurement of actual events. But the diagrams also show the various areas of research about which these research papers are being published.

Here is the web diagram for the topics that are addressed in climate science research in the southwestern universities. The 12 universities in Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, and Utah in the study show real-time effects of climate change, like drought and wildfire, and point to direct links between tree mortality, drought, and climate. We in this

country depend on the Southwest for more than half of our specialty crops—vegetables, fruits, and nuts—so we have to pay attention when drought threatens all of those.

Here is another topic web for the Southeast highlighting what the universities' research has been on sea level rise, ocean acidification, adaptation, and management.

Here is a slightly different web. This web is not a web of science and inquiry. No, this is the web of front groups and dark money organizations that the fossil fuel industry has supported, created, and used for decades to sow false doubt about all of this science—all of this science from all of our 50 States. Their job is to lie about this science, and they have done it well. They have used this same web to deploy political muscle and propaganda to block action here in Congress. That is why, with all of this research being done in all of these States, nothing is happening on this floor. Nothing has happened since Citizens United gave the fossil fuel industry the equivalent of howitzers, whereas before then, they just had muskets.

I say to the Presiding Officer, I remember how bipartisan it was here. You weren't here then. Between 2007, when I was sworn in—all of 2007, 2008, and 2009, we had five different bipartisan climate bills popping up around on the Senate floor. There were five of them, all strong, serious bills—not little nibbly things to make people feel better; real bills.

In January 2010 comes Citizens United, and the fossil fuel industry gets its brandnew hardware, its political howitzers, and they go straight to the other side of the aisle and say: Anybody who crosses us is dead. Bipartisanship died that year on climate change, and it is only beginning—only beginning—to resurge now. But the decade we lost will cost us a lot, and it makes the urgency of what we have to do now all the more important. This web of denial, paid for by the fossil fuel industry, has stymied Congress for a decade.

I hope I don't need to remind anyone here that the fossil fuel industry has a conflict of interest as to this question. Indeed, the International Monetary Fund has quantified it as a \$650 billion-a-year conflict of interest. For \$650 billion in conflict of interest, you can pay for a lot of nonsense organizations that are phony front groups to put out your poison and your political propaganda and your political pressure.

It is time, at last, for Senators to pay attention to the trusted science actually happening in their own home State universities and not to this corrupt web of denial that has been propped up by the conflicted fossil fuel industry. This web of denial has done nothing but lied over and over again. They are probably wrong over and over again. The things they say are false over and over again. Yet the industry behind them still controls the U.S.

Senate, and we can't budge, despite the rest of the world moving on dealing with this issue.

Let me close with an anniversary that we marked this week. Ten years ago this Friday, a full-page ad ran in the New York Times—a full-page ad pointing out that the science of climate change was already by then—10 years ago—to use the words in the advertisement, “irrefutable,” “scientifically irrefutable.” The science is scientifically irrefutable. And it goes on to say that the consequences of climate change would be “catastrophic and irreversible.” Wow. The science is irrefutable; the consequences, catastrophic and irreversible? Who could have signed this ad? I will tell you who signed this ad. Donald J. Trump and his children, Donald Trump, Jr., Eric Trump, Ivanka Trump—oh, and the Trump Organization, right there. This is what the Trumps had to say about this 10 years ago, Friday.

I conclude by saying to my colleagues, the science is there for you to see. You don't have to go far. Just go to your home State university. It is right there waiting for you. For the truth of climate change, just turn to the researchers teaching your students in your State's own universities. They can tell you, just as Donald Trump and his family did 10 years ago, that what we face is irrefutable and that its consequences will be catastrophic and irreversible if we keep monkeying around and failing to act.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Ohio.

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

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

#### REMEMBERING HARRISON DILLARD

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I rise today to honor a Cleveland native, a Buffalo soldier, and an Olympic legend—Harrison Dillard. Mr. Dillard died last month at the age of 96. His life included service to our country in World War II, four Olympic gold medals, and world records.

He grew up racing up and down the streets of our shared hometown of Cleveland with friends. When Mr. Dillard was 13, he saw his hometown hero, a gentleman named Jesse Owens, in a parade. He ran home and told his mother: “I just saw Jesse Owens, [Mom], and I'm going to be just like him.”

She humored her son. Think about how many people say that to mothers in Cleveland and other places. She humored her son like all mothers do, but Harrison Dillard was serious. He

and his friends would take old cars seats and put them in the street and jump over them for practice.

When he enrolled at Jesse Owens' alma mater, Cleveland's East Technical High School on the east side of our city, Owens himself gave Harrison a new pair of running shoes. Jesse Owens was one of the most famous athletes in the country. He won world records, one gold medal, and stood up to Adolph Hitler. Jessie Owens gave Harrison Dillard a new pair of running shoes.

Mr. Dillard joined the Army after high school. He served in a segregated unit. Just for younger people who don't know this history, we segregated our Armed Forces in this country, even in World War II. Just to add a little more to that history with those soldiers who came back from serving their country, they came back to a segregated country. They had fought for human rights. They came back, and they didn't have those human rights. Think about that.

After the war, General Patton saw Harrison Dillard in an Army track meet, and Patton said—pardon my language on the Senate floor: “[That man] is the best Goddamn athlete I've ever seen.”

Harrison Dillard proved him right. He represented our country at the Olympics in London. He brought home two gold medals in the 100-meter race. He achieved his childhood dream. He matched Jesse Owens' Olympic record time of 10.3 seconds. That was in 1948. He would later write in his autobiography: “I could finally say that I was just like [Jesse Owens].”

Plenty of people tried to hold Harrison Dillard back because of the color of his skin. He recalled how, after his military discharge, he was refused food at a restaurant. Again, he served his country, he came back to his country, and he was refused food in a restaurant because of the color of his skin. It is shameful how we treated veterans and fellow citizens in this country. It is a testament to Mr. Dillard's tenacity and talent that he achieved so much in the face of a society that was so often set up to hold him back. He ended his career by serving the city that raised him. He worked for the Cleveland public school system.

Now, I met Harrison Dillard once. Actually, I met him later as an adult. I saw him not that many years ago. I met him when I was in Boy Scouts at Camp Avery Hand in Mansfield, OH. Harrison Dillard came out and spoke to our Scout troop and other troops who were sitting there congregated to listen to this world class famous athlete talk to us about service. I remember I didn't know a lot about him because I was not even born when he won the Olympics, but I knew he was an Olympian. He was introduced as that. We got to listen to him, and he inspired us.

His legacy lives on in Northeast Ohio. He lives on around the country not only in our record books but also through the young people he inspired. I

ask all my colleagues to join me in honoring Harrison Dillard—Olympic gold medal winner, U.S. Army veteran, and citizen of the great city of Cleveland.

I yield the floor.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination: Executive Calendar No. 499.

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

The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Hugh Nathaniel Halpern, of Virginia, to be Director of the Government Publishing Office.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nomination with no intervening action or debate.

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

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent on the Halpern nomination?

The nomination was confirmed.

#### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

#### MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

#### VOTE EXPLANATION

● Ms. HARRIS. Mr. President, I was absent but had I been present, I would have voted no on rollcall vote No. 369 the confirmation of Executive Calendar No. 347, Eric Ross Komitee to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of New York.

Mr. President, I was absent but had I been present I would have voted no on rollcall vote No. 370 the motion to invoke cloture on Executive Calendar No. 353, John L. Sinatra, Jr., to be United States District Judge for the Western District of New York.

Mr. President, I was absent but had I been present I would have voted no on rollcall vote No. 371 the motion to invoke cloture on Executive Calendar No. 478, Sarah E. Pitlyk to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Missouri.

Mr. President, I was absent but had I been present I would have voted no on rollcall vote No. 372 the motion to invoke cloture on Executive Calendar No. 381, Douglas Russell Cole to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Ohio.

Mr. President, I was absent but had I been present I would have voted no on rollcall vote No. 373 the motion to invoke cloture on Executive Calendar No. 459, R. Austin Huffaker, Jr. to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Alabama.

Mr. President, I was absent but had I been present I would have voted no on rollcall vote No. 374 the motion to invoke cloture on Executive Calendar No. 460, David B. Barlow to be United States District Judge for the District of Utah.●

**BUDGET SCOREKEEPING REPORT**

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I rise to submit to the Senate the budget scorekeeping report for December 2019. This is my second scorekeeping report since I filed the deemed budget resolution for fiscal year 2020 on September 9, 2019, as required by the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2019, BBA19. The report compares current-law levels of spending and revenues with the amounts agreed to in BBA19. In the Senate, this information is used to determine whether budgetary points of order lie against pending legislation. The Republican staff of the Budget Committee and the Congressional Budget Office, CBO, prepared this report pursuant to section 308(b) of the Congressional Budget Act, CBA. The information included in this report is current through November 25, 2019.

Since I filed the last scorekeeping report on October 16, 2019, two measures with significant enforceable budgetary effects have been enacted. The first, the Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2020, and Further Health Extenders Act of 2019 (P.L. 116-69), provided continuing appropriations and extended several authorizing provisions. Specifically, division A of that law extended discretionary appropriations through December 20, 2019, and division B extended a number of health programs, the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program, and certain Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act provisions. Division B also extended and increased benefits under the U.S. Victims of State Sponsored Terrorism Fund and repealed a rescission of highway funding that had been included in the 2015 highway bill. CBO estimated that division B would increase outlays by \$1.1 billion over 10 years.

The second measure with significant budgetary effects to be enacted was the Women's Suffrage Centennial Commemorative Coin Act (P.L. 116-71). This law directed the Department of the Treasury to mint and issue silver coins to commemorate the women who played a vital role in rallying support for the 19th Amendment to the U.S.

Constitution. CBO estimated that P.L. 116-71 would save \$2 million in 2020 and be budget neutral over the 5- and 10-year windows.

Budget Committee Republican staff prepared tables A-D.

Table A gives the amount by which each Senate authorizing committee exceeds or is below its allocation for budget authority and outlays under the fiscal year 2020 deemed budget resolution. This information is used for enforcing committee allocations pursuant to section 302 of the CBA.

The two enacted pieces of legislation that I mentioned earlier led to the Environment and Public Works Committee, EPW, exceeding its allocation (P.L. 116-69) and the Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee generating \$2 million in savings in 2020 (P.L. 116-71). The House of Representatives' construction of division B of the P.L. 116-69, which combined numerous authorizing matters into one division, contributed to EPW's breach of its allocation. As EPW's highway rescission repeal provided the largest single budgetary effect, the entire division's effects were assigned to EPW consistent with longstanding congressional enforcement practices. It is important to note that EPW's highway repeal alone was scored by CBO as not producing an outlay or deficit effect. A detailed discussion of CBO's scoring of a similar provision is included in CBO's formal August 2019 estimate of S. 1992, a bill to amend the FAST Act to repeal a rescission of funds, which was reported earlier this year from EPW.

Table B provides the amount by which the Senate Committee on Appropriations is below or exceeds the statutory spending limits. This information is used to determine points of order related to the spending caps found in sections 312 and 314 of the CBA. The table shows that the Appropriations Committee is compliant with spending limits for current the fiscal year. Those limits for regular discretionary spending are \$666.5 billion for accounts in the defense category and \$621.5 billion for accounts in the nondefense category of spending. As no full-year appropriations measures have been enacted for fiscal year 2020, the amounts shown on the table reflect the budgetary authority effects of advanced or permanent appropriations made available in prior law.

The 2018 budget resolution contained points of order limiting the use of changes in mandatory programs, CHIMPs, in appropriations bills. Table C, which tracks the CHIMP limit of \$15 billion for 2020, shows the Appropriations Committee has not yet enacted full-year CHIMPs for this fiscal year.

Table D provides the amount of budget authority enacted for 2020 that has been designated as either for an emergency or for overseas contingency operations pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended. Funding that receives either of these

designations results in cap adjustments to enforceable discretionary spending limits. There is no limit on either emergency or overseas contingency operations spending; however, any senator may challenge the designation with a point of order to strike the designation on the floor.

In addition to the tables provided by Budget Committee Republican staff, I am submitting CBO tables, which I will use to enforce budget totals approved by Congress.

CBO provided a spending and revenue report for 2020, Table 1, which helps enforce aggregate spending levels in budget resolutions under CBA section 311. In its report, CBO annualizes the temporary effects of the latest continuing resolution, which provides funding through December 20, 2019. For the enforcement of budgetary aggregates, the Budget Committee excludes this temporary funding. As such, the committee views current-law levels as being \$1,173.2 billion and \$668.4 billion below budget resolution levels for budget authority and outlays, respectively. Details on 2020 levels can be found in CBO's second table.

Current-law revenues are consistent with the levels assumed by the budget resolution.

Social Security levels are consistent with the budget resolution's figures for all enforceable periods.

CBO's report also provides information needed to enforce the Senate pay-as-you-go, PAYGO, rule, table 3. This rule was established under section 4106 of the 2018 budget resolution. The Senate PAYGO scorecard shows that there is currently \$2 million in room in 2020 due to the enactment of the Women's Suffrage Centennial Commemorative Coin Act. Please note that the deficit effects of division B of the Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2020, and Further Health Extenders Act of 2019 are excluded from the Senate's PAYGO scorecard pursuant to Title VIII of division B of that law.

This submission also includes a table tracking the Senate's budget enforcement activity on the floor since the enforcement filing on September 9, 2019. No budgetary points of order have been raised since that filing.

All years in the accompanying tables are fiscal years.

I ask unanimous consent that this statement and the accompanying tables be printed in the RECORD.

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

**TABLE A.—SENATE AUTHORIZING COMMITTEES—ENACTED DIRECT SPENDING ABOVE (+) OR BELOW (–) BUDGET RESOLUTIONS**

(In millions of dollars)

	2020	2020– 2024	2020– 2029
<b>Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry:</b>			
Budget Authority .....	0	0	0
Outlays .....	0	0	0
<b>Armed Services:</b>			
Budget Authority .....	0	0	0
Outlays .....	0	0	0

TABLE A.—SENATE AUTHORIZING COMMITTEES—ENACTED DIRECT SPENDING ABOVE (+) OR BELOW (–) BUDGET RESOLUTIONS—Continued

	[In millions of dollars]		
	2020	2020–2024	2020–2029
<b>Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs:</b>			
Budget Authority .....	–2	0	0
Outlays .....	–2	0	0
<b>Commerce, Science, and Transportation:</b>			
Budget Authority .....	0	0	0
Outlays .....	0	0	0
<b>Energy and Natural Resources:</b>			
Budget Authority .....	0	0	0
Outlays .....	0	0	0
<b>Environment and Public Works:</b>			
Budget Authority .....	8,058	38,589	77,069
Outlays .....	415	683	1,130
<b>Finance:</b>			
Budget Authority .....	0	0	0
Outlays .....	0	0	0
<b>Foreign Relations:</b>			
Budget Authority .....	0	0	0
Outlays .....	0	0	0
<b>Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs:</b>			
Budget Authority .....	0	0	0
Outlays .....	0	0	0
<b>Judiciary:</b>			
Budget Authority .....	0	0	0
Outlays .....	0	0	0
<b>Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:</b>			
Budget Authority .....	0	0	0
Outlays .....	0	0	0
<b>Rules and Administration:</b>			
Budget Authority .....	0	0	0
Outlays .....	0	0	0
<b>Intelligence:</b>			
Budget Authority .....	0	0	0
Outlays .....	0	0	0
<b>Veterans' Affairs:</b>			
Budget Authority .....	0	0	0
Outlays .....	0	0	0
<b>Indian Affairs:</b>			
Budget Authority .....	0	0	0
Outlays .....	0	0	0
<b>Small Business:</b>			
Budget Authority .....	0	0	0
Outlays .....	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>			
Budget Authority .....	8,056	38,589	77,069

TABLE A.—SENATE AUTHORIZING COMMITTEES—ENACTED DIRECT SPENDING ABOVE (+) OR BELOW (–) BUDGET RESOLUTIONS—Continued

	[In millions of dollars]		
	2020	2020–2024	2020–2029
Outlays .....	413	683	1,130

This table is current through November 25, 2019. This table tracks the spending effects of legislation enacted compared to allowable levels. Each authorizing committee's initial allocation can be found in the Senate Budget Committee Chairman's Congressional Record filing on September 9, 2019.

TABLE B.—SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE—ENACTED REGULAR DISCRETIONARY APPROPRIATIONS<sup>1</sup>

	[Budget authority, in millions of dollars]	
	Security <sup>2</sup>	Nonsecurity <sup>2</sup>
Statutory Discretionary Limits .....	666,500	621,500
Amount Provided by Senate Appropriations Subcommittee		
Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies .....	0	9
Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies .....	0	0
Defense .....	42	0
Energy and Water Development .....	0	0
Financial Services and General Government .....	0	0
Homeland Security .....	0	9
Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies .....	0	0
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies .....	0	24,682
Legislative Branch .....	0	1
Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies .....	0	71,821
State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs .....	0	0
Transportation and Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies .....	0	4,400
<b>Current Level Total .....</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100,922</b>

TABLE B.—SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE—ENACTED REGULAR DISCRETIONARY APPROPRIATIONS<sup>1</sup>—Continued

	[Budget authority, in millions of dollars]	
	Security <sup>2</sup>	Nonsecurity <sup>2</sup>
Total Enacted Above (+) or Below (–) Statutory Limits .....	–666,458	–520,578

This table is current through November 25, 2019. As no full-year appropriations bills have been enacted this cycle, the budget authority displayed here represents funding made available through either advance or permanent appropriations.

<sup>1</sup> This table excludes spending pursuant to adjustments to the discretionary spending limits. These adjustments are allowed for certain purposes in section 251(b)(2) of BBDECA.

<sup>2</sup> Security spending is defined as spending in the National Defense budget function (050) and nonsecurity spending is defined as all other spending.

TABLE C.—SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE—ENACTED CHANGES IN MANDATORY SPENDING PROGRAMS (CHIMPS)

	[Budget authority, millions of dollars]	
	2020	
CHIMPS Limit for Fiscal Year 2020 .....		15,000
Senate Appropriations Subcommittees		
Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies .....		0
Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies .....		0
Defense .....		0
Energy and Water Development .....		0
Financial Services and General Government .....		0
Homeland Security .....		0
Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies .....		0
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies .....		0
Legislative Branch .....		0
Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies .....		0
State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs .....		0
Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies .....		0
<b>Current Level Total .....</b>		<b>0</b>
Total CHIMPS Above (+) or Below (–) Budget Resolution .....		–15,000

This table is current through November 25, 2019.

TABLE D.—SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE—ENACTED EMERGENCY AND OVERSEAS CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS SPENDING

Emergency and Overseas Contingency Operations Designated Spending	2020			
	Emergency		Overseas Contingency Operations	
	Security <sup>1</sup>	Nonsecurity <sup>1</sup>	Security <sup>1</sup>	Nonsecurity <sup>1</sup>
Additional Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Act, 2019 (P.L. 116–20) <sup>2</sup> .....	0	8	0	0
<b>Current Level Total .....</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

This table is current through November 25, 2019.

<sup>1</sup> Security spending is defined as spending in the National Defense budget function (050) and nonsecurity spending is defined as all other spending.

<sup>2</sup> The Additional Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Act, 2019 was enacted after the publication of CBO's May 2019 baseline but before the Senate Budget Committee Chairman published the deemed budget resolution for 2020 in the Congressional Record. Pursuant to the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2019, the budgetary effects of this legislation have been incorporated into the current level as previously enacted funds.

U.S. CONGRESS,  
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,  
Washington, DC, December 4, 2019.

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

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The enclosed report shows the effects of Congressional action on the fiscal year 2020 budget and is current through November 25, 2019. This report is submitted under section 308(b) and in aid of

section 311 of the Congressional Budget Act, as amended.

The estimates of budget authority, outlays, and revenues are consistent with the allocations, aggregates, and other budgetary levels printed in the Congressional Record on September 9, 2019, pursuant to section 204 of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2019 (Public Law 116–37).

Since our last letter dated October 16, 2019, the Congress has cleared and the President

has signed the following legislation that has significant effects on budget authority and outlays in fiscal year 2020: Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2020, and Further Health Extenders Act (Public Law 116–69); and Women's Suffrage Centennial Commemorative Coin Act (Public Law 116–71).

Sincerely,  
PHILLIP L. SWAGEL,  
Director.

Enclosure.

TABLE 1.—SENATE CURRENT LEVEL REPORT FOR SPENDING AND REVENUES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2020, AS OF NOVEMBER 25, 2019

	[In billions of dollars]		
	Budget Resolution	Current Level	Current Level Over/Under (–) Resolution
<b>ON-BUDGET</b>			
Budget Authority .....	3,704.2	3,773.5	69.3
Outlays .....	3,681.5	3,700.5	19.0
Revenues .....	2,740.5	2,740.5	0.0
<b>OFF-BUDGET:</b>			
Social Security Outlays <sup>a</sup> .....	961.2	961.2	0.0
Social Security Revenues .....	940.4	940.4	0.0

Source: Congressional Budget Office.

<sup>a</sup> Excludes administrative expenses paid from the Federal Old-Age and Survivors Insurance Trust Fund and the Federal Disability Insurance Trust Fund of the Social Security Administration, which are off-budget, but are appropriated annually.

TABLE 2.—SUPPORTING DETAIL FOR THE SENATE CURRENT LEVEL REPORT FOR ON-BUDGET SPENDING AND REVENUES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2020, AS OF NOVEMBER 25, 2019

[In millions of dollars]

	Budget Authority	Outlays	Revenues
Previously Enacted: <sup>a,b</sup>			
Revenues	n.a.	n.a.	2,740,538
Permanents and other spending legislation	2,397,769	2,309,887	n.a.
Authorizing and Appropriation legislation	0	595,528	0
Offsetting receipts	-954,573	-954,573	n.a.
<b>Total, Previously Enacted</b>	<b>1,443,196</b>	<b>1,950,842</b>	<b>2,740,538</b>
Enacted Legislation:			
Continuing Appropriations Act, 2020, and Health Extenders Act of 2019 (P.L. 116-59)	693	795	0
Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2020, and Further Health Extenders Act of 2019 (P.L. 116-69)	8,058	415	0
Women's Suffrage Centennial Commemorative Coin Act (P.L. 116-71)	-2	-2	0
Continuing Resolution: <sup>a</sup>			
Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2020, and Further Health Extenders Act of 2019 (P.L. 116-69)	1,242,511	687,329	0
<b>Total, Enacted Legislation</b>	<b>1,251,260</b>	<b>688,537</b>	<b>0</b>
Entitlements and Mandatories	1,079,063	1,061,080	0
<b>Total Current Level <sup>b</sup></b>	<b>3,773,519</b>	<b>3,700,459</b>	<b>2,740,538</b>
<b>Total Senate Resolution <sup>c</sup></b>	<b>3,704,246</b>	<b>3,681,491</b>	<b>2,740,538</b>
Current Level Over Senate Resolution	69,273	18,968	n.a.
Current Level Under Senate Resolution	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Memorandum:			
Revenues, 2020-2029:			
Senate Current Level	n.a.	n.a.	34,847,317
Senate Resolution <sup>c</sup>	n.a.	n.a.	34,847,317
Current Level Over Senate Resolution	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Current Level Under Senate Resolution	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

Source: Congressional Budget Office.

n.a. = not applicable; P.L. = public law.

<sup>a</sup> Sections 1001-1004 of the 21st Century Cures Act (P.L. 114-255) require that certain funding provided for 2017 through 2026 to the Department of Health and Human Services—in particular the Food and Drug Administration and the National Institutes of Health—be excluded from estimates for the purpose of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (Deficit Control Act) and the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 (Congressional Budget Act). Therefore, the amounts shown in this report do not include \$562 million in budget authority and \$854 million in estimated outlays.

<sup>b</sup> For purposes of enforcing section 311 of the Congressional Budget Act in the Senate, the resolution, as approved by the Senate, does not include budget authority, outlays, or revenue for off-budget amounts. As a result, amounts in this current level report do not include those items.

<sup>c</sup> Section 204 of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2019 requires the Chair of the Senate Committee on the Budget to publish the aggregate spending and revenue levels for fiscal year 2020; those aggregate levels were first published in the Congressional Record on September 9, 2019. The Chair of the Senate Committee on the Budget has the authority to revise the budgetary aggregates for the budgetary effects of certain revenue and spending measures pursuant to the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 and H. Con. Res. 71 (115th Congress), the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2018, as updated by the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2019.

	Budget Authority	Outlays	Revenues
Original Aggregates printed on September 9, 2019	3,703,553	3,680,696	2,740,538
Revisions:			
Adjustment for P.L. 116-59, Continuing Appropriations Act, 2020, and Health Extenders Act of 2019 (pursuant to sections 311 and 314 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 and section 3005 of H. Con. Res. 71)	693	795	0
<b>Revised Senate Resolution</b>	<b>3,704,246</b>	<b>3,681,491</b>	<b>2,740,538</b>

TABLE 3.—SUMMARY OF THE SENATE PAY-AS-YOU-GO SCORECARD AS OF NOVEMBER 25, 2019

[In millions of dollars]

	2019	2020	2019-2024	2019-2029
Beginning Balance <sup>a</sup>	0	0	0	0
Enacted Legislation <sup>b,c</sup>				
Continuing Appropriations Act, 2020, and Health Extenders Act of 2019 (H.R. 4378, P.L. 116-59) <sup>d</sup>	0	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Christa McAuliffe Commemorative Coin Act of 2019 (S. 239, P.L. 116-65)	0	0	0	0
Hidden Figures Congressional Gold Medal Act (H.R. 1396, P.L. 116-68)	0	*	*	*
Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2020, and Further Health Extenders Act of 2019 (H.R. 3055, P.L. 116-69) <sup>e</sup>	0	*	*	*
Women's Suffrage Centennial Commemorative Coin Act (H.R. 2423, P.L. 116-71)	0	-2	0	0
Preventing Animal Cruelty and Torture Act (H.R. 724, P.L. 116-72)	0	*	*	*
Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act of 2019 (S. 1838, P.L. 116-76)	0	*	*	*
	0	-2	*	*
Impact on Deficit	0	-2	0	0
Total Change in Outlays	0	-2	0	0
Total Change in Revenues	0	0	0	0

Source: Congressional Budget Office.

n.a. = not applicable; P.L. = public law.

<sup>a</sup> On September 9, 2019, the Chairman of the Senate Committee on the Budget reset the Senate's Pay-As-You-Go Scorecard to zero for all fiscal years.

<sup>b</sup> The amounts shown represent the estimated effect of the public laws on the deficit.

<sup>c</sup> Excludes off-budget amounts.

<sup>d</sup> The budgetary effects of division B of this act are excluded from the Senate's PAYGO scorecard, pursuant to sec. 1701(b) of the act. The budgetary effects of division A were fully incorporated into the PAYGO ledger pursuant to the authority provided to the Chairman of the Senate Budget Committee in section 3005 of H. Con. Res. 71 (115th Congress), the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2018. The Chairman exercised that an adjustment in the Congressional Record on September 26, 2019.

<sup>e</sup> The budgetary effects of division B of this act are excluded from the Senate's PAYGO scorecard, pursuant to sec. 1801(b) of the act.

ENFORCEMENT REPORT OF POINTS OF ORDER RAISED SINCE THE FY 2020 ENFORCEMENT FILING

Vote	Date	Measure	Violation	Motion to Waive	Result
No points of order have been raised as of September 9, 2019					

TRIBUTE TO JOHNNY ISAKSON

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, today I rise to honor and pay tribute to my good friend Senator JOHNNY ISAKSON on his retirement from the U.S. Senate.

Throughout the years, I have gotten to know JOHNNY as a colleague but more importantly as a friend.

Together, we cochaired the National Prayer Breakfast and attended the

weekly Senate Prayer Breakfast. I always came away from those breakfasts thankful for colleagues like JOHNNY, who reminded me that we all share a common purpose and a common humanity and that, with faith and forgiveness, we can start anew.

As chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, JOHNNY was always a tireless champion for our Nation's veterans—leading on issues

that face all of our brave men and women who have stepped up and served our country. Without JOHNNY, important legislation like the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act—also known as the Forever GI Bill—to increase the number of veterans who can access benefits under the post-9-11 GI bill, would not have been signed into law in 2017. And

whether it was his work on the Finance, Foreign Relations, or Health, Education, Labor, and Pension Committees, JOHNNY exemplified a fighting spirit and an enduring commitment to service.

Not long after I was elected to the Senate, JOHNNY and I began working together on legislation that was later signed into law to advance research on muscular dystrophy and help strengthen a program that provides information and education for people battling this disease. I will always appreciate his willingness to put partisanship aside in an effort to work toward a bipartisan proposal that would protect Dreamers last year.

Beyond just our legislative work together, I will always think fondly of JOHNNY as someone who is decent, caring, and kind. He even hosts a prerecess barbeque that has everything from pulled pork to brisket to mac and cheese and sweet tea and pecan pie. One year, you could smell the hickory-smoked meats in the halls of the Senate for days—and I loved it.

As we take this opportunity to honor JOHNNY, I also want to thank his wife Dianne and their three children and eight grandchildren for sharing so much of their beloved husband, father, and grandfather with the U.S. Senate.

As much as I will miss JOHNNY's company in the Senate next year, I know that this isn't his final chapter. He will continue to do good work for the people of Georgia, and I am lucky to count him as a friend.

Thank you JOHNNY.

#### REMEMBERING MISTER ROGERS

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I wanted to take a moment to recognize Mr. Rogers, who is being celebrated with the release of a new movie starring Tom Hanks and a new album recorded largely in Nashville that features new renditions of the songs we loved hearing Mr. Rogers sing.

Fred Rogers learned to play piano when he was very young. He studied music composition in college, and he actually wrote the wonderful songs we came to know so well, including "Won't You Be My Neighbor," "It's Such a Good Feeling," and "Many Ways to Say I Love You."

Rogers taught us about kindness and love, but his lessons were never trite and they were not in isolation from the world or reality.

He talked to our children about assassination with a hand puppet after Robert Kennedy was killed. He talked about racism and about divorce. When teaching children how to deal with scary news on TV, he told the story that as a young boy his "mother would say to me, 'Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.'" Inevitably with today's media and internet, after any disaster or emergency you will see people comfort one another with that quote from Mr. Rogers and thanking our brave police,

firefighters, and first responders. And that belief in the importance of "helpers" has inspired countless people to take on the role of being a helper, learning the skills and taking on the important role of saving lives, protecting our community, and rushing in when others are rushing out.

Mr. Rogers also shared with all of us a love for learning, the joy of making new friends and trying new experiences. He taught us the power of imagination, the awe of a new book, and the soothing help that a song can provide.

I often talk about what happens in Washington as a split-screen television—all the anger and the tweets and the upset on one side of the screen and all the quiet successes and getting along and bills passing and helpful meetings happening on the other side of the screen. As a society, in the media and online, we generally choose to amplify the one side of the screen—the angry and the noisy side. But this month is a good time to amplify the other.

My late friend Alex Haley, the author of *Roots*, used to say "Find the Good and Praise It." That is the best way to celebrate the memory of Fred Rogers—to find the good in one another, just as he did, and to help children find the good in themselves.

#### MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:02 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, with an amendment, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

S. 178. An act to condemn gross human rights violations of ethnic Turkic Muslims in Xinjiang, and calling for an end to arbitrary detention, torture, and harassment of these communities inside and outside China.

The message also announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 565. An act to include Portugal in the list of foreign states whose nationals are eligible for admission into the United States as E1 and E2 nonimmigrants if United States nationals are treated similarly by the Government of Portugal.

H.R. 3460. An act to facilitate effective research on and treatment of neglected tropical diseases through coordinated international efforts.

H.R. 4018. An act to provide that the amount of time that an elderly offender must serve before being eligible for placement in home detention is to be reduced by the amount of good time credits earned by the prisoner, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4803. An act to facilitate the automatic acquisition of citizenship for lawful permanent resident children of military and Federal Government personnel residing abroad, and for other purposes.

H.R. 5277. An act to amend section 442 of title 18, United States Code, to exempt certain interests in mutual funds, unit investment trusts, employee benefit plans, and retirement plans from conflict of interest limitations for the Government Publishing Office.

#### ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

The President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY) announced that on today, December 4, 2019, he has signed the following enrolled bills, which were previously signed by the Speaker of the House:

H.R. 887. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 877 East 1200 South in Orem, Utah, as the "Jerry C. Washburn Post Office Building".

H.R. 1252. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 6531 Van Nuys Boulevard in Van Nuys, California, as the "Marilyn Monroe Post Office".

H.R. 1253. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 13507 Van Nuys Boulevard in Pacoima, California, as the "Ritchie Valens Post Office Building".

H.R. 1526. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 200 Israel Road Southeast in Tumwater, Washington, as the "Eva G. Hewitt Post Office".

H.R. 1844. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 66 Grove Court in Elgin, Illinois, as the "Corporal Alex Martinez Memorial Post Office Building".

H.R. 1972. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1100 West Kent Avenue in Missoula, Montana, as the "Jeannette Rankin Post Office Building".

H.R. 2151. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 7722 South Main Street in Pine Plains, New York, as the "Senior Chief Petty Officer Shannon M. Kent Post Office".

H.R. 2325. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 100 Calle Alondra in San Juan, Puerto Rico, as the "65th Infantry Regiment Post Office Building".

H.R. 2334. An act to designate the Department of Veterans Affairs community-based outpatient clinic in Odessa, Texas, as the "Wilson and Young Medal of Honor VA Clinic".

H.R. 2451. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 575 Dexter Street in Central Falls, Rhode Island, as the "Elizabeth Buffum Chace Post Office".

H.R. 3144. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 8520 Michigan Avenue in Whittier, California, as the "Jose Ramos Post Office Building".

H.R. 3314. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1750 McCulloch Boulevard North in Lake Havasu City, Arizona, as the "Lake Havasu City Combat Veterans Memorial Post Office Building".

#### MEASURES REFERRED

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

H.R. 565. An act to include Portugal in the list of foreign states whose nationals are eligible for admission into the United States as E1 and E2 nonimmigrants if United States nationals are treated similarly by the Government of Portugal; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

H.R. 3460. An act to facilitate effective research on and treatment of neglected tropical diseases through coordinated international efforts; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

H.R. 4803. An act to facilitate the automatic acquisition of citizenship for lawful permanent resident children of military and Federal Government personnel residing abroad, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

#### EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-3357. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Propamocarb; Pesticide Tolerances" (FRL No. 10000-33) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 3, 2019; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-3358. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Etoxazole; Pesticide Tolerances" (FRL No. 10000-97) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 3, 2019; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-3359. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Fenpyroximate; Pesticide Tolerances" (FRL No. 10002-00) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 3, 2019; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-3360. A communication from the Secretary of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a violation of the Antideficiency Act that occurred in the Department of Agriculture's FSA Salaries and Expense Account; to the Committee on Appropriations.

EC-3361. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition and Sustainment), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to an inventory summary of certain required activities performed during the preceding fiscal year pursuant to staff augmentation contracts for services for on behalf of the Department; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-3362. A communication from the Acting Principal Deputy Director, Defense Pricing and Contracting, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Repeal of Temporary Statutory Authorities" ((RIN0750-AK86) (DFARS Case 2019-D040)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 2, 2019; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-3363. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to the stabilization of Iraq that was declared in Executive Order 13303 of May 22, 2003; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-3364. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, Federal Transit Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Clean Fuels Grant Program" (RIN2132-AB36) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 2, 2019; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-3365. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division,

Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Plan Approval; Idaho; Update to CRB Fee Billing Procedures" (FRL No. 10002-75-Region 10) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 3, 2019; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3366. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Plan Approval; Illinois; Sulfur Dioxide" (FRL No. 10002-81-Region 5) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 3, 2019; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3367. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Plan Approval; Missouri; Revisions to Cross-State Air Pollution Rule Annual Trading Program and Rescission of Clean Air Interstate Rule" (FRL No. 10000-20-Region 7) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 3, 2019; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3368. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Plan Approval; Wisconsin; Title V Operation Permit Program" (FRL No. 10002-80-Region 5) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 3, 2019; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3369. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Findings of Failure to Submit a Clean Air Act Section 110 State Implementation Plan for Interstate Transport for the 2015 Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS)" (FRL No. 10002-78-OAR) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 3, 2019; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3370. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Significant New Use Rules on Certain Chemical Substances (18-3)" ((RIN2070-AB27) (FRL No. 10001-94)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 3, 2019; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3371. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Significant New Use Rules on Certain Chemical Substances (18-4)" ((RIN2070-AB27) (FRL No. 10002-30)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 3, 2019; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3372. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Significant New Use Rules on Certain Chemical Substances (18-2)" ((RIN2070-AB27) (FRL No. 10001-47)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 3, 2019; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3373. A communication from the Associate General Counsel for General Law, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Commissioner, Customs and Border Protection, Department

of Homeland Security, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 2, 2019; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-3374. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, certifications relative to the inclusion of the Republic of North Macedonia in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-3375. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report consistent with the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002 (P.L. 107-243) and the Authorization for the Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 1991 (P.L. 102-1) for the July 11, 2019 to September 9, 2019 reporting period; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-3376. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the establishment of the danger pay allowance for Alexandria, Egypt; Cairo, Egypt; Khartoum, Sudan; Carthage, Tunisia; and Tunis, Tunisia; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-3377. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act, the certification of a proposed license for the export of firearms abroad controlled under Category I of the U.S. Munitions List of automatic rifles to Qatar for end use by the Ministry of the Interior in the amount of \$1,000,000 or more (Transmittal No. DDTC 18-083); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-3378. A communication from the Director, Office of Administration, Executive Office of the President, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to transactions from the Unanticipated Needs Account for fiscal year 2019; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3379. A communication from the Treasurer, National Gallery of Art, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Gallery's Performance and Accountability Report for the year ended September 30, 2019; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3380. A communication from the Chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Board's Performance and Accountability Report for fiscal year 2019; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3381. A communication from the Staff Director, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's Performance and Accountability Report for fiscal year 2019; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3382. A communication from the Chairman, Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's Performance and Accountability Report for fiscal year 2019; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3383. A communication from the Inspector General, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled, "Five-Year Strategic Mission and Diversity and Inclusions Plan for Fiscal Years 2020-2024"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3384. A communication from the Chair of the U.S. Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Board's Agency Financial Report for fiscal year 2019; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3385. A communication from the Associate General Counsel for General Law, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Under Secretary for Management, Department of Homeland Security, received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 26, 2019; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3386. A communication from the Associate General Counsel for General Law, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Secretary of Homeland Security, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 2, 2019; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3387. A communication from the Associate General Counsel for General Law, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Under Secretary for Strategy, Policy, and Plans, Department of Homeland Security, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 2, 2019; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3388. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 23-158, "Attorney General Grant-Making Authority Temporary Amendment Act of 2019"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3389. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 23-159, "Investigating Maternal Mortalities Temporary Amendment Act of 2019"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3390. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 23-160, "Student Activity Fund Theatrical and Music Performance Expenditures Temporary Act of 2019"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3391. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 23-161, "Indigenous Peoples' Day Temporary Amendment Act of 2019"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3392. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 23-164, "Intra-District Transfer Limitation Temporary Amendment Act of 2019"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3393. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 23-162, "Sanctuary Values Temporary Amendment Act of 2019"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3394. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 23-163, "MLK Gateway Real Property Tax Abatement Amendment Act of 2019"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3395. A communication from the Chairman, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's Agency Financial Report for fiscal year 2019; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3396. A communication from the Director, Congressional Affairs, Federal Election

Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's Agency Financial Report for fiscal year 2019; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3397. A communication from the Administrator, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), transmitting, pursuant to law, the Uniform Resource Locator (URL) for USAID's Agency Financial Report for fiscal year 2019; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3398. A communication from the Acting Chief Financial Officer, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department's Agency Financial Report for fiscal year 2019; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3399. A communication from the Chairman, National Endowment for the Arts, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Endowment's Agency Financial Report for fiscal year 2019; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3400. A communication from the Administrator of the General Services Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Administration's Agency Financial Report for fiscal year 2019; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3401. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, Department's Agency Financial Report for fiscal year 2019; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3402. A communication from the Deputy Chief Financial Officer, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department's Agency Financial Report for fiscal year 2019; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3403. A communication from the Secretary of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Uniform Resource Locator (URL) for the Department of Labor's Agency Financial Report for fiscal year 2019; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3404. A communication from the Director, National Science Foundation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Uniform Resource Locator (URL) for the Foundation's fiscal year 2019 Agency Financial Report; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3405. A joint communication from the Chairman and the General Counsel, National Labor Relations Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Office of Inspector General Semiannual Report for the period of April 1, 2019 through September 30, 2019; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3406. A communication from the Chairman, Board of Governors, United States Postal Service, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Postal Services' Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2019 through September 30, 2019; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3407. A communication from the Administrator, United States Agency for International Development, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Agency's Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2019 through September 30, 2019; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3408. A communication from the Chair of the Board of Governors, Federal Reserve System, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Inspector General's Semiannual Report for

the six-month period from April 1, 2019 through September 30, 2019; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3409. A communication from the Secretary of Education, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department of Education's Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2019 through September 30, 2019; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3410. A communication from the General Counsel and Acting Chief Executive and Administrative Officer, Merit Systems Protection Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the federal entity inspector general report; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3411. A communication from the Board Members of the Railroad Retirement Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Board's Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2019 through September 30, 2019; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3412. A communication from the Acting Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department's Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2019 through September 30, 2019; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3413. A communication from the Commissioner of the Social Security Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Administration's Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2019 through September 30, 2019 and the Uniform Resource Locator (URL) for the report; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3414. A communication from the Administrator of the General Services Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Administration's Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2019 through September 30, 2019; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3415. A communication from the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department of Veterans Affairs' Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2019 through September 30, 2019; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3416. A communication from the Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Agency's Semiannual Report of the Office of Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2019 through September 30, 2019; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3417. A communication from the Chair of the Federal Election Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2019 through September 30, 2019; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3418. A communication from the Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's Semiannual Report of the Inspector General and a Management Report for the period from April 1, 2019 through September 30, 2019; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3419. A communication from the Senior Procurement Executive, Office of Acquisition Policy, General Services Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Federal Acquisition Regulation; Reporting of Nonconforming

Items to Government-Industry Data Exchange Program" (RIN9000-AM58) (48 CFR Parts 1, 2, 7, 46, and 52)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 22, 2019; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3420. A communication from the Senior Procurement Executive, Office of Acquisition Policy, General Services Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Federal Acquisition Regulation; Small Entity Compliance Guide" ((48 CFR Parts 22 and 52) (FAC 2020-02)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 22, 2019; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3421. A communication from the Senior Procurement Executive, Office of Acquisition Policy, General Services Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Federal Acquisition Regulation; Introduction" ((48 CFR Part 1) (FAC 2020-02)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 22, 2019; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3422. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 Report to Congress on Contract Funding of Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act Awards"; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

EC-3423. A communication from the Federal Liaison Officer, Patent and Trademark Office, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "International Trademark Classification Changes" (RIN0651-AD44) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 2, 2019; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself and Mr. WARNER):

S. 2972. A bill to restrict the export, reexport, and in-country transfers of certain items that provide a critical capability to the Government of the People's Republic of China to suppress individual privacy, freedom, and other basic human rights; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina (for himself and Mrs. BLACKBURN):

S. 2973. A bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to harmonize the definition of employee with the common law; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. PETERS (for himself and Mr. ROMNEY):

S. 2974. A bill to require the Postmaster General to establish a comprehensive organizational strategy to combat the use of the mail in the distribution of illicit drugs; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. BENNET (for himself, Mr. DAINES, and Mr. TESTER):

S. 2975. A bill to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species in western waters, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. CASSIDY (for himself, Ms. SINEMA, Mr. DAINES, Mrs. CAPITO, and Mr. MANCHIN):

S. 2976. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide an election to advance future child tax credits in the year of birth or adoption; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself and Mr. RUBIO):

S. 2977. A bill to extend the termination of sanctions with respect to Venezuela under the Venezuela Defense of Human Rights and Civil Society Act of 2014; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Ms. CORTEZ MASTO (for herself and Mr. CRAPO):

S. 2978. A bill to ensure consideration of water intensity in the Department of Energy's energy research, development, and demonstration programs to help guarantee efficient, reliable, and sustainable delivery of energy and clean water resources; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. WICKER:

S. 2979. A bill to improve drug testing for transportation-related activities; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND (for herself, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Mr. MARKEY):

S. 2980. A bill to require the promulgation of certain standards for perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances under the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

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

S. 2981. A bill to reauthorize and amend the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Commissioned Officer Corps Act of 2002, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

#### SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR:

S. Res. 446. A resolution authorizing the printing of tributes and other related materials in honor of the late Senator Janet Kay Hagan; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. RISCH (for himself, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. COONS, and Mr. KAINE):

S. Res. 447. A resolution expressing serious concern about widespread irregularities in Bolivia's October 20, 2019, general elections and supporting the convening of new elections in Bolivia at the earliest possible date; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

#### ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 133

At the request of Ms. MURKOWSKI, the names of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) and the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) were added as cosponsors of S. 133, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the United States merchant mariners of World War II, in recognition of their dedicated and vital service during World War II.

S. 191

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from Alabama

(Mr. JONES) was added as a cosponsor of S. 191, a bill to direct the Secretary of Defense to include in periodic health assessments, separation history and physical examinations, and other assessments an evaluation of whether a member of the Armed Forces has been exposed to open burn pits or toxic airborne chemicals, and for other purposes.

S. 237

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 237, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to permit nurse practitioners and physician assistants to satisfy the documentation requirement under the Medicare program for coverage of certain shoes for individuals with diabetes.

S. 460

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) 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. 642

At the request of Mr. ALEXANDER, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) 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. 670

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 670, a bill to make daylight savings time permanent, and for other purposes.

S. 750

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. JONES) 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. 1032

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1032, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the definition of income for purposes of determining the tax-exempt status of certain corporations.

S. 1130

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1130, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to improve the health of children and help better understand and enhance awareness about unexpected sudden death in early life.

S. 1279

At the request of Mr. JONES, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1279, a bill to reauthorize

mandatory funding programs for historically Black colleges and universities and other minority-serving institutions.

S. 1397

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1397, a bill to amend the Help America Vote Act of 2002 to provide for a national Federal write-in absentee ballot for domestic use.

S. 1602

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1602, a bill to amend the United States Energy Storage Competitiveness Act of 2007 to establish a research, development, and demonstration program for grid-scale energy storage systems, and for other purposes.

S. 1622

At the request of Mr. JOHNSON, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD) 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 Arkansas (Mr. COTTON) 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. 1660

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1660, a bill to provide greater support for grandfamilies and older caretaker relatives.

S. 1719

At the request of Ms. SINEMA, the names of the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) and the Senator from Nevada (Ms. ROSEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 1719, a bill to amend the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to create an interdivisional taskforce at the Securities and Exchange Commission for senior investors, and for other purposes.

S. 1757

At the request of Ms. ERNST, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1757, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the United States Army Rangers Veterans of World War II in recognition of their extraordinary service during World War II.

S. 1967

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1967, a bill to promote innovative approaches to outdoor recreation on Federal land and to increase opportunities for collaboration with non-Federal partners, and for other purposes.

S. 2054

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the names of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) were added as cosponsors of S. 2054, a bill to posthumously award the Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to Glen Doherty, Tyrone Woods, J. Christopher Stevens, and Sean Smith, in recognition of their contributions to the Nation.

S. 2327

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2327, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to modify the eligibility requirements for transfer of unused entitlement to Post-9/11 Educational Assistance, and for other purposes.

S. 2492

At the request of Mr. GARDNER, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2492, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide best practices on student suicide awareness and prevention training and condition State educational agencies, local educational agencies, and tribal educational agencies receiving funds under section 520A of such Act to establish and implement a school-based student suicide awareness and prevention training policy.

S. 2561

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2561, a bill to amend the Lacey Act Amendments of 1981 to clarify provisions enacted by the Captive Wildlife Safety Act, to further the conservation of certain wildlife species, and for other purposes.

S. 2570

At the request of Ms. SINEMA, the names of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY), the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) and the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2570, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to Greg LeMond in recognition of his service to the United States as an athlete, activist, role model, and community leader.

S. 2591

At the request of Mr. VAN HOLLEN, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2591, a bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to establish a program to restore and protect the Chesapeake Bay watershed, and for other purposes.

S. 2621

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. SASSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2621, a bill to provide for the restoration of legal rights for claimants under holocaust-era insurance policies.

S. 2699

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from Massachu-

setts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2699, a bill to reauthorize the Federal Ocean Acidification Research and Monitoring Act of 2009, and for other purposes.

S. 2715

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2715, a bill to develop and implement policies to advance early childhood development, to provide assistance for orphans and other vulnerable children in developing countries, and for other purposes.

S. 2816

At the request of Ms. ROSEN, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2816, a bill to ensure that fixed broadband internet access service assisted by any Federal broadband support program meets a minimum speed threshold.

S. 2827

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the names of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. JONES) and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) were added as cosponsors of S. 2827, a bill to amend title 54, United States Code, to establish within the National Park Service the U.S. African-American Burial Grounds Network, and for other purposes.

S. 2833

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2833, a bill to amend the Truth in Lending Act to extend the consumer credit protections provided to members of the Armed Forces and their dependents under title 10, United States Code, to all consumers.

S. 2842

At the request of Mrs. CAPITO, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2842, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act and the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 to expand and expedite access to cardiac rehabilitation programs and pulmonary rehabilitation programs under the Medicare program, and for other purposes.

S. 2877

At the request of Mr. TILLIS, the names of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR) and the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2877, a bill to reauthorize the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act of 2002, and for other purposes.

S. 2898

At the request of Mr. INHOFE, the names of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER) and the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2898, a bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide for a full annuity supplement for certain air traffic controllers.

S. 2931

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the names of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) and the Senator

from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) were added as cosponsors of S. 2931, a bill to establish a process for obtaining a Federal certificate of rehabilitation, and for other purposes.

S. 2941

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the names of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) and the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2941, a bill to require the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to establish a consumer recycling education and outreach grant program, and for other purposes.

S. 2949

At the request of Mrs. FISCHER, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2949, a bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to make grants to eligible organizations to provide service dogs to veterans with severe post-traumatic stress disorder, and for other purposes.

S. 2962

At the request of Mr. PAUL, the names of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. KENNEDY) were added as cosponsors of S. 2962, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permit withdrawals from certain retirement plans for repayment of student loan debt, and for other purposes.

S. CON. RES. 22

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. Con. Res. 22, a concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that there is a climate emergency which demands a massive-scale mobilization to halt, reverse, and address its consequences and causes.

S. RES. 260

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 260, a resolution recognizing the importance of sustained United States leadership to accelerating global progress against maternal and child malnutrition and supporting the commitment of the United States Agency for International Development to global nutrition through the Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Strategy.

#### SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 446—AUTHORIZING THE PRINTING OF TRIBUTES AND OTHER RELATED MATERIALS IN HONOR OF THE LATE SENATOR JANET KAY HAGAN

Ms. KLOBUCHAR submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 446

*Resolved*, That there be printed as a Senate document a compilation of tributes and other related materials concerning the Honorable Janet Kay Hagan, late a Senator from the State of North Carolina.

SENATE RESOLUTION 447—EXPRESSING SERIOUS CONCERN ABOUT WIDESPREAD IRREGULARITIES IN BOLIVIA'S OCTOBER 20, 2019, GENERAL ELECTIONS AND SUPPORTING THE CONVENING OF NEW ELECTIONS IN BOLIVIA AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE DATE

Mr. RISCH (for himself, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. COONS, and Mr. KAINE) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 447

Whereas Evo Morales was elected as the first indigenous president of Bolivia in 2005;

Whereas, in 2009, Bolivians approved by a vote of more than 60 percent in a nationwide referendum a new constitution that established a limit of two 5-year presidential terms;

Whereas, in 2009 and 2014, President Morales won re-election to a second and third term in office with more than 60 percent of the vote;

Whereas, in 2016, 51.3 percent of Bolivian voters rejected a national referendum on the proposal by the Administration of President Morales to lift presidential term limits;

Whereas, in 2017, despite the results of the 2016 national referendum, President Morales' political allies in the Bolivian Constitutional Tribunal removed presidential term limits;

Whereas, on October 20, 2019, amid existing concerns over the politicization of Bolivia's electoral commission, Bolivian voters went to the polls for general elections to choose a new president, members of the Senate, and members of the Chamber of Deputies;

Whereas, at the invitation of Morales Administration, the Organization of American States (OAS) General Secretariat sent an Electoral Observation Mission to Bolivia that was comprised of 92 experts and observers from 24 different nationalities deployed in the country's nine departments and in three countries in which Bolivian expatriates could cast their votes abroad;

Whereas, on October 20, 2019, Bolivian electoral authorities stopped reporting the preliminary vote count for a period of 20 hours, subsequently announced preliminary results that negated the need for a second-round election, and Evo Morales proclaimed himself the winner of the presidential election;

Whereas, on October 21, 2019, the OAS Electoral Observation Mission in Bolivia expressed "deep concern and surprise at the drastic and hard-to-explain change in the trend of the preliminary results revealed after the closing of the polls";

Whereas, in the aftermath of the October 20, 2019, general elections, violent protests occurred throughout Bolivia in response to electoral irregularities and the findings of the OAS Electoral Observation Mission;

Whereas, on October 30, 2019, the Morales Administration and the OAS General Secretariat signed an agreement to have the OAS conduct an audit of the integrity of the October 20, 2019, general elections;

Whereas, on November 10, 2019, an OAS technical mission issued a report on its audit of the integrity of the October 20, 2019, general elections, which included findings that—

(1) the preliminary and final election results were transmitted via a flawed computer transmission system that was accessed by unauthorized outside computer servers;

(2) there was a deficient chain of custody for and significant irregularities in the electoral tally sheets and other electoral records; and

(3) the audit team could not validate the results of the election and therefore recommended a new electoral process;

Whereas, on November 10, 2019, President Morales acknowledged the results of the OAS technical mission, announced that he would call new elections, and stated that, "new national elections will allow the Bolivian people to democratically choose new authorities with their vote";

Whereas, in the face of widespread public protests and a deteriorating security environment, President Morales departed Bolivia on November 12, 2019, and was granted asylum by the Government of Mexico;

Whereas, on November 12, 2019, the Bolivian Constitutional Tribunal recognized an interim president of Bolivia;

Whereas the transitional government in Bolivia has committed to hold new elections by January 22, 2020; and

Whereas the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights stated that protests occurring in Bolivia since the October 20, 2019, general election have left 23 people dead and more than 700 people injured: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate—

(1) expresses concern about the numerous irregularities that occurred during the October 20, 2019, general elections in Bolivia;

(2) commends the efforts of the OAS Electoral Observation Mission in Bolivia and supports the findings of the OAS electoral audit mission, which documented numerous irregularities during the October 2019 general elections in Bolivia;

(3) deplores the acts of violence that have occurred in Bolivia in the aftermath of the October 20, 2019, general elections and urges all Bolivians to repudiate violence and to peacefully exercise their rights of freedom of expression and assembly;

(4) urges Bolivia's transitional government to work expeditiously to establish the conditions for an inclusive, credible, transparent, and democratic elections as soon as possible in accordance with their laws and constitution;

(5) encourages the Department of State and the U.S. Mission to the Organization of American States to provide all appropriate support to facilitate the convening of free, fair, and transparent democratic elections in Bolivia as soon as possible in accordance with their laws and constitution;

(6) encourages the Organization of American States to take all necessary steps, in accordance with the principles of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, to ensure respect for the will of Bolivian voters and the integrity of the new democratic elections in Bolivia as soon as possible in accordance with their laws and constitution; and

(7) supports the call by the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States for Bolivian authorities to ensure full respect and protection of human rights and accountability for any violation thereof.

#### AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 1254. Mr. PETERS proposed an amendment to the bill S. 760, to enable registered apprenticeship programs to better serve veterans, and for other purposes.

#### TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 1254. Mr. PETERS proposed an amendment to the bill S. 760, to enable registered apprenticeship programs to better serve veterans, and for other purposes; as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

**SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

This Act may be cited as the “Support for Veterans in Effective Apprenticeships Act of 2019”.

**SEC. 2. IMPROVED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM COORDINATION BETWEEN THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

(a) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this Act:

(1) **REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM.**—The term “registered apprenticeship program” means an apprenticeship program registered under the Act of August 16, 1937 (50 Stat. 664; commonly referred to as the “National Apprenticeship Act”).

(2) **SECRETARY.**—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Labor.

(b) **ADDITIONAL REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS.**—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, for any program applying to become a registered apprenticeship program on or after the date that is 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall—

(1) acquire from the program sponsor a written assurance that the sponsor—

(A) is aware of the availability of educational assistance for a veteran or other individual eligible under chapters 30 through 36 of title 38, United States Code, for use in connection with a registered apprenticeship program;

(B) will make a good faith effort to obtain approval for educational assistance described in subparagraph (A) for, at a minimum, each program location that employs or recruits a veteran or other individual eligible for educational assistance under chapters 30 through 36 of title 38, United States Code; and

(C) will not deny the application of a qualified candidate who is a veteran or other individual eligible for educational assistance described in subparagraph (A) for the purpose of avoiding making a good faith effort to obtain approval as described in subparagraph (B);

(2) in accordance with paragraphs (5) and (12) of section 29.5(b) of title 29, Code of Federal Regulations (as in effect on the day before the date of enactment of this Act), require the program sponsor, to the extent practicable, to provide standards that contain provisions to grant advanced standing or credit, and provide increased wages commensurate to such standing or credit, for any veteran or other individual eligible for educational assistance under chapters 30 through 36 of title 38, United States Code, who—

(A) is enrolled in the registered apprenticeship program; and

(B)(i) has a demonstrated competence applicable to the apprenticeship occupation; or (ii) has acquired experience, training, or skills through military service that is applicable to the apprenticeship occupation; and

(3) when the Secretary approves the registered apprenticeship program, provide a copy of the program’s certificate of registration to the State approving agency designated under chapter 36 of title 38, United States Code, in the State where the program is located.

**AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET**

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I have 8 requests for committees to meet during today’s session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Sen-

ate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today’s session of the Senate:

**COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION**

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, December 4, 2019, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

**COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS**

The Committee on Environment and Public Works is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, December 4, 2019, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing on the nominations of Sean O’Donnell, of Maryland, to be Inspector General, Environmental Protection Agency.

**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS**

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, December 4, 2019, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS**

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, December 4, 2019, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

**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 Wednesday, December 4, 2019, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing on the nomination of Paul J. Ray, of Tennessee, to be Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget.

**COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY**

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, December 4, 2019, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing on the following nominations: Andrew Lynn Brasher, of Alabama, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eleventh Circuit, Fernando L. Aenlle-Rocha, to be United States District Judge for the Central District of California, John Charles Hinderaker, to be United States District Judge for the District of Arizona, Joshua M. Kindred, to be United States District Judge for the District of Alaska, Scott H. Rash, to be United States District Judge for the District of Arizona, and Matthew Thomas Schelp, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Missouri.

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON PERSONNEL**

The Subcommittee on Personnel of the Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, December 4, 2019, at 3 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS AND MANAGEMENT SUPPORT**

The Subcommittee on Readiness and Management Support of the Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Sen-

ate on Wednesday, December 4, 2019, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

**AUTHORIZING THE PRINTING OF TRIBUTES AND OTHER RELATED MATERIALS IN HONOR OF THE LATE SENATOR JANET KAY HAGAN**

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 446, submitted earlier today.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 446) authorizing the printing of tributes and other related materials in honor of the late Senator Janet Kay Hagan.

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

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

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

The resolution (S. Res. 446) was agreed to.

(The resolution is printed in today’s RECORD under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

**AMENDING SECTION 442 OF TITLE 18, UNITED STATES CODE, TO EXEMPT CERTAIN INTERESTS IN MUTUAL FUNDS, UNIT INVESTMENT TRUSTS, EMPLOYEE BENEFIT PLANS, AND RETIREMENT PLANS FROM CONFLICT OF INTEREST LIMITATIONS FOR THE GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE**

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 5277, which was received from the House.

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

The clerk will report the bill by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 5277) to amend section 442 of title 18, United States Code, to exempt certain interests in mutual funds, unit investment trusts, employee benefit plans, and retirement plans from conflict of interest limitations for the Government Publishing Office.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

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

The bill (H.R. 5277) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY,  
DECEMBER 5, 2019

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m., Thursday, December 5; further, that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, morning business be closed, and the Senate proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the Myers nomination.

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

## ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, for the information of all Senators, we will have two votes at 12 noon and one vote at 1:45 p.m. tomorrow.

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 ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M.  
TOMORROW

Mrs. BLACKBURN. 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 5:59 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, December 5, 2019, at 10 a.m.

## CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate December 4, 2019:

## THE JUDICIARY

JOHN L. SINATRA, JR., OF NEW YORK, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK.

DOUGLAS RUSSELL COLE, OF OHIO, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF OHIO.

R. AUSTIN HUFFAKER, JR., OF ALABAMA, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF ALABAMA.

DAVID B. BARLOW, OF UTAH, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF UTAH.

SARAH E. PITLYK, OF MISSOURI, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI.

## GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

HUGH NATHANIAL HALPERN, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE.