The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CUÉLLAR).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE
The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
December 5, 2019.
I hereby appoint the Honorable Henry CUÉLLAR to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE
The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2019, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties. All time shall be equally allocated between the parties, and in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m. Each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, shall be limited to 5 minutes.

AND STILL I RISE
The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, and still I rise, with my mnemonic notes.

And still I rise, Mr. Speaker. I rise because I love my country. And because I love my country, I do not rise with any degree of schadenfreude. I take no pleasure in what this House is about to do. I am not gleeful.

I rise because I believe that we must do what Dr. King called to our attention when he said that, on some issues, you must do that which is neither safe nor politic nor popular. You do it because conscience tells you it is the right thing to do.

I rise to announce that I believe that we are about to do the right thing. And I know that we are doing the right thing for a multiplicity of reasons, one of which is you cannot allow the Chief Executive Officer to send a letter of absolute, intractable defiance indicating that there will be no level of cooperation with the lawful constitutional body that is investigating actions—actions taken by the President.

You cannot allow this kind of recalcitrance to exist, because, if you do, there are no guardrails. We cannot allow a President to move through the land without guardrails. He has to know that there are boundaries.

So I rise to say, today, that this House is moving in a historic direction, that, when it is written across the pages of time that this House took the action that I believe it will take, I think we will all find that it was the right thing to do.

I rise also to say this: The Constitution allows a President to be impeached more than once. If we impeach now or at some time in the near future for one issue that we dearly should, then we find later that the President has other issues that merit impeachment, we can impeach again. There is no limit on the number of times.

I don’t think you do it needlessly. Every time I have called it to the attention of this House, there was purpose and reason behind it, and I believe that we can do it more than once if it becomes necessary.

I think the Senate ought to act. I think the Senate ought to convict. But if the Senate does not convict, it does not mean that the House is now hamstrung and cannot move forward again with impeachment.

So I rise with no degree of schadenfreude. I rise with love of country and heart, and I rise understanding that Dr. King was eminently correct: There are times when we must do that which is neither safe nor politic nor popular. We do it because it is the right thing to do.

I rise because I believe we are embarking upon the right course for this House and for our history.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

STEMMING THE TIDE OF OPIOID OVERDOSES
The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, while still more work needs to be done to confront our Nation’s challenges with opioids, I am pleased to report that my home State of North Carolina is working to stem the tide and has witnessed a drop in opioid overdoses.

In my district, Surry County and its healthcare professionals, first responders, and addiction counselors deserve recognition as contributing to the county witnessing a drop of over 75 percent in opioid-related emergency room visits within the last year.

This comes as we implement one of the most significant bills that Congress passed last year, the comprehensive SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act.

I helped introduce that legislation with bipartisan colleagues, and I am glad to report that the bill is achieving its goal in stemming the tide of addiction by improving prevention and public health efforts, enhancing treatment and recovery programs, and providing communities more tools in their fight.

Again, Mr. Speaker, more work needs to be done to confront our Nation’s
challenges with opioids, but Congress laid the groundwork for this work to be done at the State and local level with the passage of the SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act.

A HISTORIC FIGHT FOR FREEDOM AND AUTONOMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Ms. PLASKETT) for 5 minutes.

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, I want to spend my 5 minutes to tell a story, a history story from the Virgin Islands.

This month and for the next 6 months in the Virgin Islands, we commemorate a historic fight for freedom and autonomy. On the small, 20-square-mile island of St. John, one of the earliest and longest lasting slave rebellions began on November 23, 1733. This rebellion was preceded by uncomparable conditions that slaves were living in on the island of St. John in the Virgin Islands.

Conditions were devastating. The life expectancy of slaves in the Virgin Islands never went above the age of 30 years old, and this rebellion was caused by a 10-year plague of insects that placed 1,000 enslaved people of St. John at risk of starvation.

This caused an unprecedented amount of slaves to run away, what we call on the island “marooning.” Living in the bush. This led to the vicious and inhumane Slave Code of 1733. The new brutal punishment for those who ran away.

This, then, led to 150 slaves, all of whom were part of the Akwamu tribe from Ghana, to begin an uprising. The Akwamu hoped to turn St. John into a lawless island to their death—but to freedom.

CELEBRATING THE CAREERS OF THREE CENTRE COUNTY PUBLIC SERVANTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, recently, I had the pleasure of traveling back to Pennsylvania’s 15th Congressional District to celebrate the careers of three dedicated public servants in Centre County.

Last month, Centre County Treasurer Richard Fornicola and Centre County Controller Chuck Witmer served their last day at the Centre County Courthouse and began their much-deserved retirements.

Rich Fornicola began his term as Centre County Treasurer in January 2000 and has worked diligently over the past two decades overseeing every penny that was received and disbursed by Centre County, including hunting permits and fishing licenses, as well as overseeing bids for county contracts.

Chuck Witmer has spent 15 years in public service in Centre County, having worked as the deputy controller for just under 4 years before being elected to serve as county controller. Over the years, Chuck has exhibited fantastic leadership that includes overseeing the county ledger, seeing the budget is adhered to, completing the county audit, and more.

This week, Prothonotary and Clerk of Courts Deb Immel will be serving her last day at the courthouse as well. Debra began her career in Centre County in 1976 as a department clerk and quickly rose through the ranks of deputy prothonotary and acting prothonotary. In 1999, Debra was elected to her current position and has served in county government ever since.

Mr. Speaker, together, these individuals have given more than 90 years of service to Centre County, and they have worked hard to make Centre County a better place to live. I would like to congratulate Rich and Chuck and Debra on their retirements and wish them all the best in their new life chapter.

HONORING THE LIFE AND SERVICE OF COACH JOHN MCKISSICK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. CUNNINGHAM) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of longtime Summerville High School football coach, Hall of Famer, John McKissick, who passed away on Thanksgiving Day.

Coach McKissick was the greatest high school football coach our country has ever seen. In fact, he held the record for the most wins of any football coach anywhere at any single level. Over the course of his 62-year career, he led the Green Wave to 10 State championships and 621 wins.

Coach McKissick was a mentor and a father figure to thousands of student athletes. In total, he coached over 5,000 young men throughout his career.

I had the honor of attending his funeral earlier this week, and I got to meet several of his former players, many in their fifties, sixties, seventies, and even eighties, who all told me about the incredible impact he had on their lives.

He famously told his players that it is not about the Xs and Os; it’s about the Jims and the Joes. He called his players like family because they were, and that feeling was mutual.

It is impossible to imagine high school football or Summerville without him, but his amazing legacy will live on forever.

May God bless his family, his friends, former players, and the entire Summerville community.

Thank you for everything, Coach.
completely unresponsive. The firefighters immediately performed CPR on the victim and as a result of these actions, the person gained a pulse and began breathing. The brave actions of these dedicated public servants resulted in a life being saved, and in the words of the late Prime Minister of Great Britain Winston Churchill, who said the following: There are times when doing one’s best is not good enough. One must do what is required. These brave firefighters of Newberry Fire Department’s alpha shift did what was required, and as a result, a life was saved.

CONGRATULATING SARI FELDMAN ON HER RETIREMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. FUDGE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FUDGE. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize and congratulate Sari Feldman on her recent retirement as the executive director of the Cuyahoga County Public Library.

Ms. Feldman began her tenure at the Cleveland Public Library in 1997 as head of community services, later serving as deputy director. In 2003, Ms. Feldman was named the executive director of the Cuyahoga County Public Library where she oversaw one of the country’s busiest public libraries for 16 years.

Ms. Feldman’s leadership was instrumental to strengthening the libraries across Cuyahoga County and ensuring they were prepared to engage and serve the community in the 21st century. Throughout her time as executive director, she directed an expansive $110 million capital improvement program for the county’s libraries and navigated the library system through significant cuts in State funding without reducing hours or service.

From 2015 to 2016, Ms. Feldman also served as the president of the American Library Association, a testament to her importance not only to northeast Ohio but to the entire Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Ms. Feldman for her enduring leadership, service, and dedication to engaging and empowering the Cuyahoga County community.

I congratulate her successor, Tracy Strobel, the new executive director for the Cuyahoga County Public Library.

As a northeast Ohio native with decades of experience, I trust Tracy will continue to advance Cuyahoga County Public Library’s mission of being at the center of community life where reading, lifelong learning, and civic engagement thrive.

AMERICANS SHOULD RENEW IN THEIR HEARTS OUR NATION’S MOTTO

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CONAWAY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, our Nation’s motto of “In God We Trust” is inscribed on the wall above our heads. The word “trust” is typically defined as to have confidence, faith, or hope in someone or something. In this case, it is obviously trust in God.

To have confidence or faith or hope in God requires that we know something about God. This knowledge is gained by reading and studying the inspired word of God, which is, of course, the Bible. God has revealed Himself to us in the pages of the Bible, and to trust in God means that we also trust His teachings as revealed in the Bible.

Among those teachings is a prescription for the way we should lead our lives, the way we should treat each other, and how we should rely on God and His teachings to, in fact, trust in Him.

John Adams wrote that only a moral and religious people can self-govern. In my opinion, the morals to which he is referring to are laid out in God’s teachings in both the Old Testament and the New Testament.

Almost every day we hear someone ask for God’s blessings on our Nation. The next time you hear someone ask for God to bless our Nation, please ask yourself what is it about America and what is it about God that makes us ask for His blessings? Just what is there about our Nation that is, in fact, blessable?

Are we asking God to bless the killing of more than 61 million babies in the last 46 years? Are we asking God to bless the racism and incivility that permeates much of our public discourse? These and other issues cause me to fear that we are on the verge of being an unblessable Nation.

The Old Testament is replete with times when God’s chosen people, the Nation of Israel, would stray far from His teachings that He would subject them to awful events and terrible circumstances to cause them to turn their hearts back to Him. I believe that we are on that same destructive path.

We must ask ourselves what should we do to turn our Nation’s heart back to God? There is no legislative fix for this problem. The path to a blessable Nation must start in the heart of each one of us. To return to the moral high ground that has allowed our Nation to prosper under God’s blessings, we must each have a moral code to live by.

For me that moral code is the Judeo-Christian code found in God’s Word. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is also my personal savior. As I try to live His teachings every day. Some days I am better at it than others, but each of us must have a moral code that is based on truth, not on whims or feelings. This awakening must start now.

It can start by claiming God’s promise to the Nation of Israel that applies to our Nation, as well. It is found in II Chronicles 7:14, which says: “If my people, who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face, turning from their wicked ways,” emphasis on wicked ways, “then I will hear them from heaven, and I will forgive their sin, and heal their land.” Each of us individually and our Nation as a whole has never needed that promise more than we need it today.

Mr. Speaker, we should renew in our hearts every day our Nation’s motto, “In God We Trust.”

DEMOCRACY IS FACING A CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan (Mrs. LAWRENCE) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Mr. Speaker, more than 200 years ago, the delegates of the Constitutional Convention gathered in Philadelphia to help chart a path forward for the newly independent United States of America.

After deliberation, the Framers established a system of government with three equal branches, the legislative, executive, and judicial, with a system of checks and balances to ensure no single branch had too much power. After years of control by a foreign power, our Framers understood the importance of self-governance and ensuring no monarch could once again rule over our country.

Now, more than 200 years since the ratification of our Constitution, our democracy faces a constitutional crisis that the Framers never could have imagined. The office of the President of the United States occupies the most powerful position in the world, yields immense influence with the expectation to use that power in a principled manner.

However, that principled approach has since vanished as self-interest has consumed the Oval Office. In the pursuit of that self-interest, this President has compromised our national security by withholding critical military assistance to Ukraine, military assistance approved by the Congress, the legislative branch, to provide assistance to preserve their sovereignty and counter Russian aggression.

That same system of checks and balances described in the Constitution over 200 years ago is now under attack. The President, as well as the Members of Congress, take an oath of office when stepping into this amazing place of our Republic to be leaders in our country, to protect, to preserve, and defend the Constitution of the United States as long as we hold office. As a part of that oath, it is my constitutional duty to protect the Constitution from all threats, even within our own government.

This June, I announced my support for the House of Representatives to begin an impeachment inquiry. In the 6 months since then, with new details revealed weekly and daily, my support for the House impeachment inquiry has never been stronger. This President has jeopardized our national security to affirm the law, not even the President.

On Tuesday, The House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence
voted to approve a comprehensive report outlining actions regarding Ukraine and the obstruction of justice. For 2 weeks last month, the American people heard various witnesses share their account of the President and the things that were happening in our government.

As an African American, I stand here today, Mr. Speaker, and I am very sensitive to any action to oppress my right to vote. My history as an African American in this country causes me to be very alert. Furthermore, the report details a concerted effort by the White House to defy authorized congressional subpoenas for documents, a right the Supreme Court has affirmed Congress possesses.

During the Constitutional Convention, it was noted that Madison rose and asked his colleagues two questions: “Shall any man be above justice? Shall that man be above it who can commit the most extensive injustice?”

With great power comes great responsibility. That responsibility has been ignored, and it has been demonstrated in the office of our President that his only interest is his self-interest and not that which is the best interest of the American people.

Mr. Speaker, Congress will be tasked with making a decision that will likely alter the course of history. However, taking the evidence into account, this is not a difficult decision. When history looks back, I will be one of the Members of Congress who kept my oath, who served and voted to protect, preserve, and defend the Constitution of the United States.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

RECOGNIZING DR. LYNN AND SAM COFIELD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. COMER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in special recognition of my lifelong friends, Drs. Lynn and Sam Cofield of Trigg County, Kentucky, for their remarkable careers and outstanding contributions to their local community and beyond. This year marks their retirement, and I want to congratulate Russia and Sam for many decades of success.

Lynn and Sam met while attending veterinary school at Auburn University. They married in 1984 and bought the Trigg County Veterinary Clinic located in Cadiz, Kentucky. While practicing veterinary medicine, they also managed a 160-acre farm they called Riverview West. They raised a herd of purebred Charolais cattle and quickly became passionate about Lynn and Sam, who continued to expand their influence in the agriculture community.

From 1986 to 1991 Lynn served as Kentucky Junior Charolais Association adviser where she was one of many students who traveled the livestock show circuit with the Cofield family. Lynn was also active in many organizations over the years ranging from 4-H and FFA to the Kentucky Veterinary Medical Association.

Sam served on the Farm Bureau Board of Directors and the Trigg County Health Department Board. Both Lynn and Sam supplied the Trigg County community with high-quality, honest veterinary medicine until 2019. Their clinic sold in February, and in October they began a hard-earned and much-deserved retirement.

In the words of those who know them best, the Cofields are staples in Trigg County and the surrounding communities.

Countless families can tell stories of how the Cofields cared for their pets and livestock from beginning to end. The Cofields let no obstacle prevent them from providing top-notch medical care. Whether in the wee hours of the morning or in the pouring rain, the Cofields were there ready to lend a hand.

Once again, I want to congratulate Drs. Lynn and Sam Cofield on their notable and recent retirement. I want to thank them both for being exceptional leaders in the First Congressional District of Kentucky.

HONORING THE WORK OF THE KENTUCKY MAGISTRATES AND COMMISSIONERS ASSOCIATION

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize the work of the Kentucky Magistrates and Commissioners Association headquartered in Frankfort, Kentucky.

On October 30, 2019, the Association provided 600 new pairs of shoes to Monroe County schools. The shoes were delivered to my hometown and my former school Tompkinsville Elementary. I am deeply grateful to the elected magistrates and commissioners who made this donation on behalf of the KCMA. Their actions represent the best of the Commonwealth and make me proud to represent one of its six congressional districts.

I want to particularly thank several members of the KCMA from the Monroe County Fiscal Court: Magistrates Jamie Veach, Roger Deckard, Ricky Bartley, Ricky Graves, and Mark Williams, in addition to county judge, Mitchell Page. I also want to thank my good friend, J.C. Young, executive director of the Kentucky Magistrates and Commissioners Association for spearheading the effort.

No child should worry that they might leave the house without adequate footwear, and because of the actions of the Kentucky Magistrates and Commissioners Association, Monroe County’s most vulnerable are better off today than they were a few short weeks ago.

Mr. Speaker, once again, I thank the KCMA for choosing Monroe County and for the time and energy they sacrificed to improve the everyday lives of dozens of schoolchildren. Their efforts are applauded in Kentucky’s First Congressional District.

CONGRATULATING NEW PAL FOOTBALL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the New Palestine High School football team for winning the Indiana high school Class A football state championship. This marks the second year in a row the Dragons have gone undefeated.

I applaud Coach Kyle Ralph, who now has an 88–4 record in his 7-season tenure at New Pal.

I also congratulate the whole team for their hard work in this fantastic accomplishment. Congratulations to all the Dragons nation.

CONGRATULATING EHHS CHEERLEADING

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Eastern Hancock High School cheerleading squad for winning the Indiana Cheer Championship Varsity D division.

After placing fourth at the semi-State competition, the Royals returned to the State competition for a victorious first place win.

The Royal cheerleading squad has displayed dedication, hard work, and sheer talent. They have made the Sixth District very proud.

RECOGNIZING GREENSBURG AG TEACHER GREG SCHNEIDER

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Greensburg Community High School agriculture teacher and FFA adviser Greg Schneider.

Greg Schneider was recently awarded the honorary American FFA degree through his commitment to the advancement of ag education. The degree recognizes those who have gone beyond valuable daily contributions to make a positive difference in the lives of their students.

Congratulations to Greg, who has inspired confidence in a new generation of farmers.

RECOGNIZING SHELBURNE CENTRAL SCHOOL’S KRIS BAKER

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Shelbyville Central Schools’ special education coordinator, Kris Baker, for winning a prestigious education award.

Kris’ work has earned her the 2019 Early Career Special Education Administrator Award. Ms. Baker won the award for her dedication to autism education and assistive technology at Earlywood Educational Services.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Kris for the work she has done for those in need, and I congratulate her on this honor.

CONGRATULATING ANALYTICAL ENGINEERING ON GOLD HIRE VETS MEDALLION

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Analytical Engineering of Columbus and the May family for receiving the Gold HIRE Vets Medallion.
December 5, 2019

Pledge of Allegiance

The SPEAKER, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to stop indulging in this political theater and pass the NDAA.

Recess

The SPEAKER pro tempore, pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today. Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 34 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

1200

After Recess

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

Prayer

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

God of light, we give you thanks for giving us another day. Once again we come to you to ask wisdom, patience, peace and understanding for the Members of this people’s House.

Give them the generosity of heart and the courage of true leadership to work toward a common solution to the many issues facing our nation.

As true statesmen and women, may they find fortitude to make judgments to benefit all Americans in their time of need.

May all that is done this day be for your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

The Journal

The SPEAKER, Mr. Speaker, I rise to urge my Democratic colleagues to stop playing political games and send the NDAA to President Trump’s desk.

The NDAA has been a bipartisan piece of legislation that we, as Congress, have passed for 58 straight years. The NDAA is essential for our men and women in uniform and for our National Defense Strategy.

Now, in the final hour, House Democrats want to wedge partisan policies into this bill. As Democrats continue to divide Congress over nondefense issues, they play right into the hands of our enemies.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to stop indulging in this political theater and pass the NDAA.

Wages Are Rising in South Carolina

The SPEAKER, Mr. Wilson of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Madam Speaker, yesterday, Jessica Holden with The Post and Courier reported that wages in South Carolina rose faster than expected this year and will continue to rise. I was alerted to this by Gary David and Christopher Thompson on WVOX by iHeartRadio. I am grateful for President Donald Trump’s actions to increase wages by reducing taxes and regulations.

According to Doug Woodward, economist with the University of South Carolina’s Darla Moore School of Business, this is the best job market we have seen in a generation. USC economist Joey Von Nessen says, “workers are in high demand right now, and we are seeing strong wage growth as a result. This includes wage growth for workers across the pay scale, with those on the lower end benefiting the most.”

By creating jobs, raising wages, and consistently working to promote opportunities, President Trump is continuing his record of keeping his promises. I am grateful that President Trump is focused to work for American families and jobs, despite the failed Russian hoax and today’s impeachment hoax.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

Recognizing Bittle Porterfield

The SPEAKER, Mr. Wilson of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.

Mr. CLINE of South Carolina, Madam Speaker, I rise today to memorialize Roanoke businessman Mr. Bittle Porterfield, III,
who contributed greatly to the arts, education, and business community throughout southwest Virginia.

Among the many civic leadership roles held during his lifetime, Mr. Porterfield served on the Virginia Council on Higher Education, was president of the Taubman Museum of Art, and the Roanoke Valley Chamber of Commerce in addition to being chairman of both the Roanoke Valley Business Council and the United Way of Roanoke Valley.

Mr. Porterfield believed in Roanoke’s potential and knew that the Star City could play a pivotal role in cultural development. As a veteran, a Roanoke native, and an innate leader, Mr. Porterfield believed that it was his life’s purpose to serve others and his community.

I am grateful for the commitment and passion Bittle Porterfield had for the Roanoke Valley and wish to extend my deepest sympathies to his family for their loss. May they find peace in knowing that his legacy of service will live on through the countless lives he touched.

CALLING ATTENTION TO LYME DISEASE

(Mr. DELGADO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DELGADO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to call attention to an urgent issue in upstate New York. Lyme and tick-borne diseases are deeply prevalent in my district, New York 19, and across the country.

From 2007 to 2017, Lyme disease cases rose by 78 percent in my district. Approximately half of adult deer ticks in the State carry the bacteria that causes Lyme disease. We should be doing all we can to address this and invest in more effective ways to both diagnose and treat this disease.

That is why this week, I, along with fellow members of the bipartisan Lyme Disease Caucus, introduced legislation to supplement congressionally appropriated funding for research with the Stamp Out Lyme Disease Act. Our bill would create a postage stamp to raise awareness about the disease and directly support medical research to treat and cure tick-borne illnesses.

I urge the House to take up this legislation and move us closer to a cure.

RECOGNIZING THE REPEAL OF PROHIBITION

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the repeal of prohibition. On this day in 1933, the 21st Amendment was ratified, ending the prohibition of alcohol.

Today, throughout Pennsylvania, breweries, wineries, and distilleries have become one of the Commonwealth’s fastest growing industries, and quite frankly, agri-businesses. Pennsylvania is home to more than 300 wineries, which produce more than 1.6 million gallons of wine each year. This equates to roughly $1.4 billion in economic impact.

Recently, Woody Lodge Winery, a disabled veteran and female-owned business from Cambria County, racked up six awards at the Atlantic Seaboard Wine Association competition, including two best-of-category awards.

The craft beer industry is also booming. Each year, craft brewers pump nearly $6 billion into Pennsylvania’s economy and are responsible for more than 100,000 jobs and generate $2.2 billion in wages. For the past three years, Pennsylvania has been the number one producer of craft beer in the Nation.

As we look back on 13 long years of prohibition in this country, let’s raise a glass to how far we have come in the 96 years since.

THE AMERICAN PEOPLE STAND BEHIND THE INTERNATIONAL FIGHT TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE

(Ms. BROWNLEY of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. BROWNLEY of California. Madam Speaker, this past week I had the privilege to join Speaker Pelosi and several of my colleagues at the 2019 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Madrid, commonly known as COP25.

Our visit sent a message: No matter what the current President says or does, the American people stand behind the international fight to combat climate change. We are still in.

Our only chance to stop the climate crisis is for the entire world to come together on solutions to stop pollution, protect public health, and build a clean energy economy. Streetcredently encouraged and reinvigorated by the world leaders I met in Madrid who were deeply passionate and understand the urgency in finding ways forward on this global crisis.

I pledge to bring that passion back to the House as a member of the Select Committee on the Climate Crisis as we continue our work to put together an action plan for both Congress and our country.

ADDRESS URGENT PRIORITIES OF AMERICA

(Mr. CICILLINE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CICILLINE. Madam Speaker, it has been less than a year since Democrats took back the majority in the House. In that short time, we have passed nearly 400 bills to get government working for the people again, by increasing access to quality, affordable healthcare and protecting coverage for preexisting conditions; by raising family wages; by making bold investments in rebuilding our Nation’s infrastructure; and by cleaning up corruption in Washington and getting the government to work for the people again.

We have sent more than 275 bipartisan bills to the Senate, where MITCH MCCONNELL is refusing to vote on them. These bills include legislation to protect and strengthen coverage for preexisting conditions, to ensure equal pay for equal work, and to fight back against the debilitating effects of climate change and ban offshore drilling.

We also voted to give 33 million Americans a long-overdue pay raise by raising the minimum wage, provide Gold Star families with much-needed tax relief, and secure our Nation’s elections.

Yet, MITCH MCCONNELL has described himself as the “grim reaper” and won’t take up any of this legislation.

We are busy doing the work of the American people. We have passed over 375 bipartisan bills that are sitting in the Senate. It is time for the Senate to take up these bills and address the urgent priorities of the American people.

HONORING TREVON TYLER

(Ms. STEVENS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)
Ms. STEVENS. Madam Speaker, last week, tragedy struck the South Lyon community in Oakland County, Michigan, as we learned of the death of Trevon Tyler.

Just 17 years old, Trevon died from complications following knee surgery. “Trevon was a beloved member of the South Lyon community and a member of the South Lyon East High School football team. His coach called him “the nicest, most fun-loving, caring kid.” He “walked with a pretty big pep in his step. He always said hi to everybody. Everybody loved him. He was a little bit of a joker, had this big laugh, always made you smile.”

Trevon’s incredible family, friends, classmates, and teammates are all heartbroken by his passing. His life was cut tragically short, but he will always be remembered by that smile, his laugh, his friendship, and his contributions to our community.

Today, we are called to live our lives more like Tre, with joy and love at the forefront.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. SEWELL of Alabama) laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Washington, DC, December 5, 2019.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
The Speaker, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on December 5, 2019:

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 5277.

With best wishes, I am
Sincerely,
CHERYL L. JOHNSON.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4, VOTING RIGHTS ADVANCEMENT ACT OF 2019, AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H. RES. 326, EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES REGARDING UNITED STATES EFFORTS TO RESOLVE THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT THROUGH A NEGOTIATED TWO-STATE SOLUTION

Mr. RASKIN. Madam Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up the rule providing for consideration of H.R. 4, the Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2019, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. Res. 741

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 4) to amend the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to revise the criteria for determining which States and political subdivisions are subject to section 4 of the Act, and for other purposes. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. The amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on the Judiciary now printed in the bill, modified by the amendment printed in part A of the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution and the preamble recommended by the Committee on Foreign Affairs now printed in the resolution, modified by the amendments printed in part B of the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution, shall be considered as adopted.

The bill, as amended, shall be considered as ordered on the bill, as amended, and on any further amendment thereto, to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Judiciary; and (2) one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. Upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order without intervention of any point of order to consider in the House the resolution (H. Res. 326) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding United States efforts to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through a negotiated two-state solution.

The resolution and the preamble recommended by the Committee on Foreign Affairs accompanying this resolution, shall be considered as adopted.

The resolution, as amended, shall be considered as ordered on the resolution and preamble, as amended, to adoption without intervening motion or demand for division of the question except one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Maryland is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. RASKIN. Madam Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentlewoman from Arizona (Mrs. LESKO), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consider. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

GENRAL LEAVE

Mr. RASKIN. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members be given 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Maryland?

There was no objection.

Mr. RASKIN. Madam Speaker, on Wednesday, the Rules Committee met and reported a rule, House Resolution 741, providing for consideration of two measures.

First, the rule provides for consideration of H.R. 4, the Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2019, under a closed rule. The rule self-executes a manager’s amendment offered by Chairman NADLER and provides 1 hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking member of the Committee on the Judiciary. The rule provides one motion to recommit. Additionally, the rule provides for consideration of H. Res. 326, expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding United States efforts to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through a negotiated two-state solution, under a closed rule.

The rule self-executes two manager’s amendments offered by Chairman NADLER. The rule provides for 1 hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Madam Speaker, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 is one of the great legislative achievements of American history. It is perhaps the greatest single statute of the 20th century, in a century of great statutes, including the National Labor Relations Act and the Fair Labor Standards Act.

But the Voting Rights Act was born out of the blood, sweat, and tears of the American civil rights movement; in the wake of Freedom Summer; in the murders of Schwerner, Chaney, Goodman, and other civil rights heroes; and after the famous March on Washington, where Dr. King made his “I Have a Dream” speech.

The Voting Rights Act transformed American politics by bringing into our elections millions of voters who had been disenfranchised for a century after the Civil War ended. It changed the nature of politics in the Deep South and across the United States, and it changed the politics of the United States Congress as well.

Theoretically, the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments had solved the problem of disenfranchisement after the Civil War. The 13th Amendment abolished slavery; the 14th Amendment established equal protection; and the 15th Amendment banned discrimination in voting. But after the dismantling of reconstruction, African Americans were subjected to a regime of disenfranchisement that included violence, terror, grandfather clauses, literacy tests, poll taxes, and an ever-expanding panoply of devices, tricks, and tactics to keep Black people from being able to register to vote and to participate in elections.

The civil rights movement and President Lyndon Johnson fought for the Voting Rights Act, which passed in 1965 and which included a package of strong remedies targeting discriminatory voting practices and devices in the areas where discrimination was most egregious and virulent.

A key component of the Voting Rights Act was section 5, the preclearance requirement, which compelled covered States—that is, the States to which it applied—to stop discriminating and to subject all changes in their voting practices to the Department of Justice or to the United States District Court for the District of Columbia.

States were covered if they had used illegal voting discrimination devices like literacy tests, poll taxes, and character exams, and if fewer than 50 percent of the people were registered to vote or allowed to participate.
The Voting Rights Act was challenged immediately in litigation called South Carolina v. Katzenbach, but in 1966, the Supreme Court rejected arguments that the Voting Rights Act violated the Constitution.

The Supreme Court said Congress may use any rational means to effectuate the constitutional prohibition on race discrimination in voting. It upheld the preclearance requirement against attack.

Specifically, it was said by South Carolina that it violated the so-called equal footing doctrine, but the Supreme Court said that the equal footing doctrine applied to the admission of States and counties that were precleared when it got struck down, dozens of tests, which don't exist anymore. So this formula was now out-of-date because it went back many, many decades to the 1960s and 1970s and that the Shelby County case struck down the section 4(b) formula for which States were covered, declaring that the 1965 Voting Rights Act preclearance requirement against the 1965 Voting Rights Act was now lost.

It works all the way up until 2013, when the Supreme Court rendered its 5-4 decision in Shelby County v. Holder. The Shelby County case struck down the section 4(b) formula for which States were covered, declaring that this formula was now out-of-date because it went back many, many decades to the 1960s and 1970s and that the Congress would need to update the formula to address current needs in the field and to show that the formula relates to the current problems that we are targeting.

The Court said specifically that coverage was based on decades-old data and eradicated practices, like literacy tests, which don’t exist anymore. So when it got struck down, dozens of States and counties that were previously required to preclear changes related to voting didn’t have to do it anymore, which can very quickly, almost instantly, to roll back various kinds of voter protections and to pass strict voter identification laws, to pass massive voter purges, to implement cuts to early voting, to close polling places, and so on. I am going to read from one of the witnesses who testified before the House Judiciary Committee, Kristen Clarke, the president and executive director of the Shelby County’s Committee for Civil Rights, who said:

“We have vetted complaints from tens of thousands of voters in Shelby, many revealing systemic voting discrimination. In short, this is how Shelby County has disfranchised and disfranchises.”

“First, we have seen the resurgence of discriminatory voting practices, some motivated by intentional discrimination, and this discrimination has been most intense in the very jurisdictions that were once covered by section 5. They range from the consolidation of polling sites to make it less convenient for minority voters to vote to the curtailing of early voting hours, the purging of minority voters from the register, the pretense of list maintenance, strict photo ID requirements, abuse of signature match verification requirements . . . the threat of criminal prosecution, and more.”

Second, we have seen increased levels of recalcitrants in hostility among elected officials who institute discriminatory voting changes with impunity. . . .

Fourth, the public no longer has the ability to participate in the process of reviewing practices before they take effect. . . .

Fifth, the preclearance process had an identifiable deterrent effect that is now lost.

Sixth, the status quo is not sustainable. Civil rights organizations are stepping up to fill the void created by the Shelby decision at insurmountable expense.

And finally, this will be the first redistricting cycle in decades in which redistricting takes place without the Voting Rights Act that is one example of testimony that we got from all over America about what the Shelby County v. Holder decision meant by dismantling section 5 by knocking out section 4(b) of the Voting Rights Act.

H.R. 4 is doing precisely what the Supreme Court invited us to do in the Shelby County decision: to pass a new coverage formula for the Civil Rights Act preclearance requirement based on new data in a new formula designed to address current contemporary problems.

The Judiciary Committee and the House Administration Committee had a combined total of 17 hearings: 9 on the Judiciary side with its Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, and 8 in the House Administration Committee's Subcommittee on Elections. They heard about restrictive and discriminatory practices taking place in numerous States across the country, including Texas and Georgia, where, after the end of preclearance, Georgia voters faced a myriad of new voting barriers, including the closing of more than 200 precinct polling places, spoiled voter registration materials, purging of more than 1 million voters in a racially discriminatory way, restrictive voter ID laws, systematic rejection of absentee ballots, and more.

We also looked in North Carolina, which passed a so-called monster voter suppression law, which resulted in race discrimination in accessing the polls, including the closure of dozens of polling sites and long voting lines. The law eliminated same-day voter registration, reduced early voting by a week, curtailed satellite polling sites for elderly and disabled voters, and so on.

Madam Speaker, this legislation is the product of massive legislative inspection of voting conditions across the United States of America today, and it threads the needle that was offered to us by the Supreme Court in the Shelby County decision by amending the Voting Rights Act to revise the section 4(b) criteria and providing other voter protections at the same time.

Specifically, the bill creates a new coverage formula that applies to all States and hinge on a finding of repeated voting violations in the preceding 25 years.

It establishes a process for reviewing voting changes in jurisdictions nationwide, focused on a limited set of measures such as voter ID laws and the reduction of multilingual voting materials; it requires reasonable public notice for voting changes; it allows the Attorney General authority to request Federal observers; and it increases access to voting for Native American and Alaska Native voters.

Just turning, now, to H.R. 326, for more than 20 years, American Presidents from both political parties and Israeli Prime Ministers have supported reaching a two-state solution that establishes a democratic Palestinian state to coexist peacefully and constructively side by side with a democratic Israel.

Middle East peace talks have favored the two-state solution and opposed settlement expansions, negotiation towards a bilateral agreement, and unilateral annexation of territories, and efforts to arrive at Palestinian statehood outside the framework of negotiations with Israel.

In 2002, President Bush stated: “My vision is two states, living side by side in peace and security.”

In 2013, President Obama reiterated this exact same commitment, stating that: “Negotiations will be necessary, but there is little secret about where they will lead—two states for two peoples.”

This resolution emphasizes the sentiment of the past 20 years of peace talks.
Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. LESKO. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I thank Representative RASKIN for yielding me the customary 30 minutes.

Madam Speaker, the right to vote is of paramount importance in our Republic. We all agree on that. Prohibitions against discriminatory barriers to the right to vote have been grounded in Federal law since the Civil War and, more recently, through the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

We all agree: Discrimination should have no place in our voting system. However, the majority would have us believe that the Voting Rights Act does not prevent any of this and would rather pass this partisan legislation for a Federal takeover of elections.

I anticipate that the 2013 Supreme Court case Shelby County v. Holder will be brought up many times today, but I would like to point out to my Democratic colleagues that, in that decision, the Supreme Court only struck down one outdated provision of the Voting Rights Act.

This provision, section 4(b), was struck down because it was outdated as it had not been updated since 1975, and it violated principles of equal State sovereignty and federalism. H.R. 4 is, quite simply, unconstitutional, as the Supreme Court had held that Federal control over local elections is allowed only when there is a showing of discrimina-
tory treatment in voting.

Further, I believe it is important to point out that other very important provisions of the Voting Rights Act remain in place, including section 2 and section 3.

Section 2 applies nationwide and prohibits voting practices or procedures that discriminate on the basis of race, color, or the ability to speak English. Section 2 is enforced through Federal laws and policies as well as through other Federal civil rights law, and the United States and civil rights organizations have brought many cases to enforce the guarantees of section 2 in court, and they may do so in the future, as well.

Section 3 of the Voting Rights Act also remains in place. This section authorizes Federal courts to impose preclearance requirements on States and political subdivisions that have enacted voting procedures that treat people differently based on race in violation of the 14th and 15th Amendments.

If a Federal court finds a State or a political subdivision to have treated people differently based on race, then the court has discretion now to retain supervisory jurisdiction and impose preclearance requirements as they see fit until a future date at the court’s discretion. This is all valid now without this bill.

Section 5 has been utilized recently, in fact. U.S. District Judge Lee Rosenthal issued an opinion in a redistricting case that required that the city of Pasadena, Texas, be monitored by the Justice Department because it had intentionally changed its city council districts to decrease Hispanic influence.

States should be allowed to implement their own laws regarding their elections and voting security to ensure all results are accurate on election day. State and local governments know more about how to handle their elections than bureaucrats in Washington, D.C.

I applaud State and local governments that are taking the necessary steps to modernize and secure their elections. For example, in Arizona, my home State, we have made continual progress on improving voter turnout and participation.

Mr. RASKIN said that the section that was taken out of the courts was genius. Well, I believe the opposite is true.

Arizona was under this outdated preclearance formula, and I can tell you personally that this section was not genius. Both Arizona Democrats and Republicans, alike, thought to have to pre-clear every single decision that elected election officials made with the Federal bureaucrats in Washing-
ton, D.C., was a total disaster.

Arizona now has free, open, and secure elections, despite not being under this Federal control preclearance anymore. Nearly 80 percent of Arizonans vote by mail. We have a robust online voter registration system, so it is easy to register, and we have approximately 1 month of early voting.

While Arizona has made voting easier and more accessible for voters, we have also made our elections more secure by outlining the practice of ballot har-
vesting. In Arizona, we believe it should be easy to vote and hard to cheat. The policies in Arizona seem to be working, as we have seen in election after election that voter turnout continues to grow.

A couple months ago, I had the op-
portunity to participate in a field hear-
ing in Phoenix, Arizona, to discuss the Voting Rights Act. There, I spoke with staff of the Maricopa County Recorder, an elected Democrat. She relayed to me how disappointed they were to not have been asked to testify at this hear-
ing as they felt that they had not been able to speak to the story of the suc-
cesses in Arizona and why they were very concerned about H.R. 4. They did not want the Federal Government to be preclearing every single decision they made.

Think about it: They don’t want to have to go back to the Federal Govern-
ment every single time they change early ballots or voting locations. They, instead, are making great progress and strides. Voter turnout has soared. They don’t want bureaucrats in Washington, D.C., slowing down important and time-sensitive decisions.

This rule also includes H. Res. 326.

I am curious why my Democratic col-
leagues decided to bring forward this nonbinding resolution as opposed to bringing up H.R. 326, a bill that I am personally a proud cosponsor of, which is identical to the text of S. 1, the Strengthening America’s Security in the Middle East Act of 2019, which passed the Senate by a vote of 77-25—totally bipartisan—on February 5, 2019. Instead of the nonbinding resolution we have before us today, H.R. 326 would take concrete steps to counter the BDS movement against Israel.

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Instead, I am saddened the Demo-
crats brought up this resolution, a res-
olution passed by the House in June 2019, under the leadership of the Trump administration and em-
barrasses Israel. In fact, the resolution expressly states a proposal must be put forward that is consistent with pre-
vious administrations’ proposals, com-
temporary with the Trump admin-
istration. This should not be a partisan issue with only Democrat sponsors and not one Republican cosponsor as this bill has. We should not be handicapping our President.

My Republican colleagues on the Foreign Affairs Committee tell me that a resolution that supports a two-
state solution, without attempting to undermine the President, could have been bipartisan. However, this resolu-
tion singles out settlement expansion and annexation. These are some of the most delicate issues in our bilateral re-
relationship with Israel, and it shines a spotlight on them in the middle of an ongoing and contentious Middle East conflict.

The resolution spells out specific Palestinian Authority demands with-
out listing critical Israeli pre-
conditions, such as acknowledging Israel’s right to exist with an undivided Jerusalem as Israel’s capital and providing assurances for Israel’s safety and security through a demilitarized zone.

As a whole, this resolution dispropor-
tionately criticizes the Israeli Govern-
ment while failing to recognize the dangerous actions targeting innocent Israelis that further remove the possi-
bility of peace.

We already voted to support a two-
state solution over the summer in H. Res. 246 in a bipartisan manner.

So why do we need this partisan bill? So, Madam Speaker, I urge opposi-
tion to this rule, and I reserve the bal-
ance of my time.

Mr. RASKIN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

My good friend from Arizona chides me for having described section 5, the preclearance requirement of the Voting Rights Act, as genius, which is amaz-
ing to me because this has been a bi-
partisan national commitment and a
bipartisan commitment in Congress since 1965 when it passed on a bipartisan basis, since 1982 when it was reauthorized on a bipartisan basis, and since 2006 when President Bush signed it, as well, and celebrated it.

So we have had Presidents Bush, Clinton, and Obama, a continuous array of Presidents, supporting it, and Congresses supporting it. If you don’t have it, here is what happens. The NAACP Legal Defense Fund testified to us about successful litigation they had in Texas against a restrictive voter ID law that had discriminatory racial impact. They won on the lawsuit under section 2, but it was too late.

In the meantime, who was elected in Texas? A U.S. Senator, all 36 Members of the House of Representatives, a Governor, a lieutenant governor, and so on.

The reason why section 5 is genius and why we need to restore the precoverage formula is because it requires States to submit in advance laws that could be potentially discriminatory.

I was amazed to hear again the language of federalizing control and a Federal takeover of elections when this has been a bipartisan commitment for decades grounded in the Constitution of the United States which tells us in Article I, Section 4 we can regulate elections; Section 2 of the Fifteenth Amendment saying we can regulate elections to prevent race discrimination; Section 5 of the Fourteenth Amendment, and the republican Guarantee Clause, which tells us we must guarantee to people of the States a republican form of government, which means representative government based on democracy.

Finally, I will allow my friend to portray what is going on in her State her way, and she paints a lovely picture. I would just refer her to page 25 of the Judiciary Committee report which says that in Arizona polling places were closed 34, and so on. So there is another story to be told there which is based on democracy.

Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. GOTTHEIMER).

Mr. GOTTHEIMER. Madam Speaker, I thank Mr. RASKIN for yielding me time.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of the rule which adopts bipartisan language which I introduced with my good friend Tom REED and Congressman DEUTCH, reaffirming the United States’ ironclad commitment to providing security assistance to our historic ally, Israel, which, as ever, is key to America’s national security and our global security, especially in our fight against terror.

This vote officially puts to rest the splinter view of adding new conditions on aid to Israel and reinforces our historic commitment to restoring a two-state solution.

I want to thank my good friend, House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman ELIOCT ENGEL, for his leadership that he has had and for his bipartisan language in his manager’s amendment.

Madam Speaker, as we have seen in recent weeks, Israel, the democracy in the region, faces threats like no other country of missile and rocket attacks from terrorists, including Hamas, Hezbollah, and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, as well as the ongoing threat of Iranian-backed forces in Syria.

Vital security assistance to Israel, including missile defense funding for Iron Dome, David’s Sling, and Arrow 3, helps our ally to defend itself and preserve its qualitative military edge in the region. That is why in 2016 under the Obama administration, the U.S. and Israel signed a 10-year Memorandum of Understanding which constituted the single largest pledge of security assistance to Israel in American history. The MOU also increased the amount of defense dollars that go to U.S. businesses here at home, with as much as $1.2 billion a year invested in the United States.

We know that this aid helps save countless lives, and we know that the United States is better off when Israel is fully equipped to defend itself. That is why I led an amendment with my colleagues, Congressman REED and Congressman DEUTCH, which reaffirms our commitment to providing this assistance without additional conditions or exceptions.

Our amendment was cosponsored by a total of 36 Members of Congress, Republicans and Democrats, who know that this assistance should not be subject to politics. I deeply appreciate all of our colleagues’ support for our amendment, for this vital, lifesaving assistance for the bipartisan U.S.-Israel relationship.

This language is absolutely necessary because of the extreme and misguided views of some, especially several currently running for our Nation’s highest office, who seemingly believe that assistance to Israel should be held hostage until Israel makes concessions according to their beliefs, including how Israel treats Gaza, which is controlled by the terrorist organization Hamas.

We must stand together in rejecting that harmful view—as one Senator called it, the view of having leverage against Israel, our ally.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman’s amendment has expired.

Mr. RASKIN. Madam Speaker, I yield the gentleman from New Jersey 10 additional seconds.

Mr. GOTTHEIMER. Madam Speaker, when our ally, Israel, faces more than 450 rockets fired by Palestinian and Jihad terrorists in Gaza, it must have the ability to defend itself, no matter what.

That is why with this vote we commit ourselves to strengthening the U.S.-Israel relationship by ensuring that we fulfill our guarantee to provide vital security assistance to the key democracy in the region.

Mr. RASKIN. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. LESKO. Madam Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RODNEY DAVIS).

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I thank my good friend, Mrs. LESKO, for her participation in the Election Subcommittee hearing in Phoenix.

Also, Madam Speaker, I want to thank you personally for your hard work in making sure that every person throughout this great Nation gets that opportunity to vote and for your work in furthering civil discussion and civil rights in your career.

Madam Speaker, I do rise in opposition to the rule for H.R. 4 today.

The Voting Rights Act is currently in place. The bill that we will be debating tomorrow is not a reauthorization of this important and historically bipartisan legislation that has prevented discrimination at the ballot box.

It has only been since the U.S. Supreme Court decision in Shelby County v. Holder that Democrats have decided to politicize the Voting Rights Act. This landmark decision left the vast majority of the Voting Rights Act in place.

What it struck down was 40-year-old data and the formula used to determine which States were to be placed under the control of the Department of Justice, known as preclearance. The Supreme Court deemed this data and formula was no longer accurate nor relevant for our country’s current climate.

The 2013 opinion held that regardless of how to look at the record, no one can fairly say that it shows anything approaching the pervasive, flagrant, and systematic discrimination that faced Congress in 1965, and that clearly distinguished the covered jurisdictions from the rest of the Nation.

So what does H.R. 4 do? It doubles down and would attempt to put every State and jurisdiction under preclearance. This is a bill to federalize elections, regardless of what my colleagues have said in this institution. During the Rules Committee meeting, it became clear that the majority was unable to determine the number of States or jurisdictions that would be covered by this preclearance if H.R. 4 were to become law tomorrow. Apparently, we have to pass this bill before the American people can even find out if they would be subjected to it.

This is a proposition that the majority knows is bad policy, and it is a non-starter for myself, my colleagues in the other body across this Capitol, the Supreme Court, too, but perhaps most importantly, the thousands of local election
officials across the country who would be crippled if this bill were to ever become law.

H.R. 4, the Voting Rights Advancement Act, is not a Voting Rights Act reauthorization bill. This is only about pre-clearing the Democratic majority giving the Department of Justice control over all election activity.

While it is not in my committee’s jurisdiction in the House Administration Committee, our Subcommittee on Elections majority held seven field hearings and one listening session across the U.S., encompassing eight different States and over 13,000 miles of air travel. Even with this gargantuan effort, the Democrats were still unable to produce a single voter who wanted to vote and was unable to cast a ballot.

This is a great thing. We ought to celebrate it. Credit should be given to the Voting Rights Act for helping to achieve this. The 2018 midterm election produced the highest voting turnout in four decades according to data from the Census Bureau, especially among minority voters. That, again, should be celebrated.

Sections 2 and 3 of the Voting Rights Act that are currently in effect are continuing to safeguard the public from discrimination at the ballot box. Every eligible American who wants to vote in our country’s elections should be able to cast a ballot. That is why we have the Voting Rights Act, a great example of bipartisanship that is working to help Americans today and protecting Americans from discrimination.

Unfortunately, H.R. 4 is just a political attempt from the Democrats to give the Federal Government more control over how States run their elections. I have now seen four voting bills from the majority come to this floor. All of them have one common theme, and that is to federalize elections. I urge all my colleagues to vote against this rule.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Alabama (Ms. SEWELL), who has been such a magnificent leader on this legislation.

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, today I proudly rise to support the rule on H.R. 4, the Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2019.

Voting rights are primal. They are the cornerstone of our democracy. No right is more precious to our citizenship than the right of all Americans to be able to vote. When Americans are not able to cast their ballots, their votes are silenced, and we, especially as elected officials, should be alarmed if any Democrat who wants to cast a ballot is unable to cast a ballot.

What H.R. 4 does is it restores the Voting Rights Act of 1965 by giving a new coverage formula. In fact, the Roberts Court specifically said in striking down section 4b that it was outdated. So H.R. 4 is our effort, the efforts of three committees, hours of testimony, lots and lots of stakeholders, and lots and lots of people who were American citizens not able to vote; it is that effort that led to a narrowly tailored new coverage formula. That new coverage formula does not look back to the 1960s or to the 1970s. It looks back 25 years, that is 1994 and going forward.

It requires the most egregious violations of voter discrimination. It is narrowly tailored, and it hits the mark as to what the Supreme Court requires us to do in saying that Congress could feel free to update its coverage formula. The Supreme Court and Roberts, in his opinion, also said that voter discrimination still existed. It admitted that it still existed. And H.R. 4 is our effort to actually provide a modern-day voter coverage formula that will allow States and jurisdictions and localities with the most egregious forms of discrimination to be required to pre-clear.

The Shelby v. Holder decision originated out of Shelby County, Alabama. I am honored every day to represent Alabama’s Seventh Congressional District. It is a district that knows all too well the importance of voting.

So I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that this is not only an important piece of legislation for our Nation to ensure that every American—American—who has the ability, who is 18 years of age or older, has the right to access a ballot box.

This is exactly what H.R. 4 does. It restores the full protections of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. In so doing, it provides a mechanism by which the most egregious States and localities must pre-clear before the elections. It is so hard to unring the bell once an election has already taken place. So section 2, while it has been used to litigate and to get good results, it only can occur after the election has taken place.

So, what happened? We woke up the day after that resolution passed last summer, and the Republicans wanted to pass legislation with teeth. I know that we have a lot of strong, bipartisan support for passing legislation with teeth, S.1/H.R. 336, legislation that already passed the Senate with almost 80 votes. But, unfortunately, for some of my colleagues, they woke up the next day and instead of wanting to pass legislation with teeth that would do something about it, do something about that strong statement that we made, we have been seeing this resolution passed as the main effort for the second half of this year.

In the last 2 years, Israel has been hit by over 2,600 rockets and mortars, and 1,500 of those rockets were fired from the Gaza Strip into Israel in the past year alone. Last week, every headline in the region was about Israel being bombarded with over 450 rockets, and that was just one moment in time.

This resolution fails to not only recognize these latest attacks but all the
persistent assaults on innocent Israelis by Palestinian terrorists. Notice this resolution is reprimanding Israel, but it says nothing about Palestinian terrorists.

My friend on the other side of the aisle forgot to give the opening remarks, was reprimanding Israel and didn’t say anything about Palestinian terrorists murdering innocent Israelis; nothing about the pay-to-play program where the Palestinians financially reward terrorism and incite violence; nothing about denying humanitarian aid, calling jihadi an obligation, and saying that they do not recognize Israel as a Jewish state.

This reality is lost in this resolution. This resolution completely fails to mention that Israel has made repeated attempts to offer peace proposals to the Palestinian Authority. Time and again, the Palestinian Authority has rejected peace proposals because they refuse publicly and privately to accept a Jewish state.

This resolution is silent on fundamental facts that shape the way Israel has dealt with this constant threat on its border. This resolution chooses to reference President Obama’s policy toward Israel intentionally leaving out President Trump’s policy, ensuring a partisan outcome for this resolution.

Support for Israel in this Chamber has long been bipartisan. For whatever reason, the majority is choosing to advance in the resolution tomorrow that is going to have one of the most partisan votes to ever take place regarding Israel in the history of the House of Representatives. Congratulations.

H. Res. 326 undercuts the administration’s efforts to strengthen our critical alliance with our greatest ally, Israel, and the timing of this vote is fooling no one. This resolution is a clear rebuke to the Trump administration’s recent reversal of the Obama administration’s targeting of Israel with U.N. Security Council Resolution 2334.

If House Democrats want to pass bipartisan legislation with teeth, they should bring S.H.R. 336, which has already passed the Senate, as I mentioned, with strong bipartisan support and was introduced by Congressman MICHAEL McCaul in the House. There is even a discharge petition led by Congressman BRIAN MAST for this bill that has almost 700 signatures on it. If it came to a vote in this Chamber, it would pass.

How about we focus on passing legislation that gets through the House? It has already been through the Senate. It will be signed by the President. We will be doing something about that statement that we made last summer.

I urge all of my colleagues to vote against this rule and against this partisan resolution.

Mr. RASKIN. Madam Speaker, all I will observe is that the gentleman from New York oddly begins by attacking a resolution for being a recycled version of language we have already adopted on a massive bipartisan basis in the House. Then he closes by attacking us for this resolution being partisan and divisive in some way. Obviously, those two things don’t match up.

Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT).

Mr. DOGGETT. Voting rights guarantee all of our other rights. When Americans are obstructed from freely participating in elections, our democracy is imperiled.

This bill, six long years overdue, restores a key provision of the Voting Rights Act that was wrongfully nullified by Republican-appointed justices.

How troubling that a law that President Lyndon Johnson long ago secured now is being obstructed, while our home State of Texas has become ground zero for voter suppression. State Republicans have aggressively, illegally purged voting rolls. They eliminated mobile voting to quash especially minority voters. They enacted a cumbersome voter ID law. And they horribly, illegally gerrymandered our State.

Republicans split 100 voting precincts to create the district which I serve to divide the most crookedly drawn districts that weaken the accessibility and accountability of Congress Members. A three-judge Federal court with two Republican-appointed judges unanimously condemned Texas redistricting as having a patently discriminatory intent in its work.

Fortunately, the Texas Civil Rights Project, Move’Texas, LULAC, and other groups have challenged the suppression, but this bill is essential to offer the protection that they, and our democracy, deserve.

We need preclearance in Texas. We need preclearance to clear away all the obstacles Republicans insist on imposing to ensure that our State remains a voter nonparticipation State for democracy.

Madam Speaker, let’s support H.R. 4.

Mrs. LESKO. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

If we defeat the previous question, I will bring to the floor H.R. 2207, the Protect Medical Innovation Act of 2019, which most people know as the bill that will eliminate the medical device tax.

Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to strike, as intentional rack of my amendment in the Record, along with extraneous material, immediately prior to the vote on the previous question.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. SEEWELL of Alabama). Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Arizona?

There was no objection.

Mrs. LESKO. Madam Speaker, H.R. 2207 was introduced by Mr. KIND from Wisconsin, and it has 233 bipartisan co-sponsors, including myself.

Since the medical device tax was imposed by the Affordable Care Act, commonly known as ObamaCare, folks have known that it was detrimental to innovation and to patient access to necessary devices and treatments. The 2.3 percent excise tax has been suspended twice because we know it is bad policy. So what are we waiting for?

Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. WALORSKI).

Mrs. WALORSKI. Madam Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to oppose the previous question.

If we defeat the previous question, Republicans will amend the rule to include the repeal of the medical device tax.

The medical device tax takes effect on January 1, 2020, unless Congress acts. Time is of the essence. Yet, my friends across the aisle continue to waste our time and energy and, more importantly, clock time that we need to stop this tax from going into effect.

This is a bipartisan bill with 253 of us cosponsoring it. All I am asking is that the 253 cosponsors get an opportunity before this expires to say stop this, stop the wheels from grinding. Let’s do something that counts for our fellow Americans, for senior citizens who are the recipients of a lot of these medical device implants.

It brings quality of life. Oftentimes, it brings the extension of very important quality of life to seniors. It is less time in hospitals. It has been proven—back up on people’s feet to engage back in the workforce and their part of the American Dream.

Instead of having nothing happening in a bipartisan way, as our fellow Americans are watching what is happening in this House, if 253 of us agree on this today, we can stop this onerous tax. We can stop costing healthcare and the exorbitant amount of increases sent back down to all of our constituents.

This is a big deal in the State of Indiana, where I come from. What we do in the State of Indiana with 300 medical device manufacturing companies supporting nearly 55,000 good-paying jobs—nationally, the industry directly employs over half a million people.
I urge my colleagues to support this important bill. Twenty-six days to go. We can work together. Over 250 of us are cosponsoring this legislation.

I ask, on behalf of every citizen, everybody working in the medical device industry, and for the sake of our own economy, let’s do something that makes sense for this country.

Mr. RASKIN. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time to close.

Mrs. LESKO. Madam Speaker, in closing H.R. 4 is totally partisan, without one Republican cosponsor; and H. Res. 326, another totally partisan bill, ties the Trump administration’s hands and embarrasses Israel.

Madam Speaker, I urge “no” on the previous question, “no” on the underlying measure, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. RASKIN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

I want to thank my friend from Arizona, who rightfully invites us to focus on legislation that will bring us together.

The gentlewoman from Indiana, who I have not had the good fortune of meeting yet, accuses me of wasting not just time, but something called “clock time,” which sounds like a really low blow.

In any event, I think our legislation actually will bring us together and should bring us together. The rule is for two points of order on legislation that I thought ought to have and would have complete bipartisan support.

The first is simply to update the preclearance coverage formula, section 4(b) in the Voting Rights Act, as we were instructed to do by the Supreme Court in the Shelby County v. Holder decision.

The Voting Rights Act is the product of a massive political and social struggle in the country to make America move forward, but it had been supported by huge bipartisan majorities in 1965, in 1982, and in 2006. Yet, today, our friends across the aisle now attack the Voting Rights Act and the preclearance requirement for being some kind of assault on Federalism when it vindicates the right of all Americans to vote, as we are not only authors but also authors of the 14th and 15th Amendments, but we are obligated to do under the republican Guarantee Clause to make sure that all Americans are in a representative relationship with their government.

So I invite them to come on back over to this side of the Voting Rights Act.

Obviously, we are all for a two-state solution, as American Presidents of both parties have been for, for the last several decades, so I invite them to come back over for that, too.

This resolution cannot be both a tired rehash of everything we have done in the past, as was claimed, but also some kind of partisan departure. The partisan departure is on their side.

Madam Speaker, I urge a “yes” vote on the rule and a “yes” vote on the previous question.

The material previously referred to by Mrs. LESKO is as follows:

AMENDMENT TO HOUSE RESOLUTION 741

At the end of the resolution, add the following:

SEC. 3. Immediately upon adoption of this resolution, the House shall proceed to the consideration in the House of the bill (H.R. 2534) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the excise tax on medical devices. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. The bill shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and on any amendment thereto to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means; and (2) one motion to recommit.

SEC. 4. Clause 1(c) of rule XIX shall not apply to the consideration of H.R. 2534.

Mr. RASKIN. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question.

The question was taken; and the yeas and nays were ordered.

Mrs. LESKO. Madam Speaker, on a point of order.

The question was taken; and the yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

INSIDER TRADING PROHIBITION ACT

Ms. WATER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 2534 and to insert extraneous material thereon.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. RASKIN). Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 739 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 2534.

The Chair appoints the gentlewoman from Alabama (Ms. SEWELL) to preside over the Committee of the Whole.

Madam Speaker, I urge a “yes” vote on the rule and a “yes” vote on the previous question.

INSIDER TRADING PROHIBITION ACT

Ms. WATER. Madam Chairwoman, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2534, the Insider Trading Prohibition Act, introduced by the gentleman from Connecticut, Representative JIM HIMES.

I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan bill creates a clear definition of illegal insider trading under the securities laws so that there is a codified, consistent standard for courts and market participants to better protect the hard-earned savings of millions of Americans and bring certainty to the U.S. securities market.

For nearly 80 years, the Securities and Exchange Commission—that is, the SEC—has sought to hold corporate insiders accountable for insider trading that generally serves self-interest at the expense of minority shareholders. This has resulted in a web of court decisions that generally prohibit insiders with a duty of trust and confidence to a corporation from secretly trading on material, nonpublic corporate information for their own personal gain.

These insiders are also generally prohibited from tipping outsiders, known as tippers, who then trade on the information they receive even though they know it was wrongfully obtained.

But, because there isn’t a statutory definition of “insider trading,” there is uncertainty around who is subject to insider trading prohibitions; and, with various court decisions, liability for this type of violation has shifted.

For example, in 2014, an appeals court added a brand-new requirement that the tippee must not just know that information was wrongfully disclosed but must also know about the specific personal benefit that the insider received.

This decision has severely hampered the SEC’s ability to prosecute insider trading cases and, according to Preet Bharara, the former U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York “provides a virtual roadmap for savvy hedge fund managers to insulate themselves from tippee liability by knowingly placing themselves at the end of a chain of insiders and avoiding learning details about the sources of obvious confidential and improperly disclosed information.”
So I am pleased that this bill codifies existing case law and overturns this new controversial requirement, creating a clear, consistent standard for the SEC, the courts, and market participants to follow, and does so in a way that, as Columbia Law School professor John Coffee testified before one of our subcommittees, “expands liability in ways that should not be controversial.’’

I would like to commend Representative HIMES for his efforts since the bill was marked up in May in committee to ensure that it fairly reflects existing law. In addition to extensive outreach to current and former regulators and prosecutors, investor advocates, and institutional investors, Mr. HIMES also repeatedly engaged with our colleagues on the opposite side of the aisle.

As a result, Ranking Member MCHENRY will offer an amendment which will remove unnecessary ambiguities, clarify the intent of the bill to reflect existing insider trading case law, and ensure that the bill preserves the SEC’s ability to bring bad actors to justice under other related insider trading laws.

I plan to support this amendment as a reasonable bipartisan compromise, so I urge all Members to support this commonsense bill that makes the definition of illegal trading very clear for all so that the SEC can effectively crack down on corporate insiders who illegally trade on inside information.

Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HUIZENGA. Madam Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Chair, preventing fraud and abuse within our financial system and cracking down on bad actors for illegal insider trading is a nonpartisan priority. This kind of fraud and illegal activity hurts everyday investors, and it also makes our markets less efficient, accurate, and reliable.

Current law prohibits trading on material insider information in breach of a fiduciary duty under the antifraud provisions of the Federal securities law.

The Securities and Exchange Commission and the Department of Justice are the Federal agencies tasked with enforcing insider trading. Both agencies regularly use their authority by bringing insider trading cases against bad actors who violate our insider trading laws.

The SEC has not asked for this bill, however, unlike other bills that Republicans have voted for out of this House in this past month. Moreover, Democrats have not fully identified a problem within the current body of the law that inhibits the prosecution of bad actors who illegally trade on material, nonpublic information.

As it is written before us on the floor at this moment, this bill could potentially create more confusion and uncertainty within the law of insider trading. It could even expand liability for good faith traders, which would hurt the efficiencies of our markets, chill vital information gathering, and weaken investor confidence.

Republican and Democrat SEC chairs alike, with vastly different approaches to enforcement matters, have expressed concern about codifying a prohibition on insider trading into one single statute. Specifically, they voiced concerns that Congress would write a law that could be both overly broad and too narrow at the same time.

I share their concerns with the bill as drafted before us today, and I am pleased to hear that the chair has indicated that the majority will be accepting the ranking member’s amendment shortly.

I am concerned that the current version of the bill, however, does not include an explicit personal benefit test, as set forth by the Supreme Court precedents. I am troubled that an unclear phrase such as “relating to the market” is overbroad and will allow judges and prosecutors to expand the law.

I am also concerned that the bill, as drafted, lacks an exclusivity provision that would make this bill the exclusive law of the land.

Finally, the rule of construction section before us is troubling, because the Financial Services Committee has not even had a chance to debate this specific language. I fear that this language could substantially and uncer- tainty around insider trading laws, with rogue judges and prosecutors using the language to expand the bounds of insider trading law.

I do believe that the ranking member’s amendment goes a distance in clarifying that, but, as I will talk about, I will be having an amendment later on as well that I believe further clarifies that.

Drafting a statute that appropriately and accurately captures the subtleties of insider trading case law and regulations that have been shaped and refined over decades into a single statute isn’t easy, to say the least.

Achieving bipartisan support also isn’t easy, especially when it involves nuanced and technical substance such as the body of insider trading law.

My colleague, Ranking Member MCHENRY, will be offering his amendment momentarily that represents a bipartisan agreement with the author to improve the bill by including some Republican priorities and improving the bill to better track current insider trading law.

As I had mentioned, I will be offering an amendment as well in an attempt to further clarify and improve this proposal.

So while we are unsure exactly what the final product is going to look like here, I do want to commend both Mr. HIMES and Ranking Member MCHENRY for working together to attempt to reach a bipartisan agreement to improve this bill with the amendment and to make it clear that it is Congress’ intent to codify existing law without broadening it into new areas. I hope that the author of the legislation will accept my amendment as well.

Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. WATERS. Madam Chair, I yield myself such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. HIMES), the chair of the Strategic Technologies and Advanced Research Subcommittee of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, and a valued member of the Financial Services Committee.

Mr. HIMES. Madam Chair, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

I rise, delighted today by our consideration of H.R. 2534, the Insider Trading Prohibition Act, because, after years of work, we are going to produce a bipartisan product which actually does address a significant challenge in insider trading law, and that is, in general, that, to date, there has existed, remarkably, no specific statutory prohibition on insider trading.

I am a believer, as I know everyone else in this Chamber is, that, if we are going to create criminal or civil liability, the legislators of the Congress of the United States should make specific how and when and under what circumstances we do so. And that is what we are doing today, I am delighted to report, in bipartisan fashion.

But let me back up for a second, for those who don’t sit on the committee or watch this particular space all that closely, just to explain why this is important.

Insider trading is an activity in which somebody who has information that they have been entrusted with, or for which they have paid or come by in some dishonest fashion, uses it to secure a market advantage. They have information that others don’t. They trade on that information that allows them to get a material gain.

There is a problem with that, quite apart from the notion that it is only insiders or those people who are not acting based on their talent or their intelligence or their hard work, but acting based on who they know or, worse yet, who they might have paid, that they are the ones who benefit from our capital markets. I think that notion sort of strikes at the fundamental sense of fairness that we all carry around.

But, inasmuch as this behavior exists, it is profoundly damaging to the capital markets that are such a hallmark of the United States, and it is damaging because those capital markets rely on the confidence that millions of American families have out there that their hard-earned savings can be put into the market, invested, and redeployed in a way that is fair to the people that will trade and that they are doing so on a level playing field, not competing with people who may have an inside advantage.
Now, the good news here is that, in the generations preceding us, we have, in fact, prosecuted insider trading, but we have done so under antifraud provisions of the Securities Acts that were passed in the early 1930s; and, as a result, there is a particularly good fit between the concept of fraud and the concept of insider trading.

And to my friend Mr. HUIZENGA’s point, as he knows, this has led to a vast body of court-determined law, starting with the Dirks decision in 1984, moving through Materia, Carpenter, O’Hagan, all court decisions which crafted the concept of liability around insider trading, culminating in the 2014 Newman decision by the Second Circuit, leading then to the Salman decision at the Supreme Court in 2016.

All of these cases that I have mentioned have created uncertainty about the nature of liability and created liability for bad behavior but which did not, in fact, create liability for behavior like doing a little extra work to secure an advantage in investments.

And to my friend Mr. HUIZENGA’s point, we have developed through those decades an extensive and expansive body of law, which crafted the concept of liability for bad behavior but which did not, in fact, create liability for behavior like doing a little extra work to secure an advantage in investments.

It is very, very important to me that this bill be on a bipartisan basis. There is really nothing partisan about this bill. Neither party believes in insider trading or wants to support insider trading. This is not a question of balancing regulation or allocating public resources; this is a question of clarity of law.

So I want to close, apart from just saying that this has been the track record of the establishment and writing the legislation, by thanking Ranking Member MCHENRY and Ranking Member HUIZENGA.

There will be an amendment offered by Ranking Member MCHENRY which the Democrats support. It does improve the bill, but it is not really a compromise in the sense that it actually makes for a better bill.

But I am pleased to say that, after a lot of hard work, this is, in fact, the product of some very robust engagement between the Democratic and Republican Representatives in this Chamber. That is not easy to achieve under these circumstances.

So I want to start, first and foremost, by thanking Chairwoman WATERS and Chairwoman MALONEY for their sponsorship and then, again, Mr. McHENRY and Mr. HUIZENGA, who committed to really understanding what is a technical corner of the law and offer a good faith, good amendment, including some ideas that we will shortly be taking up.

And then, finally, as every Member in this Chamber knows, hard work happens and gets done and leads to success only because an extraordinary and very, very hard work of the staff on both sides of the aisle. So, before yielding back my time to the chairwoman, I do want to specifically thank Katelynn Bradley, Ben Harney, David Fernandez, and David Karp from the Financial Services staff; Mark Snyder, my legislative director, and Rachel Kelly, his predecessor, from my staff.

And then, on the Republican side, big thanks to Kimberly Betz, McNatt, and Jamie McGinnis.

Madam Chair, I urge passage of this law. This will be a good thing for the confidence in our capital markets. It will be a good thing in reassuring the American public that we can get things done on a bipartisan basis. On that basis, I urge passage of H.R. 2534, the Insider Trading Prohibition Act.

Mr. HUIZENGA, Madam Chair, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. McHENRY), the distinguished ranking member.

Mr. McHENRY. Madam Chair, I think the ranking member of the Investor Protection, Entrepreneurship, and Capital Markets Subcommittee, Mr. HUIZENGA, for his good work in committee and working on important legislation for economic growth and for his constituents in Michigan.

Madam Chair, preventing and punishing bad actors for illegal insider trading is one of the top priorities of Republicans on the House Financial Services Committee and I think legal activity hurts everyday Main Street investors as well as the integrity and the efficiency of our markets.

Trading on material insider information in breach of a fiduciary duty is currently prohibited by court-made law under the antifraud provisions of the Federal securities laws that we have. The Securities and Exchange Commission and the Department of Justice have the power to bring insider trading cases, and both agencies regularly exercise this power and have done so for decades.

Our body of insider trading laws has been developed through those decades of judicial precedent to protect investors and the markets by punishing bad actors who illegally trade on insider information.

Codifying nuanced case law and regulations that have been developed over decades into a single statute is really difficult. It is a very difficult undertaking, and it is, really, a very delicate piece of legislation that must occur.

Both Republicans and Democrats who have served on the Securities and Exchange Commission have expressed concerns about Congress drafting a statute that accurately captures this extensive and expansive body of law without expanding it into new areas, inadvertently, perhaps, or perfectly by design in some areas.

But bipartisanship is never easy. It is a give-and-take. It is a difficult process. I appreciate the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. HIMES).
for his willingness to work with us in a bipartisan manner.

The bill on the floor today is not perfect, and, as the gentleman from Connecticut knows, I have several concerns with this bill. I have concerns about the lack of an explicit personal benefit test consistent with Supreme Court precedent. I am concerned that ambiguous language currently in the bill, such as "relating to the market," is ripe for activist judges and overzealous prosecutors and private plaintiffs to exploit, leading to greater uncertainty for anyone involved in investing. That is not what we want; that is not what we seek; and that should not be this undertaking. And I also don't believe that is the intention of my colleague from Connecticut in the drafting of this bill.

I am also troubled that the Rules Committee print before us does not include an exclusivity provision establishing that this bill is the insider trading bill and just an additional action under insider trading.

Finally, the Rules Committee print includes a rule of construction section that has yet to be vetted through the Financial Services Committee; and without the understanding of the implications of this language, the bill could further open the door for activist judges, overzealous prosecutors, and trial lawyers, creating even more confusion under insider trading law.

That is not good for investors. That is not good for our markets. It is not good for anyone outside of a narrow few that personally benefit through fees around lawsuits.

My amendment, which I will offer in a minute, addresses some of these concerns, and I appreciate my colleague from Connecticut, and I appreciate the chair of the Financial Services Committee, Ms. Waters, for their engagement so that we can actually come to a bipartisan agreement on this important act.

Now, Republicans continue to support sensible bipartisan insider trading bills, such as the one that Chairwoman Waters and I brought forth, or she brought forth, as the first action of our committee on this House floor in this Congress, which was promoting Transparent Standards for Corporate Insiders Act, which we passed out of this Chamber. And starting off with the fact that we are going to be tough on bad actors from the Financial Services Committee and doing it in a bipartisan way shows our seriousness. And this bill before us is an addition to that seriousness that we take against bad actors in our area of jurisdiction.

Finally, I would say this: We currently have out of decades of lawsuits, decades of regulatory enforcement, we have the greatest clarity on insider trading that we have ever had in this Nation, and that is due to two Supreme Court cases, in particular, giving us serious rules of the road. And I think that clarity is good. And what we want out of this legislation is to put in statute what is confirmed and established currently in the marketplace and currently in the courts of law.

This is not to create more confusion or more complexity; codify what is a well-regulated, bright-line space that we currently have. And we want to take that consistency that we currently have and establish it in statute. And that is the reason why Republicans have engaged deeply with Democrats to come to some reasonable conclusion on this important matter of banning insider trading.

So Congress will have its say. I believe we will have a bipartisan vote for final passage, if my amendment is adopted, and I would hope that that would take place. And we have had good conversations along those lines, and I think we have workable language that could be acceptable to all in this body.

I want to thank everyone who has participated, but most particularly Mr. Himes from Connecticut. While we don't agree on every issue—heck, I don't think you would get reelected in Connecticut if you agreed with me on every issue, nor I in North Carolina in my district—bipartisanship is a hard thing, but if we are going to do big, important things, we have to try for that. And when you are in the majority, it is implicit you have more votes than those in the minority.

So Democrats could pass this bill on their own. And if they wanted to just use this as a political issue, they could just jam the language they have; they could, right? But it was your willingness to reach out, so that we could actually have a big bipartisan vote, rather than a narrow victory. That is also something that is a marker, that most in this country don't have a chance to actually do talk. We may disagree on big things, we may, and from time to time Chairwoman Waters and I have had our public disagreements, but at the same time we have been able to come to terms on important things in our jurisdiction and get things done.

So while that is not the everyday case for this Congress, when it happens, I think we should actually acknowledge it. Not that anybody is going to put us on the back for it, but we should acknowledge it.

I thank my colleagues on the Democrat side of the aisle for their work, and I thank my colleagues on the Republican side of the aisle for their work, as well.

Mr. HUIZENGA, Madam Chair, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Madam Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. WATERS. Madam Chair, I yield myself the remainder of my time.

Madam Chairwoman, H.R. 2534, the Insider Trading Prohibition Act, is a long overdue piece of legislation that simply spells out the definition of illegal insider trading under the securities laws. It creates clarity for participants in financial markets and empowers the SEC to punish bad actors.

As we have discussed, this bill is supported by groups, including the Council of Institutional Investors, the California State Teachers' Retirement System, the North American Securities Administrators' Association, Healthy Markets, and Public Citizen.

Madam Chair, I thank the ranking member, Mr. McHenry, for his very kind comments. I thank him for his cooperation. I thank him for recognizing that it is possible to have bipartisan legislation. And I thank him for recognizing that Mr. Himes has worked very hard to ensure that he would have this as bipartisan legislation, rather than simply having the Democrats try to run roughshod over the opposite side of the aisle to get their way.

I urge all Members to vote "yes" on this important bill. Madam Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.
The CHAIR. All time for general debate has expired.

Pursuant to the rule, the bill shall be considered for amendment under the 5-minute rule.

In lieu of the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Financial Services, printed in the bill, an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 116–39, shall be considered as adopted.

The bill, as amended, shall be considered as read.

The text of the bill, as amended, is as follows:

H.R. 2534

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

SECTION 1 SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Insider Trading Prohibition Act”.

SEC. 2. PROHIBITION ON INSIDER TRADING.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (15 U.S.C. 78a et seq.) is amended by inserting after section 16 the following new section:

"SEC. 16A. PROHIBITION ON INSIDER TRADING.

(1) Prohibition Against Trading Securities While Aware of Material, Nonpublic Information.—It shall be unlawful for any person, directly or indirectly, to purchase, sell, or enter into, or cause the purchase or sale of or entry into, any security, security-based swap, or security-based swap agreement, relating to the market for such security, security-based swap, or security-based swap agreement, if such person knows, or recklessly disregards, that such information has been obtained wrongfully, or that such purchase or sale would constitute a wrongful use of such information.

(b) PROHIBITION AGAINST TRADING SECURITIES WHILE AWARE OF MATERIAL, NONPUBLIC INFORMATION.—It shall be unlawful for any person, directly or indirectly, to purchase, sell, or enter into, or cause the purchase or sale of or entry into, any security, security-based swap, or security-based swap agreement, while aware of material, nonpublic information relating to such security, security-based swap, or security-based swap agreement, or relating to the market for such security, security-based swap, or security-based swap agreement, if such person knows, or recklessly disregards, that such information has been obtained wrongfully, or that such purchase or sale would constitute a wrongful use of such information.

(c) AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSES.

(1) In general.—With respect to a transaction in any security, security-based swap, or security-based swap agreement, the following defenses are available:

(a) Federal securities laws (including any successor regulation), the securities exchange act of 1934, the securities and exchange commission shall review rule 10b-5-1 (17 C.F.R. 240.10b5-1), or any successor regulation.

(b) The prohibitions of this section shall not apply to any transaction that satisfies the requirements of rule 10b-5-1 (17 C.F.R. 240.10b5-1), or any successor regulation.

(c) COMMISSION REVIEW OF RULE 10B-5-1.—The Securities and Exchange Commission shall review Rule 10b-5-1 (17 C.F.R. 240.10b5-1) and make any modifications to the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 made by this Act.

(d) AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSES.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—The Commission may, by rule or by order, exempt any person, security, or transaction, or any class of persons, securities, or transactions, from any or all of the provisions of this section, in any case in which the Commission determines that such an exemption is necessary or appropriate in furtherance of the purposes of this title.

"(2) DIRECTED TRADING.—The prohibitions of this section shall not apply to any person who acts on the specific direction of, and solely for the account of another person whose own securities trading, or communications of material, nonpublic information, would be lawful under this section.

"(3) RULE 10B-5-1 COMPLIANT TRANSACTIONS.—The prohibitions of this section shall not apply to any transaction that satisfies the requirements of Rule 10b-5-1 (17 C.F.R. 240.10b5-1), or any successor regulation.

"(f) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Section 10(b) and 14(e) and any judicial precedents from judicial decisions under this section may be applied to the purchase or sale of or entry into, any security, security-based swap, or security-based swap agreement, which such decisions do not conflict with the provisions of this section.

"(g) COMMISSION REVIEW OF RULE 10B-5-1.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Securities and Exchange Commission shall review Rule 10b-5-1 (17 C.F.R. 240.10b5-1) and make any modifications to the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 so as to consider the needs and conditions as it considers necessary or appropriate in furtherance of the purposes of this title.

"(h) COMMISSION REVIEW OF RULE 10B-5-1.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Securities and Exchange Commission shall determine, or grant any necessary or appropriate exemption to the provisions of this Act.


"(1) in section 21(d)(2), by inserting "section 16A of this title" after "section 19(b) of this title;"

"(2) in section 21A—

"(A) in subsection (p)(1), by inserting "section 16A," after "section 16A;"

"(B) in subsection (h)(1), by inserting "section 16A," after "section 16A;" and

"(C) in section 21C, by inserting "section 16A," after "section 16A;" the CHAIR. No further amendment to the bill, as amended, shall be in order except those printed in House Report 116–320. Each such further amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, by a Member designated in the report, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question.

AMENDMENT NO. 1 OFFERED BY MR. HENRY

The CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 1 printed in House Report 116–320.

Mr. MCENRY. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk. The CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 1, beginning on line 11, strike “relating to the market for” and insert “any non-public information, from whatever source”.

Page 2, beginning on line 11, strike “relating to the market for” and insert “any non-public information, from whatever source”.

Page 3, line 21, insert before the period the following: “for a direct or indirect personal benefit (including pecuniary gain, reputational benefit, or a gift of confidential information to a trading relative or friend)”.

Page 5, strike lines 12 through 17 and insert a closing quotation mark and a period.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 739, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MCHENRY) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

Mr. McHENRY. Madam Chair, as I just mentioned a few minutes ago, I have concerns with H.R. 2534, the Insider Trading Prohibition Act in its current form. Mr. Chair, my amendment addresses several of these concerns and improves this bill to better demonstrate congressional intent of codifying current insider trading law and not expanding it.

I thank the bill’s sponsor, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. Himes), and his staff for their diligence and patience in working with us over the last few months and over the recent Thanksgiving holiday. I also want to thank both of our staffs, as well as the Waters’ staff. And I want to thank Mr. Himes for agreeing to support this amendment in order to make this underlying bill a bipartisan approach to codify insider trading law and punish bad actors.

My amendment reflects Republican priorities discussed at our May markup, such as the inclusion of an explicit personal benefit test consistent with Supreme Court precedent, the removal of the novel rule of construction section from the Rules Committee Print of this bill, and clarification of ambiguous words to ensure judges and prosecutors know that this bill is not intended to expand or create new insider trading liability.
The bill as drafted does not explicitly include the so-called personal benefit test, a significant element of insider trading law that prosecutors must currently satisfy in certain insider trading cases. In the 2016 Salman case, the Supreme Court noted that in order for a violation to have occurred, the insider or ‘’tipper’’ providing the material, nonpublic information must have received a direct or indirect personal benefit, including but not limited to, pecuniary gain, reputational benefit, or a gift of material information to a trading relative or friend.

Including an explicit personal benefit test, as set forth by the Supreme Court, ensures that this important test cannot be read more broadly by judges than the Supreme Court has allowed, and also, this prevents activist judges and overzealous prosecutors from reading the test out of law entirely.

My amendment also clarifies the ambiguities within the ‘’relating to the market price of a security’’ phrase in the underlying bill. This phrase ‘’relating to the market’’ is not a legal term of art defined within the existing body of insider trading law, nor is it defined in this bill. It is entirely plausible for an activist judge or a rogue prosecutor to interpret this phrase far more broadly than the drafters of the bill intended.

This amendment provides a limiting principle by applying only to nonpublic information that has or is reasonably expected to have a material effect on the market price of a security. This ensures that the statute will still capture cases where the receipt of material, nonpublic information was not from the company itself, but from another source. This is referenced in the Supreme Court’s 1987 Carpenter decision.

Finally, my amendment strikes the rule of construction section in the underlying bill that was not reviewed or debated in the House Financial Services Committee. I believe this provision is unnecessary and creates more confusion. The worst, could have been read as giving a congressional stamp of approval for a poorly reasoned judicial set of decisions.

As such, my amendment would ensure that Congress’ intent is to simply codify existing law, not expand liability or create additional defenses for those accused of insider trading. This is about codifying what is already existing, period, end of statement.

That being said, my amendment does not achieve all the Republican goals that we have previously outlined in our comments and could hear. Unfortunately, the bill, even if it is amended by this amendment, still will not contain an exclusivity provision to make this the exclusive law of the land for insider trading.

While my amendment does not make this the exclusive law of the land for insider trading by Congress to exercise its Article I authority to produce a comprehensive insider trading law for the first time and does so in a bipartisan manner that simply intends, we believe, to codify current insider trading law without expanding liability to good-faith people innocent under the law.

Mr. Chair, I urge its adoption, and I thank the bill’s sponsor for working with us on it.

Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Chair, I claim myself such time as I may consume.

First, I thank Ranking Member MCHENRY for offering this amendment to H.R. 2534 to help further ensure that this commonsense bill codifies the law against insider trading in a fair manner.

When we marked up the bill in committee in May, I understood that my Republican colleagues had several concerns with the bill but nevertheless voiced their support in hopes of having those concerns addressed before the bill made its way to the House floor.

At the end of the day, those concerns amounted to wanting additional clarity that H.R. 2534 reflected the current judge-made law against insider trading, aside from the controversial 2014 appeals court decision that has been subject to criticism from many sides.

After months of discussion with the bill’s sponsor, Representative Himes, Ranking Member MCHENRY has crafted this amendment to do just that. In particular, the amendment would clarify that the existing law that requires the SEC to establish some personal benefit to a tipper in cases involving tipper and tippee liability; clarify that the material, nonpublic information that forms the basis of liability may be relevant to a specific security or to any security if that information would have or reasonably be expected to have a material effect on the market price of that security; and remove the rule of construction to avoid confusion and ambiguity and to ensure that this act is not the exclusive means by which the SEC, the Department of Justice, or private litigants may pursue insider trading.

If the amendment is accepted, I believe that the bill would provide the SEC with clear additional authority to bring to justice corporate insiders and others who take unfair advantage of confidential information. In addition, because the bill uses the same terms identified in the current case law against insider trading, the SEC and market participants can easily understand what those terms mean.

Again, Mr. Chair, I thank Ranking Member MCHENRY for strengthening the bill and I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this amendment.

Mr. Chair, I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. Himes), the sponsor of this important legislation.

Mr. Himes. Mr. Chair, what is the balance of time available?

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from California has 2½ minutes remaining.

Mr. Himes. Mr. Chair, I thank Ranking Member WATERS for yielding me time.

I rise very briefly to welcome the amendment by Mr. MCHENRY. Mr. MCHENRY raised four substantive points. Three of those points are incorporated in this amendment, which we are very happy to accept.

I think it is, again, not a compromise, but an improvement of the bill.

In my very little remaining time, we did have discussions about exclusivity. As the ranking member knows, the idea here is to create a law under which insider trading is prosecuted. That is the objective. As the ranking member knows, it is a fairly complicated situation when including specific exclusivity language. Ultimately, that was not included in the ranking member’s proposed amendment here, but we should continue to work together to make sure that this is about clarifying and simplifying and making more efficient rather than making more complex.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MCHENRY).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 2 OFFERED BY MR. HUIZENGA

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 2 printed in House Report 116–320.

Mr. HUIZENGA. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 1, line 10, strike ‘’AWARE OF’’ and insert ‘’USING’’.

Page 2, line 22, strike ‘’aware of’’ and insert ‘’using’’.

Page 3, beginning on line 24, strike ‘’aware of’’ and insert ‘’using’’.

Page 3, line 3, strike ‘’aware of’’ and insert ‘’using’’.

Page 3, line 3, strike ‘’aware of’’ and insert ‘’using’’.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 739, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HUIZENGA) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes and conclude hearing.

Mr. HUIZENGA. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chair, I will be brief. I am concerned that the bill before us today forgets specifically awareness of information rather than the use of wrongful information in connection with security trading.
Specifically, this bill defines trading while “aware” of material and nonpublic information or communicating material and nonpublic information as wrongful only if the information was obtained by way of, or its communications or use would constitute: theft, bribery, other deception, espionage, or violation of Federal computer data and intellectual property protection and privacy laws; conversion, misappropriation, or other deceptive means; and any breach of a fiduciary duty of confidence, a code of conduct, or a personal confidence or trust.

A person violates the bill’s prohibitions on trading with and communicating material on nonpublic information so long as this person “knew” the information was wrongfully obtained, actively avoided gaining such knowledge, or recklessly disregarded the wrongful use, communication, or obtaining of this information.

It does not matter, under the bill, whether they know the method by which the information was obtained or communicated or if any benefit actually came from communication of the information.

In short, Mr. Chair, I believe that this would, in turn, allow activist judges and prosecutors to go after individuals regardless of their intention or actual profit from wrongful actions.

That is why my amendment is very simple. It would strike all occurrences of the phrase “aware of” and insert the word “using.” In other words, you can be aware of something, but if you are not going to actually use that information, why would you be held to a criminal standard?

My amendment would have the effect of limiting who can be prosecuted under this bill to people who actually use wrongful information to gain a profit.

As we all know, in our lives, there are all kinds of rumors around us all the time, whether it is about our work life or our family or whatever might be going on, somebody in the neighborhood. It is hard to know what information is actually true or actually accurate.

What we have currently is this assumption that being aware of something makes you criminally liable. What would it do, in effect, all occurrences of the phrase “aware of” and insert the word “using.” In other words, you can be aware of something, but if you are not going to actually use that information, why would you be held to a criminal standard?

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My amendment would have the effect of limiting who can be prosecuted under this bill to people who actually use wrongful information to gain a profit.
The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, this 5-minute vote on passage of the bill will be followed by 5-minute votes on ordering the previous question on House Resolution 741, and adoption of House Resolution 741, if ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 410, nays 13, not voting 7, as follows:

[Vote list]

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, this 5-minute vote on passage of the bill will be followed by 5-minute votes on ordering the previous question on House Resolution 741, and adoption of House Resolution 741, if ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 410, nays 13, not voting 7, as follows:

[Vote list]
December 5, 2019

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD—HOUSE

H9279

December 5, 2019

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4, VOTING RIGHTS ADVANCEMENT ACT OF 2019, AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H. RES. 326, EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES REGARDING UNITED STATES EFFORTS TO RESOLVE THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT THROUGH A NEGOTIATED TWO-STATE SOLUTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the unfinished business is the vote on ordering two-state solution, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question.

This is a 5-minute vote. The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 228, nays 196, not voting 6, as follows:

[Table]

The yeas and nays were ordered.
So the previous question was ordered. The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question was taken; and the previous question was ordered, yeas 226, nays 196, not voting 8, as follows:

(A Roll No. 661)

YEAS--226

So the resolution was agreed to. The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

COMMEMORATING THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF PEACEFUL ZION BAPTIST CHURCH

(Mr. PAYNE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAYNE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commemorate one of my district’s most venerable churches. This year marks the 75th anniversary of the Peaceful Zion Baptist Church in East Orange, New Jersey.

It has been known as a sanctuary for those in need throughout that time. It runs a food pantry for those in need of a meal. It provides clothing for those who could use a warm coat or socks.

The community of Peaceful Zion is so strong that members have been known to bring food to ailing families. One of its members said: “Everyone is there for one another.”

Congratulations to Peaceful Zion Baptist Church on its 75th anniversary. They are a blessed beacon of loving care in my 10th District in New Jersey.

YESTERDAY’S IMPEACHMENT HOAX

(Mr. RUTHERFORD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RUTHERFORD. Madam Speaker, this morning, Speaker PELOSI announced that yesterday’s hearing in the Judiciary Committee with “leading American constitutional scholars,” give Congress no choice—no choice—but to impeach the President. But let’s take a look at who exactly testified at yesterday’s impeachment hearing.

Professor Karlan donated over $12,000 to liberal Democrat politicians, went after the President’s 13-year-old son, and she can’t even walk past the Trump Hotel without having to cross the street.

Professor Gerhardt donated thousands of dollars to former President Obama and Hillary Clinton. He also worked against Justice Kavanaugh during his nomination process.

Professor Feldman called for the President’s impeachment in 2017 based on a tweet, just over a month into his Presidency.

However, Professor Turley, who voted against the President, told us this to say about the lack of evidence against President Trump: “Impeachment has to be based on proof, not presumptions.”

Abuse of power? Madam Speaker, an impeachment with this fact pattern is an abuse of power by the House of Representatives.

DEMOCRATS ARE WORKING FOR THE GOODNESS AND GREATNESS OF THIS NATION

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to address the House
for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, we do have a very solemn responsibility to uphold the rule of law, but it is important to note that Democrats and the majority in the House have worked every day for the American people.

Among the 400 bills that we have supported are: H.R. 986, the Protecting America from Existential Conditions Act of 2019, legislation that I have consistently worked on for almost a decade; the Equality Act, which gives equality to all people; the Paycheck Fairness Act, to treat women fairly; the Climate Action Now Act to give other legislation to recognize the crisis in climate change; national flood insurance, which my constituents in Texas are desperate for; directing the removal of United States Armed Forces from hostilities in the Republic of Yemen; and then, of course, a signature bill that I have written over a 2-year period, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act, which expands the rights of Native Americans and provides $291 million for our law enforcement and prosecutors.

Finally, let me say, I was very proud to stand for H. Res. 183, condemning anti-Semitism as hateful expressions of intolerance, which are contradictory to the values and aspirations that define the people of the United States, and condemning anti-Muslim discrimination and bigotry against minorities as hateful expressions of intolerance.

We are working on behalf of all of the American people. We ask the other body to work, but we are doing our job for the goodness and the greatness of this Nation.

PENNSYLVANIA’S 12TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT’S ENERGY ECONOMY IS BOOMING

(Mr. KELLER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KELLER. Madam Speaker, the energy economy of Pennsylvania’s 12th Congressional District is booming, creating good-paying jobs and providing low-cost energy to thousands of families across the Commonwealth and our Nation.

As evidence of this, our district is happy to welcome Thailand-based natural gas company BKV to Pennsylvania’s 12th Congressional District. Next week, BKV will be opening an office in Tunkhannock, Pennsylvania. They will join other natural gas companies in Pennsylvania’s 12th Congressional District in creating good-paying jobs, giving back to the community, and helping our rural district thrive with the resources right under our feet.

Pennsylvania’s 12th Congressional District plays an important role in our national energy portfolio, producing between one-tenth and one-twentieth of the country’s entire natural gas supply on any given day.

Energy produced in PA–12 lowers energy costs, creates an energy-independent United States, and allows our allies to no longer be reliant on energy resources from countries that do not share our values.

Natural gas companies have helped with community revitalization and in creating a robust economy of downstream jobs. The present and future of PA–12 is bright because of the natural gas industry, and, for the benefit of my community, our State, and our Nation, I will continue to support its growth and expansion in Congress.

STOP ROBOCALLS

(Mr. LIPINSKI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LIPINSKI. Madam Speaker, robocalls, just mentioning them is enough to make anyone’s blood boil. Robocalls interrupt our time with family and friends, scam people out of their hard-earned money while spoofing numbers to make calls look local, and even clog up the phone lines of hospital emergency rooms. In 2018, Americans collectively, received 48 billion robocalls.

I cosponsored legislation earlier this year to stop robocalls, and the House voted yesterday to pass the final version, which we expect to be signed into law.

The TRACED Act strengthens penalties and extends the statute of limitations on violations; it requires phone companies to authenticate where calls are coming from and help customers easily block them at no extra charge; and it requires continued work by the Federal Government to combat emerging robocall methods.

This is a clear win for the American people and shows what we can do here when we work together.

VIRGINIA SUPPORTS THE SECOND AMENDMENT

(Mr. RIGGLEMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RIGGLEMAN. Madam Speaker, 40 Virginia localities have declared themselves “Second Amendment sanctuaries,” resolving to support the Constitution and stand against infringements on the Second Amendment.

Across my district, thousands of citizens are rallying outside the meetings of their local government to show their strong support for the rights of gun owners.

Virginia has always been a cradle of constitutional rights. There is no divide between our rural and urban populations. All of us want to defend our rights as citizens of the United States of America.

I represent the same district that James Madison represented in the first Congress. He understood America’s rights to bear arms when he wrote it into our Constitution.

I am a strong supporter of the Second Amendment, and I am proud to stand with the people who are speaking up for their constitutional rights and for the Commonwealth of Virginia.

James Madison would be proud. I know I am.

12 DAYS OF SALT

(Ms. SHERRILL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SHERRILL. Madam Speaker, on the second day of SALT, my constituents have said to me that they send more money to Washington and get back less than almost any other State in the country. The SALT cap compounds the attack on New Jersey, forcing our residents to send even more money to Washington without a return on that investment.

For every dollar New Jersey sent to Washington in 2017, we got back only 82 cents. That puts us in 49th place, almost dead last in State return on Federal tax dollars. And this was before the Federal Government stripped the full SALT deduction.

Meanwhile, States like Kentucky got back $2.35 for every dollar they sent to Washington. That is nearly three times what New Jersey gets.

The 2017 tax bill unfairly targets States like mine that pay more than their fair share. We fund projects in Kentucky and do not see that same investment, say, on things like infrastructure, for example, in our State.

We need to restore the SALT deduction cap and keep money in the pockets of New Jerseys so we can continue to power the Nation’s economy.

CONGRATULATING SANGAMON COUNTY’S WILLIAMSVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

(Ms. SHERRILL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SHERRILL. Madam Speaker, on Friday night at Huskie Stadium in DeKalb, Illinois, the Williamsville Bullets rallied late in the fourth quarter to win a thrilling 46–42 game against Byron High School. With just 3 minutes remaining and Byron leading 42–39, the Williamsville defense stonewalled Byron to force a turnover. The Bullets then marched down the field, and junior quarterback Conor McCormick fired a game-winning touchdown to secure the State title.

The Bullets’ offense set a 3A championship record with 550 yards of total offense. Wide receiver Brandon Bishop set a record for receiving yards with
230, and quarterback Conor McCormick set the record with 335 passing yards and four touchdowns.

The Williamsville football team has made all of central Illinois proud with their accomplishments this season. The never-give-up belief that embodied this team was on full display in their State championship, and their historic season is a testament to the hard work of these young men.

I congratulate Coach Aaron Kunz and the Williamsville High School Bullets.

And today we stand with those who lost family and friends, and we stand with the heroes who have defended and those who continue to defend our freedoms today and our way of life. We must never forget, and we must always honor their sacrifice.

DEMOCRATS HAVE PLEDGED TO TAKE ACTION

(Mr. MORELLE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MORELLE, Madam Speaker, in January, House Democrats pledged to get to work for the people and take action to uplift the lives of everyday Americans.

I am so proud of the progress we have made and the proposals we have advanced that would have meaningful impacts on our communities. Unfortunately, our partners in the United States Senate have abdicated their responsibility to do the same.

We have sent over 300 bipartisan bills to the Senate so far this year, and not one has been taken up for a vote. This includes legislation to keep our communities safer by enacting universal background checks on all gun sales, legislation that would raise the minimum wage, safeguard our elections, protect people with preexisting conditions, and ensure equal pay for equal work.

We were elected to serve the American people, and I will keep fighting alongside my colleagues in the House to advance legislation that improves the lives of everyone who calls our Nation home. I call upon the United States Senate to do the very same.

THE RIGHT TO VOTE IS SACRED

(Mr. ENGEL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ENGEL, Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4, the Voting Rights Advancement Act.

The right to vote is sacred and must not be infringed upon. Sadly, our Nation has a long and even bloody history of racial voter suppression, but lately that suppression has been supercharged by the terrible decision in Shelby County v. Holder. This case gutted key protections of the Voting Rights Act, allowing for States to prevent certain groups from accessing the ballot through voter ID laws, closing polling locations, and even purging voter rolls.

I will be pleased to vote in favor of H.R. 4, as it represents a major step toward ensuring every citizen has the ability to vote. H.R. 4 will create a new coverage formula for repeated voting rights violations in the last 25 years and establish practice-based preclearance to focus administrative or judiciary review narrowly on suspect voting practices.

With the House approving H.R. 4, we take a major step forward, and I urge prompt action by the other body.

PEACE PROCESS IN UKRAINE

(Ms. KAPTUR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. KAPTUR, Madam Speaker, next week, leaders from Ukraine, France, Germany, and Russia will meet to discuss a road forward to peace in Ukraine. President Biden must be united with a clear mandate to bring to an end Russia’s illegal war on Ukraine.

The question we must ask is: Peace at what cost to liberty?

Russia illegally invaded Ukraine, already leading to the deaths of over 14,000 Ukrainians and the displacement of millions. The enemy of liberty seeks to undermine democratic institutions that have secured peace in Europe since the second World War ended.

During these sensitive negotiations, freedom lovers stand shoulder to shoulder with the Ukrainian people. America will not tolerate any nation that bullies Ukraine into a sham peace that only rewards Kremlin aggression.

We join with the Ukrainian people in welcoming a just peace in Ukraine. However, any peace agreement cannot provide legal cover for Russia’s land grab. Peace can only come to Europe when Russia respects the integrity of Ukraine’s borders.

Madam Speaker, liberty on the European Continent hangs in the balance. Today we must do what is right and stand with Ukraine’s people so that tomorrow she will have a lasting peace and Europe, as well.

CONGRATULATING THE RIVER ROUGE FOOTBALL TEAM

(Ms. TLAIB asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. TLAIB, Madam Speaker, I rise today to give a hearty congratulations to our Panthers, the River Rouge High School football team on winning their first ever state championship. Thirteenth District strong is so incredibly proud.

In a dramatic game, our River Rouge Panthers prevailed over setbacks early on to defeat a formidable opponent. This hard-earned victory is a testament to the countless hours of training put in by this dedicated team, as well as the support of its coaches and our parents.

As legendary basketball coach Phil Jackson once said, “The strength of the team is each individual member. The strength of each member is the team.”

Please join me in recognizing our River Rouge High School football team, the Panthers, and Coach Corey Parker for their outstanding accomplishment.

Congratulations, Panthers.

ECONOMIC JUSTICE ISSUES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. WEXTON). Under the Speaker’s announced policy of January 3, 2019, the
gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. TLAIB) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Ms. TLAIB. Madam Speaker, today, I am representing the Congressional Progressive Caucus in our Special Order so that we can push forward on a number of agenda items on economic justice issues. I am really proud to join many of my colleagues today as we talk about housing for all across the United States of America.

Ms. O’MARA. I yield to the gentlewoman from Minnesota (Ms. O’MARA).

Ms. O’MARA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to discuss the basic and dire human right that so many of us take for granted, the right to a safe and stable home.

Last week, families across this country gathered around in their dining rooms to give thanks and break bread, but many families in my home district were not sitting around for a holiday dinner. Instead, they were facing an inescapable truth. The day before Thanksgiving, a fire broke out in a 25-story public housing building in the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood of Minneapolis where I grew up. Five people lost their lives. And more than a week later, residents are still in the hospital recovering from their injuries.

After the brave men and women of the local fire department cleared the scene and controlled the blaze, we discovered an almost unbelievable reality. These buildings are not equipped with sprinklers. You see, these buildings are so old that it is exempt from laws that require such lifesaving equipment.

And that’s not the only egregious safety issue that our public housing residents are forced to endure.

There has been a ban on building new public housing since the 1990s. In fact, the Cedar-Riverside building that sustained the fire was built in the 1960s. And the Federal Government has been understaffing the repair and maintenance needs of the homes for years. In Minnesota, the backlog of repair needs totals over $300 million. So not only are these homes half a century old, they are practically being held together with little more than hope and masking tape.

Make no mistake, we, as lawmakers, bear responsibility for the deplorable conditions of our public housing and for the deplorable and unsafe conditions of Americans who are living in today. This is our fault. The Federal Government has all but abandoned public housing.

We cannot continue to pretend that we can’t see the crumbling buildings in our districts. We can’t continue to ignore the hundreds of thousands who experience homelessness because of waiting lists for housing assistance. And it goes beyond the homeless population.

Millions of Americans are living every single day in fear of eviction. Two million Americans are paying more than half of their income in rent, and about 6,300 people are evicted every single day.

How can we in Congress call ourselves leaders if we continue to ignore this crisis?

I, for one, refuse to continue down that path. It is time for a bold and progressive solution.

I will be introducing legislation that ensures every public housing unit in this country is equipped with sprinklers, so that we never see another devasting tragedy like the one that befell the Cedar-Riverside district. And we will be demanding accountability from HUD, requiring the agency to report on exactly how many units are not fitted with sprinklers and how much money the agency needs to fix this glaring hazard. But that is not enough.

Last month I introduced Homes for All Act, which would make an historic investment of $1 trillion in public housing and low-income housing and build a record 12 million new homes over the next 10 years.

My bill would also ensure that public housing residents are guaranteed access to important wraparound services like employment assistance, child care, and financial literacy courses.

And just as important, my bill would make sure that public housing funding is a mandatory part of our Federal budget, meaning that the government wouldn’t be able to abandon these new homes or neglect their upkeep. Public housing would now be treated like any other important guaranteed source of assistance, like Social Security and Medicare.

While any legislation is bold, it is also absolutely necessary. Every human being has a right to a safe and affordable home. And without a historic investment in our public housing stock and greater accountability for the safety of our residents, we will continue to face tragedies like the ones that claimed the lives of five people in Cedar-Riverside last week. We cannot let that happen, and I will not let that happen.

Madam Speaker, I thank Congresswoman RASHIDA TLAIB for allowing this conversation to take place today.

Ms. TLAIB. Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. GOMEZ).

Mr. GOMEZ. Madam Speaker, I thank Congresswoman RASHIDA TLAIB for allowing this conversation to take place today.

In America, homeownership is how we build wealth, and it determines your family’s likelihood of success.

In America, whether you rent or you own, where you live determines where your kids go to school.

In America, it often determines how far you commute to work.

In America, it often determines how far you are from a grocery store and healthy options for food for your family.

It also determines what public services are available to you.

But, unfortunately, many low-income individuals and people of color have been denied this opportunity.

We still have an opportunity to make amends and rectify the inequalities that have persisted in low-income neighborhoods and communities of color.

The Tax Code is one of the most powerful tools we have. That is why I re-introduced the Rent Relief Act.

This bill aims to reduce the rent burden by creating a new refundable tax credit for families that are paying more than 30 percent of their income in rent and utilities because no family should be forced to choose between heat and light and putting food on the table.

This bill will put more money in the pockets of families at a time when wages have remained stagnant and housing costs have increased.

This bill has the potential to transform lives, especially those of the lowest income people with a breadth of opportunities, and provide opportunities to climb the economic ladder by redistributing the benefits of homeownership to the lowest income earners.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to cosponsor this important piece of legislation.

Ms. TLAIB. Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ), my good colleague.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Madam Speaker, I thank Congresswoman TLAIB for hosting this Special Order hour on housing and our chair for presiding during this very critical conversation.

We are here today to talk about one of the most core, important issues facing the American people, which is housing.

Each and every year, it feels as though as our wages remain stable or the same, rent is going up, and it becomes harder and harder to afford the very things that keep ourselves afloat and alive, whether it is healthcare, housing, or an education.

During the financial crisis of 2008, American households lost $16 trillion in wealth. Many lost their homes and saw their savings and retirement funds depleted. More than half of all renters in America, over 21 million households, were rent-burdened in 2015, meaning that they spend more than 30 percent or more of their income on rent.

We are in one of the worst renter crises in a generation. At a time when our
country is at its wealthiest, in the city of New York, we are seeing populations of people who are homeless at the highest rates since the Great Depression. But there is another way.

When we start to legislate housing as a human right, we begin to change our priorities and move away from looking at housing as a for-profit commodity for speculation and toward something that should be guaranteed for all Americans at an affordable rate that can be accessible to all working people in America.

That is one of the reasons why I have introduced A Place to Prosper Act, which includes provisions like universal rent control, just cause evictions, a ban on income discrimination, access to counsel, improving the quality of the housing stock, and a disclosures requirement on corporate landlords to rein in bad actors.

Additionally, we know that the area of housing and construction is one of the largest contributors to carbon emissions, which is why we have also introduced the Green New Deal for Public Housing Act. What that does is that it aims to decarbonize the entire public housing stock in the United States of America.

It is what must be done; it is in accordance with the science; and it changes the systems through which we approach housing away from the volatile boom-and-bust speculative environment and toward a secure and stable economic environment that treats housing as a right.

Ms. TLAIB. Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER), my good colleague.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, I appreciate the gentlewoman’s courtesy in permitting me to speak on this and for organizing, as I think is one of the most important discussions that this Congress needs to have.

Housing is fundamental. It has been the major source of wealth generation for middle-class Americans and is an even greater source of wealth accumulation for upper income Americans.

But, sadly, it has been a source of discrimination and widening income inequality because of decades of systematic discrimination by the Federal Government against people of color, especially African Americans.

I am embarrassed that in my community, returning World War II veterans were turned away from opportunities to live in neighborhoods where they could actually afford the loans. The redlining practices denied them an opportunity to be able to secure government-financed lending.

We know that practices in the real estate industry that actively steered people away from certain neighborhoods. We had areas where people resisted allowing people of color to move in. The Federal Government did not enforce constitutional antidiscrimination provisions.

Madam Speaker, the consequences of decades of neglect, discrimination, and underinvestment is visible today in most major American cities. It is obvious in my community, where we are seeing a homeless population that is persistent and growing.

We are seeing in communities large and small, people who are rent-burdened, as my colleagues have already referenced, with half the people paying more than a third of their income, many of them over half, if they can qualify as renters at all.

The Federal Government has systematically reduced its modest housing footprint, not being involved in new housing construction for low-income and extremely low-income people.

There is no way, despite Ben Carson’s mumbo jumbo, that those people can be self-sufficient, in terms of housing. They need direct government assistance.

The failure to have adequately housed them plays out in our streets. Inadequate housing has health consequences, in fact, we are watching now some of America’s hospital systems realizing that fact and investing in housing opportunities and wrap-around services because people who are not adequately housed actually cost society far more.

We are watching steps that are being taken in the private sector to recognize that this is the quickest way to close that income inequality gap. It is the quickest way to strengthen communities. In fact, it is the most profound indicator of future academic success.

I have been troubled with this issue for years. This summer, I spent time developing a report on why the Federal Government needs to get back into the housing game. It is entitled “Locked Out: Reversing Federal Housing Failures and Unlocking Opportunity.” It is available on my website.

Madam Speaker, I am deeply concerned that we finally recognize housing is a fundamental right. The United Nations recognized it as a fundamental human right, and we are a long way from that point.

We need to invest in reducing the shortage of 7 million affordable rental homes available to extremely low-income people. No State has an adequate supply of affordable homes. I propose building 12 million new public housing units and fully funding all the maintenance need in the existing public housing stock rather than slowly starving the authorities in their ability to maintain an adequate housing stock.

I think it is past time to create a renter’s tax credit to cover the difference between the rent and wages or making Section 8 vouchers an entitlement program available for all who qualify.

Yes, it will be expensive, but we are already spending huge amounts of money subsidizing housing. The problem is that the subsidies go to people who need the help the least. The mortgage interest deduction provides most of the support for people at the upper income levels, people who already have housing. In countries around the world that don’t even have a mortgage interest deduction, there is no great variation in homeownership rates.

We can adjust that now. There is an opportunity for us, and I have proposed equalizing the benefit of the mortgage interest deduction by converting it into a credit so that it treats people at various income levels equally.

I also think it is past time to eliminate a mortgage interest deduction for second homes and, instead, invest that money in helping people who don’t have housing today.

It may seem to some that these are ambitious proposals, but I would suggest that the cost of past discrimination and the cost of inadequate housing is far more in terms of wasted human potential, increased law enforcement, increased health costs, and poor aademic performance.

Madam Speaker, I deeply appreciate my colleagues coming forward with this discussion and working together on provisions that can make a difference.

We just had the Republicans pass the largest transfer of wealth in America’s history, adding $2 trillion to our national debt and doing nothing to deal with the housing crisis. In fact, it created housing burdens in States by wiping out the deduction for State and local income taxes, for instance.

I think it is time for us to stop paying for failure, to reassess our policies, to reverse decades of past discrimination, and to do things that will make a difference for American families.

Ms. TLAIB. Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. EVANS), my good colleague.

Mr. EVANS. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman, my colleague from the great city of Detroit and from Michigan, for showing this leadership. “None of us are home until all of us are home.” This is the slogan of Project HOME, an organization in my district that empowers individuals to break the cycle of poverty and homelessness, starting with permanent supportive housing.

Safe, affordable housing is the basis of stability and well-being. Secure housing improves health outcomes, boosts children’s educational performance, and can break generational cycles of poverty. But given the skyrocketing cost of rent, which is outpacing incomes, secure housing is out of reach for many low-income families.

Losing a fixed address makes it harder to land a job, enroll children in school, apply for assistance and benefits.
The affordable housing shortage is a crisis in my district and in many other cities and neighborhoods across the Nation. I represent Philadelphia, a city which has a poverty rate of around 25 percent. Let me repeat that, a city with a poverty rate of 25 percent. Most low-income renters spend at least half of their income on housing. This leaves no room for unexpected expenses such as medical bills, which can quickly send vulnerable families into housing insecurity, eviction, and, sometimes, homelessness.

We must increase funding for programs that help the most vulnerable, including children, people with disabilities, and seniors, such as homeless assistance grants and the housing choice voucher program. Those living in poverty, including 400,000 in the city of Philadelphia, are struggling to find safe and affordable places to live. Over 40,000 families are on the Philadelphia Housing Authority waiting list—40,000 are on that list. Most low-income renters in Philadelphia receive no government assistance with their housing costs, driving many to rely on alternative arrangements to secure shelter.

These are steps that we can take to address this growing crisis. We must invest in preserving existing public housing and improving health and safety through increased funding for the Public Housing Authority and the Public Housing Capital Fund. In the city of Philadelphia, the Philadelphia City Council recently passed a right to counsel law, providing attorneys for low-income families facing evictions.

But millions of Americans in other cities and communities face evictions every year. This lack of access to legal representation has led to unjust evictions. I am an original cosponsor of the Eviction Prevention Act, which creates grants to provide legal representation to those facing eviction.

It is not an accident that two Members who stood up here are also members of the Ways and Means Committee, as I am. We all recognize that we can use the Tax Code to lift our representation has led to unjust evictions. I am an original cosponsor of the Eviction Prevention Act, which creates grants to provide legal representation to those facing eviction.

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we choose to spend our money is a direct reflection of our values.

Representative OMAR’s Homes for All Act invests a total of $1 trillion into our nation’s affordable housing stock. I was proud to be an original cosponsor of Homes for All, as I was an original cosponsor Senator WARREN’s American Housing and Economic Mobility Act.

However, it is the work of activists and agitators on the ground that has pushed this issue to the forefront. While there is still much to do, I am heartened by the efforts of my colleagues, and I associate myself with all of their thoughtful and impassioned comments and legislative proposals highlighted during this Special Order hour.

We must continue to mobilize, to organize, and to legislate until Homes for All is no longer a promise, but a guarantee.

Ms. TLAIB. Madam Speaker, I know from living in Detroit, and Detroit and throughout the 11 other surrounding communities, for us, being the third-poorest congressional district in the country, housing is critical, critical not only for economic stability, but also in providing a safe haven for many of our families across the district.

Poverty is complex. A number of factors, including State and Federal policy failures and racial and gender inequities, have resulted in so much increased poverty, especially among children. Housing poverty requires that deep public investment in housing and other infrastructure, healthcare access, and public school investment, coupled with criminal justice reform policies designed to repair a history of segregation and continued exploitation.

Less than a year, Madam Speaker, into its enactment, the opportunity zone program has already resulted in millions of dollars of wasteful spending and possible corruption.

President Trump, who has called Gilbert “a great friend.” In return, Madam Speaker, three census tracts in downtown Detroit where Gilbert owns valuable property were selected for these large tax breaks through the opportunity zones. According to ProPublica, multiple studies have found that property values in those zones increased because of this tax break. At least one of those census tracts did not meet the poverty requirement for being an opportunity zone and appears to have been designated solely due to political influence.

So, if we are going to talk about housing justice, we are going to talk about impacting and helping ensure that housing is a human right, we also need to take the corruption and the political influence.

Email exchanges revealed Quicken executives working in concert with the White House to designate tracts with Gilbert’s investments as opportunity zones. Madam Speaker, Quicken Loans, the lobbyists were directly involved in the selection process at every level, lobbying the city, State, and Federal officials to include Gilbert’s investment zones in the opportunity zone law.

So I am asking us as we stand for housing for all that we need to restore public trust in our Federal Government which has so many rules that have been applied unevenly here and seem to reward the wealthiest and the best-connected among us. It appears that a tax program supposedly designed to benefit the poorest among us is now being used to reward political donors and wealthy investors.

I have asked the Committee on Ways and Means to investigate the actions by billionaire Dan Gilbert, and I have also asked the Treasury to respond to some of those questions.

This is additional evidence of these tax breaks for the wealthy and for billionaire-led development. I have proposed the BOOST Act.

The BOOST Act would give 3 to $6,000 to families making less than $150,000. It would instantly lift up 45 percent of Americans living in poverty now. Sixty-four million children would be instantly uplifted out of poverty. The BOOST Act would be paid for by repealing the Trump tax scam. In there, Madam Speaker, you saw not only the opportunity zones, but a number of tax breaks for the wealthy that only benefited the folks who are corporate-led who have actually been tainting our process to get access to affordable housing in this Chamber.

So I ask my colleagues, as we propose many fixes to access affordable housing and to repair some of the historic segregation zoning laws and the continued exploitation among many of our neighbors, that we also make sure that we are addressing that corruption within our government is not expanding and that we are holding those accountable who are trying to taint that process.

So I really appreciate my colleagues, members of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, in standing strong for housing as a human right.

Many of the proposals you see forward, Madam Speaker, will only deepen whether our country can implement it in a way that is just and is very democratic and, again, has really clear oversight. Things like the opportunity zone are not the direction that we need our country to go in, and I am looking forward to any legislation that would not only ask for repealing the opportunity zone but actually use it for land trust and community trust funds, things that will be rooted within communities and help those who, again, are seeing homeownership among communities of color decrease, seeing increases between 30 to 50 percent of their income going towards rent. I think the way we have to do it is all those goals, not only providing housing, but also making sure that we are implementing it in a way that is just and fair.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN).

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for the opportunity to speak, and I commend her for her stellar effort to bring justice to the housing circumstance in our country.

I am honored to say that I did visit her congressional district, and we had a field hearing that was quite successful. She truly is engaged and involved in making a difference in her community.

Madam Speaker, I was there in 2008 when we had the housing crisis. I remember when Secretary Paulson came before the committee. He was there in need of some funds for what were called toxic assets. He was there because the market was in a free fall. He was there because there was a imminent crisis that had to be contained.

I remember him asking for a large sum of money with few pages, probably less than 5 pages. He wanted us to infuse capital into a process that would allow us to purchase these toxic assets. He was indicating to us that this was an emergency. He did not ask for hundreds of millions of dollars. He did not ask for tens of billions of dollars. He requested hundreds of billions of dollars.

I do recall that I spoke to constituents, and being the judicious person that I was, I did pay attention to my constituents who encouraged me and insisted that I not bail out the big banks. That was the language that was used: Do not bail out the big banks, A.I.C. I was justifiably listened to my constituents. When we took the floor on the floor to accord the sum of 700-some billions of dollars, I remember standing over in the door and looking at the vote. I could also see the stock market at the same time. As the bill was failing, the stock market was rising. It was a day that I will never forget. I went back home, and I visited with my constituents.
The constituents said to me: At what is wrong with you? You did not vote to save my 401(k). You let the market fall. You could have voted to support us.

I learned an invaluable lesson that day. We are not doing the things that we have to do to what you know to be the best thing, even when your constituents might stand in opposition to it. That is the lesson that I carry with me to this day. I came back. We had a second vote, and I voted for the funds necessary to deal with the toxic assets.

One of the reasons why I was so concerned about this was because I understood what was happening. There were instruments that were in the marketplace that were not suitable for everyone. We had something called a 327 and a 228; 3 years, 2 years of a fixed rate, and then 27 years or 28 years of a variable rate. This was not suitable for everyone. We had no-doc loans, meaning no documents necessary, and you could walk into a bank, pull out some money, which you could acquire a loan. Madam Speaker. We had negative amortization, a process that allowed you to at some point continue to owe more than you initially borrowed.

We were calling the yield spread premium. The yield spread premium allowed the person who originated your loan to originate a loan for you for an amount in excess of what you qualified for. Here is how it worked. That person would check to see what you were eligible for as a rate. You could qualify for a loan at 5 percent, but at that time because of the yield spread premium, the person originating could come out and say, good news, I have a loan for you for 8 percent. You qualify for 5, you get a loan for 8 percent interest, and the person would never have to tell you that you qualified for the 5 percent. The money between 5 and 8 was called the spread, and the spread on that spread could be shared with the person who originated the loan and the lender, the yield spread premium.

Poor people, well, people who are of little means who acquired homes with these 327s and 228s, that I mentioned, where the rate would go up and down, they lost homes. It is said that in the African American community a generation of wealth was lost—a generation. The community is still recovering from the 2008 downturn.

I believe that what we have to reconsider how we address housing in this country. There are some people who are born into poverty. They are not born into poverty, they are not easy to work your way out of poverty. So we have to have housing as a means by which they can acquire and accumulate wealth.

One of the things that I tried to do and there are many things that have to be done— is to use something called alternative credit scoring. This is where you will score a person’s light bill, gas bill, water bill, phone bill, and cable bill and use that information with the traditional credit to allow that person to have maybe the little additional help needed so as to acquire a loan. It is a pilot program. We have passed the bill out of committee. It is H.R. 123.

The piece of legislation will allow many, many persons with thin files and with little credit, because they haven’t been in the credit market, to get a home. Many people who are paying now X number of dollars for rent will be able to acquire a home for X minus some amount, meaning less than what they are paying for rent, they will be able to acquire a home.

I am pleased to say that many of the prudential agencies are in agreement and are encouraging this. Just today we had a hearing with the Housing, Community Development and Insurance Subcommittee, and Mr. Montgomery, who is the head of FHFA, was there. I will be visiting with him. He has been very helpful and is an advocate so that we can talk about these things and see what we can do to help with homeownership for persons who were not born in the suites of life and many who now find themselves living in the streets of life.

This is something that is an imperative. It is a moral imperative. It is something that we have to do because we want to have a just society, and a just society would afford an equal opportunity to all to have a place to call home. In the richest country in the world, every person ought to have a fair opportunity to have a place to call home.

I thank the gentlewoman for allowing me to share, and I encourage her to continue on her mission to bring justice to those who find themselves living in places that, quite frankly, most people in Congress would not live in under any circumstances, but, unfortunately, we are not doing enough to help others to be extricated from the circumstances of which we speak.

Ms. TLAIB. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG PRICING

The Speaker pro tempore. Under the Speaker’s announced policy of January 3, 2019, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. SCHWEIKERT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Madam Speaker, what we are going to do today is actually sort of a little follow-up with a couple of other things sprinkled in here.

I want to walk through, once again, some of the numbers and some of the good things that have happened. I want to talk also about H.R. 3, which is a reference pricing bill that has gone through Ways and Means in regard to pharmaceuticals that actually I don’t think anybody understands what the casualty is. The problem is on how Europe and those actually do set drug pricing and to understand the rationing that will be coming with that.

But, first off, what is the greatest threat to our society?

I am going to argue it is actually the coming mountain of debt. It is not Republican or Democrat, it is called demographics. There are 74 million of us baby boomers. 74 million baby boomers were born in an 18-year period; we have our earned entitlements coming, and we functionally have no cash in the bank for them. So this board is really, really important, and I can’t believe that I don’t see it in everyone’s office here.

This is a 30-year window. Let’s actually just pull out Social Security and Medicare. Madam Speaker, you do realize that if you look at the Social Security and Medicare from the numbers, we have $23 trillion in the bank. Now, this one is not inflation adjusted, so these are raw numbers, but $23.1 trillion, if you want to be accurate, in the bank, but when we roll Social Security and Medicare in and their financing costs—the money has to be borrowed to keep the promises—we are functioning at $103 trillion in debt.

It is math. It is not Republican or Democratic. It is demographics. We are getting older as a society.

Since 1971, our birthrates have been below replacement rates. We need to deal with the reality of math, but as this place now proceeds, we will make math partisan. But the math will always win.

It breaks my heart because there are things we can do policy-wise that make it work, that keep us under or right about that 95 percent debt-to-GDP, and we survive our demographic bubble. But we have people around here that say crazy things that have no basis in economics, no basis in the math, no basis in demographics. The cruelty they are bringing down on our society and my 4-year-old daughter, destroying her future, is because of the unwillingness to own a calculation; it is the single thing that destroys our economic vitality for the future. But once again, it would require owning a calculator.
It is lots of people's fault, but it is Congress' fault, but it is decades old.

Here is where most of that comes from. If you take some of the math for a couple that retires today—it is not their fault; this is just the math—they will have paid $161,000 into Medicare. They are going to receive just shy of $500,000 out. Take that, functionally, $300,000—plus difference, multiply it by 74 million, and now you understand the driver of our debt.

You will hear people behind the microphone and say, “Well, it is waste and fraud,” or, “We don’t tax rich people enough.” Those are all absurd. The percentage of tax revenues as the percentage of GDP is within the margin. Waste and fraud, yes, we need to deal with it, but it would be a fraction of these numbers.

Remember, we are about to come up on the 2-year anniversary of tax reform. This last fiscal year, unlike every economist that the left brought to us—that is what I know that is mean, but it is true.

Things that were being said on this floor when we debated tax reform, reforming our system: “Oh, revenues are going to crash.” “The world is coming to an end.” I hate to say Armageddon ...

We went up over 4 percent in what they call receipts growth last year. Our problem is that we spent dramatically more than that. I think our spending was approaching almost 7 percent growth because has so many things added to spending. About half of that 7 percent is just, once again, demographics. But we grew revenues even with the tax reform slightly over 4 percent.

There should have been joy around here, if you think about where we are economically. You all saw the applications for unemployment today, 10,000 down from what the projection was.

Once again, we are demonstrating the lack of economic miracles are a miracle. They are remarkable. I don’t think there is anyone living today who has lived in a time that this economically stable, when you look at our labor markets, when you look at wage growth, the lack of inflation.

There should be joy on this floor, talking about the miracle of our brothers and sisters who were being written off just a couple years ago because they didn’t have a high school education, didn’t have a skill, were going to be part of the permanent underclass.

It turns out those folks who were willing to write off those brothers and sisters, those Americans, were wrong. That population—and I hate this term, but we use it—the lower quartiles of economic participation, skill sets that were being written off, they have had the fastest movement of income. You saw the number, if anyone cares about these things.

Last year, a single woman, no partner in the house: 7.6 percent growth in wages. These are numbers that I can tell you from being on the Joint Economic Committee for years that every economist we would bring in would look at us like we were out of our minds if we predicted numbers like that. Where is the joy?

The fact of the matter is there has been more progress in the last 2 years than in the previous 5 years. Those who have physical issues, have had substance abuse issues, have had criminal records, these sorts of things, coming back into the labor force.

There is this thing called U-6 data, U-4, which I like to use. When you see the unemployment rate and all this information of workers who might be—we use the term “marginally attached” and haven’t been looking, who quit looking, the number of those who are moving into the labor force that we barely give any credit for when we see the top-line number because the top-line number is those who are looking.

There is an economic miracle happening right now when you see the robustness, the stability of our labor markets. I wish the debate on this floor be: It is working for our brothers and sisters who we have always said were poor or that we were writing off. Something is working for them. How do we keep doing more? How do we keep doing more that are working and avoid the crazy policies of just a couple years ago that didn’t work, that punished these populations?

These are the folks who had just a really crappy decade. They fell further behind. There is some math out there, and it is not all put together. I am being maybe a little pathologically optimistic here, but there are some preliminary numbers that last fiscal year could be the very first year in modern times where income inequality did not grow and potentially shrank. It is not because wealthy people didn’t make more money. It is because poor people made more money than they had before.

Where is the discussion of how do we do more of this?

It turns out, for all those out there who are busting their backsides, working, paying into programs like Social Security and Medicare, why aren’t we being honest with them that the scale of the unfunded nature is devastating?

If you are a young person today, do understand that when you hit your peak earning years, your tax rate will have to be double today’s just to maintain these benefits. There is a path, but that path requires a whole bunch of things. It is going to be my very last board do I talk about healthcare?

It is going to be my very last board talk about healthcare. This is a whole string of things that will keep us healthy. But the other side is that we are about to live in the time of miracles. The single-shot care for hemophilia, it is here. It is going to be really expensive, but hemophilia is also really expensive.

We should be talking about ways to have more of these disruptive pharmaceuticals that take care of hemophilia, ALS, Crohn’s, cystic fibrosis, and sickle cell anemia. We are on the cusp of having the pharmaceuticals that either stabilize or cure these.

They are incredibly expensive. These are small populations, but remember, 5 percent of the population with chronic diseases is the majority of our healthcare spending.

If we go back to the slide here, the majority of what is about to hit us over the next 30 years is Medicare. It is healthcare spending.

What happens if you actually crash the price of healthcare? Well, one of the ways you do that is you cure people.

The Democrats are pushing a piece of legislation that sounds at first really good. ‘’Hey, we are going to lower new drug prices by reaching out to a handful of European countries and getting their prices.” Then you can’t go more than that, or we are going to give you a 95 percent tax,” which if you reverse it 1,950 percent.

Except, you have to understand, and I know this board is really hard to read, we are going to use the Great Britain model. What is a year of you being healthy worth? It is an honest question because that is what is about to be imported into the country. For you, your family, your child, what are you willing to believe is the value of a year of health? If you are in Great Britain, their model, their formula, is $38,000.

If this breakthrough pharmaceutical would make you healthy for 1 year and costs more than $38,000, it is not purchased. It is not part of the formula. That is what the Democrats are saying we need to import into this country.

So understand that the Democrats are about to say a year of you being healthy is not worth $38,001. I don’t think they know that. I don’t think anyone who has read at this point how this handful of European countries builds their pricing mechanisms, but they do it by scarcity.
They basically say, “Hey, I know this would cure you for the next year, but you are out of luck. It is over $38,000 here in Great Britain, so you are on your own.”

At a certain level, this is just incredibly cruel. How could you look someone in the eye and say: “I value your life at $38,000 for a year of you being healthy.” But that is the cruelty that is being discussed.

At first, it sounds really wonderful: “Hey, we are going to lower drug prices by using reference pricing.” But the fact of the matter is, how do you tell Americans that what this means is not only are you not going to be able to have these things that keep you healthy anymore because they are going to be outside the price window, but the other thing is there was a major report put together early this week that also said a substantial number of the drugs, like 100-plus, that are in the pipeline, that are about to cure our better patients who are about 5 percent of the chronic conditions that is the majority of our healthcare spending, those cures are going to stop because they are really expensive, really risky, really hard to put together.

The thing of them is that sort of roll the dice and say: “If we succeed, we get a fairly decent payday, but it is going to pay for a whole lot of failed drug trials.”

We are about to make a policy decision in this Congress, where we did the CURES Act a few years ago, where we created a pipeline to cure people, that pipeline is about to get crushed.

You have to understand the cruelty of this. This is just math. This is what other countries do on their formula.

If you really wanted to crash the price of pharmaceuticals, it turns out, yes, there is a whole list of things that are bipartisan: the way you deal with the capital that is used for the investment, and you are going to do a derivative on an existing drug, so, therefore, they have very little research costs. They already know what their profit margin is. It is nice and safe to do.

The things the Republicans did in this Congress, where we did the CURES Act a few years ago, where we created a pipeline to cure people, that pipeline is about to get crushed.

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more talent-based so you maximize economic growth so we can keep our economic promises? How do you encourage people to be in the labor force? One of the very odd things we see in the data is that December, a year ago, suddenly we saw in the data statistics millennial females moving into the labor force at substantial numbers but millennial males still substantially underperforming. Why? Is this the opioid crisis? Are there other factors? We need to know those sorts of things because, it turns out, when we have entire quartiles of our population who are underperforming in the labor market, it has really bad societal cascade effects. So let’s work on policies that get as many folks who are interested. Whether you be retirement age or that millennial male, what do we have to do as a society to encourage, to prod, to push you for you to be in the labor force? Because that is important not only to you as an individual, but it is really important to the country's economic stability.

Technology disruption: We just talked about the curative drugs that are coming. We also can talk about the sensors and the other things that are going to allow us to stay healthy. How do we update the laws so that thing like that flu kazoo isn’t illegal? There is a reason you didn’t go to Blockbuster Video last weekend. Technology changes. We need to make sure our law sets are sympathetic to the changes that can reduce our prices in healthcare, to protect the environment and so many other things. Yet we are decades behind in the way we write laws here and understanding how to future-proof those laws so, when we have disruptive technologies— and anyone who is really interested in this, pull out your phone. Go to a search engine, and go look up “MIT ambient air capture” and look at the mirage they have here. If what they have published is correct on, now, their price per ton—they believe they can pull CO2 right out of the air or do it right over a smokestack. If those numbers are correct, we now have a major change in CO2 emissions in the world because of our ability now, at amazing prices, to be able to pull it almost right out of the air. These technologies are here. Why aren’t we talking about them on the floor, and how to encourage more of it and how to get it rolled out in society, not only here, but across the world? Because, if you actually care about global warming—or climate change or whatever the current pop term is, there are amazing technology disruptions that are here. The only problem is they don’t allow you to control other people’s lives; they just solve the problem. And are we about solving the problem or just the other folks who are often the Members of this body? And then other things: The earned entitlements. You have earned your Social Security. You have earned your Medicare. Are there things we can do in those benefits to encourage you to stay healthier; to, if you feel like it, work; to actually, instead of taking your benefits, say how long would you like—if we gave you a spiff, would you wait?

There is tinkering you can do here that actually makes the programs more sound. And if you do it all together, we believe we have a model that provides an economic future for where we are not destroyed by the growing debt. But there is no single answer. It is going to have to be almost a holistic approach of lots of types of policies woven together, and every single one of them needs to be about the reality of our demographics. And now the experiment I will ask you all to engage in: Watch the floor this week and see how many people will ever come behind these micro-immigration changes with the triangle countries of Central America, the countries of Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras, and they are currently taking people coming from farther south who need asylum. President Trump has also—we wish he was doing more here, but he began building a wall, and we are working our way toward adding another 450 miles of wall by the end of next year. This is a significant improvement toward what it should be, but we are still well short of where we want to be. What should Congress be doing, or what should we be focusing on while Congress is spending time debating impeachment? First of all, we have a shortage of detention beds. So, when ICE is trying to remove people from this country, there are a lack of beds to place people in. There is no reason why, given the amount of money we are spending here, that should not be taken care of. There have been another 5,000 people in the Border Patrol, and there are still, unquestionably, people streaming across this border every month who aren’t even counted because we are not taking care of them.

IMMIGRATION POLICY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker’s announced policy of January 3, 2019, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GROTHMAN) for 30 minutes.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Madam Speaker, obviously, most of the newspapers, insofar as people still read newspapers, most of the TV shows in the last month have focused on the impeachment hearings. And we all know that, at the end of the day, impeachment or no impeachment, President Trump is not going to be removed in the next year. So the question is: Why are we spending so much time on impeachment? I have felt, in the long-term future of America, the most significant thing going on right now is what is going on with immigration policy in the United States; and as long as this impeachment hearing has taken the top of the page in the newspaper, immigration is at the bottom of the page. I believe one of the primary reasons for keeping immigration from the public is that it is important to know what is going on in immigration or what isn’t going on in Congress with regard to immigration. At its worst, we allowed over 140,000 people in this country in May. President Trump has been asking for help in this crisis, and he has gotten no—or virtually no help from Congress. Nevertheless, things that President Trump has done on his own have reduced that flow, if only temporarily.

I mention again, 145,000 people caught and processed in May and probably over another 10,000 people not even processed. That number has gone down to around 45,000 in September, and we believe it will go lower in October. This is largely because of things that President Trump has done on his own. He has negotiated with the Mexican Government—to a certain extent, under threat of tariffs—to put Mexican troops on the southern border. The Mexican Government is patrolling the interior of its country for people trying to work their way north, and President Trump has reached agreements with the triangle countries of Central America, the countries of Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras, and they are currently taking people coming from farther south who need asylum. President Trump has also—we wish he was doing more here, but he began building a wall, and we are working our way toward adding another 450 miles of wall by the end of next year. This is a significant improvement toward what it should be, but we are still well short of where we want to be. What should Congress be doing, or what should we be focusing on while Congress is spending time debating impeachment?

First of all, we have a shortage of detention beds. So, when ICE is trying to remove people from this country, there are a lack of beds to place people in. There is no reason why, given the amount of money we are spending here, that should not be taken care of. There have been another 5,000 people in the Border Patrol, and there are still, unquestionably, people streaming across this border every month who aren’t even counted because we are not taking care of them.
which people are coming here while their parents are in another country.

We have the Flores settlement in which, right now, people have to be released after being detained for 20 days. Given the slowness of our court system, it is not unusual for people to have to wait prior to the time when a hearing takes place. Again, Congress should act and spend time on that rather than continue to spend time on impeachment.

We continue to have a problem with sanctuary cities in which, when we want to remove people even from incarceration types of facilities or from jails, particularly from jails, sanctuary municipalities are not allowing us to remove people, even criminal people. Congress should act, and Congress has not acted, so that we do not allow these sanctuary cities to forbid access to the jails for ICE to remove people from this country.

Another thing that should be done is something that should be done about the credible fear standard and when people are allowed in this country and when people are not allowed in this country. But, again, Congress has refused to act. I want to point out that we can do all these things without being anti-immigrant.

And something that hasn’t been noticed in the most recent year: Over 800,000 new people were sworn into this country, and President Trump is doing nothing to change that figure. As a matter of fact, that 830,000 figure is well over the 700,000 figure of the relatively recent past.

President Trump is a friend of legal immigration, but we have to stop being a friend of illegal immigration.

In other things that encourage people to come here, Secretary Carson is going to bat and trying to keep our limited, low-income housing stock available for our own citizens and not people who come here illegally. It would be good if Congress stepped up to the plate and said we are going to put our homeless veterans ahead of people who are in this country illegally.

President Trump is also trying to put work requirements in the SNAP program. And let’s be honest: If we have a program giving away free food without a work requirement, that is an inducement for people from other countries to come here.

Congress should, again, convene and bring bills to the floor that put a work requirement with the SNAP benefit. A work requirement with a SNAP benefit, making it a less advantageous welfare program, would stop sending the message for the rest of the world to come into this country.

So, in summary, there are a variety of things that have to be done and that Congress should be acting on and that the mainstream media and even the conservative media should be paying attention to because they are going to affect the future of this country for the next 10 or 20 or 30 years, unlike the impeachment inquiries which we know are going nowhere, although the impeachment inquiries are keeping other things off the page.

We need more detention beds.

We have to change the credible fear standard so that less people are able to come in this country without doing something, without having a genuine fear.

We have to change the 20 days in the Flores settlement so we are not required to release people in the country.

And above all, we have to change the Trafficking Victims Protection Act so that we can remove children from this country and send them back to their parents in Central America.

I don’t know why, with so many people in this institution purporting to claim that they want families together, we do not amend our current laws and do with other countries what we already do with Mexico and Canada, and that is tell an unaccompanied minor: You belong with your parents. We are not going to separate you from your parents.

However, Congress is not acting. And I think one of the reasons they are able to get away with not acting on this is because the papers are filled with impeachment, impeachment, impeachment all day long.

So, in summary, I hope we pay attention to the number of people coming in this country.

I hope we congratulate President Trump on the things he was able to do. Without anything, congratulate him on the reduction of—I will play with my mind here a little bit—reduction of over 75 percent, about 75 percent reduction in the number of people who are processed in this country compared to 4 or 5 months ago.

But I also think we have to pay attention to the things that we are not finishing at this time, and I hope the media and the American public does not take its eye off the immigration ball while we focus on the impeachment hearing.

And I really hate to say it, but I do believe one of the reasons why some people want to keep impeachment in the news is, as long as impeachment dominates the news, we are not talking about Congress’ neglect in doing what they should do to secure our border and to make sure that the people coming here are people coming here for legal green cards, legal work visas, and, eventually, to be sworn in as legal citizens.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED
Robert F. Reeves, Deputy Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled a bill of the House of the following title, which was thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.R. 5427. 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.
By Mr. RYAN (for himself, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Ms. JACKSON LEE, and Mrs. NORTON) to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

H.R. 5308. A bill to amend the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 and the Richard B Russell National School Lunch Act to eliminate redundant provisions and to require that the income guidelines for determining eligibility for free breakfasts and free lunches be 200 percent of the poverty level, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and Labor.

By Mr. RICHMOND (for himself, Ms. LEE of California, Ms. FUDEN, Ms. PRATT of New York, Mr. BEATTY, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Ms. BLUNT of Missouri, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. CLARK of New York, Mr. CLAY, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. CLYBURN, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. EVANS, Mrs. HAYES, Ms. NORTON, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Mr. LAWSON of Florida, Mr. LEWIS, Ms. MOORE, Ms. OMAR, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. PLASKETT, Mr. RUSH, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Ms. TLAIB, Mr. VERSACE, Mrs. PEARSON COLEMAN, and Ms. WILSON of Florida).

H.R. 5309. A bill to prohibit discrimination based on an individual's texture or style of hair, and to increase the availability of financial assistance and resources to schools to implement improvements as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. WALTZ (for himself and Ms. BERNSTEIN of Florida), Mr. Vela, and Mr. Viscerita) to the Committee on Armed Services.

H.R. 5310. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to expand, enhance, and improve public health data systems, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. HECK (for himself, Mr. TIPTON, Mr. LUIJAN, Mr. COLE, Ms. HAALAND, Mr. YOUNG, Ms. MOORE, and Ms. GABARD) to the Committee on Financial Services.

H.R. 5311. A bill to require States and units of local government receiving funds under grant programs operated by the Department of Justice, which use such funds for pretrial services programs, to submit to the Attorney General a report relating to such program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. MCBATH (for herself and Mr. CARTER of Georgia): to the Committee on Ways and Means.

H.R. 5312. A bill to amend the Older Americans Act of 1965 to expand supportive services for Native American aging programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committee on Small Business, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. O'HALLERAN (for himself, Ms. DAVIDS of Kansas, Ms. HAALAND, and Mr. LIUAN): to the Committee on Education and Labor.

By Mr. PETRUS (for himself, Mr. BANKS, Mrs. DAVIS of California, and Mr. CESNIRO) to the Committee on Natural Resources.

H.R. 5313. A bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to expeditiously conduct a pilot program on information sharing between the Department of Veterans Affairs and designated relatives and friends of veterans regarding the assistance and benefits available to the veterans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.
By MR. PRESSLEY:
H.R. 5325. A bill to reduce exclusionary discipline practices in schools, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and Labor.

By MS. SÁNCHEZ (for herself and Ms. Wasserman Schultz):
H.R. 5328. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to end the immigrant visa backlog, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By MS. SHALALA (for herself and Ms. Wasserman Schultz):
H.R. 5329. A bill to require that the Federal Government procure from the private sector the goods and services necessary for the operations and management of certain Government agencies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Reform.

By MR. STEUBE:
H.R. 5330. A bill to amend the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act to provide a timeframe for verification of information and to increase the efficiency of credit reports with more perfect information, to prohibit consumer reporting agencies from issuing consumer reports containing information about debts related to medically necessary procedure, about and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By MR. COSTA (for himself, Mr. Rouzer, Mr. Bishop of Georgia, Mr. Fortenberry, Ms. Fudge, and Mr. Marshall):
H.R. 5331. A resolution recognizing the continued success of the Food for Peace Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on Agriculture, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By MR. SCHNEIDER (for himself, Ms. Kuster of New Hampshire, Mr. Rishi, Mr. Khanna, Ms. Slotkin, and Ms. DeLauro):
H.R. 5332. A bill to require certain information be reported with respect to principal investigators who have discriminated, including harassment on the basis of sex, including gender identity, sexual orientation, pregnancy, childbirth, medical conditions related to pregnancy and childbirth, parental status, and sex stereotype), and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and Labor, and in addition to the Committees on Oversight and Reform, and Science, Space, and Technology, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By MR. STEUERE:
H.R. 5333. A bill to require that the Federal Government procure from the private sector the goods and services necessary for the operations and management of certain Government agencies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Reform.

By TLALI:
H.R. 5335. A bill to amend the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act to provide a timeframe for verification of information and to increase the efficiency of credit reports with more perfect information, to prohibit consumer reporting agencies from issuing consumer reports containing information about debts related to medically necessary procedure, about and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By MR. ROZIER, MR. BISHOP of Georgia, MR. FORTENBERRY, MS. FUDGE, and MR. MARSHALL:
H.R. 5336. A resolution recognizing the continued success of the Food for Peace Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on Agriculture, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

H. Res. 743. A resolution expressing strong disapproval of the President’s formal notification to the United Nations of his intent to withdraw the United States from the Paris Agreement; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By MR. SMITH of Missouri (for himself, MR. GUEST, MS. LAIMALA, MR. HICE of Georgia, MR. CHERNHAY, MR. WRIGHT, MR. SMITH of Nebraska, MR. KEVIN HIREN of Oklahoma, MR. RICHGREN of Arkansas, MR. BANKS, MR. WALKER, MR. Yoho, MR. GOAR, MR. ROGERS of Alabama, MR. DUNCAN, MR. LUTKEMAYER, MR. RASHIO, MR. MULLIN, MR. CRAWFORD, MR. LONG, MR. HUNTER, MR. MARSHALL, and MR. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia):
H. Res. 744. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the Senate should amend its rules to require senators to actively campaign and seek re-election to the Presidency of the United States to recuse himself or herself from the impeachment trial of an incumbent President of the United States who is serving his or her first term in office; to the Committee on Rules.

MEMORIALS

Under clause 3 of rule XII, memorials were presented and referred as follows:

H.R. 5315. The SPEAKER presented a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Texas, relative to Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 59, respectfully urging the President of the United States to designate a state funeral for the last surviving Medal of Honor recipient from World War II; which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services.

H.R. 5324. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Texas, relative to House Concurrent Resolution No. 74, respectfully urging the President of the United States to repeal the Government Pension Offset and the Windfall Elimination Provision of the Social Security Act; which was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statements are submitted regarding the specific powers granted to Congress in the Constitution:

By MR. ROGERS of Kentucky:
H.R. 5305. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, Clause 7

By MR. LARSON of Connecticut:
H.R. 5306. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 of the U.S. Constitution: “The Congress shall have the Power to make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.”

By MS. SEWELL of Alabama:
H.R. 5307. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, Clause 7

By MR. RYAN:
H.R. 5308. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 of the U.S. Constitution: “The Congress shall have the Power to make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.”

By MR. RICHMOND:
H.R. 5309. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, Clause 7

This bill is introduced pursuant to the powers granted to Congress under the General Welfare Clause (Art. 1 Sec. 8 Cl. 1), the Necessary and Proper Clause (Art. 1 Sec. 8 Cl. 18).
Further, this statement of constitutional authority is made for the sole purpose of compliance with clause 7 of Rule XII of the Rules of the House of Representatives and shall have no bearing on judicial review of the accompanying bill.

By Mr. WALTZ:
H.R. 5310.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, which provides Congress the power “to provide for the common Defence” and “to make Rules for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval Forces”.

By Mr. HUFFMAN:
H.R. 5312.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article IX, Clause 1: The Congress shall have Power to lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States.

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18: To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

By Mr. DAVID P. ROE of Tennessee:
H.R. 5312.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, Clause 1
By Mr. MORELLE:
H.R. 5313.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, clause 18
By Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts:
H.R. 5314.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mrs. BEATTY:
H.R. 5315.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, Clause 3. “To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.”

By Mr. COX of California:
H.R. 5316.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution.

By Mrs. FLETCHER:
H.R. 5317.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Clause 7 of Section 8 of Article I of the Constitution.

By Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois:
H.R. 5318.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section VIII, Clause III
By Mr. HECK:
H.R. 5319.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution: “The Congress shall have power . . . To regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states, and with the Indian Tribes.”

By Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana:
H.R. 5320.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
U.S.C. Article I, Section 8
By Mrs. McBATH:
H.R. 5321.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
By Mr. MEEKS:
H.R. 5322.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
By Mr. O’HALLERAN:
H.R. 5323.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
By Mr. PETERS:
H.R. 5324.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8
By Ms. PRESSLEY:
H.R. 5325.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 1
By Ms. SANCHEZ:
H.R. 5326.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I Section 1
By Ms. SHALALA:
H.R. 5327.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, clause 4 of the United States Constitution.
By Ms. SPHIER:
H.R. 5328.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.
By Mr. STREUBE:
H.R. 5329.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 1
The Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States;
To borrow money on the credit of the United States;
To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes;
To establish an uniform Rule of Naturalization, and uniform Laws on the subject of Bankruptcies throughout the United States;
To coin Money, regulate the Value thereof, and of foreign Coins, and fix the Standard of Weights and Measures;
To provide for the Punishment of counterfeiting the Securities and current Coin of the United States;
To establish Post Offices and Post Roads;
To promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts, by securing for limited Times to Authors and Inventors the exclusive Right to their respective Writings and Discoveries;
To constitute Tribunals inferior to the supreme Court;
and Offenses against the Law of Nations;
To declare War, grant Letters of Marque and Reprisal, and make Rules concerning Captures on Land and Water;
To raise and support Armies, but no Appropriation of Money to that Use shall be for a longer Term than two Years;
To provide and maintain a Navy;
To make Rules for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval Forces;
To provide for calling forth the Militia to execute the Laws of the Union, suppress Insurrections and repel Invasions;
To provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining, the Militia, and for governing such Part of them as may be employed in the Service of the United States, reserving to the States respectively, the Appointment of the Officers, and the Authority of training the Militia according to the discipline prescribed by Congress;
To exercise exclusive Legislation in all Cases whatsoever, over such District (not exceeding ten Miles square) as may, by Cession of particular States, and the acceptance of Congress, become the Seat of the Government of the United States, and to exercise like Authority over all Places purchased by the Consent of the Legitutaires of the State in which the Same shall be, for the Erection of Forts, Magazines, arsenals, dock-Yards, and other needful Buildings; And
To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

By Ms. TLAIB:
H.R. 5330.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, clause 3

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 3: Mr. LOWENTHAL.
H.R. 20: Mr. GONZÁLEZ of Ohio.
H.R. 49: Ms. SHALALA.
H.R. 186: Ms. UNDERWOOD.
H.R. 218: Mr. KELLER.
H.R. 372: Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. STANTON, Mr. JEFFREYS, Ms. BASS, Mr. DUTCH, Mr. CLEAVER, and Mr. Swalwell of California.
H.R. 413: Mrs. AXNE.
H.R. 600: Mr. STANTON.
H.R. 763: Mr. REHA.
H.R. 779: Mr. DAVID P. ROE of Tennessee.
H.R. 849: Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. BLUMENAUER, and Mr. NIETO.
H.R. 912: Ms. PINKENAUER.
H.R. 935: Mr. FORTENBERRY.
H.R. 1049: Ms. McCOLLUM and Mr. KHANNA.
H.R. 1108: Mr. GOMEZ and Mr. CASTRO of Texas.
H.R. 1126: Mr. NEGUZE.
H.R. 1154: Mr. MCAFADAMS.
H.R. 1158: Mr. POSEY.
H.R. 1171: Mr. LARSEN of Washington.
H.R. 1175: Mrs. McBATH.
H.R. 1179: Mr. BYRNE.
H.R. 1185: Mr. CLAY.
H.R. 1228: Mr. CÁRDENAS and Mr. POSEY.
H.R. 1240: Ms. BONAMICI.
H.R. 1367: Mr. TONKO, Ms. SHALALA, Mr. CLAY, and Mr. KENNEDY.
H.R. 1380: Mr. DOGGETT and Mr. VARGAS.
H.R. 1418: Mr. KHANNA.
H.R. 1441: Mr. LOUDERMILK.
H.R. 1530: Mr. HOLDEN.
H.R. 1570: Mr. LAMB, Ms. SHALALA, and Mr. HOLDING.
The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

**PRAYER**

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

Let us pray.

Majestic God, Your name fills the Earth. In spite of our challenges, You continue to rule with Your love, wisdom, and power. Grant that our lawmakers may not forget the many dangers, toils, and snares You have already brought our Nation through.

Lord, give our Senators the wisdom to know that You continue to direct the steps of the faithful and that we have nothing to fear. Spirit of God, arise within our hearts and prepare us for the task of this day. Surprise us again with Your ability to transform dark yesterdays into bright tomorrows, doing for us more than we can ask or imagine.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

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

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

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

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to address my colleagues for 11⁄2 minutes as in morning business.

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

**WORLD BANK**

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I believe I have developed a reputation among my constituents, for transparency in the issue of the public's business should be public. That applies to how the World Bank loans U.S. dollars. The World Bank is right now trying to sneak through a new policy that offends me.

I received word that the World Bank is planning to vote right now, as I speak, on a new country partnership framework with China. That framework commits the World Bank to providing China with billions of dollars in loans indefinitely. What is odd about this is that China is now the world’s second largest economy and its per capita income is well above the levels at which countries are supposed to graduate from needing World Bank assistance. In other words, China should stand on their own two feet without help from the American taxpayers or even indirectly through the World Bank.

It happens that our country is the World Bank’s largest contributor, and the spending bill that funds the World Bank includes a provision for a big capital increase from the American taxpayers to the World Bank. With this legislation pending, we in the Congress have an opportunity to weigh in and we should take that opportunity to make sure that American taxpayer dollars don’t go to China, particularly when China is using their own money and investing in the Belt and Road Initiative to get influence around several countries on the face of the Earth.

I will have more to say later on this topic.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.
modernization, and that locks in—listen
to this—the largest pay raise in a
decade.

These bills touch every single State. Of course, there are major national and international issues at stake, as well, but the Democrats are still holding the NDAA hostage for a partisan wish-list of proposals that is meant to appease trial lawyers, public sector unions, and their own far-
left base. They are holding up the NDAA over unrelated, nongermane, leftover wish-list items.

Meanwhile, the Speaker and the Democratic leader are withholding their assent from important bipartisan provisions like the Caesar Syria Civil-
ian Protection Act, which has previ-
ously passed both Houses and has been modi-
fied to resolve all concerns by the committees of jurisdiction. Un-
like the Democratic leader’s rhetoric on Syria in recent weeks, this bill would actually do something to stand up for the Syrian people and hold Assad accountable. So I hope the Democratic leader will allow this im-
portant demonstration of our support for the Syrian people to go forward.

In the meantime, as if to underscore that the Democrats’ top priority is per-
formance art for coastal elites and not the people’s business, I understand the Speaker of the House spent part of this week in Madrid, talking about climate change. She took an international flight to discuss carbon emissions. So the Speaker, in Spain, lamenting President Trump’s decision to pull us out of the Paris Agreement. Maybe she pitched her conference’s Green New Deal—its socialist plan to hurt our economy for American families—while bigger emitters like China go roaring right by.

As an aside, over the past 15 years, the United States’ carbon emissions have actually fallen significantly. We are still trying to recover from the Trump administration’s conscience of every man; and it is the right of every man to exercise it as he may and free himself from constraint of man,even if the mass of that man live improvidently forGrab yourself time. Let me contrast the Founders’ under-
standing of the right of private judgment. This straightforward rule en-
sured that healthcare workers could not be forced to perform or assist with medical procedures that profoundly violated their religious beliefs. Yet the radical Democrats in New York could not abide by this basic protection for faith. Instead of force Christians and other people of faith who work in healthcare to either assist in procedures like abortion or lose their jobs—so much for freedom of conscience?

New York’s behavior is part of a dis-
turbing trend. Powerful interests on the left want to shrink freedom of reli-
gion until it means freedom to go to church for an hour on Sundays as long as it doesn’t impact the rest of your life. That shrunken interpretation is nothing like what our Founders in-
tended, and, candidly, I am not sure how much longer the modern Demo-
cratic Party will even believe in that.

A few months ago, a Democratic leader told CNN that if the government should take away the tax-exempt status of churches and reli-
gious institutions that disagree with leftist positions. He was not some fringe candidate. He was a guy whom the Democrats and mainstream media had likened to John F. Kennedy. He was openly suggesting the Federal Government should punish churches if liberals don’t like their social views— how appalling.

These disturbing signs have not been limited to the courts or to the Demo-
cratic campaign trail. Absurd anti-rel-
igious arguments have appeared right here in the Senate. In the last several years, some of our Democratic col-
leagues have tried, literally, to impose religious tests on nominees for Federal office. Just take the “no religious test” clause and the First Amendment and throw them right out the window. Get rid of them.

Judge Brian Buescher, now a districtjudge in Nebraska, was attacked by two Democrats on the Committee on the Judiciary for being a faithful Catholic and a member of the main-
stream, worldwide Catholic group the Knights of Columbus. He was attacked for being a member of the Knights of Columbus? In written questions, one Senator called standard Catholic teachings “extreme positions” and asked if he would dial down his per-
sonal faith practice if confirmed. That, of course, is the Committee on the Ju-
diciary of this Senate.

As our colleague Senator Sasse ob-
served at the time, the Democrats were transparently implying that Brian’s reli-
gious beliefs and his affiliation with his Catholic, religious, fraternal orga-
nization might make him unfit for service. It was plainly unconstitu-
tional.

Judge Amy Coney Barrett, now a cir-
cuit judge on the Seventh Circuit, was likely subjected to a religious test during her confirmation hearing. One Democratic Senator literally asked: Do you consider yourself an orthodox

The only path to results is bipartisan legislation, and, fortunately, it is a well-trodden one. There are 58 consecu-
tive annual defense authorizations to prove it. Always in the past we have been able to overcome these partisan differ-
ences and go forward. There is a bipartisancbicameral agreement that

the Speaker and the Democratic leader signed just a few months ago to help them find their way back to the table, but the agreement needs to be honored. I hope they do so sometime soon.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. McCONNEL. Madam President, on another matter, while we wait for our Democratic colleagues to let this legislation move forward, the Senate has used the time to confirm millions of President Trump’s impressive nomi-
nees for the Federal courts.

Some of my friends across the aisle complain that we devote too much time to nominations. First, I would like to remind everyone that district judges are the kinds of nominations that, historically, have sailed right through the Senate in big groups by voice votes. If our Democratic col-
leagues want to spend less time voting and more time working, they should take it up with the Democratic leader, who is forcing us to take cloture vote after cloture vote. As of this morning, we have taken cloture votes on 81 district judge nominees.

By this point in President Obama’s Presidency, we had taken one cloture vote on a district judge nominee. Let me say that again. As of this morning, we have taken cloture votes on 81 dist-

At the comparable point in the five Presidencies preceding President Obama’s, combined, we had not taken a single cloture vote on a district judge’s nomination—not one. Yet, 3 years into the Trump Presidency, there have been 81 cloture votes and counting just on district judges. So there is your answer on floor time.

More broadly, I want to take a mom-
ent to thank all 36 Republicans, including those from my home state of Nebraska, for standing with a couple of current Federal judges who should take it up with the Democratic leader, who is forcing us to take cloture vote after cloture vote. As of this morning, we have taken cloture votes on 81 district judge nominees.

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the Speaker and the Democratic leader signed just a few months ago to help them find their way back to the table, but the agreement needs to be honored. I hope they do so sometime soon.
Catholic? She was asked that in the Committee on the Judiciary.

Another offered this bizarre and ominous remark: “The dogma lives loudly within you, and that’s a concern.”

So, look, these warning signs on religious freedom are literally popping up everywhere, and modern political left rears its head.

Religious freedom in America has never—never—meant and will never mean solely the freedom to worship privately. It has never meant and will never mean the ability to practice only a subset of faiths acceptable to some subset of politicians. What it means is the right to live your life according to the dictates of your faith and your conscience, free from government coercion.

If those statements strike anybody in this Chamber as remotely controversial, that is exactly why President Trump, Senate Republicans, and millions of Americans are focused on confirming Federal judges who will apply our Constitution as it was originally written.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

FOSTERING UNDERGRADUATE TALENT BY UNLOCKING RESOURCES FOR EDUCATION ACT

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. Madam President, first, I thank the Democratic leader for the opportunity to move forward on this unanimous consent.

As in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 212, H.R. 2486.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2486) to reauthorize mandatory funding programs for historically Black colleges and universities and other minority-serving institutions.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Alexander-Murray amendment, which was agreed to and that the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment (No. 1255), in the nature of a substitute, was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: In the nature of a substitute.)

(The amendment is printed in today’s Record under “Text of Amendments.”)

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

The bill was read the third time.

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. Madam President, I know of no further debate on the bill, as amended.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate? Hearing none, the bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill, as amended, pass?

The bill (H.R. 2486), as amended, was passed.

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senators from South Carolina, Tennessee, Washington State, and Alabama be allowed to speak for brief moments on the great job they have done and that I be given back my leadership time at 10:50.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senators from South Carolina, Tennessee, Washington State, and Alabama be allowed to speak for brief moments on the great job they have done and that I be given back my leadership time at 10:50.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Madam President, on behalf of all of us, I want to thank the Democratic leader for his courtesy and his support on this. He and Senator MCCONNELL have made it possible for us to do this.

I am going to limit my remarks to a couple of minutes, and then Senator MURRAY and then Senator SCOTT, Senator COONS, Senator JONES are here, and we will finish by 10:50.

Madam President, it is hard to think of a piece of legislation that would have a more lasting impact upon minority students in America than the bill that the Senate just passed.

I believe, in doing so, we have improved the provision in the House bill that was sent to us. That is what we did; we amended a House bill that we are now sending back to them. We have been working with leaders in the House to make sure that our bill is something the House can accept and pass. We hope that will happen in the next couple of weeks, and here is the result of it happening: No. 1, a big step for historically Black colleges and minority institutions—permanent funding at the level of $255 million a year for those institutions—serving nearly 6 million minority students. That is No. 1.

The second big step is one that Senator MURRAY and I and our committee, Senator JONES, Senator BENNET, Senator KING, and many others have been working on for 5 years to simplify the form that students use to apply for Federal aid for college. Twenty million families fill out what is called the FAFSA, a Federal aid form, every year; then we have students who borrow more than $100 billion a year. What we have done in this bill is reduce the complexity of filing that FAFSA form by saying to students: You don’t have to give your Federal tax information to the government twice. We will take the up to 22 questions that are a part of the 108-question FAFSA, and we will eliminate them, and if the student gives his or her express consent, the Internal Revenue Service will answer those questions for the student.

I can’t tell you how many times students, parents, college presidents, Federal aid counselors have told me that the application and the verification of this information has discouraged low-income students from coming to college.

Five and one-half million of the twenty million students who fill out these forms have the accuracy of those forms questioned. This will eliminate that for most of the students because they will have to give that information to the government only once.

I want to thank Senator MURRAY especially for her work on this. We work together on the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee in the Senate, but Senator SCOTT, Senator RICHARD BURR of North Carolina—which has the largest number of historically Black colleges—and Senator JONES of Alabama have also been crucial with their support.

I yield the floor to Senator MURRAY.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, HBCUs, Tribal colleges, and other minority-serving institutions—or MSIs—are an essential part of our entire higher education system, and those institutions serve nearly 6 million undergraduate students, a large majority of whom are students of color or Native students.

Funding for those critical institutions should never be up for debate, and now, because of this, it will not be. I am so glad we have reached a bipartisan deal that will permanently fund HBCUs and MSIs.

I know many of our colleagues worked very hard on this, but I especially want to thank Senator JONES for his leadership in pushing to make sure this got done, as well as my partner
Senator ALEXANDER, and, of course, Senators COONS, SCOTT, and BURB.

I am also pleased that this legislation streamlines Federal student aid for more than 20 million students applying for aid and nearly 8 million borrowers.

Our Nation’s outdated and overly complicated financial aid system is forcing students and borrowers to jump through too many hoops to access Federal financial aid and verify their tax returns. We have already filled out, and to get help if they are struggling to pay their student loans.

The FAFSA Act, which has been included in this bill, allows data to be securely shared between the IRS and the Department of Education, making it easier for students to fill out the FAFSA and pay their loans.

This bill will strengthen privacy protections and how students and borrowers navigate their financial aid through a streamlined, more efficient process.

This bill is also thanks to Jeff Appel, an integral member of Federal Student Aid who recently passed away. I am grateful for his contribution, and I know that he will be sorely missed.

The way in which we have reached this agreement we have reached is important. This proves once again that we can work across the aisle and get things done when we all stay focused squarely on what is best for students.

We have a lot of work ahead of us to make higher education in our country more affordable and accessible and to hold schools accountable for student outcomes and ensure student safety on campus. I am hopeful that we can build on this bipartisan progress we have seen so far as we continue working together to reauthorize the Higher Education Act in a comprehensive way.

Again, I want to thank all of my colleagues for their work on this, and I look forward to more to come.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. Madam President, to avoid the risk of being redundant, I want to put a little skin on the bones as relates to what this act really means to college students, particularly those college students entering into the process for the very first time and their families.

What it means is this: Simplifying the current financial aid process for a lot more students, and that is good news. We oftentimes talk about the importance of keeping the American dream alive and keeping it well. This will provide significant opportunities for low-income students to get through the process very quickly.

In South Carolina we have eight HBCUs. The economic impact of those graduates is around $5 billion of lifetime earnings. This bill makes that more achievable, more attainable, and keeps the American Dream alive and well.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama. Mr. JONES. Madam President, I am rising today with just, for lack of a better term, an incredible amount of hope and excitement—something we don’t always see on the Senate floor these days. We go through so many routine measures. We go through so many things today, but truly it is truly a day of hope and excitement and optimism because we are on the verge of a significant moment for our Nation’s historically Black colleges and universities and all minority-serving institutions that in our partisan world we are living in and in our partisan America, people across this country are tuning in right now or at least will follow what is happening on the floor of the Senate today, where a bipartisan coalition has come together for a significant and important segment of our population that deserves the same economic and educational opportunities as everyone else.

Fourteen months ago, I came to this Chamber to introduce a permanent extension, an increase of funding for these important institutions of education. Nearly half of all the funding they receive was set to run out on September 30, 2019. We secured a quarter of the Senate as co-sponsors of the bill, and we laid out an ambitious proposal.

In the new Congress, with the clock ticking down toward the deadline, we offered a more modest but bipartisan agreement, the long-term fiscal cliff. But our goal and the goal of everyone here and the goal of all of those, including my friend Senator ALEXANDER, was to always reach the ultimate goal of permanent funding, a permanent solution for these important institutions.

All told, these schools serve 6 million students across the country. They are often the foundation upon which families begin to build generational wealth. Wealth that allows them to go to college but generational wealth in communities that have long faced systemic barriers to doing so. They create good, sustainable jobs. They are part of the very foundation of our higher education system in this country and in my State in particular.

With all the due respect to my friend Senator MURRAY from Washington, there is little controversy about who has the most HBCUs. I would claim that Alabama does with 14, but that is for debate another day. But we can all agree that supporting these schools and the students they serve is not a partisan issue. I think we can all agree on that. I think we have shown that we can agree that funding should never be a political football. We have all been working toward the same goal.

To say the least, I am so deeply relieved that today we forged this bipartisan compromise that will allow these schools the funding and the certainty that they need, and they are now truly fulfilling their important mission.

I sincerely especially want to thank my colleagues on the HELP Committee and Chairman ALEXANDER and Ranking Member MURRAY in particular for their leadership and willingness to reach across the aisle and find the common ground for the better good of this community. I also want to thank my friend Chairman Scott from Florida for joining me on what we have done over the last couple of years to introduce the FUTURE Act and to push it forward.

I believe—and I have said this for so long that we have so much more in common than we have that divides us. This is just one example. It is why I hope folks across the country are looking and see that we can come together and we can be unified.

I am grateful today because in addition to the permanent funding of HBCUs and minority-serving institutions, this agreement, as the Senator from Tennessee said, includes a long overdue first big step toward simplifying the FAFSA application.

Even with a law degree, I can tell you that with my kids, trying to do that made me pull out what little bit of hair I have left. I didn’t need to do that. It is just a frustrating process. It can be so intimidating that students or their parents just walk away. In Alabama alone, kids walked away from millions of dollars of Federal financial aid and grants, not just loans. The FAFSA as it is today can be a huge barrier for students who want to go to college.

The proposal we have on the table now will help save taxpayers and make the FAFSA process less painful by cutting up to 22 questions from the form. It lays the groundwork for a broader FAFSA reform that Senator ALEXANDER and I have been working on to cut even further to between 17 to 30 questions.

But getting across the finish line today is not just about renewing funding or cutting redtape. At their core, these issues are about opening doors of opportunity for young people who have talent and motivated and invested in college and in life, but they have not necessarily had the financial means or the family connections to do so. This is about making sure we empower every young person in this country to reach their full potential and then pay it forward for future generations. That is what gives me hope standing here today. It is what makes me excited today.

Again, I want to thank my colleagues for this incredible effort—Senators ALEXANDER and MURRAY in particular. Our hearts have always been in the right place. We have always moved the ball forward knowing that the long-term goal was to help these families for generations to come.

Thank you, Madam President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. COONS. Madam President, today is about a moment of hope. Today is about a moment of genuine bipartisanship made possible by the discipline
and determined leadership of Senators Alexander of Tennessee and Murray of Washington State. I rise to join my friend and colleague, the Senator from Alabama, who has just given remarks following the Senator from South Carolina. At a moment when the American electorate on their televisions is partisan division and dysfunction in the Senate and the House, I just want to remind all of us that we can get good, important, and significant things done together, as just happened on the floor a few moments ago.

For generations, American families have worked and saved and strived to send their children to college, but for a long time, our Nation’s original sin—the sin of slavery and racism—has left a long shadow and a stain on access to the critical opportunity of higher education. In much of our Nation, for decades, African Americans were denied entry to most of our colleges and universities. Today, African Americans have risen to become some of our Nation’s finest academic institutions. They have educated hundreds of thousands of young men and women who have gone on to do incredible things and to be some of our Nation’s greatest leaders.

That is why all of us who have come on the floor today, Republicans and Democrats, have acted to make a permanent commitment to supporting HBCUs and minority-serving institutions, no matter what. We have agreed to make permanent $255 million in annual funding for HBCUs. I am particularly excited about this legislation because my home State of Delaware is home to one of the finest publicly supported HBCUs in the country, Delaware State University. Founded in 1891, it is one of the country’s premier land grant universities. Over the last 125 years, it has emerged as one of our Nation’s premier academic institutions. They have educated hundreds of thousands of young men and women who have gone on to do incredible things and to be some of our Nation’s greatest leaders.

To join this bipartisan coalition and look forward to even more progress in the months and years ahead. Thank you. With that, I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER
THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized. MR. SCHUMER. Madam President, first, let me thank my colleagues from South Carolina, Senator Tim Scott of South Carolina, and representatives from Delaware, Congresswoman Lisa Blunt Rochester and Congresswoman Lauren Underwood of Illinois, for their work on this important issue. I appreciated their words and I think far more appreciated even than their eloquent words is the fact that we are getting this done, finally. I am so glad for it.

Let me just add my words of support for the FUTURE Act. A few minutes ago, as I mentioned, we passed the FUTURE Act by unanimous consent. I am so glad and grateful that the Senate and the House together today to give these institutions and the students they serve the certainty needed to continue focusing on their important mission.

In America, we believe in ladders up. People should have a chance to climb those ladders. No one is going to put them up on a pedestal. But there should be the ladders there so that if somebody wants to work hard, they are given fair opportunity and barriers—sometimes barriers based on bigotry and discrimination—do not stand in their way. One of the best ladders up we have in America is our HBCUs. HBCUs make up 3 percent of colleges and universities, but they produce 27 percent of African-American students with bachelor degrees in STEM fields, 80 percent of African-American judges, 40 percent of African-American engineers, 50 percent of African-American lawyers, and 40 percent of African-American college graduates. So this is one fine ladder up, as are our other institutions that spend much time helping Hispanics and Native Americans as well. I need these ladders because they are part of America. We should help them whenever we can. Tribal colleges and universities serving Black, Hispanic, and Native American populations serve more than 130,000 American Indians and Alaska Natives, the most underserved group in higher education. Hispanic-serving institutions have grown by nearly 40 percent since 2009, helping the Latino community make big inroads in college enrollment and completion. They now enroll 66 percent of Latino undergraduate students but account for only 15 percent of nonprofit colleges.

So all three of these types of institutions—the HBCUs, the colleges and universities serving American Indians and Alaska Natives, and Hispanic-serving institutions—are amazing ladders up. They are essential for making higher education accessible, affordable, and attainable for all Americans; essential for having that bright Sun—the American Dream—actually shine on people instead of it being some words that are meaningless to them.

This is a very fine moment, and I want to thank all of those who put this all together and made it happen. We can celebrate. Most of the things that pass by UC around here—or many of them—are really kind of small and narrow. This is not. This is very important. And my salute to those who made it happen, whom I mentioned earlier.

Madam President, now on a less happy subject, this morning the Speaker of the House instructed House committee chairs to begin drafting articles of impeachment against the President of the United States. That is a very solemn duty and solemn undertaking. The Speaker’s decision comes after the House Intelligence Committee reported its findings to the Speaker. The Speaker’s decision comes after the House Intelligence Committee reported its findings to the Speaker. The Speaker’s decision comes after the House Intelligence Committee reported its findings to the Speaker.

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personal political interests of the President of the United States. The gravity of those charges demands that Senators, if Articles of Impeachment are served to us, to put country over party and examine the evidence without prejudice or partisanship, which is why it is so dishonoring, confounding, and deeply disappointing that, at this historic moment, I heard the Republican leader criticizing in such strident terms the process of the impeachment inquiry in the House for being too short and not including enough witnesses or due process for the President.

I respond on two counts. First, the Republican leader is simply wrong to suggest that the House process has been anything but deliberate, even-handed, and serious. Speaker PELOSI, the House Intelligence Committee, and the House Judiciary Committee are proceeding carefully by the witnesses situation prescribes. But, second, it is the height of hypocrisy to criticize the House process for being too short and not including enough witnesses when the Trump administration is the one blocking inquiry from testimony.

What hypocrisy? How can a leader even say it with a straight face? Will this febrile obeisance to President Trump never cease? Are they so afraid of history that they can’t admit the obvious truth and twist themselves in pretzel knots to make arguments that are so spurious? It is the height of hypocrisy to criticize the House for not including enough opportunities for the President to make his defense when the President is refusing to participate. It is the height of hypocrisy to say that there are not enough witnesses when we don’t hear a peep out of the Republicans urging the President to allow the witnesses that the House wanted to come forward.

This hyperventilation about the length of the House process and the number of witnesses is simply ridiculous. The Trump administration is responsible for those things, not House Republicans. Everyone knows that. Everyone knows they have gone to court to block witnesses and documents.

I remind my colleagues, if the Articles of Impeachment are indeed passed by the House, Leader MCConnell and Senate Republicans must work with Democrats to set the parameters of a fair and impartial trial. Every Member of the Senate should support a fair procedure on the President to make his defense when the President is refusing to participate. We must do the same in the Senate if it comes to that.

All week, I have been urging my Senate Republican colleagues not to spread or even speculate about the dangers of Ukraine—not Putin—interfered in the 2016 elections. The myth was invented by Putin’s intelligence services to deflect blame away from Putin while driving a wedge between the United States and Ukraine, one of Putin’s top goals. When certain Senate Republicans are parroting Putin’s talking points, we have a serious problem.

Hopefully, the overwhelming criticism of the Members who did that this week have convinced them to stop and back off in the Republicans’ absurd denial of fact and total defense of President Trump, even when it is obvious that he is not telling the truth. We have never seen anything like it, and maybe the lowest of all was the mounting of Putin’s conspiracy theory about Ukraine.

Now, another absurd conspiracy theory was doused with cold water this morning. The truth comes out. Republicans, sooner or later. Another theory was doused with cold water when it was reported that Attorney General Barr’s handpicked prosecutor had reportedly found no evidence that the FBI probe into the Trump campaign was a setup. Republicans in the House, conservative media personalities, FOX News, and other blind partisan loyalists to the President have long conjured and peddled these deep-state conspiracy theories without evidence.

The Attorney General is even using the resources of the Justice Department—which could be exposing Chinese Communist Party’s spies or tracking would-be radical terrorists or fighting epidemics or preventing mass-murder attacks on cities across the country—to investigate the origins of the 2016 probe. Attorney General Barr’s actions are presumably in the hopes of turning up evidence to support these far-fetched theories.

Well, too bad, Republicans. Too bad, hard right. The Attorney General’s handpicked prosecutor found no evidence to these conspiracy theories, that the investigation of President Trump was started with evil and political intent. The only evidence we have is that the outlandish loyalist theories peddled by President Trump and his allies to defend this administration are totally baseless.

BORDER SECURITY

Now, on another note, airport face scans, this morning, it was reported that the Trump administration will propose a rule to require U.S. citizens to have their faces scanned whenever they enter or leave the United States. This sounds like something out of science fiction. Currently, all U.S. citizens are allowed to opt out of facial scans when entering or exiting the country. Now, the Trump administration is poised to remove that option and make facial scans mandatory for all travelers, including U.S. citizens.

I have significant concerns about what this policy would mean for the privacy of every American citizen. Just last year, a cyber attack of CBP compromised the personal information—in this case, it was license plates—and facial data of just under 100,000 people. Imagine if DHS were required to retain the facial data of every American who travels in and out of the country.

There are, of course, legitimate questions about whether the Federal Government is legally allowed to collect and store this data. Those questions must be answered before—not after—the Trump administration moves forward with its new rules. On something as serious as this, Congress should debate this issue.

Regardless, I see no reason why the current opt-out policy must change, and I will work with privacy advocates in the Senate, like my friend Senator MarkEY, to legislatively prevent the administration from moving forward.

Another issue, robocalls, the House of Representatives yesterday passed bipartisan legislation to expand on the tens of billions of robocalls that plague Americas every year. All of us are bothered by these darn robocalls. They come at the worst times, and they are on and on. You can’t even shut them off.

Last year alone, Americans were battered by 48 billion—billions—robocalls. That is 150 calls per person, per year. Robocalls are annoying. They are persistent, and beyond that, many of them are dangerous to consumers. Foreign companies can make thousands of calls with a push of a button and can charge Americans simply for picking up the call. Can you believe that? Many are designed to scam elderly Americans. We have heard about elderly Americans who are frightened and send their life savings to these criminal callers. Many of the calls target institutions like hospitals and slow down important businesses.

The TRACED Act passed by the Senate in May and recently amended and passed by the House requires phone companies to block robocalls without charging consumers and will give the Justice Department and the FCC better tools to prosecute scammers who prey on unsuspecting—many elderly—Americans. I am proud to favor of the original Senate bill. I pushed hard to move it forward. The Senate should now take action on the amended and expanded robocall legislation from the House and pass it before the year is out.

As we saw with the recent legislation to the democratic protests in Hong Kong, when there is bipartisan consensus on an issue, we can move swiftly to enact bipartisan legislation. These moments, unfortunately, are far too rare under Leader McConnell, who has avoided the consideration of legislation on the floor, even when it has bipartisan support, but I hope as we enter the final few weeks of the year, Leader McConnell will address the issue of robocalls and send this bipartisan to the President’s desk.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCott of Florida). The Senator from Texas.

APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I know the American people, when they see what is happening in Washington, think that we fight all the time and we disagree about everything, but let me
just agree with my friend, the democratic leader, on the issue of the nuisance of robocalls.

But as important as that is to our quality of life and to protecting vulnerable seniors and others who may be mislead by these deceptive calls, some of the most basic functions of the Federal Government have not been fulfilled, like appropriating the money that is necessary to support our men and women in uniform. The bipartisan spending bill that we agreed to in August has been walked back by our Democratic friends, and we find ourselves with a lot of uncertainty here at the end of the year in terms of what the future may hold in terms of our ability to actually get anything done, things like pass a highway bill. That is one thing that Republicans and Democrats can all agree on, is our disdain for traffic and congestion.

That is one thing we can work on together. We could work together to bring down drug prices, particularly the out-of-pocket costs for consumers with high deductibles and high co-pays. We could pass USMCA, the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Trade Agreement. All of these things are bipartisan, but unfortunately, they are now all held captive by this impeachment mania which has stricken the House of Representatives, and it is scheduled to come over here to the Senate probably around the end of the year, depending on the schedule that Speaker Pelosi keeps in the House.

IMPEACHMENT

So while there are plenty of good ideas out there about things that we can work on together on a bipartisan basis, we all know that the Senate and the Congress has limited bandwidth. We can’t do everything we want to do. We need to prioritize. I would hope that our priorities would be the American people’s priorities and not the partisan spending caps bill that we agreed to in 1970s. At that time, the vast majority of our international alliances, and sent the entire globe into an energy famine.

We remember earlier this year they introduced the Green New Deal—arguably the most extreme energy and climate proposal this country has ever seen. The Green New Deal is chock-full of utopian ideas but completely devoid of practicality. It puts a range of unrealistic environmental and socialist policies under one big green umbrella with an unaffordably high pricetag.

The best evidence of how extreme this proposal is, is when it came up for a vote in the Senate. Not a single Senator voted for it—that includes all of the cosponsors of the proposal. That is not exactly a profile in courage, to tell the American people this is the solution to our energy and our air. We drink the water. We should not be a solution to a problem. All of these folks are trying to paint the energy industry as the enemy of the future, while reducing emissions by a substantial amount, but, no, in pursuit of their pie-in-the-sky utopian dreams, the ideologues want to eliminate something that has been a very substantial benefit to our economy for the American people this is the solution to our air.

Some of them have said they also want to ban the export of crude oil. This month, for the first time in 70 years, America became a net exporter of oil. I will talk more about that in a moment.

Some are saying they even want to go so far as to ban the use of natural gas. Natural gas has been responsible for taking formerly coal-fired power plants and putting them into a cleaner, more affordable, and safer source, which has provided that cheap gasoline so many people can drive to work, take their kids to school, or go about their business in a day with more certainty. We drive to work, take our kids to school, or go about our business in a day with more certainty. We breathe the air. We drink the water. We should all be equally concerned about the environment.

I really think some of these proposals are nothing more than virtue signaling. They are not a solution to a problem. All of these folks are trying to paint the energy industry as the enemy of the future. Every good story needs a villain, and our friends on the left have choose the energy industry that has provided that cheap gasoline so people can drive to work, take their kids to school, or go about their business in a day with more certainty. We breathe the air. We drink the water. We should all be equally concerned about the environment.

By the rhetoric you are hearing, you would think oil and gas companies have bankrupted the country, ruined our international alliances, and sent the entire globe into an energy famine. Well, that is not true. It is not just the opposite. Quite the contrary.

When you talk about global energy security, American oil and gas has reversed the tide of the energy landscape in our favor and supported our friends and allies around the world in important ways.

Our colleagues proposing these unworkable and unaffordable mandates would be wise to look at how the global energy landscape has changed over the last half century and consider the broader consequences of their proposal. America is the leader of the free world. We need to lead in this decade, in this decade. We have to lead to work with our friends and allies around the world in important ways.

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CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — SENATE
of the world’s oil and gas came from the Middle East, giving these nations a great deal of power. In fact, you may remember back in 1980 President Jimmy Carter announced something called the Carter Doctrine. He said if any oil-rigged country within a hundred miles of oil through the Straits of Hormuz, it would be an act of war. That is what Jimmy Carter said in 1980, such was our reliance on imported energy from the Middle East. Our country dealt with that abhorrence, and we addressed it responsibly and effectively.

We know another indication of our dependence on imported energy is when the United States supported our friend and ally Israel in the Yom Kippur war of 1973. OPEC, the organization of petroleum exporting countries, primarily Middle East countries, banned the sale of crude oil to the United States. Those who are old enough to remember, remember that prices quadrupled, some States banned neon signs to cut down on energy, and we knew they were worried about the energy that would be necessary to create that electricity, and a number of towns asked for citizens not to even put up Christmas lights. This was because our source of oil and gas from the Middle East, such was our dependence. Despite strong domestic production, we were still relying heavily on imports. Once that supply was cut off, we were caught flat-footed.

The Iranian oil embargo brought to light the risk of our energy independence and underscored the need for America to do something about it. There was a consensus—has been a consensus—that we needed to grow our supplies here at home so we were less dependent on imports. So less than 2 years later, Congress, thinking we were doing a good thing, put a ban on export on American crude because we thought we needed it here and didn’t want to export it abroad.

Over the next four decades, a lot has changed. Advancements in the energy sector, including hydraulic fracturing and horizontal drilling, have dramatically increased the production of American energy. As I said, for the first time in 70 years, America has become a net exporter of oil. That is how dramatically this has turned around.

In the process, we have achieved our goal of reducing our reliance on imported energy from dangerous and unsettled regions of the world, like the Middle East, but pretty soon we found ourselves sitting on a gold mine, and it became clear it was time to lift the export ban. In 2015, after 40 years of no exports, that is what Congress did. We did so because we believed, No. 1, we had more than we could use here in America, but we also believed this would be a huge boon to our economy. That was part of the equation. Just as we were able to reduce our reliance on oil from other regions of the world, we knew that by exporting the oil that America produced, we could help other countries—our friends and allies around the world—that were dangerously dependent on sources of energy from countries like Russia that is all too ready to use energy as a weapon. They say: Do what we say, and we will keep the energy and gas flowing. Do something we don’t like, and we will turn it off.

In the not-so-distant past, many of our allies in Europe looked to Iran and Russia for their energy needs, and the Baltic States, all NATO allies, relied almost exclusively on Russia for their energy. Seven European countries depended on Russia for 80 percent of their gas, and on the whole, one-third of the gas Europe consumed came from Russia.

When our allies are looking to our adversaries for basic needs like heating, electricity, and fuel, that is a real problem. It is a strategic vulnerability not only for those countries but also for the United States.

Our friend John McCain had quite a sense of humor, and we knew him during his lifetime. He aptly described Russia as a gas station masquerading as a country. Russia’s ability to export that energy to other countries was the lifeline for their energy. As I alluded, in 2009, we saw the vulnerability this created when Russia effectively turned the lights off in Ukraine. For almost 3 weeks, they shut down the energy supply. This affected at least 10 countries in Europe whose natural gas traveled through Ukraine. Just as the United States realized how dangerous our foreign oil reliance was, our allies began to understand the implications of their dependency as well. Many of our friends in Europe have been working to diversify their energy supply, which is a good thing, and build strategic gas interconnectors between countries like Germany and Russia for natural gas. Getting a diversity of sources is an insurance policy for those countries so Russia can’t just cut off their energy supply.

Supplying our friends around the world with American oil and gas not only strengthens our security but it alleviates the power our adversaries, like Russia, hold in important regions of the world, like Europe.

In addition to increasing global security, American energy has allowed us to provide affordable, plentiful, and reliable energy to countries struggling to provide power for their own citizens. If you think about it, low-cost energy coming from America has the potential to be the greatest poverty reduction program in history. For example, when I first traveled to India in 2004—if you drive from Delhi, the capital, to Agra, where the Taj Mahal is, you will drive across vast areas where the population is very poor. Huge swaths of that land were empty, lifeless things to cook their food with or electricity to light their homes. So what do they do? Well, they burn cow dung; they burn coal; they burn wood pellets or other high-emission fuel sources. By America agreeing to export the energy we have here—the cleaner energy we have here—we are agreeing to help one of our closest friends and partners in the world, India. Prime Minister Modi and the leadership there lift more Indians out of this grinding poverty and relying on things like cow dung simply to cook their food.

Last year, we doubled the amount of LNG exported to India, and I dare say that the sky is the limit.

I think many of our Democratic colleagues should reflect back on the lessons of history before advocating a return to the 1970s when it comes to the way we approach American energy. I understand the importance of innovation in the energy sector to lower emissions, and I am all in, but rather than another government program, higher taxes, more regulation, or surrendering control of our freedom to Washington, DC, why don’t we let the innovators, the entrepreneurs, come up with solutions? That is what has happened when it came to America. They came up with the answer, not Washington, DC, and we are all benefiting from the results.

When it comes to innovation, I have introduced legislation—and a number of our other colleagues have, too—to increase research dollars going into ways to lower emissions by looking at alternative ways to deal with energy production, like electricity. For example, there is a small natural gas-fired power plant in Las Vegas, which I visited with our friend Senator Collins from Maine—that emits zero carbon dioxide. That is a boon to the environment, and I think it also provides a solution to the oil and gas industry because what they do is pipe the CO2 off the back end, and they use it to inject into the ground in the oilfields, so they produce more oil and gas. It is called secondary recovery.

Here at home, it is easy to take dependable energy for granted. We do it all the time. We don’t worry about having the energy to cook our dinner at night or refill our cars’ gas tanks. We take that all for granted. But the truth is, in countless countries in the world and for the majority of the world, it is a completely different story.

For our friends who advocate these utopian ideas like the Green New Deal, I don’t begrudge their desire to improve the environment, but I would ask them to be more pragmatic when it comes to trying to solve the problem. I would ask them: Are you really trying to solve a problem? If you are, we want to work with you to reduce emissions, but our goal is not to have a utopian fantasy that will not work and we can’t afford, count me out. If you want to solve the problem, count me in.

American energy is simply powering the world. It is strengthening global security, and it is helping people out of poverty. We need to continue to harness the power of one of our country’s greatest national assets.
I will conclude there. I will continue to share some of my thoughts on the importance of American energy on the Senate floor. It is a topic bigger than one floor speech, and I will hopefully remind and encourage all of the Members of the Senate to work toward energy independence to help keep energy affordable, which will improve the standard of living and the quality of the lives of all Americans.

I yield the floor.

REMEMBERING LAUREN BRUNER

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, on September 10, just a few months ago, Lauren Bruner, a veteran of Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941, passed away. Mr. Bruner wasn’t just any veteran. He was a veteran who served on the USS Arizona during the attack that morning.

On Saturday, December 7, millions of Americans across the country will pay tribute to the attack at Pearl Harbor Nationally to commemorate what happened that morning, which brought the United States fully into the Second World War. Aboard the USS Arizona were 1,512 officers, sailors, and marines. The attack that day on December 7, 1941, marked the last time that Donald Stratton was able to join the memorial service to commemorate December 7, Pearl Harbor. I have this picture here that I will show of Donald Stratton, who again this weekend will be joining Ken Potts as Lauren Bruner is interred to join the other men and women who lost their lives that morning.

This is an opportunity for us to once again say thank you to the 2,403 people who were lost that morning, to the people who survived, who went on to fight the Second World War, and our veterans today who live and continue to live a legacy that was given to them that December 7 morning.

On Saturday, as we join our families and do weekend work, I hope we will take a little bit of time to reflect once again on a dark chapter in American history that led to a great American conflict. I want to thank the men and women who served our country, to the men and women who fight for our Nation each and every day, to the people like Ken Potts and Lou Conter and Donald Stratton, who continue to remind us each and every moment why this Nation is worth fighting for.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

TAX REFORM

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to talk about the importance of passing the expired tax credit provisions for many small businesses and industries that support families and help revitalize economic, depressed communities, and those that are underserved.

We all know that 2 years ago, the Republicans and President Trump enacted a $2 trillion tax break for large corporations, and there was a lot of lobbying to get that in the bill, but the tax bill that Congress passed. Yet, when it comes to these provisions, which are just about tax certainty in the Tax Code that has been there for decades that really needs to be reauthorized, Congress is not getting the job done, and we need to come to terms now about why it is so important to help small businesses have tax certainty in the code, to help families and communities, and to get this provision done by December 31.

We all know how important it is that these individuals, green energy companies, economic development, and many other aspects of the Tax Code are being basically held hostage—since, I believe, 2017—by Congress’s inattention to this issue. Our Tax Code is most effective when we have certainty, predictability, and when we have made decisions out of Congress that we think we do want to incent and motivate investment.

One example of the Tax Code is to incentivize private sector infrastructure investment, and the clean energy tax credits have allowed industry to scale and invest in technologies that have brought prices down in wind by 80 percent and solar power by 98 percent. This is unbelievable growth in the energy sector because of our investments in the green energy tax credits.

Another example is the biodiesel tax credit that I worked on with Chairman Grassley for years. That particular tax credit and its uncertainty and Congress’s failure to act and give predictability have led to more than 10 biodiesel plants being closed so far, and there could be more many more closed if we fail to act before December 31.

This means a loss of jobs and a loss of production of fuel. It means the loss of economic benefit to regions, and it means an impact to soybean and other sectors that have been a part of this Chamber in Congress helped to create the ones that have been there for decades that allow us to think about tax certainty in the Tax Code. Without that certainty, it is going to be more dollars out of their pockets.

I am very concerned about a particular facility in Grays Harbor, WA. While it may employ only 37 people at this point in time, Grays Harbor is an important part of the Washington State economy, located on our coast, and has many great attributes positioned for the future of trade. Not only do I want to see biodiesel grow, I want to see biodiesel exports grow. I think it is shortsighted that Congress can’t get its act together to give people predictability and certainty about the Tax Code.

Let’s talk about some other examples that are not just about clean energy—like Ken Potts and Donald Stratton, the men and women who served our country, to the men and women who fight for our Nation each and every day, to the people like Lauren Bruner, who passed away. Mr. Bruner was 98 years old from Colorado Springs, CO. Ken Potts, 98 years old; and Donald Stratton, 97 years old. These three men remain as veterans of that war from the USS Arizona. Mr. President, I yield the floor.
for corporations, you should at least give small businesses and individual taxpayers the certainty they deserve in the Tax Code.

These provisions have been in the Tax Code for a long, long time. This is not new. It is not as if we haven’t done this before. But instead of taking care of today’s Tax Code before December 31, people are off making grandiose discussions.

I get it that some people on this side of the aisle would like to change and make corrections to the Tax Code, and other people on our side of the aisle would like to make a $100 billion investment in child tax credit. Look, I am appreciative of that discussion, but quit waging that battle, and do our day job, and take the Tax Code and the expiring provisions, and give taxpayers certainty by the 31st of this month.

Another example is that the expired provisions would help address the high cost of higher education by allowing students and families to deduct up to $4,000 for tuition and other high education costs. With total student loan debt of $1.5 trillion and average student debt of over $31,000, provisions like these on deductibility are very important.

On employment and economic development, nearly 26 percent of the provisions that are expiring are related to incentivizing employment investment in lower income communities.

The new markets tax credit. There is probably not a Member in the Senate who has not had a jurisdiction in their State use the new markets tax credit as one of the most effective economic development and community tools. This credit encourages private investments in low-income communities. Since the program was enacted in 2000, the new markets tax credit has delivered over $85 billion in project financing to more than 6,000 projects and created 1 million jobs.

Why can’t we have certainty on the new markets tax credit by December 31 of this year? There is no reason.

The new markets tax credits expire, and where are we going to be on building affordable housing, healthcare facilities, community clinics, research and technology incubators, and mixed-use commercial programs? I see no reason why we can’t get this job done. I have been working with Senators Booker and Toomey on a bill that would make this program permanent, and, hopefully, we wouldn’t have to go through this routine every year.

But take another example. The work opportunity tax credit has been an incredibly effective tool in helping individuals, including veterans, to find gainful employment. The work opportunity tax credit provides up to $2,400 for hiring a certified person, including veterans and people receiving SNAP and TANF benefits. We know this program worked. In the State for which person certified to receive the tax credit, there is a net savings of $17,700 in Federal subsidies. Where is the voice for people who say: Let’s give a tax credit and put people to work and actually reduce Federal subsidies? Oh, we are letting it expire again and giving uncertainty in the Tax Code.

Why? I am not sure because people are too busy in a big debate instead of getting our basic tax extension homework done. Let’s not continue to fail. Let’s get out here and give these work opportunity tax credits the predictability people would like to see. In 2013, Washington had over 28,000 individuals certified with the tax credit, helping them find employment, and that represented a total of $42 million in savings.

I urge all of my colleagues to vote for Judge Myers’, or soon-to-be Judge Myers’, confirmation when it comes up later today.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. BURRELL. Mr. President, I also rise today to voice my strong support for the President’s nomination of Professor Richard Myers to serve as a judge in the Eastern District of North Carolina. I might add for my colleagues that it is the longest court vacancy in the history of the system. Professor Myers was reported out of committee on a strong bipartisan vote on October 31. I am pleased that the Senate will today consider his nomination.

I want to give my colleagues some additional insight into a man whom we are asking them to vote on and that goes beyond his stellar legal credentials. The first thing I want my colleagues to know is that Professor Myers embodies a work ethic and diligence that we deserve in all of our judges. As an immigrant of Kingston, Jamaica, Professor Myers is a first-generation college student in his family. He worked his way through his undergraduate degree at the University of North Carolina School of Law and began a legal career as a clerk for Judge David Sentelle of the DC Circuit Court of Appeals.

Second, Professor Myers will be a judge who understands the value of public service, having made a career change from practicing at a prestigious private firm to contributing to our Nation’s justice system following the attacks of September 11, 2001. He said that his career change was ‘‘something I felt that I could do and that I owed to a country that had been really good to my family.’’

He did this first in the Central District of California and then in the Eastern District of North Carolina. Professor Myers then took his different path of service at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, instructing the next generation of lawyers to be people who, in his own words, ‘‘do the right thing every day.’’

If confirmed, Professor Myers will serve on the Eastern District of North Carolina and, as Senator TILLIS said, will hold court in Wilmington. Ironically, this court is currently meeting
in the building that once housed the Wilmington Morning Star, his first job as a reporter. However, when considering Professor Myers’ story, it seems fitting that someone with the character, work ethic, and servant’s approach to life will be returning to the building of his first post-college job wearing the robe of a Federal judge. I have faith in Professor Myers’ ability to do the right thing every day in this critically important role, and I am grateful for the opportunity to speak on his behalf to our colleagues. This is well-deserving, and he will be an incredibly effective serving judge in our district court system. I urge my colleagues to support him unanimously.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the presence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISCHER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

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

Mr. BURR. Madam 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 Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE), and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) 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 Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), and the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) are necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 68, nays 21, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 383 Ex.]

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The nomination was confirmed. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate from Texas.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Lydon nomination, Calendar No. 489, be made pending.

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

The clerk will report the nomination. The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Sherri A. Lydon, of South Carolina, to be United States District Judge for the District of South Carolina.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Could I ask unanimous consent that the Lydon nomination be reported without objection?

The result was announced—yeas 76, nays 20, as follows:

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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 will be immediately notified of the Senate’s actions.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate from New Jersey.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. RES. 159

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I come to the floor again to seek unanimous consent for a resolution that commemorates the Armenian genocide.

In October, the House of Representatives passed a version of this resolution by a vote of 405 to 11—405 to 11. This vote was historic, and I applaud the bipartisan courage of those in the House to stand up for what is right.

For those here in the Senate who would consider objecting to this request, I urge you to think long and hard about what it means for your reputation, what it means for history, and what it means for the Senate as an institution. History is watching, and it will not look kindly on those who object to recognizing genocide.

In recent speeches before the Senate, I have laid out the case for why we must move forward on this resolution.
The simple threshold question for this body comes to this: Do we recognize a clear case of genocide when it happens, or do we let a country like Turkey determine our own views, determine our own sense of history, determine our own moral obliteration, and determine the public record—a Turkey that today is committing atrocities against the Kurds in Syria, a Turkey that has teamed up with Russia and the Kremlin in purchasing the S-400 air defense system, and a Turkey that recently used it against an American F-16 to see if it works, and a Turkey that works to block forward movement in NATO on key national security objectives of the United States?

At what point do we say enough is enough? At what point do we simply move forward and acknowledge the truth? The truth is that the Armenian genocide happened. It is a fact. To deny that is to deny one of the monstrous acts of history. This denial is a stain on the Senate and our country. We have an opportunity to right that wrong and put the U.S. Senate on the right side of history.

Let us again review some of that history here today. More than 100 years ago, the Ottoman Empire launched a systemic campaign to exterminate the Armenian population through killings, forced deportations, starvation, and other brutal matters. How do we know this? How do we know this? Because U.S. diplomats were there. They wrote it down and sent it back to the State Department in Washington.

Henry Morgenthau, the U.S. Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire from 1913 to 1916, wrote this in his memoir:

When the Turkish authorities gave the orders for these deportations, they were merely giving the death warrant to a whole race; they understood this well, and, in their conversations with me, they made no particular attempt to conceal this fact.... I am confident that the history of the human race contains no such horrible episode as this. The great massacres and persecutions of the past seem almost insignificant when compared to the sufferings of the Armenian race in 1915.

That is what Henry Morgenthau said. On June 5, 1915, the U.S. consul in Aleppo, Jesse Jackson, wrote to Ambassador Morgenthau, saying:

There is a living stream of Armenians pouring into Aleppo from the surrounding towns and villages.

The Ottoman government has been appealed to by various prominent people and even by those in authority to put an end to these conditions, under the representations that it can only lead to the greatest blame and reproach, but all to no avail. It is without doubt a carefully planned scheme to thoroughly extinguish the Armenian race.

On July 21, 1915, in a report to Ambassador Morgenthau, the U.S. consul in Harput, Leslie Davis, stated: "Any doubt that may have been expressed in previous reports as to the Government's intention in sending away the Armenians have been removed. . . . It has been clearly demonstrated that the plan is to destroy the Armenian race as a race. . . . Everything was apparently planned months ago.

In an October 1, 1916 telegram to Secretary of State Robert Lansing, U.S. Charge d'Affaires Hoffman Philip wrote, "The Department is in receipt of ample details demonstrating the horrors of the anti-Armenian campaign. For many months past I have recorded the method taken by the Ottoman Government of dealing with the situation from an international standpoint would be to flatly threaten to withdraw our Diplomatic Representative from a country where such barbarous methods are not only tolerated but carried out by order of the existing government."

And finally, Abram I. Elkus, who served as the United States Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire from 1916-17, telegrammed the Secretary of State on October 17, 1916, stating "In order to avoid opprobrium of the civilized world, which the continuation of massacres [of the Armenians] would arouse, Turkish officials have now adopted and are executing the unfathomable method of extermination through starvation, exhaustion, and brutality of treatment hardly surpassed even in Turkish history."

"...That continues to verify that these diplomats saw the truth with their own eyes and communicated back to their superiors in Washington. They did their job, and the historical record proves it. Now it is up to individual U.S. Senators to do your job."

The Government of Turkey has funded lobbying activities and makes up lies and make excuses for these atrocities. The Turkish Government and its sympathizers have advocated for restrictive laws on expression and against legislation that recognizes the Armenian genocide. They will stop at nothing to bury the truth. I hope that individual Senators will not once again fail for it.

Any apprehension, any trepidation on the part of Senators who believe this resolution will somehow do irreparable harm to the cause in Turkey is simply unfounded. Twenty-seven countries have recognized the genocide in one form or another. Some saw trade increases in Turkey following their recognition. Twelve members of NATO have recognized the genocide. They still work with Turkey on defense issues. They still have embassies in Ankara. Their relationships were not irreparably harmed. Belgium, Canada, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland, and the Slovak Republic all did the right thing.

I say to my friends and colleagues that genocide is genocide. Senators in this body should have the simple courage to say it plainly, say it clearly, and say it without reservation.

In every session of Congress since 2006, I have introduced or cosponsored resolutions affirming the facts of the Armenian genocide. When I was chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I was proud to preside over the passage of an Armenian genocide resolution out of the committee.

The work continues here today. If we are not successful this afternoon, I know we are not going to stop until we are. I am not going to stop until I go through every single Senator who is willing to come to the floor and issue an objection on behalf of the administration. I thank the 27 additional Senators who have been willing to stand up for a true, clear-eyed vision: Senators Van Hollen, Rubio, Stabenow, Gardner, Markey, Cornyn, Warren, Romney, Peters, Portman, Feinstein, Wyden, Duckworth, Reed, Schumer, Udall, Harris, Whitehouse, Sanders, Klobuchar, Cardin, Booker, Casey, Bennet, Rosen, Brown, and Cortez Masto. I thank them all.

If this body comes to this: Do we recognize a clear case of genocide when it happens. It is a fact. To deny it can only lead to the greatest blame and reproach, but all to no avail. It is with-
marking up an enormous package of sanctions on Turkey.

The horse has left the barn. There is no good reason for the administration to object to this resolution, and the effect of doing so is to deny recognition of this chilling moment of history.

Let me begin by echoing the optimism the Senator from New Jersey expressed. We may well see an objection here today, as we did when Senator MENENDEZ and I previously came to the Senate floor and sought to pass this just a couple of weeks ago, but I believe that in the coming days and weeks, we will get this passed and that this objection, I hope, will be only temporary. I look forward to the day—hopefully very, very soon—when all 100 Senators, Democrats and Republicans, are united in simply speaking the truth, recognizing the genocide that occurred, and making perfectly clear that America stands against genocide.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, once again, I am deeply disappointed. This is the third time a Senator from New Jersey has come to the floor to object to the genocide resolution—the recognition of the genocide resolution. There is never a good time. There is never a good moment. In my view, there is always the right time, however, to recognize genocide as genocide.

My colleague from North Dakota actually sponsored H. Res. 220, the Armenian genocide resolution, affirming the proper commemoration and consistent condemnation of the Armenian genocide and the international standing in preventing modern-day genocides when he was a Member of the House of Representatives. He was right then. He was right then. The time was right then, and the time is right now.

President Erdogan was here in the United States a couple of weeks ago. There was a meeting at the White House. A few of my colleagues had the privilege of joining the President expressing their discontent. Erdogan was given options—a way out of the dilemma that Turkey has put themselves in with the S–400. Basically, they were told either return to Russia and destroy them in our presence and/or give them to us, which, of course, Russia will never allow that to happen, for us to have their technology.

There was a deadline. It was yesterday. I waited until today to make sure that in fact we wouldn’t intercede in that possibility. Turkey has come to the floor to object to the genocide resolution—t意论 the recognition of the genocide resolution. There is never a good time. There is never a good moment. In my view, there is always the right time, however, to recognize genocide as genocide.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, once again, I am deeply disappointed. This is the third time a Senator from New Jersey has come to the floor to object to the genocide resolution—the recognition of the genocide resolution. There is never a good time. There is never a good moment. In my view, there is always the right time, however, to recognize genocide as genocide.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, once again, I am deeply disappointed. This is the third time a Senator from New Jersey has come to the floor to object to the genocide resolution—the recognition of the genocide resolution. There is never a good time. There is never a good moment. In my view, there is always the right time, however, to recognize genocide as genocide.

My colleague from New Jersey, my good friend and colleague from New Jersey, has made and laid upon the table with no motions to reconsider be considered the resolution be agreed to, that the preamble be agreed to, and that the various consent that the Senate Foreign Relations Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 150 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration. I further ask that the resolution be agreed to, that the preamble be agreed to, and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. President, as I understand it, I, too, want to be on the right side of history. I believe we will be on the right side of history, but these negotiations that the President is currently in are a part of getting on the right side of history.

I appreciate the ongoing conversations and still hope we will be able to overcome the challenges in the bilateral relationship with Turkey. We know where the challenges are, and we all share the goal of seeing them appropriately addressed, but there is no good alternative right now. In my view, adoption of this resolution today is unnecessary and might very well undermine that diplomatic effort at a key time.

I do not intend to continuously object to this resolution, but I believe it is appropriate for me to do so at this time, so I ob

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, once again, I am deeply disappointed. This is the third time a Senator from New Jersey has come to the floor to object to the genocide resolution—the recognition of the genocide resolution. There is never a good time. There is never a good moment. In my view, there is always the right time, however, to recognize genocide as genocide.

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I serve on the Senate Judiciary Committee, as a member of the Bar Association of Delaware, and a member of the Delaware bar, and I care deeply about the transformation of our Federal judiciary under this current administration. I am particularly concerned about rising issues around qualification and competency. Let me speak to that, if I might, for a few minutes.

This Senate is doing precious little in terms of legislating, but we are moving at a breakneck pace to confirm President Trump’s judicial nominees—roughly, 150 so far. During the entire 8 years of the previous administration, 55 circuit court judges were confirmed. Nearly that same number have been confirmed in just 3 years of the Trump administration—48. Nearly one in seven of all U.S. district court judges now serving have been appointed by President Trump.

I am deeply concerned about the quality of some of these nominations. Some have never taken a deposition, argued a motion, let alone tried a case in front of a jury. In the previous administration, the professional association of lawyers, has ranked nine of President Trump’s nominees as “not qualified,” which is an exceptionally unusual and striking step for them to take.

This isn’t about whether the President’s nominees are conservative or not. I understand that elections have consequences and that a Republican President will more often than not nominate conservative judges. I have, in some cases, joined my Democratic colleagues in supporting qualified nominees. And even those serving have been appointed by President Trump.

I can’t support nominees with deeply concerning records about their commitment to justice and to advancing a commonsense jurisprudence. I am not going to set a standard any lower than what has been required in previous administrations to merit a seat on Federal benches across this country is an absolutely essential piece of our Constitution and our ordered liberty.
The cases that come before Federal courts are too important to tolerate incompetence, inexperience, or bias in the Federal Judiciary.

Why does this matter both in terms of the process and the substance? The President has forwarded nominees who, in my view, would take us backward on civil rights and voting rights, on women’s access to healthcare, on laws that protect consumers and workers, and on the environment. Their decisions impact every American. Equally concerning is that Trump’s nominees don’t reflect the diversity of our Nation. We want litigants to go into a court and be able to have their day in court and be confident that the judge before them represents the breadth and range of America.

So far, of the 55 circuit court nominees confirmed, only 11 have been women, and they have been even less racially diverse. Of all of President Trump’s nominees, 87 percent are White, and 70 percent are men. I think the judiciary should reflect the diversity of the American people and have strong records and a wealth of experience. Sadly, that is not the case for several we have considered, and let me briefly discuss them.

President Trump’s nominee to serve on the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, who was recently confirmed, Lawrence VanDyke, raised serious concerns about his work ethic and his temperament. He is “not qualified” by the ABA based on concerns about his lack of knowledge of basic procedural rules and his commitment to being truthful. Six retired justices of the Montana Supreme Court questioned his fitness when he ran for the Supreme Court in Montana and expressed concerns about his partisanship and the possibility of corporate influence. He is opposed to basic civil rights and civil liberties for the LGBTQ community and made a range of statements that I think would be disqualifying under any circumstance.

Sarah Pitlyk, who this Senate just confirmed this week to a lifetime seat on the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri, has never tried a case, either criminal or civil, has never taken a deposition, has never examined a witness, and has never argued a motion in Federal or State court. The ABA unanimously rated her as “unqualified” for a lifetime seat in the Federal Judiciary. We can and we should do better than this. Of the entire bar of the State of Missouri, I am certain there are qualified, capable, and seasoned conservatives who could have been nominated for that seat in the entire Ninth Circuit. In particular, the State for which Mr. VanDyke was nominated, there are certainly abundant opportunities to choose qualified nominees. We can and we should do better than this.

In my State of Delaware, my senior Senator, Tom Carper, and I worked together to help form a bipartisan judicial nominating committee to fill two vacancies on our district court. We felt strongly we had to reach out to the White House and work with them to identify consensus nominees who would be the best candidates we could best support and whom the President could nominate. Ultimately, we had a very productive conversation. The President nominated Maryellen Noreika and Colm Connolly, whom we both returned positive blue slips for. They ultimately have been confirmed by this Senate, seated, and now serve in our district court. This is how the process should work.

We should be able to consult back and forth between the executive and legislative until we find competent, capable, and qualified judges of whom we can all be proud. The Senate should not be a rubberstamp for this administration, regardless of the quality of nominees that get sent forward.

I will continue to oppose President Trump’s nominees who are undeserving or unqualified to serve. I do not believe in a so-called “hanging chad” of unqualified to serve. It is, in my view, our responsibility to guard against the politicization of the Federal Judiciary, and we should work together, not to tear down and destroy the traditions and rules, but to find ways to strengthen and sustain them.

That is how we will move qualified and consensus nominees forward and protect the independent judiciary on which our very democracy rests.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll. Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded. The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I come to the floor today because I missed an important occasion in the Senate. We had a celebration recently of one of our more beloved Members, Senator JOHNNY ISAKSON of Georgia.

There wasn’t much that could keep me away from that, but there was no Senator going to Madrid to the conference of the parties to consider the Paris Climate Agreement. Speaker PELOSI asked me to come on her delegation to the bicameral. As I think most people in this body know, I am pretty animated on that subject and couldn’t say no. There are not many other things that could have kept me away.

I want to come now and make up a little bit for being absent that day and express my gratitude for JOHNNY’s friendship to me over the years. I had the pleasure of going with him to the D-day anniversary on a codel that he was kind enough to join quite early on the bipartisan Senate Oceans Caucus I started and has been a very helpful part of that endeavor.

We have worked together on ways to improve healthcare planning for people who are in the late stage of illness to make sure that they get the care that they want and don’t get a lot of care that they don’t want and so that they have a chance to have their dignity and desires be honored.

We have long been adherent of a biennial budget, and I am delighted that the bipartisan bill that Senator Enzi and I have put together will create a biennial budget. I am not sure we will be able to get that done before Senator ISAKSON leaves, but one way or the other, his interest in biennial budgeting will live on, I hope, successfully when we pass that.

We had a parity question about children’s mental health hospitals that weren’t getting counted and, therefore, weren’t getting access to funding for the medical interns who come, and JOHNNY helped me fix that. It helped, I am sure, hospitals in Georgia, but it was particularly helpful to me for our Children’s Hospital in Rhode Island.

We have a lot of Rhode Islanders who were killed in the Lebanon Marine barracks bombing, and there has been litigation against Iran for the responsibility for those deaths. It is not easy to collect a judgment on a foreign government, and JOHNNY has been very helpful to me in our joint efforts on Iran terror victims’ judgments, helping us let the lawyers collect against assets of the Government of Iran.

Then, we regularly have done National Mentoring Month resolutions together.

But for all the things we have done together, that is not what I am going to miss about Senator JOHNNY ISAKSON. He is just one of the most decent, kind, good people who I have come across anywhere in my life and, certainly, one of the most decent and kind Members of the Senate.

With my very sincere apologies, JOHNNY, for missing the correct day, I hope you will understand how much it mattered to me to be elsewhere and why I had to be there. I come to the floor now, belatedly, to wish you all my very best with great affection and great respect.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll. Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded. The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the vote on the soon-to-be-pending nomination be called up.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Duncan nomination? Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?
EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 333.

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

The motion was agreed to.

The clerk will report the nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The bill clerk read the nomination of Patrick J. Bumatay, of California, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit.

CLOTURE MOTION

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

The bill clerk read as follows:

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 Patrick J. Bumatay, of California, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit.


LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 530.

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

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of John Joseph Sullivan, of Maryland, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Russian Federation.

CLOTURE MOTION

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

The bill clerk read as follows:

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 John Joseph Sullivan, of Maryland, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Russian Federation.


LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

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

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 534.

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

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Lawrence VanDyke, of Nevada, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit.

CLOTURE MOTION

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

The bill clerk read as follows:

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 Lawrence VanDyke, of Nevada, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit.


LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

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

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 543.

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

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.
The bill clerk read the nomination of Stephen Hahn, of Texas, to be Commissioner of Food and Drugs, Department of Health and Human Services.

**CLOTURE MOTION**
Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The bill clerk reads 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 Stephen Hahn, of Texas, to be Commissioner of Food and Drugs, Department of Health and Human Services.


Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the motions be waived.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motions were agreed to.

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

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**EXECUTIVE CALENDAR**
Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 432. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The President pro tempore will report the nomination. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Aurelia Skipwith, of Indiana, to be Director of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

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

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

The bill clerk reads 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 Stephen Hahn, of Texas, to be Commissioner of Food and Drugs, Department of Health and Human Services.


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

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

The Senator for Louisiana.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, last week, of course, was Thanksgiving, a day that we all set aside in America to be grateful. So that is what I do that we always say to ourselves: Gee, we really ought to be thankful every day of the year for the many blessings that have been bestowed upon us.

I know I say that to myself. So I thought today, for a few minutes, I would mention two things that I am especially thankful for, even though this isn’t Thanksgiving, but it is another day that the Lord has blessed us with.

The first thing—and there are many things that I am thankful for, but the first thing I am thankful for that I want to mention today is the many public servants who care for and protect American taxpayer money.

I want to highlight one in particular: the Chairman of the FCC, over many obstacles, announced that he was going to hold a public auction for the C-band.

**Why is that important?**
We all have a cell phone now, and many of us have iPads and computers. The internet has changed the world along with it. I am and changed our lives. It has made it more complicated, of course, but on balance, I think the internet has been good for our lives.

We are about to move into a new phase of telecommunications called 5G. It stands for fifth generation. It is really an extraordinarily fast internet. It can carry huge amounts of data. The ingenuity of the American people takes my breath away.

I am pretty impressed with 4G, and 5G is going to be 100 times faster. It is going to make things possible like telemedicine, where a specialist in a field of surgery through robotics and now an incredibly fast internet can operate on a sick patient 1,000 miles away and save his or her life, thanks to 5G.

We will be able to hook up all of our devices through 5G, saving time. It will give us more precious time to spend with our family. There will be driverless cars. Maybe I will not see them in my lifetime, but our assistants and our pages in the Senate will see them in my lifetime, but our assistants and our pages in the Senate will see them in their lifetime.

I could go on, but the point is, to make 5G possible, a lot of people have to work together. So 5G is made possible through the airwaves. When internet devices talk to each other, data in the form of radio waves—the scientists call them electromagnetic radiation—these radio waves go through the airwaves from one device to another.

It’s got to be different airwaves. It is called spectrum. We have airwaves for radios and TVs. Well, 5G can be used in a number of different airwaves or different parts of the spectrum. But one part of the spectrum, one part of the airwaves, is just perfect for 5G. It is called the C-band. That part of the airwaves is able to carry these 5G radio waves in a manner that can cover a huge geographical area but also carry lots of data.

It is called the C-band, and it is perfect for 5G. It is perfect. It is not too hot, not too cold. It is just right.

Some swamp creatures, both in government and out, seem to close—that closing to getting control of the C-band, which is owned by the American people. Led by three foreign satellite companies, they had almost convinced the powers that be to give them the C-band—just give it to them—and let them decide who is going to get to use that C-band for 5G.

Oh, and, by the way, in picking the telecommunication companies that would get to use the C-band that was going to be given to them for free by the powers that be, the foreign companies were going to get to keep the money—about $60 billion. That is just the upfront money—$60 billion. That would build 7,000 miles of interstate in this country.

Not only would the companies get the $60 billion, they would get to decide who could use the C-band, and they were that close. But the Chairman of the FCC stopped it. He is going to recommend next week—and I hope the rest of the FCC goes along with it—that we are going to have a public auction.

Doing a public auction is nothing new for the FCC. The FCC auctions off different airwaves all the time. In fact, the FCC in the last 25 years has held right around 100—I think it is 93—public auctions where anybody who wants to, any company that wants to—competition, moral good—can come in and bid that part of the C-band that isn’t getting used. The FCC has brought in to the American taxpayer about $123 billion in the last 25 years by auctioning off these airwaves and giving everybody a fair chance in a fully transparent way in front of God and country.

That is the way it ought to be.

But a lot of swamp creatures were pushing hard for this private sale. The American taxpayer not only would have lost the $60 billion, they would have lost control of the C-band, which, according to the Communications Act, doesn’t belong to me, doesn’t belong to the businesses; it belongs to the American people.

We can’t let our guard down. I have legislated in my short 3 years here that those swamp creatures—if they can’t get in the front door, they are going to try the side door, and if they can’t make it through the side door, they are going to try the back door. We have a lot more work to do but I am more than happy to work right here, so we have to remain vigilant.

I want to thank Ajit Pai for standing up. He made the right people mad.
That is easy to talk about, but it is hard to do. It takes courage, and he did it, and I wanted to single him out.

The second thing I want to say is that I am thankful for, among so many things, is this: I am so thankful for our neighbors to the north. I have visited Canada so many times. I am so proud to call them friends. There are 37 million people in Canada, some of the finest people that God ever put breath in.

We have fought together in wars. We have fought for freedom and we will take for granted. We trade with each other. I mean, the country is just a wonderful country with extraordinarily friendly, decent, and God-fearing people.

Our leaders squabble sometimes. That is just the way life is. Sometimes good friends have disagreements. We are having a few little disagreements right now. But on this beautiful Thursday, I just wanted to come and say how thankful I am that Canada is our friend and I am going to call them friends and how grateful I am for all 37 million of the fine men, women, and children in that great country.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the question be rescinded.

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

WORLD BANK

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I come to the floor this afternoon to discuss two issues: one dealing with the World Bank and another one dealing with the Department of Defense’s inability to get clean audits.

Today the World Bank is releasing its country partnership framework with China. Reportedly, this includes $1 billion to $2 billion of loans to China per year and $800 million to $1 billion in private sector investment.

Keep in mind that the World Bank was created to help economic development in the world’s poorest countries. China is now the world’s second-largest economy after the United States. Also, the United States is the World Bank’s largest contributor. I think many Americans would question why so many American tax dollars are going to support loans in China.

In China, there is a large and growing body of evidence of human rights abuses in Xinxiang, including mass internment camps. Reports indicate that these camps are centers for social control and political indoctrination. Chinese authorities reportedly mistreat or even torture detainees, while requiring them to engage in forced labor and to renounce their religion and their culture.

Yet the World Bank has supported a program called Technical and Vocational Education and Training Project in Xinxiang Province.

This is wording very close to what the Chinese Communist Party euphemistically calls its internment camps. Plus, one reporter has uncovered documents that these schools purchased barbwire, tear gas, and body armor using other funds—and, of course, funds are fungible.

Institutions like the World Bank have a great responsibility to further assess critical human rights risk and religious freedom, such as those exhibited in Xinxiang in any region where it lends money.

The World Bank’s own social framework states that when assessing social risk and impacts, the Bank must assess threats to human security and impacts on the health, safety, and well-being of workers and project-affected communities. The Bank and other such institutions cannot adequately assess a project’s full impact without monitoring and examining reports of widespread human rights abuses in any local area.

On November 12, the New York Times published leaked Chinese records indicating a coordinated effort going back years, directed by General Secretary Xi, to detain hundreds of thousands of Uighurs, Kazakhs, and other Muslims in internment camps and to unleash a wave of 'dictatorship' on the Xinxiang Muslim population. Given these repeated reports about repression in Xinxiang that date back even years, it is hard to see how any project in that region could meet the Bank’s social framework standards.

Therefore, it is a periodic internal review of risk assessment mechanisms to ensure that they are appropriately calibrated to capture changing risk profiles.

I question whether the Bank’s oversight processes are adequate, given its own assessments saw no issue with these intern camps that go by the professional name of Technical and Vocational Education and Training Project—and I am referring particularly to those in Xinjiang Province.

In a statement on August 29, the World Bank stated that it had conducted supervision missions twice a year since the project started and that these missions included a review of social safeguards and a monitoring and evaluation review. The World Bank found "no evidence from subsequent reviews that funds were diverted, misused, or used for activities not in line with project objectives or World Bank policies and standards." However, just last month, the Bank raised the environmental and social risk ratings from moderate—the second lowest level—to substantial and then to high—the highest level. It is very disheartening that very little happened in upgrading the risk assessments on this project until after congressional attention, even with an internal whistleblower raising the matter.

This seems like a failed process to me when routine audits and a whistleblower reporting no financial irregularities, despite increasingly concerning reports in the media about mistreatment and abuse.

I have written a letter to the Bank President, Malpass, asking questions about these systemic concerns. Moreover, I questioned why a country like China, whose economy has far surpassed the threshold at which it is supposed to graduate from rural bank funding, is now and forever still taking loans.

The World Bank was created for a very worthwhile purpose—to help poor countries that cannot, on their own efforts, assess capital markets. China and Russia today have well surpassed the World Bank’s graduation threshold and have access to capital markets. Yet American taxpayers are called on to do more. Yet China then continues to borrow, on average, $2 billion a year from the World Bank, making it one of the Bank’s top borrowers—the second largest economy in the world and one of the Bank’s top borrowers.

Countries like China or Russia that have seen the most economic progress should not seek to maintain access to the Bank’s preferential lending rates and technical support. Moreover, these are our two major geopolitical foes.

I have previously highlighted China’s influence through its Belt and Road Initiative and foreign influence activities at American universities as just an example of other things I looked at in the case of China.

Russia’s illegal occupation of territory in Georgia and Ukraine and its active measures in Georgia and Ukraine and its intellectual property theft and foreign influence activities at American universities as just an example of other things I looked at in the case of China.

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Now, just think, through the World Bank, they get U.S. taxpayer dollars, and then the country is still so rich that they can lend to many other nations around the world to increase the geopolitical influence and ensure that country’s lending does not follow international development finance standards, nor does China disclose the amounts or terms for loans that it offers.

Through the Belt and Road Initiative in China—this initiative is a process where they invest in other countries to have Chinese influence in these other countries—this Belt and Road Initiative in China has raised concerns about the accountability and transparency of this initiative in the United States.

I have previously highlighted China’s influence through its Belt and Road Initiative and foreign influence activities at American universities as just an example of other things I looked at in the case of China.

Russia’s illegal occupation of territory in Georgia and Ukraine and its active measures in Georgia and Ukraine and its intellectual property theft and foreign influence activities at American universities as just an example of other things I looked at in the case of China.
It took 28 years after Congress enacted a law requiring every Federal agency to conduct an annual audit for the Pentagon to get its ducks in a row. Unfortunately, the results are not what they are quacked up to be. As required by the Chief Financial Officers Act, the bean counters at the Department of Defense disclosed their financial assessments for fiscal year 2019 to the Office of Inspector General, and then the IG deployed 1,400 auditors to 600 sites around the world. These 600 different sites surveyed $2.9 trillion in assets and tallied $2.8 trillion in liabilities. After spending $1 billion to conduct this audit, the Department of Defense inspector general was unable to issue a clean opinion, and that is the goal we seek.

Just like other Departments can get clean opinions, why can’t the Defense Department do so? The case is that last year, the Pentagon is unable to account for tax dollars coming in and tax dollars going out. Let me clarify for everyone listening just what happens when big spenders aren’t held accountable. Tax dollars are ripe for wrongdoers to harvest, and that is why I have said that we call the Defense Department, with bases and contractors stationed around the globe, Pentagon spending is vulnerable to waste, fraud, and abuse.

As a Pentagon watchdog, I have approached nearly 50 times over my years of service here in the Senate to continually call attention to this wasteful spending by the Department of Defense. At the same time, I haven’t avoided calling attention to wasteful spending in any agency of the Federal Government, but the Department of Defense has gotten the majority of my attention. During this period of time, I have written countless oversight letters and launched scores of investigations. I have encouraged my colleagues to ramp up their oversight work so we can work together to fix what is broken.

The top dogs at the Pentagon have undertaken countless reform efforts, so I am not saying they don’t recognize it and try to do something about it, but after all these decades, they have not succeeded. At the same time, besides undertaking countless reform efforts, they have had command changes. They have testified that real solutions are underway. Yet the results of the fiscal 2019 audit leaves this Iowa Senator underwhelmed. Tax dollars are still leaking through the Pentagon ledgers like a sieve. The plumbing is broken. When the fiscal faucets are cranked wide open, at full throttle, with no internal controls welded in place to prevent leaking, tax dollars are flushed down the drain.

Over many years of oversight, dozens of top brass, the Defense Department and the top brass of U.S. military have come to my office to offer explanations for wasteful spending, particularly after the Pentagon is on the receiving end of unflattering headlines. They have polished their skills when it comes to dodging tough questions posed by my oversight letters. They are also well prepared to rationalize billions of dollars for their budget.

It is entirely reasonable and the responsibility of each of our lawmakers, including this one, to expect that they also have the ability to show us where taxpayer money goes. I have approached dialogue with our Nation’s military leaders in good faith, but time and again, I have been disappointed. The Defense Department’s inability or unwillingness to make necessary and overdue changes is quite unacceptable. The buck stops here, of course. As representatives of the American people, we owe it to our constituents.

The Defense Department is the largest federal agency. Those same military leaders plead for additional funding to defend our Nation, fight our enemies, and protect our interests abroad. Those military leaders discuss the growing threat of cyber attacks, aging and obsolete equipment, and ways that cuts to their budgets would hurt our men and women in uniform.

National defense, as we all know, is the No. 1 priority of the Federal Government under the Constitution, so Congress is understandably reluctant to deny money that military leaders say they need. That, in turn, is the reason earning a clean audit is shoved to the back burner at the Defense Department.

Congress and the Pentagon need to reach an understanding. Fiscal accountability and military readiness are not mutually exclusive. It is not an either/or scenario. Earning a clean bill of fiscal health would strengthen military readiness and be necessary increases to defense spending in Congress and among the American people.

Money somehow seems to simply get lost at the Defense Department. It is unreasonable to concede that it is okay for military inventory to vanish into thin air. It boils down to sloppy bookkeeping and antiquated accounting
systems that can’t generate reliable transaction data.

The problem starts at the top and filters down throughout the five quarters of the Pentagon. Let’s consider the recent debacle with the TransDigm Group, the Department of Defense’s Office of Inspector General released a report on spare parts that the Pentagon purchased from TransDigm. The result of that report exposed the rinse-and-repeat fiscal shenanigans corroding the accounting system. In one report, the IG analyzed 113 contracts between January 2015 and January 2017. It reviewed 47 spare parts the Defense Department purchased from TransDigm. In that window of time of only 2 years, TransDigm overcharged the Defense Department by more than $16 million.

I will go out on a limb and suggest that Americans would rather spend $16 million for the Defense Department on our men and women in uniform rather than overpaying for spare parts rip-offs to a defense contractor.

Congress can’t sign blank checks to the Defense Department. We must work to ensure every dollar is present and accounted for. The Nation’s strongest military in the world is managed by a Department where taxpayer dollars seem to vanish without explanation, without receipts, and without accountability. Over the years, I have collected a laundry list of Pentagon waste, fraud, and abuse: 26 hammers to $640 toilet seats, $117 soap dish covers, and $999 pliers. Most recently, I have exposed $1,200 reheatable coffee cups and $14,000 toilet seat lids. The dirty laundry just keeps piling up, and at the same time it is piling up, it is soaking the taxpayer.

These wasteful expenditures represent just the tip of the iceberg. The simple truth is the Defense Department can’t keep track of or doesn’t seek out the overtax dollars are spent. Internal controls are weak and, in some cases, nonexistent. That has been reinforced by this second audit for which the Department of Defense Inspector general can’t give a clean audit.

For a second time, I would suggest that what the law of 28 years ago tries to accomplish is that every Department get a clean audit—a clean opinion on their audit. Let me repeat for a second time this Defense Department, in the absence of a Department to sweep this issue under the rug year after year.

The TransDigm fiasco is just one very small example, even though it cost the taxpayers a lot of wasted dollars. Price gouging has been going on for years at the expense of the taxpayer and military readiness. Top-level managers know all about what I am talking about. They are doing a doggone thing to fix it. People must be held accountable for missing receipts, for lost financial information, for wasteful spending approvals, for questionable contracting agreements, and for business practices that lead to more taxpayer dollars being squandered.

American households across the country scrutinize their spending and keep tabs on their bills. The Defense Department should approach spending no differently. That is why I pushed for an amendment to the latest Defense authorization bill that would have required the Pentagon to keep better track of its contracts and to make sure they are accountable to Congress.

While this amendment was ultimately not included in the bill, I want my colleagues to know that I am going to continue to push for more accountability. Throughout my years of oversight, the Pentagon officials have claimed they want to reverse the cycle of cost overruns; they want to clean up the books; and they want to hold people responsible. Yet it never seems to happen. Although I have assaulted by the conversations I have had so far with new Defense Secretary Esper, the proof is in the pudding. From one administration to the next, it has been the same story. Business goes on as usual.

From the top of the chain of command to the rank and file, there is a pervasive mindset that assumes no one is watching over them and that no one cares. For four decades, this Senator has been watching, and this Senator cares. I am disgusted each time I discover another example of wasteful spending.

So I am here this very day, as I have been dozens of times before in my service in the Senate, to ask my colleagues in both the Senate and House of Representatives to join me in a crusade to stop wasteful spending at the Defense Department. There is a saying that goes something like this: no guts, no glory. Well, wasteful spending is gutless and going against the taxpayers. There is no glory in that, and people might wonder then, why does this Senator bother?

I have fought fiscal mismanagement at the Defense Department for these many decades. I have launched investigations after investigation and come to the floor of the Senate to talk until I am blue in the face. Billions of dollars have been poured into a decades-long effort to right the fiscal ship at the Defense Department. The Pentagon has won hundreds of partial orders, two complete audits, and endless technology updates to modernize its IT and accounting systems. Yet no one can tell us when, if ever, a clean audit might be possible. How can that be? After nearly 30 years of effort, there is no solution.

The Department of Defense can develop the most advanced weapons systems in the world, but it can’t seem to deploy something as simple and common as an accounting system that is capable of capturing payment transactions and generating reliable financial data. That is why it is a cakewalk for crooks to rip into the Defense Department from both ends and use a front end loader to freeload their way through this money pit.

Without a clean audit on the foreseeable horizon, there is no evidence to catch anyone’s hands in the Pentagon cookie jar. The only way we will root out fraud and wasteful spending is by knowing where the money is being spent.

That brings me back to square one as I finish. We need a clean audit and a record of accountability. As I mentioned earlier, I am Iowa stubborn, and, by God, I am willing to work with my colleagues and go toe-to-toe with any administration, Republican or Democrat. I will work as long as it takes for us to see eye to hold the Defense Department accountable once and for all.

I yield the floor.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I rise to commemorate the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change 25th Conference of the Parties, or COP25, which is taking place in Madrid until December 12 this year. I do so despite the cloud cast by President Trump’s announcement of his intention to withdraw the United States from the Paris Agreement.

The Paris Agreement is a landmark effort to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions in an effort to limit the global temperature increase in this century to 2 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels while pursuing means to limit the increase to 1.5 degrees.

The COP meetings now routinely represent the largest multilateral diplomatic events in the world. This year’s conference is designed to take the next critical steps in the U.N. climate change process with agreements on the implementation guidelines of the Paris Agreement COP24 in Poland last year, a key objective is to complete several matters with respect to the full operationalization of the Paris climate change agreement.

Article 28 of the Paris Agreement specifies that after joining, no country can withdraw for 3 years, after which a 1-year waiting period must occur before withdrawal takes effect. The Trump administration recently filed withdrawal documents on November 4, 2019, making November 4, 2020, the earliest possible date that the United States can be out of the agreement.
Withdrawal could not come at a costlier time. In an analysis I requested to review the Federal approach to prioritizing and funding climate resilience projects that address the Nation’s most significant climate risks, the Government Accountability Office notes that as of September 2020, the total estimated costs reached at least $91 billion in damage to public and private property.

The cost of recent weather disasters has illustrated the need to plan for climate change risks and invest in climate resilience, the report says. "Investing in climate resilience can reduce the need for far more costly steps in the decades to come.

The Paris Agreement establishes a global goal on adaptation that consists of, one, enhancing adaptation capacity; two, strengthening resilience; and three, reducing vulnerability to climate change in the context of the temperature goal of the agreement. It aims at strengthening the national adaptation efforts, including through support and international cooperation. It recognizes that adaptation is a global challenge faced by all, including the United States. Beating the global goal would not formally take effect until November 4, 2020, the U.S. team's posture at COP25 remains largely unchanged. A group of dedicated career civil servants will be on the ground.

Moreover, 2 years ago, numerous U.S. States, cities, Tribal nations, businesses, faith groups, universities, and others enhanced their presence at major international events, including COP meetings, to maintain and encourage the U.S. progress toward its national climate goals.

I am proud that nearly 100 Maryland plenipotentiaries “Are Still In.” They comprise dozens of businesses—many small. We have 10 cities, 6 counties, cultural institutions, faith and healthcare organizations, 20 universities, including my alma mater, the University of Maryland School of Law in Baltimore, and investors, such as the State treasurer of Maryland. They are all still in.

The Senate's report on the U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Agreement is an important contribution to our national efforts to mitigate climate change. I urge President Trump to reassert our Nation's strong leadership in implementing the Paris Agreement before the next conference of the Parties. In the meantime, I applaud the courage of the stakeholders who have taken action to protect our future, and I urge the President to rejoin the Paris Agreement to help address the causes and effects of climate change.

Prior to that, I led a congressional delegation of 10 Senators to COP21 that produced the Paris Agreement in 2015. Then the United States committed to lowering its contribution of greenhouse gas emissions 26 to 28 percent below 2005 levels by 2025.

Business and labor “are still in.” In a recent letter, 75 major CEOs and organized labor that are represented by the AFL-CIO stressed the importance of the Paris Agreement and the need for the United States to remain in it. This represents one of the most powerful business leaders and the largest labor federation in the country to unequivocally oppose the President's plan to withdraw from this agreement. It is not just in our national interest to achieve these goals, but it is also our moral obligation to do so.

In 2009, at the Copenhagen COP 15, the United States helped to drive the creation of goals for developed nations to mobilize $100 billion in public and private climate finance in 2020. The result was the Green Climate Fund, which helps to fund climate finance investment in low emissions, climate-resilient development.

The Paris Agreement affirmed and extended that $100 billion goal. Although President Trump has stymied its funding, the fiscal year 2020 State Department and Foreign Operations Appropriations bill the Senate Committee on Appropriations reported is the most favorable, forward-leaning on multilateral climate assistance in years, funding renewable energy programs at $179 million and resilient development at $177 million. In addition, the bill commits $140 million to the Global Environmental Facility and $10 million to the U.N. climate convention.

We must not forget the cooperation President Trump would have us forget. On a bipartisan basis, the U.S. Congress has uniformly rejected the President’s repeated calls to zero out climate assistance funding. This rebuke represents the true, cooperative spirit of our country, once a global leader on climate issues.

I urge President Trump to reassert our Nation’s strong leadership in implementing the Paris Agreement before the next conference of the Parties. In the meantime, I applaud the courage of the stakeholders who have taken action to protect our future, and I urge the President to rejoin the Paris Agreement to help address the causes and effects of climate change.

Prior to that, I led a congressional delegation of 10 Senators to COP21 that produced the Paris Agreement in 2015. Then the United States committed to lowering its contribution of greenhouse gas emissions 26 to 28 percent below 2005 levels by 2025.
Canada and Mexico aren’t just important markets for my State. Each of our States stands to gain with the ratification of the USMCA. This landmark trade deal will create over 175,000 jobs, which will help to strengthen our economy and America’s middle class. The overall conclusion of NAFTA will benefit workers in a wide array of industries. Manufacturing, tech, and more stand to gain from the USMCA. It will add much needed certainty for farmers and ranchers, who currently need every market they can get. Rural America is struggling right now, and approving this agreement will provide a shot in the arm for the rural economy.

The ratification of the USMCA, along with the recent deals that have been struck with South Korea and Japan, will show the rest of the world that the U.S. is open for business. Proving that the U.S. is negotiating in good faith to reach mutually beneficial outcomes for all parties that are involved could really move the needle in other ongoing trade standoffs.

The House leadership needs to get on the stick. The USMCA is too important for our Nation’s economic future for it to be sitting in limbo while House Democrats engage in partisan goals. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOZMAN). The majority leader.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. 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.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, this past October, the young women who make up the Burlington High School girls soccer team in Burlington, VT, made a statement: The time for equal pay is now. They are looking for it to happen. They are looking for it for their leaders—leaders like us in Congress—to show the courage to make it happen.

It all began one Friday night in October, when, after scoring a goal to put them ahead in the closing minutes of a game against neighboring rivals South Burlington, four exuberant members of the soccer team removed their jerseys to reveal T-shirts emblazoned with the simple phrase: “#EqualPay.”

The reception to their silent statement was reminiscent of that moment when the U.S. Women’s National Team made history in July, winning its second consecutive World Cup title. After making history in July, winning its second consecutive World Cup title. After the United States women’s national team made history in July, winning its second consecutive World Cup title, when the U.S. Women’s National Team’s inspiring pay equality—went viral over the weekend.

The reception to their silent statement was reminiscent of that moment when the U.S. Women’s National Team made history in July, winning its second consecutive World Cup title. After making history in July, winning its second consecutive World Cup title, when the U.S. Women’s National Team made history in July, winning its second consecutive World Cup title. After making history in July, winning its second consecutive World Cup title, when the U.S. Women’s National Team made history in July, winning its second consecutive World Cup title, when the U.S. Women’s National Team made history in July, winning its second consecutive World Cup title.

Marcelle and I are proud to support the young women of the Burlington High School soccer team. We proudly wore our #EqualPay shirts outside the U.S. Capitol, standing in solidarity with these young Vermonters and with women everywhere who are simply demanding what should be theirs: equal pay for equal work.

Earlier this year, after the U.S. Women’s National Team’s inspiring victory at the World Cup, I reintroduced a simple resolution calling for the Federation Internationale de Football Association, FIFA, to immediately eliminate gender inequality and treat all athletes with the same respect and dignity, regardless of gender. It is straightforward. It is common sense. And it is past due.

Following the October game, the referee who issued the yellow card bought one of the team’s #EqualPay shirts for himself. I find in that action a simple metaphor: There is simply no longer support for arcane practices that never should have existed. We should heed the call of the generation and tell these discriminatory practices, not just in sports but across the workforce. Equal pay for equal work should be the right of every person. It is as simple as that.

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

[From the VTDigger, Oct. 22, 2019]

BURLINGTON GIRLS SOCCER TEAM MAKES WAVES WITH EQUAL PAY ACTIVISM

By Aidan Quigley

BURLINGTON—A handful of Burlington girls soccer midfielder Helen Worden knocked in the take-the-lead goal during the team’s Friday night game against South Burlington with under five minutes to play, her team burst into a celebration.

Team members took the opportunity to lift their jerseys up to reveal #equalpay T-shirts underneath, with a few removing their jerseys to show the full #equalpay shirts.

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As four of the girls received yellow cards, the crowd chanted “equal pay.”

The good thing about the card was hearing everybody had our back,” senior center back/mid Maggie Barlow said. “That was one of the moments we were like, ‘wow, we have such a big support system.’ It was worth it because that was amazing to hear.”

Coach Jeff Hayes said some members of the South Burlington team came over the referees and requested that they not card their players. The cards were an exciting moment for the team, he said.

The four players who received yellow cards had to be temporarily taken out of the game and were not able to check back in before South Burlington equalized minutes later. The game ended in a 1-1 tie.

The effort was applauded by Brandi Chastain, a longtime member of the U.S. national team who famously removed her jersey in celebration of her penalty kick win over Japan during the 1999 World Cup.

“Thank you @bhsgirlssoccer for standing up, celebrating and taking your jerseys off for #equalpay Proud of you! #rolemodels,” Chastain tweeted Saturday.

Removing a jersey as part of a goal celebration—a popular goal celebration—is an
automatic yellow card under the regulations of FIFA, soccer’s worldwide governing body.

Vermont Sen. Patrick Leahy tweeted a photo of himself and his wife, Marcelle, both wearing the #equalpay jerseys. “Marcelle and I stand with you!” Leahy tweeted.

The team has worked with Change The Story, an initiative which works to address the wage gap and advance economic opportunities for women in the state. Women in Vermont earn 84 cents to every dollar earned by men, according to Change The Story.

Jessica Nordhaus, director of strategy and partnerships for Change The Story, said the organization is helping the team with logistics and strategy. She said it has been a good opportunity to talk to young people about the wage gap, which isn’t on track to close until 2048.

“They’re doing the math and thinking, ‘How old will I be in 2048?’” Nordhaus said. “We’ve just been so thrilled to see them take this issue on and do some of the activism that raises awareness about pay inequality.”

The team is selling the jerseys for $25, with a looser fit “men’s” style jersey for $29.80. The jerseys are 18% more expensive, which is meant to even the wage gap.

The jerseys have #EqualPay on the front with the BHS Seahorse logo and Change The Story across the sleeves.

Funds raised in the sales will go to a local youth soccer Greater Burlington Girls Soccer League. The players are hoping the funds raised can help with outreach across the city and help make participants in the soccer league more reflective of the demographics of the city.

“We want them to be able to give scholarships to girls who aren’t able to play,” Barlow said. “We’re working on widening access for all different kinds of people and making sure that the means to fund that.”

The team finished its regular season with a 9–4–1 record, receiving the fourth seed in the Division 1 playoffs. Burlington will face off with 13th seed Brattleboro Wednesday in the first round of the playoffs.

Hayes said he is excited for the playoffs and that the activism is bringing the team even closer together.

“It just brought this team so together,” Hayes said. “They’re so cohesive when they are using their voices. They’re making waves in the community, and they’re good waves.”

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INTER-AMERICAN FOUNDATION

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, for 50 years the Inter-American Foundation, IAF, has partnered with grassroots organizations and underserved populations throughout Latin America and the Caribbean to advance U.S. interests by helping to improve the lives of the hemisphere’s poorest people, supporting civil society, and strengthening democratic institutions. I want to take this opportunity today, on IAF’s 50th anniversary, to comment briefly on IAF’s accomplishments and on the unique value of small-grant, community-led development.

In 1969, Congress established IAF as an independent development agency charged with identifying and investing in creative solutions to improve the lives of local organizations, eliminating costly intermediaries and ensuring programs are led and implemented locally. IAF also requires grantees to contribute or mobilize their own cash or in-kind resources, helping to ensure sustainability and local investment in project success. On average, such counterpart investments total $3.11 for every $1 invested by IAF.

According to IAF, in fiscal year 2019 alone, it awarded $18.5 million to 97 grassroots organizations in 24 countries and mobilized $20 million in counterpart resources. IAF grantees created more than 2,500 partnerships with other organizations to share experiences and advance their missions, trained more than 200,000 people in new leadership and technical skills, and contributed to the creation of 11,000 new or improved jobs.

IAF’s development model illustrates that if modest resources and technical support are provided directly to communities and their grassroots organizations, they can address their own needs, design their own solutions, and invest in their own communities, then local ownership, self-reliance, and sustainable development are possible.

IAF’s small-grants model also enables it to respond to changing conditions on the ground, including natural and man-made disasters. In recent years, IAF has used its network of grantees in Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru to support thousands of displaced Venezuelans and the communities where they have relocated.

After the signing of the Colombia Peace Accords in 2016, IAF launched the Colombian Peacebuilding Initiative and invested nearly $2 million in 23 local Colombian organizations to support community-level peacebuilding and reconciliation.

In Central America, IAF has 98 projects addressing the causes of migration and targeting targets of criminal gangs in order to help families and communities resist such violence. And since June 2019, IAF has awarded $650,000 in grants to civil society organizations across the Eastern Caribbean focused on strengthening community-led disaster mitigation and preparedness planning.

IAF’s successful approach to development is why we increased funding in the fiscal year 2020 State and Foreign Operations Appropriations bill, which was reported unanimously by the Appropriations Committee in September. Increased funding would enable IAF to support a greater number of meritorious grant proposals, as the foundation was able to fund only 7 percent of the almost 800 proposals received in fiscal year 2019.

Regrettably, this model of donors directly supporting small-scale, local initiatives to design, implement, and sustain their own development solutions is more cost-effective than the rule. I hope IAF’s 50th anniversary serves not only as an opportunity to commemorate its many accomplishments, but also to reflect on the need to expand IAF’s approach to development across the U.S. Government.

(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. 376, the motion to invoke cloture on Executive Calendar No. 479, Richard Ernest Myers II, of North Carolina, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of North Carolina.

Mr. President, I was absent, but had I been present, I would have voted no on rollcall vote No. 376, the motion to invoke cloture on Executive Calendar No. 489, Sherri A. Lydon, of South Carolina, to be United States District Judge for the District of South Carolina.

Mr. President, I was absent, but had I been present, I would have voted no on rollcall vote No. 374, the confirmation of Executive Calendar No. 473, John L. Sinatra, Jr., of New York, 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. 379, the confirmation of Executive Calendar No. 475, Sarah E. Pitlyk, of Missouri, 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. 380, the confirmation of Executive Calendar No. 381, Douglas Russell Cole, of Ohio, 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. 382, the confirmation of Executive Calendar No. 460, David B. Barlow, of Utah, to be United States District Judge for the District of Utah.

ARMS SALES NOTIFICATION

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, section 36(b) of the Arms Export Control Act requires that Congress receive prior notification of certain proposed arms sales as defined by that statute. Upon such notification, the Congress has 30 calendar days during which the sale may be reviewed. The provision stipulates that, in the Senate, the notification of proposed sales shall be sent to the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

In keeping with the committee’s intention to see that relevant information is available to the full Senate, I
ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the notifications which have been received. If the cover letter references a classified annex, then such annex is available to all Senators in the office of the Foreign Relations Committee Office, Room 423.

The Senate, without objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

DEFENSE SECURITY

COORDINATION COUNCIL

Arlington, Va.

Hon. JAMES E. RISCH,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

Dear Chair Risch,

Pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(5)(C) of the Arms Export Control Act (AECA), as amended, we are forwarding Transmittal No. 20–0A. This notification relates to enhancement or upgrades from the level of sensitivity of technology or capability described in the Section 36(b)(1) AECA certification of August 1, 2008.

Sincerely,

CHARLES W. HOOVER,
Lieutenant General, USA, Director.

Enclosure

TRANSMITTAL NO. 20–0A

Report of Enhancement or Upgrade of Sensitivity of Technology or Capability (Sec. 36(b)(5)(C), AECA)

(i) Purchaser: Government of Italy.

(ii) Sec. 36(b)(1) AECA. Transmittal No.: 08–60; Date: August 1, 2008; Military Department: Air Force.

(iii) Description: On August 1, 2008, Congress was notified by Congressional certification transmittal number 08–60 of the possible sale, under Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, of four MQ–9 Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV), one Mobile Ground Control Station, five years of maintenance support, engineering support, test equipment, ground support, operational flight test support, communications equipment, technical assistance, personnel training/equipment, spare and repair parts, and other related elements of logistics support. These UAVs included AN/DPY–1 Synthetic Aperture Radar/ Ground Moving Target Indicator (SAR/GMTI) systems with 0.3 to 3 meter resolution. The estimated total cost was $330 million. Major Defense Equipment (MDE) constituted $50 million of this total.

On November 18, 2009, Congress was notified by Congressional certification transmittal number 08–60 of the possible sale, under Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, of two armed MQ–9 Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), one Mobile Ground Control Station, five years of maintenance support, engineering support, test equipment, ground support, operational flight test support, communications equipment, technical assistance, personnel training/equipment, spare and repair parts, and other related elements of logistics support. These UAVs included AN/DPY–1 Synthetic Aperture Radar/ Ground Moving Target Indicator (SAR/GMTI) systems with 0.3 to 3 meter resolution. The estimated total cost was $330 million. Major Defense Equipment (MDE) constituted $50 million of this total.

On December 17, 2009, Congress was notified by Congressional certification transmittal number 08–60 of the possible sale, under Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, of a performance upgrade of the AN/DPY–1 SAR/GMTI systems aboard the four MQ–9s UAVs previously notified on transmittal number 08–60. This upgrade, called the Enhanced Airborne Reconnaissance and Ground Moving Target Indicator (EAR/GM) AWAS System, provides for the following payloads: Electro-Optical/ Infrared (EO/IR), Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR), Electronic Support Measures (ESM), Signal Intelligence (SIGINT), laser designators, and various weapons packages. The MQ–9A Block 5 systems will include the following components:

a. The Ground Control Station (GCS) can be either fixed or mobile. The fixed GCS is enclosed in a customer-specified shelter. It provides remote split operations (RSO) capability, ground moving target indicator, and is contained in a mobile trailer. Workstations in either GCS can be tailored to meet customer requirements. The GCS data, technical data, and documents are UNCLASSIFIED.

b. The Raytheon Multi-Spectral Targeting System-B (MFTS-B) integrates electro-optical (EO), infrared (IR), laser designation and laser illumination capabilities to provide detection, ranging, and tracking capabilities specifically for high-altitude applications. The system provides long-range surveillance, high altitude target acquisition, tracking, range finding, and laser designation for the Hellfire missile and for all three service and NATO laser-guided munitions.

c. The AN/APY–8 Lynx Block 20 Synthetic Aperture Radar and Ground Moving Target System (SAR/GMTI) is a fully distributed, modular system for enhanced surveillance, reconnaissance, and targeting.

The Force 524D is a 24-channel GPS receiver based on precise positioning service capability built upon Trimble’s next generation GPS technology. The Force 524D retains compatibility with the proven Force SGS while adding new functionality to interface with the digital antenna electronics to significantly improve performance. The digital platform can select the radio frequency of digital antenna electronics interface. In the digital mode, the Force 524D is capable of controlling up to 16 independent beams. (vii) Date Report Delivered to Congress: December 4, 2019.

FUTURE ACT

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, today, the Senate passed a solution that Senator MURRAY and I reached to permanently fund historically Black colleges and universities and other minority serving institutions.

It is hard to think of a piece of legislation that would have more of a lasting impact on minority students and their colleges than this compromise.

This legislation does two things:

First, it provides permanent funding—that is fully paid for—for HBCUs and other Minority-Serving Institutions attended by over 2 million minority students.

Second, after 5 years of bipartisan effort, it greatly simplifies the free application for Federal student aid—the
FAFSA—that 20 million families, including 8 million minority students, fill out every year to qualify for Federal student aid.

This bipartisan provision—which was sponsored by Senators MURRAY, WURTH, and GARDNER—passed the Senate by unanimous consent last December—stops families from having to give their same tax information to the Federal Government twice—first to the IRS, then again to the Department of Education. Students give their information to the IRS and then the Department of Education to share tax return data, which eliminates up to 22 questions on the FAFSA with one click.

It should eliminate most of the so-called verification process, which is a bureaucratic nightmare that 5.5 million students go through annually to make sure the information they gave to the Department of Education is exactly the same as they gave to the IRS. The University of Kentucky recently told me that half the students applying to ETSU go through verification at some point.

According to the Department of Education, it helps taxpayers by eliminating up to $6 billion each year in mistakes—both in overpayments and underpayments—in Pell grants and student loans.

It has taken 20 years to reach this result, and it would not have happened without Jeff Appel, a longtime staff member at the Department of Education who recently passed away, and Secretary DeVos and Secretary Mnuchin’s commitment to getting this over the finish line.

In addition, I want to thank the staff who have been instrumental in getting the proposal to this place: on Senator MURRAY’s staff, Kara Marchione, Bryce McIlhlen, Mary Barry, and Evan Schatz. Conor Sheehy with Senator SCOTT, Christopher Toppings with Senator BURR, Corey Linehan, Mary Catherine Cook, as well as being a graduate of both the University of Florida and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology—MIT—and an integral part of the Federal Government staff. They are a true testament to the incredible education system we have throughout Big Sky Country.

The final step to simplify the FAFSA is to pass additional legislation that will reduce the 108 questions on the FAFSA to a total of between 18 and 30 questions and make Pell grants predictable so students can know how much aid they will receive to attend college.

I and Senators MURRAY, SCOTT, BURR, and COONS worked together to reach this result and I am glad the Senate passed it today so it can be sent to the House and signed into law by the President before the end of the year.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, Florida is the Nation’s greatest melting pot. People from all over the Nation choose to make Florida their permanent home. Our State has the best colleges and universities in the Nation, including many Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Minority Serving Institutions. As Governor of Florida, I made historic investments in higher education and fought to keep higher education affordable so more students can get a great education in Florida.

As Senator, I will continue to fight to make sure every child has access to a quality education at a price they can afford. Our Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Minority Serving Institutions are critical to the success of our State and the future of our children, and I will always work to support their mission.

The best way to support our colleges and universities is to make sure our economy is thriving so we have the resources we need to invest in education. I am thankful about how we are spending taxpayer dollars. I have concerns any time the government permanently funds a program, no matter what that program is. Funding anything permanently means there is little to no accountability or oversight. We must be careful to regularly review a government-funded program to make sure taxpayers are always getting the best return on their investment.

TRIBUTE TO MAJOR JORDAN KAHN

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I rise today to acknowledge the service of my defense fellow, Maj. Jordan Kahn, who is approaching the end of his assignment with my office as part of his experience in the U.S. Air Force Legislative Fellowship Program.

Major Kahn joined my office in January and his dedication, work ethic, and intelligence quickly made him a trusted voice on my legislative team. A proud member of the U.S. Air Force, as well as being a graduate of both the U.S. Air Force Academy and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, MIT, Jordan has deployed to defend our country multiple times, and because of his service, our Nation is safer. Most importantly, Jordan is a devoted husband and father, and I have had the pleasure of watching his family grow over the last year. In November, his wife and the U.S. Air Force Weapons School, Jordan has deployed to defend our country multiple times, and because of his service, our Nation is safer. Most importantly, Jordan is a devoted husband and father, and I have had the pleasure of watching his family grow over the last year. In November, his wife and his firstborn son Harrison has now dutifully taken on the responsibilities of big brother.

As Major Kahn moves on to his next assignment, I have full faith that he will continue to excel as a leader in the Air Force and would trust him in the most demanding and sensitive positions within our Armed Forces. I extend my sincere thanks for his service to our Nation and our office and wish him and his family continued success in his future endeavors.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO BETH WALSH, CLAIRE PICHETTE, THOMAS REDMON, AND JUSTINE HURLEY

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, this week I have the honor of recognizing four Montana school teachers for their passion and dedication to teaching math and science to young Montanans.

Beth Walsh from East Valley Middle School, Claire Pichette from Helena High School, Thomas Redmon from Daly Elementary, and Justine Hurley from White Sulphur Springs Elementary School have all been awarded the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching between 2017 and 2018.

The Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching is an incredibly high honor for school teachers across the country and no easy task to receive. A competition of Montana math and science teachers select finalists from a collection of statewide applications followed by a national panel of distinguished scientists, mathematician, and educators who select four national award winners from those finalists.

These teachers won the Presidential Award for their superior abilities to educate young Montanans on mathematics and science ranging from kindergarten children to seniors in high school. They show passion for their profession daily, and this award is a symbol of that passion. We are lucky to have such highly qualified teachers educating Montana students.

It is my honor to recognize Beth Walsh, Claire Pichette, Thomas Redmon, and Justine Hurley for their exemplary work educating Montana students. They are a true testament to the incredible education system we have throughout Big Sky Country.

REMEMBERING DR. WOODIE FLOWERS

Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, today I would like to recognize the life of an extraordinary individual, Dr. Woodie Flowers.

As an engineer, a professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology—MIT—and an integral part of FIRST—For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology—Woodie helped educate and inspire people in New Hampshire, across the country, and around the world.

I first had the privilege of meeting Woodie in the 1980s when I was doing legal work for MIT. Almost immediately, I recognized his curiosity and eagerness to learn, his patience and understanding, and his desire to collaborate and work effectively. Woodie extended that ethos and enthusiasm for education to every aspect of his life, including through groundbreaking leadership at MIT and FIRST.

Throughout his career, Woodie brought a unique vision to his work.
and frequently stressed that technology is changing at a pace that the human brain simply cannot keep up with. This understanding and concern led him to emphasize the importance of teaching critical thinking and an allegiance to objective truth, which he posted was a push back against the tribalism and binary thinking afflicting our society.

As part of his efforts to bridge division and expand human understanding, Woodie served as a mentor to countless students, including the following Woodie in a speaking program in a speaking program that was certainly a daunting task. I always looked forward to hearing his perspective at FIRST events. The major theme that Woodie sought to impart to students is that life is not a zero sum game. He would encourage them to work and compete with "gracious professionalism," where you work hard and challenge one another to be your very best, but you always engage with respect and kindness. FIRST encourages its participants to consider the annual contest as "coopertition," and Woodie used the opportunity to interact with the students and coaches as a way to reinforce this critical concept, that success comes through bringing out the best in each other and in humanity.

Woodie understood what a good leader should be, and his vision and example are characteristics that all Americans should aspire to. And in many ways, his confidence in our ability as human beings to solve problems and transcend our most basic tribal instincts, informed by science and grace, was uniquely American.

Dr. Woodie Flowers was one of the most brilliant, kind, and creative people I have ever met, and it was an honor to know him. I extend my condolences to Woodie's talented and magnificent wife and partner, Margaret, and their entire family. And I join them and the FIRST community in mourning an extraordinarily intelligent inventor, humanist, and American.

We will miss Woodie more than I can say, but I am certain that his legacy will live on through the countless lives he has touched. The world is a smarter, better, and more hopeful place because Woodie Flowers lived his life with love and purpose.

TRIBUTE TO EDWARD HALL
Ms. ROSEN. Mr. President, today I recognize Edward Hall, an incredible 96-year-old Ne- vadan, whose story began when he answered the call to defend his country. Eighty years ago, in 1939, at the age of 16, Ed lied about his age to enlist in the Army Air Corps and began his military service to our great Nation. On December 7, 1941, at just 18 years old, he found himself stationed at Hickam Field, Hau-waii, working in the mess hall cleaning up and preparing for the day when he and his fellow troops heard an explosion. This was the beginning of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, and Ed, like many of the men on Hickam Field, stopped what he was doing to response to this attack on the American Base. Without hesitation, Ed put his life on the line, joining in to rescue his fellow servicemen injured in the ongoing attack. Along with an Army officer, Ed commandeered a truck and began driving around the flight line picking up the injured to move them to the base hospital in spite of coming into direct fire from Japanese aircraft.

Upon returning from his third round of picking up the injured, Ed's truck was strafed by a Japanese Zero fighter and taken out of action, but Ed kept at it, as he knew helping the injured was his priority. As the bodies of the dead and injured continued to mount, Ed grabbed a 45-caliber pistol off one of his fallen comrades in order to have the means to defend himself from the attack as enemy planes buzzed the skies above him. He would go on to keep that pistol for the remainder of the war.

As the attack on Pearl Harbor ended, the recovery of the base began as Ed and other survivors began dealing with the aftermath of the attack and preparing for our formal entry into World War II in the Pacific theater. Ed kept going, as many of the members of that "greatest generation" did throughout World War II, embodying the American spirit of tenacity when faced with the greatest adversity, the spirit that eventually led to our success in defeating tyranny and enabling freedom across the world at the end of the Great War in 1945.

Mr. President, to Edward Hall, I join citizens across Nevada and the Nation in sending our sincere gratitude to him for his service to the United States. It is heroes like Ed whose service has kept our communities, States, Nation, and world safe. His service during World War II and the hard work he has led since are an incredible testament to resilience, and we are forever grateful.

TRIBUTE TO ANTHONY BORDA
Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I recognize Anthony Borda, an intern in my Washington, DC, office, for all of the hard work he has done for me, my staff, and the State of South Dakota over the past several months.

Anthony is a graduate of Nutley High School in Nutley, NJ. Currently, he is attending American University in Washington, DC, where he is majoring in political science. He is a hard work- er who has been dedicated to getting the most out of his internship experience.

I extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Anthony for all of the fine work he has done and wish him continued success in the years to come.

TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM SHUSTER DIXON
Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I recognize William Shuster Dixon, an intern in my Washington, DC, office, for all of the hard work he has done for me, my staff, and the State of South Dakota over the past several months.

Will is a graduate of Altoona Area High School in Altoona, PA. Currently, he is attending American University in Washington, DC, where he is pursuing a degree in communications, law, economics, and government. He is a hard worker who has been dedicated to getting the most out of his internship experience.

I extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Will for all of the fine work he has done and wish him continued success in the years to come.

TRIBUTE TO ALEXANDER REINKE
Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I recognize Alexander Reinke, an intern in my Washington, DC, office, for all of the hard work he has done for me, my staff, and the State of South Dakota over the past several months.

Alex is a recent graduate of South Dakota State University in Brookings, SD, having earned a degree in history. This spring, Alex plans to continue serving the public by working on Capital Hill. He is a hard worker who has been dedicated to getting the most out of his internship experience.

I extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Alex for all of the fine work he has done and wish him continued success in the years to come.

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

S. 151. An act to deter criminal robocall violations and improve enforcement of section 227(b) of the Communications Act of 1991, and for other purposes.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED
At 12:22 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

H.R. 3277. An act to amend section 402 of title, 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.

The enrolled bill was subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES
The following reports of committees were submitted:
By Mr. WICKER, from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation,
with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:
S. 153. A bill to promote veteran involvement in STEM education, computer science, and specific research, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 116–164).

S. 529. A bill to establish a national program to identify and reduce losses from landslide and to establish a national landslide program, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 116–165).

By Mr. WICKER, from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, with an amendment:
S. 906. A bill to improve the management of driftnet fishing (Rept. No. 116–166).

By June 28, S. 1004, a bill from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, without amendment:
S. 908. A bill to provide for an equitable management of summer flounder based on geographic, scientific, and economic data and for other purposes (Rept. No. 116–167).

S. 914. A bill to reauthorize the Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act of 2009, to clarify the authority of the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration with respect to post-storm assessments, and to require the establishment of a National Water Center, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 116–168).

By Mr. WICKER, from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, with an amendment:
S. 1148. A bill to amend title 49, United States Code, to require the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration to give preferential consideration to individuals who have successfully completed air traffic controller training and veterans when hiring air traffic control specialists (Rept. No. 116–169).

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:
By Ms. BALDWIN (for herself, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. ROBERTS, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. MENENDEZ):
S. 2982. A bill to expand eligibility for certain housing programs for qualified volunteer first responders; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN:
S. 2983. A bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to seek to enter into an agreement with the city of Vallejo, California, for the transfer of Mare Island Naval Cemetery in Vallejo, California, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans Affairs.

By Mr. THUNE (for himself and Mr. INAKSON):
S. 2984. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow for certain residential rental property to be depreciated over a 30-year period; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. MCCONNELL:
S. 2985. A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to assess the suitability and feasibility of designating certain land in the State of Kentucky as the Kentucky Wildlands National Heritage Area, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. YOUNG (for himself and Ms. STABENOW):
S. 2986. A bill to amend part A of title XI of the Social Security Act to establish an interagency council on social determinants of health, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. TILLIS (for himself, Mr. COONS, Mr. CASSIDY, and Ms. HIROKO):
S. 2987. A bill to authorize U.S. Customs and Border Protection to seize imported merchandise that infringes a design patent, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. TESTER (for himself, Ms. COLVIN, Mr. CASEY, and Mr. DADNESE):
S. 2988. A bill to address the financial exploitation of veterans receiving pension from the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself and Mr. CASSIDY):
S. 2989. A bill to amend title XI of the Social Security Act to clarify the mailing requirement related to social security account statements; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. THUNE:
S. 2990. A bill to require that the Federal Government procure from the private sector the goods and services necessary for the operations and management of certain Government agencies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. SULLIVAN (for himself and Ms. BALDWIN):
S. 2991. A bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to conduct an independent review of the deaths of certain veterans by suicide, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. MERKLEY (for himself, Mr. DURbin, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. WARREN, Mr. MENENDEZ, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE):
S. 2992. A bill to amend the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to prohibit mandatory pre-dispute arbitration agreements, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. WARNER (for himself and Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina):
S. 2993. A bill to amend titles XVIII and XIX of the Social Security Act with respect to nursing facility requirements, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina (for himself, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. GRADNIER, Mr. ERNST, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. RUBIO, and Mrs. CAPITO):
S. 2994. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to require information reporting with respect to qualified opportunity zone tax incentives enacted by the 2017 tax reform legislation, to require public reports related to such tax incentives, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. MANCHIN (for himself and Mr. CAPITO):
S. 2995. A bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress reports on patient safety and quality of care at medical centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs with respect to for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. LEE (for himself, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mrs. BLACKBURN, and Mr. CRUZ):
S. 2996. A bill to amend the Head Start Act to authorize block grants to States for pre-kindergarten education, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 131

At the request of Ms. MURKOWSKI, the names of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY) and the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBuchar) 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. 319

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SARAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 319, a bill to improve the reproductive assistance provided by the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs to severely wounded, ill, or injured members of the Armed Forces, veterans, and their spouses or partners, and for other purposes.

S. 469

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 469, 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. 531

At the request of Mr. COTTON, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOMWEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 511, a bill to promote and protect from discrimination living organ donors.

S. 622

At the request of Mr. JONES, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Ms. ERNST) was added as a cosponsor of S. 622, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to repeal the requirement for reduction of survivor annuities under the Survivor Benefit Plan by veterans' dependency and indemnity compensation, and for other purposes.

S. 670

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

S. 800

At the request of Mr. CASSIDY, the names of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) and the Senator from Arizona (Ms. MCSALy) were added as cosponsors of S. 800, a bill to establish a postsecondary student data system.

S. 839

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOYVIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 839, a bill to extend Federal Pell Grant eligibility of certain short-term programs.

S. 879

At the request of Mr. VAN HOLLen, the names of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN), the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) and the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 879, a bill to provide a process for granting lawful permanent resident status to aliens from certain countries who meet specified eligibility requirements, and for other purposes.
At the request of Ms. Stabenow, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. Gardner) was added as a cosponsor of S. 880, a bill to provide outreach and reporting on comprehensive Alzheimer’s disease care planning services furnished under the Medicare program.

At the request of Ms. Collins, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. Reed) was added as a cosponsor of S. 901, a bill to amend the Older Americans Act of 1965 to support individuals with younger onset Alzheimer’s disease.

At the request of Mr. Schatz, the names of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. Bennet) and the Senator from California (Ms. Harris) were added as cosponsors of S. 944, a bill to enhance the security operations of the Transportation Security Administration and the stability of the transportation security workforce by applying a unified personnel system under title 5, United States Code, to employees of the Transportation Security Administration who are responsible for screening passengers and property, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mr. Burr, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. Merkley) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1015, a bill to require the Director of the Office of Management and Budget to review and make certain revisions to the Standard Occupational Classification System, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mr. Portman, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. Inhofe) 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.

At the request of Ms. Collins, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. Stabenow) 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.

At the request of Mrs. Gillibrand, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Ms. Duckworth) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1820, a bill to improve the integrity and safety of horse racing by requiring a uniform anti-doping and medication control program to be developed and enforced by an independent Horseracing Anti-Doping and Medication Control Authority.

At the request of Ms. Stabenow, the names of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. Bennet), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. Blumenthal), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. Casey), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. Carper), the Senator from Nevada (Ms. Cortez Masto), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. Durbin), the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. Hirono), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. Markey) and the Senator from Michigan (Mr. Peters) were added as cosponsors of S. 2179, a bill to amend the Older Americans Act of 1965 to provide social service agencies with the resources to provide services to meet the urgent needs of Holocaust survivors to age in place with dignity, comfort, security, and quality of life.

At the request of Mr. Brown, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Ms. Cortez Masto) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2254, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to create a Pension Rehabilitation Trust Fund, to establish a Pension Rehabilitation Administration within the Department of the Treasury to make loans to multi-employer defined benefit plans, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mr. Murphy, the names of the Senator from Illinois (Ms. Duckworth), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. Smith) and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. Van Hollen) were added as cosponsors of S. 2317, a bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to credit individuals serving as caregivers of dependent relatives with deemed wages for up to five years of such service, and to support State medical training programs for caregivers.

At the request of Mr. Daines, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. Tester) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2376, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide criminal penalties for individuals acting as agents or attorneys for the preparation, presentation, or prosecution of a claim under a law administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs without being recognized by the Secretary for such purposes, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mr. Kennedy, the names of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. Roberts) and the Senator from Florida (Mr. Rubio) were added as cosponsors of S. 2417, a bill to provide for payment of proceeds from savings bonds to a State with title to such bonds pursuant to the judgment of a court.

At the request of Mr. Tester, the name of the Senator from New York (Mr. Schumer) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2599, a bill to amend the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 to provide assistance to manage farmer and rancher stress and for the mental health of individuals in rural areas, and for other purposes.

At the request of Ms. Duckworth, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Ms. Murphy) and the Senator from Nevada (Ms. Duckworth) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2661, a bill to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to designate 9-8-8 as the universal telephone number for the purpose of the national suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline system operating through the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and through the Veterans Crisis Line, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mr. Cassidy, the names of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. Manchin) and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. Tillis) were added as cosponsors of S. 2688, a bill to amend the Energy Policy Act of 2005 to establish an Office of Technology Transitions, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mr. Roberts, the names of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. Casey) and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. Perdue) were added as cosponsors of S. 2693, a bill to authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to provide for the defense of United States agriculture and food through the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mr. Blunt, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. Collins) 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.

At the request of Mr. Brown, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Ms. Duckworth) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2753, a bill to amend title XVI of the Social Security Act to update eligibility for the supplemental security income program, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mr. Kennedy, the names of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. Moran) and the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. Schatz) were added as cosponsors of S. 2754, a bill to create jobs and drive innovation and economic growth in the United States by supporting and promoting the manufacture of next-generation technologies, including refrigerants, solvents, fire suppressants, foam blowing agents, aerosols, and propellants.
At the request of Mr. BROWN, the names of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) and the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) were added as cosponsors of S. 2976, a bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide for a full annuity supplement for certain air traffic controllers.

At the request of Ms. INHOFE, the names of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN), the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN) and the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA) were added as cosponsors of S. 2988, a bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to establish within the National Park Service the U.S. African-American Burial Grounds Network, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mr. MURPHY, the names of the Senator from Texas (Mr. BRAUN) and the Senator from Wyoming (Ms. HASSAN) were added as a co-sponsor of 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.

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the names of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HRYKIJ) and the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. SCHATZ) were added as cosponsors of S. 2827, a bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to assess the suitability and feasibility of designating certain land in the State of Nebraska as a National Heritage Area.

At the request of Mr. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2960, 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.

At the request of Mr. RISCH, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 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.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. MCCONNELL:

S. 2986. A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to assess the suitability and feasibility of designating certain land in the State of Kentucky as the Kentucky Wildlands National Heritage Area, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 2986

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Kentucky Wildlands National Heritage Area Study Act”.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) HERITAGE AREA.—The term “Heritage Area” means the Kentucky Wildlands National Heritage Area.

(2) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of the Interior.

(3) STATE.—The term “State” means the State of Kentucky.

(4) STUDY AREA.—The term “study area” means—

(A) Adair, Bath, Bell, Boyd, Breathitt, Carter, Casey, Clay, Clinton, Cumberland, Elliott, Floyd, Green, Harlan, Jackson, Johnson, Knott, Knox, Laurel, Lawrence, Lee, Leslie, Letcher, Lincoln, Magoffin, Martin, McCreary, Menifee, Marshall, Monroe, Morgan, Owen, Perry, Pike, Pulaski, Rockcastle, Rowan, Russell, Whitley, and Wolfe Counties in the State; and

(B) any other areas in the State that—

(i) have heritage aspects that are similar to the heritage aspects of the areas described in subparagraph (A); and

(ii) are adjacent to, or in the vicinity of, the areas described in that subparagraph.

SEC. 3. STUDY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, in consultation with the National Park Service, the State and local historical societies, State and local tourism offices, and other appropriate organizations and governmental agencies, shall conduct a study to assess the suitability and feasibility of designating the study area as a National Heritage Area, to be known as the “Kentucky Wildlands National Heritage Area”.

(b) REQUIREMENTS.—The study shall include analysis, documentation, and determinations on whether the study area—

(1) has an area of natural, historic, and cultural resources that—

(A) represent distinctive aspects of the heritage of the United States;

(B) are worthy of recognition, conservation, interpretation, and continuing use; and

(C) would be best managed—

(i) through partnerships among public and private entities; and

(ii) by linking diverse and sometimes non-contiguous resources and active communities;

(2) reflects traditions, customs, beliefs, and folklore that are a valuable part of the story of the United States;

(3) provides outstanding opportunities—

(A) to conserve, interpret, cultural, or scenic features; and

(B) for recreation and education;

(4) contains resources that—

(A) are important to any identified themes of the study area; and

(B) retain a degree of integrity capable of supporting interpretation;

(5) includes residents, business interests, nonprofit organizations, and State and local governments that—

(A) are involved in the planning of the Heritage Area;

(B) have developed a conceptual financial plan that outlines the roles of all participants in the Heritage Area, including the Federal Government; and

(C) have demonstrated support for the designation of the Heritage Area;

(6) has a potential management entity to work in partnership with the individuals and entities described in paragraph (5) to develop the Heritage Area while encouraging State and local economic activity;

(7) could impact the rights of private property owners with respect to private property; and

(8) has a conceptual boundary map that is supported by the public.

SEC. 4. REPORT.

Not later than 3 years after the date on which funds are first made available to carry out this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate and the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives a report that describes—

(1) the findings of the study under section 3; and

(2) any conclusions and recommendations of the Secretary.

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

S. 2989. A bill to amend title XI of the Social Security Act to clarify the mailing requirement relating to social security account statements; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I along with Finance Committee member Senator CASSIDY are introducing a bill to make a common-sense, low-cost change to the law that will help American workers help themselves when preparing for retirement: The Know Your Social Security Act. This bill is simple: it clarifies the law about Congressional intent so that every worker over 25 receives a Social Security statement in the mail each year, unless the worker has accessed their statement online or declined to receive the statement in the mail.

The history of the Social Security statement runs right through the Senate and the “powerful” Committee on Finance. Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan expressed his frustration well: “All of us pay into Social Security but rarely, until we become beneficiaries, do we ever hear from Social Security . . . . in every paycheck, we see money withheld for Social Security, but we hear nary a word from the Social Security Administration. Let us take this simple step [sending statements] to reassure Americans that Social Security will be there for them.” The Social Security statement has three goals: to provide workers with information about their Social Security benefits, to help workers plan for the future, and enable workers to review their earnings records.

After enactment and once fully phased in, every worker aged 25 and older received an annual statement from Social Security starting in the year 2000. After a few years, Social Security’s website allowed workers to obtain a Social Security statement online. At the time, the online option was a good step forward in customer service. But as so many other government advancements in technology shortchanged good intentions. Due to tight budgets, SSA came to view the online option as
钱。最后，当美国人收到年度声明时，它帮助他们更好地理解社会保障作为他们整体退休计划的一部分的重要性。许多美国人，特别是年轻人，他们为社会保障做出了贡献，已经为一个项目制定了计划。

AARP相信，只要所有美国人，除非他们退出，都应该有权获得他们社会保障声明。我们很高兴地敦促您考虑您的社会保障声明，并在您未来的规划中发挥重要作用。

AARP 已收到 AARP，the Coalition for Paper Options，Justice in Aging，the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare，The Arc of the United States and The Senior Citizens League 的来信。我在这里告诉你，至少在正常情况下，如果工人的声明仍按要求通过邮件寄出，我们可以做更好的规划。

我非常赞同您的观点，即该法案将有助于确保美国人准确了解他们的社会保障。AARP 已收到 AARP，the Coalition for Paper Options，Justice in Aging，the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare，The Arc of the United States and The Senior Citizens League 的来信。在此，我感谢您为完善社会保障政策所做的努力。

你可以将这份声明视作美国人的年度提醒。这将帮助他们更好地规划未来。

We believe it is not only SSA’s obligation to send these statements, but that it is vital to the well-being of workers who need to be fully informed about their potential Social Security benefits in order to make decisions about their own working lives, and their retirement. While those who choose to get this information electronically and decline a paper statement have increased their awareness of the benefits they may receive in the future, others who do not make this choice should receive the statement in the mail as required under the law.

Justice in Aging supports this bill.

Sincerely,

TRACY GRONNIJDIG
Director of Economic Security

NATIONAL COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE SOCIAL SECURITY & MEDICARE

HON. JOE BIDEN, U.S. Senator, Delaware.
HON. JOHN BOYD, Chairman, Subcommittee on Social Security, Committee on Ways and Means, Washington, DC.
HON. JOHN DEERE, Ranking Member, Committee on Finance, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.
HON. VERN BUCHANAN, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.
HON. BILL CASSIDY, U.S. Senator, Louisiana.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVES LARSON, BUCHANAN, AND SENATORS WYDEN AND CASSIDY:

The Coalition for Paper Options—an alliance of consumer organizations, labor unions, rural advocates, and print communications industry leaders—is pleased to support today’s introduction of the bipartisan Know Your Social Security Act. Introduced in both the House and Senate, the bill would require the Social Security Administration to reissue the mailing of annual Statement of Earnings to workers, even though section 1143 of the Social Security Act clarifies that mailings are required, a choice should receive the statement in the mail as required under the law. For these reasons, Justice in Aging supports this bill.

Sincerely,

TRACY GRONNIJDIG
Director of Economic Security

NATIONAL COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE SOCIAL SECURITY & MEDICARE

HON. JOE BIDEN, U.S. Senator, Delaware.
HON. JOHN BOYD, Chairman, Subcommittee on Social Security, Committee on Ways and Means, Washington, DC.
HON. VERN BUCHANAN, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.
HON. BILL CASSIDY, U.S. Senator, Louisiana.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVES LARSON, BUCHANAN, AND SENATORS WYDEN AND CASSIDY:

The Know Your Social Security Act would make one change: it would allow the Social Security Administration to resume annual mailing of annual Statement of Earnings to workers, even though section 1143 of the Social Security Act clarifies that mailings are required, a choice should receive the statement in the mail as required under the law.

The Know Your Social Security Act would make one change: it would allow the Social Security Administration to resume annual mailing of annual Statement of Earnings to workers, even though section 1143 of the Social Security Act clarifies that mailings are required, a choice should receive the statement in the mail as required under the law.

We believe it is not only SSA’s obligation to send these statements, but that it is vital to the well-being of workers who need to be fully informed about their potential Social Security benefits in order to make decisions about their own working lives, and their retirement. While those who choose to get this information electronically and decline a paper statement have increased their awareness of the benefits they may receive in the future, others who do not make this choice should receive the statement in the mail as required under the law.

Justice in Aging supports this bill.

Sincerely,

TRACY GRONNIJDIG
Director of Economic Security

NATIONAL COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE SOCIAL SECURITY & MEDICARE

HON. JOE BIDEN, U.S. Senator, Delaware.
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HON. BILL CASSIDY, U.S. Senator, Louisiana.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVES LARSON, BUCHANAN, AND SENATORS WYDEN AND CASSIDY:

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We believe it is not only SSA’s obligation to send these statements, but that it is vital to the well-being of workers who need to be fully informed about their potential Social Security benefits in order to make decisions about their own working lives, and their retirement. While those who choose to get this information electronically and decline a paper statement have increased their awareness of the benefits they may receive in the future, others who do not make this choice should receive the statement in the mail as required under the law.

Justice in Aging supports this bill.

Sincerely,

TRACY GRONNIJDIG
Director of Economic Security

NATIONAL COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE SOCIAL SECURITY & MEDICARE
support and understanding for Social Security. Not surprisingly, Senator Moynihan’s simple, common sense amendment worked as intended while SSA was producing the statements. In fact, the bipartisan Social Security Advisory Board of 10 years ago found that SSA’s own survey data showed ‘‘...a link between increasing public confidence and receipt of a statement. People who receive a statement not only experience higher knowledge of Social Security than non-recipients, but also exhibit greater confidence that the program still will be there for them when they need it.’’

The statement also raises workers’ awareness of the need for retirement planning by focusing attention on their future retirement income. It brings clarity to an often confusing and perplexing subject by providing the individual’s estimated Social Security benefits, whether retirement, survivors or disability insurance. From there, workers can determine how much more they need to save for the future. Because the statements were intended to reach people early in their working lives, they provided an invaluable service.

Another important function of the Social Security statement, if it were to be delivered annually as Congress intended, would be to enable people to review the accuracy of the wage records maintained by SSA for each worker. As the statement indicates, workers are encouraged to review the chart showing their wages, compare the amounts reflected on SSA’s records with information from the worker’s own records. Workers are further advised that only they can perform this function and that they should report discrepancies to SSA as soon as possible.

We have been especially concerned that, with the number of statements being sent to all those who are approaching retirement age, fewer workers have been able to check the accuracy of SSA’s wage records. The annual statement, when it was being provided, helped to assure that if errors were made in the reporting of wages that they could be quickly discovered and corrected while the required evidence would still be readily at hand. Since SSA has suspended the statements now for nearly a decade, we are concerned that many errors in SSA’s records will go undetected and that some workers’ benefits will be reduced as a result.

As mentioned earlier, one function performed by annual distribution of Social Security statements was to inform workers of the kinds of benefits that are provided by Social Security. The statements focused on retirement, survivors, and disability benefits. In other words, the statements were an invaluable annual tutorial of what Social Security is all about. And knowledge about Social Security is vitally important to the success function of the program. We see that reflected in recent work that finds that one reason for the seemingly inexplicable recent decline in disability applications is related to the suspension of the statements. Clearly, restoration of annual production and mailing of the annual statements, as is required in the Know Your Social Security Act, is long overdue.

When it was being mailed to all eligible workers, the Social Security statement was able to play a critical role in building and strengthening public confidence in Social Security. It provided workers with the only meaningful pre-retirement information that they had available about the program and the benefits they could expect when they retire or otherwise qualify for benefits. SSA’s decision to end annual mailings has harmed many Americans. It is time for SSA to undo this harmful decision and to follow the clearly unambiguous requirements of the law to mail statements to all eligible workers. We applaud you for your leadership in introducing the Know Your Social Security Act, and look forward to working with you to enact this important measure.

Sincerely,

MAX RICHTMAN,
President and CEO,
PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA,
Washington, DC, December 5, 2019.

DEAR SENATORS WYDEN AND CASSIDY,
CHAIRMAN LARSON AND REPRESENTATIVE BUCHANAN:
Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) is pleased to support the Know Your Social Security Act. PVA is the nation’s only Congressionally chartered service organization solely dedicated to representing veterans with spinal cord injuries and/or disorders. Many of our members are among the nine million veterans who receive Social Security retirement or disability benefits. Others are among the millions of veterans and military service members and their families who will at some point in their lives benefit from the system.

For many years, the Social Security Administration (SSA) issued paper earnings statements each year. In fact, the bipartisan Social Security Advisory Board of 10 years ago found that SSA’s own survey data showed ‘‘...a link between increasing public confidence and receipt of a statement. People who receive a statement not only experience higher knowledge of Social Security than non-recipients, but also exhibit greater confidence that the program still will be there for them when they need it.’’

Social Security earnings statements help families plan for the future. The statements educate and inform working families of the kinds of benefits they are earning. Crucially, they allow workers to identify and correct their earnings records in a timely way, when mistakes are made.

Your wise legislation clarifies that these vital statements are to be mailed automatically, more and more private and public services are being shifted to individuals. This should not happen with Social Security. As technology continues to progress, there is a tendency for administrators to lean more on its capabilities and move communications with consumers and constituents online. Electronic communication is, no doubt, desired in many situations. However, the most important financial documents, including the Social Security earnings statements, should default to postal mail as intended by the original law.

That the earnings statements be mailed is vital for everyone, including those who have access to high speed computing. Of course, not everyone even has this kind of access. For example, a 2018 Pew Research Survey found that one in four Americans living in rural areas lack reliable access to high speed internet service. Other polling found that Americans, even those between ages 18 and 29, prefer not to receive important information from SSA online.

We applaud your effort to clarify the requirement that annual Social Security earnings statements be mailed. We are confident that the Know Your Social Security Act will help strengthen Social Security. We look forward to working with you to see this excellent bipartisan legislation become law quickly.

Sincerely,

HEATHER ANSLEY,
President and CEO,
Paralyzed Veterans of America,
Washington, DC.
Representative LARSON, Washington, DC.
Representative BUCHANAN, Washington, DC.
Representative PUJOLI, Washington, DC.
Representative ROBERTS, Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE LARSON, REPRESENTATIVE BUCHANAN, SENATOR WYDEN, AND SENATOR ROBERTS: The Arc of the United States writes in support of the Know Your Social Security Act. The Arc is the largest national community-based organization advocating for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families.

Social Security statements are a crucial tool to help recipients plan for their future by providing accurate information about their earnings and future benefits. In addition, the statement raises awareness about all Social Security benefits, including about the Disability and Survivors Insurance that many people with I/DD also receive.

As such, TSCL salutes you for introducing the “Know Your Social Security Act”. Every American who pays tax contributes to a limited population means that many people are not receiving this crucial information. While this information may be available via the My Social Security website, less than half of registered users of the website checked their statements in 2018. In addition, low income households are less likely to have internet access at home and be able to access the website, despite the importance of Social Security benefits to these households; using library or other public internet sources advised due to the high privacy nature of the information and the risk of identity theft. Without mailed statements, those households may have no access to the crucially important information about their Social Security benefits in the statement necessary to plan for their future.

For these reasons, we strongly support the Know Your Social Security Act. Please contact Bethany Lilly at lilly@thearc.org with any questions or if you would like to further discuss these issues.

Sincerely,

BETHANY LILLY, Director of Income Policy.

THE SENIOR CITIZENS LEAGUE,

By Mr. THUNE:

S. 2990. A bill to require that the Federal Government procure the private sector the goods and services necessary for the operations and management of certain Government agencies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD. There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 2990
Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.
This Act may be cited as the “Freedom from Government Competition Act of 2019”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.
Congress makes the following findings:
(1) Private sector business concerns, which are free to respond to the private or public demands of the marketplace, constitute the strength of the United States economic system.
(2) Competitive private enterprises are the most productive, efficient, and effective sources of goods and services not exempt under the provisions of a good or service.
(3) Unfair Government competition with the private sector of the economy is detrimental to the United States economic system.
(4) Unfair Government competition with the private sector of the economy is at an unacceptably high level, both in scope and in dollar volume.
(5) Current law and policy have failed to address adequately the problem of unfair Government competition with the private sector of the economy.
(6) It is in the public interest that the Federal Government establish a consistent policy to rely on the private sector of the economy to provide goods and services necessary for or beneficial to the operation and management of Federal agencies and to avoid unfair Government competition with the private sector of the economy.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.
In this Act, the term “agency” means—

(1) an executive department as defined by section 101 of title 5, United States Code;
(2) a military department as defined by section 102 of such title; and
(3) any establishment as defined by section 104(l) of such title.

SEC. 4. PROCUREMENT FROM PRIVATE SOURCES.
(a) POLICY.—In the process of governing, the Federal Government shall compete with its citizens. The competitive enterprise system, characterized by individual freedom and initiative, is the primary source of national economic strength. In recognition of this principle, it has been and continues to be the general policy of the Federal Government to rely on commercial sources to supply the products and services the Government needs;
(b) GENERAL RULE.—Except as provided in subsection (c) and notwithstanding any other provision of law, each agency shall take the goods and services necessary for or beneficial to the accomplishment of its authorized functions by procurement from private sources.

(c) EXCEPTIONS.—Subsection (b) shall not apply to an agency with respect to goods or services if—
(1) the goods or services are required by law to be produced or performed, respectively, by the agency; or
(2) the head of the agency determines and certifies to Congress in accordance with regulations promulgated by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget that—
(A) Federal Government production, manufacture, or provision of a good or service is necessary for the national defense or homeland security;
(B) a good or service is so critical to the mission of the agency or so inherently governmental in nature that it is in the public interest to require production or performance, respectively, by Government employees;
(C) there is no private source capable of providing the good or service.
(d) METHOD OF PROCUREMENT.—The provision of goods and services, under subsection (c) shall be performed by an entity in the private sector through—
(1) the divestiture of Federal involvement in the provision of a good or service;
(2) the award of a contract to an entity in the private sector, using competitive procedures, as defined in section 312 of title 41, United States Code, and section 2002 of title 10, United States Code; or
(3) conducting a public-private competitive sourcing analysis in accordance with the procedures established by the Office of Management and Budget and determining that using the assets, facilities, and performance of the private sector is in the best interest of the United States and that production or performance, respectively, by the private sector provides the best value to the taxpayer.
(e) CONTRACTED ACTIVITIES.—The head of an agency may utilize Federal employees to perform inherently governmental functions as that term is defined in section 5 of the Federal Activities Inventory Reform Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-270; 112 Stat. 2894).

Sincerely,

RICK DELANEY, Chairman.
(f) REGULATIONS.—The Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall promulgate such regulations as the Director considers necessary to carry out this section. In promulgating such regulations, the Director shall assure that any State or territory, or political subdivision of a State or territory, complies with the policy and implements the purposes of this section when expending Federal funds.

SEC. 5. STUDY AND REPORT.

The Director of the Office of Management and Budget, with the Comptroller General of the United States, shall carry out a study to evaluate the activities carried out in each agency, including those identified as commercial and inherently governmental in nature in the inventory prepared pursuant to the Federal Activities Inventory Reform Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-270; 31 U.S.C. 501 note) and shall transmit a report to the Congress prior to June 30 of each year. The report shall include—

(1) an evaluation of the justification for exempting activities pursuant to section 4(c); and

(2) a schedule for the transfer of commercial activities to the private sector, pursuant to section 4(d), to be completed within 5 years after the date on which such report is transmitted to the Congress.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 1253. Mr. SCOTT, of South Carolina (for Mr. ALEXANDER (for himself, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, Mr. JONES, Mr. BURR, and Mr. COONS)) proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 2486, to reauthorize the Federal Student Loan Program (under part 4 of title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965), under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, for the fiscal year 2008.

SA 1255. Mr. SCOTT, of South Carolina (for Mr. ALEXANDER (for himself, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, Mr. JONES, Mr. BURR, and Mr. COONS)) proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 2486, to reauthorize the Federal Student Loan Program (under part 4 of title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965), under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, for the fiscal year 2008.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

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to a taxpayer only if the Secretary of Education has provided to such taxpayer the notification required by section 494 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 prior to such disclosure.

(2) CONFIDENTIALITY OF RETURN INFORMATION.—Section 6103(a)(3) of such Code is amended by inserting “, (13)(A), (13)(B)” after “(1)”.

(3) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 6103(p)(4) of such Code is amended—

(A) by inserting “(a), (b)” after “(13)” each place it occurs and

(B) by inserting “, (13)(A), (13)(B)” after “(11)(10)” each place it occurs.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to disclosures made under section 6103(l)(13) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (as amended by this section) after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 4. NOTIFICATION OF REQUEST FOR TAX RETURN INFORMATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Part G of title IV (20 U.S.C. 1088 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“SEC. 484. NOTIFICATION OF REQUEST FOR TAX RETURN INFORMATION.

“The Secretary shall advise students and borrowers who submit an application for Federal student financial aid under this title or for a loan based on permanent and total disability, as described in section 417(a), or who request an income-contingent or income-based repayment plan on their loans (as well as the parents and spouses who sign such an application or request) or a Master Promissory Note on behalf of those students and borrowers) that the Secretary has the authority to request that the Internal Revenue Service disclose their tax return information (as well as that of parents and spouses who sign such an application or request or a Master Promissory Note on behalf of those students and borrowers) to officers, employees, and contractors of the Department of Education as authorized under section 6103(l)(13) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, to the extent necessary for the Secretary to carry out this title.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 484(q) (20 U.S.C. 1091(q)) is amended to read as follows:

“(q) reserved”.

SEC. 5. INCREASED FUNDING FOR FEDERAL PELL GRANTS.


(1) in clause (X), by striking “$1,430,000,000” and inserting “$1,455,000,000”; and

(2) in clause (XI), by striking “$1,145,000,000” and inserting “$1,170,000,000”.

SEC. 6. REPORTS ON IMPLEMENTATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than each specified date, the Secretary of Education and the Secretary of the Treasury shall issue joint reports to the Committees on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions and Finance of the Committees on Education and Labor and Ways and Means of the House of Representatives regarding the amendments made by this Act. Each such report shall include, as applicable—

(1) an update on the status of implementation of the amendments made by this Act,

(2) an evaluation of the processing of applications for Federal student financial aid, and applications for income-based repayment and income contingent repayment, under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070 et seq.) during the preceding fiscal year; and

(3) implementation issues and suggestions for potential improvements.

(b) ACCIDENTAL DATES.—For purposes of subsection (a), the term “specified date” means:

(1) the date that is 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act,

(2) the date that is 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and

(3) the date that is 1 year after the report date described in paragraph (2).

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I have 5 requests for committees to meet during today’s session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today’s session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

The Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, December 5, 2019, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

The Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, December 5, 2019, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

MERRILL’S MARAUDERS CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL ACT

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs be discharged from further consideration of S. 743 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The clerk will report the bill by title.

The bill clerk reads as follows:

‘‘S. 743 to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the soldiers of the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional), commonly known as “Merrill’s Marauders”, in recognition of their bravery and outstanding service in the jungles of Burma during World War II.

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

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be postponed until the end of the Senate on Thursday, December 5, 2019, at 2 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

The Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, December 5, 2019, at 11 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCIAL, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

The Committee on Armored Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, December 5, 2019, at 11 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

The Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, December 5, 2019, at 11 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

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COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be discharged from further consideration of S. 743.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be discharged from further consideration of S. 743.

The bill (S. 743) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed as follows: S. 743

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Merrill’s Marauders Congressional Gold Medal Act”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

(1) in August 1943, President Franklin D. Roosevelt and other Allied leaders proposed the creation of a ground unit of the Armed Forces that would engage in a “long-range penetration mission” in Japanese-occupied Burma to—

(A) cut off Japanese communications and supply lines; and

(B) capture the town of Myitkyina and the Myitkyina airstrip, both of which were held by the Japanese;

(2) President Roosevelt issued a call for volunteers for “a dangerous and hazardous mission” and the call was answered by approximately 3,000 soldiers from the United States;

(3) the Army unit composed of the soldiers described in paragraph (2)—

(A) was officially designated as the “5307th Composite Unit (Provisional)” with the code name “Galahad”; and

(B) later became known as “Merrill’s Marauders” (referred to in this section as the “Marauders”) in reference to its leader, Brigadier General Frank Merrill;

(4) in February 1944, the Marauders began their approximately 1,000-mile trek through the dense Burmese jungle with no artillery support, carrying their supplies on their backs or the pack saddles of mules; and

(5) during their march to Myitkyina, the Marauders fought victoriously against larger Japanese forces through approximately 3,000 soldiers from the United States;

(2) the date that is 120 days after the first date that the disclosure process established under section 6103(l)(13) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended by section 3(a) of this Act, is operational and accessible to officers, employees, and contractors of the Department of Education (as specifically authorized and designated by the Secretary of Education), and

(3) the date that is 1 year after the report date described in paragraph (2).

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Angel Ventling, a State Department fellow in my office, be granted floor privileges for the remainder of the day.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.
(8) by August 1944, the Marauders had accomplished their mission, successfully disrupting Japanese supply and communication lines and taking the town of Myitkyina and the Myitkyina airstrip, the only all-weather airstrip in Northern Burma;

(9) after taking Myitkyina, only 130 Marauders out of the original 2,750 were fit for duty and all remaining Marauders still in action were evacuated to hospitals due to tropical diseases, exhaustion, and malnutrition;

(10) for their bravery and accomplishments, the Marauders were awarded the “Distinguished Unit Citation”, later redesignated as the “Presidential Unit Citation”, and a Bronze Star; and

(11) though the Marauders were operational for only a few months, the legacy of their bravery is honored by the Army through the modern day 75th Ranger Regiment, which traces its lineage directly to the 5307th Composite Unit.

SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.

(a) Award Authorized.—The Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President pro tempore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements for the award, on behalf of Congress, of a single gold medal of appropriate design to the soldiers of the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional) (referred to in this section as “Merrill’s Marauders”), in recognition of their bravery and outstanding service in the jungles of Burma during World War II.

(b) Design and Striking.—For the purposes of the award referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary of the Treasury (referred to in this Act as the “Secretary”) shall strike a gold medal with suitable emblems, devices, and inscriptions, to be determined by the Secretary.

(c) Smithsonian Institution.—

(1) In general.—Following the award of the gold medal referred to in subsection (a) in honor of Merrill’s Marauders, the gold medal shall be given to the Smithsonian Institution, where it shall be displayed as appropriate and made available for research.

(2) Sense of Congress.—It is the sense of Congress that the Smithsonian Institution should make the gold medal received under paragraph (1) available for display elsewhere, particularly at other locations and events associated with Merrill’s Marauders.

SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.

Under such regulations as the Secretary may prescribe, the Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in bronze of the gold medal struck under section 3, at a price sufficient to cover the costs of the medals, including labor, materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses.

SEC. 5. STATUS OF MEDALS.

Medals struck pursuant to this Act are national medals for purposes of chapter 51 of title 31, United States Code.

ORDERS FOR MONDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2019

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 3 p.m., Monday, December 9; further, that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; further, that following leader remarks, the Senate proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the Bumatay nomination; and finally, that the cloture motions filed during today’s session ripen at 5:30 p.m. on Monday.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL MONDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2019, AT 3 P.M.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 3:57 p.m., adjourned until Monday, December 9, 2019, at 3 p.m.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate December 5, 2019:

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

ROBERT M. DUNCAN, OF KENTUCKY, TO BE A GOVERNOR OF THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE FOR A TERM EXPIRING DECEMBER 8, 2025.

THE JUDICIARY

RICHARD ERNEST MYERS II, OF NORTH CAROLINA, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF NORTH CAROLINA.

SHERRI A. LYDON, OF SOUTH CAROLINA, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA.
EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

TRIBUTE FOR MOHAMMED CHOWDHURY

HON. MAX ROSE
OF NEW YORK
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, December 5, 2019

Mr. ROSE of New York. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Mohammed K. Chowdhury, a Staten Island resident. Mr. Chowdhury is an activist, community organizer, and civil servant who has spent his life fighting to make the world a better place.

Mr. Chowdhury was born in rural Bangladesh. Beginning as a college student, he fought to better the lives of rural Bangladeshis in a whole host of areas, including education, infrastructure, healthcare, and communications. He also pushed for democratic reforms, fighting against autocratic government and ensuring that everyone would have the right to vote.

Upon moving to the United States, Mr. Chowdhury did not stop trying to better his communities. He has served as a civil servant in both the New York City and New York State systems. In both jobs, he was an active union member. He currently serves as the Council Leader for the New York State Public Employees Federation (PEF) Division 349.

Mr. Chowdhury has consistently fought on behalf of Staten Island's South Asian community. In 2015, he became the Staten Island Chapter Secretary of the Alliance of South Asian American Labor (ASAAL). Under his leadership, ASAAL has grown to include 12 chapters across five states.

Mr. Chowdhury's work to raise the voice for the voiceless and build coalitions between labor and community organizations should serve as an example to all of us. With a vision for the future, a desire to bring people together, and a tenacious work ethic, we truly can enact change.

So, Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues in the House to join me in honoring Mohammed Chowdhury's work to make communities across the world, from Staten Island to rural Bangladesh, a better place.

CELEBRATING TELEGRAM NEWSPAPER'S 75 YEARS OF LOCAL JOURNALISM

HON. RASHIDA TLAIB
OF MICHIGAN
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, December 5, 2019

Ms. TLAIB. Madam Speaker, I rise today in tribute to the Telegram Newspaper, a local paper serving the Wayne County communities of Detroit, Ecorse, and River Rouge.

Founded in 1944, the Telegram is a multicultural community newspaper that is distributed weekly with the goal of connecting citizens within the region by publishing information that educates, enlightens, uplifts and empowers its readers. The Telegram has been in continuous publication since its inception and continues to be unique in its approach to providing news the community turns to for local, state and national information.

We are especially proud of the Telegram's legacy as an African American-owned and run business and its outstanding commitment to the communities it serves. Their staff has developed partnerships with local schools, businesses, non-profit organizations, and city governments. They also participate in volunteer opportunities and provide media sponsorships for community events. The Telegram is helping to prepare the next generation of media personnel by establishing internship programs with local colleges & high schools. They expose youth to newspapers through the Newspapers in Education Program and Write Steps Internship Program.

Please join me in saluting publisher Gina Stuard and the Telegram Newspaper for seventy-five years of local reporting.

IN MEMORY OF MR. LARRY N. WOFFORD

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.
OF GEORGIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, December 5, 2019

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Madam Speaker, it is with a heavy heart and solemn remembrance that I rise to pay tribute to a great man and dear friend of longstanding, Mr. Larry N. Wofford. Larry passed away on Tuesday, December 3, 2019, and a funeral service will be held on Saturday, December 7, 2019, at 11:00 a.m. at the Chapel of Vance Brooks Funeral Home in Phenix City, Alabama.

A native son of Columbus, Georgia, Larry was born on August 1, 1944, to the union of the late Claude Newton Wofford and Zola Coker Wofford. He was retired from AT&T where he faithfully worked for over 47 years. During his distinguished career, he served as President, Communication Workers of America (CWA) Local No. 3212 for over 38 years; President, CWA Retirees for over five years; member of five Bargaining Committees; member of Telephone Pioneers of America; President, Chattahoochee Valley Labor Council for four years; and was actively involved with the Georgia Heritage Youth Homes in LaGrange, Georgia for over 25 years. Former Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm once said that “Serv- ice is the rent that we pay for the space that we occupy here on this earth.” Larry paid his rent and he paid it well.

He will be remembered for his insightful and optimistic spirit, his passion for helping others, and his immense love for his family. He leaves behind a great legacy in how life should be lived and warm cherished memories in the lives of those who knew him.

While he was preceded in death by his parents, he is survived by his loving wife, Sue, and a host of family, friends, and colleagues in the labor movement, who will miss him dearly. On a personal note, I am proud to have called Larry my friend. He was always encouraging and supportive of my career in the Georgia General Assembly and in the United States Congress and I will be forever grateful for his friendship, advice, and counsel over the years.

Mr. ROSE of New York. Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me, along with my wife, Vivian; and the more than 730,000 residents of Georgia’s Second Congressional District in saluting Mr. Larry N. Wofford for his lifelong dedication to serving working men and women and humankind in general. I would also like to ask my colleagues in the House to join us in extending our deepest sympathies to Larry’s family, friends, and loved ones during this difficult time. We pray that they will be consoled and comforted by an abiding faith and the Holy Spirit in the days, weeks, and months ahead.

RETIEMENT OF MS. PAULA KOCHER BARNES

HON. JOHN LEWIS
OF GEORGIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, December 5, 2019

Mr. LEWIS. Madam Speaker, today, I rise to recognize Ms. Paula Kocher Barnes on her retirement from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and for her decades of public service.

For over 40 years, Ms. Barnes served our country—most recently as deputy associate general counsel for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the Office of the General Counsel located in Georgia’s Fifth Congressional District.

It took some time for Ms. Barnes to make her way to our wonderful city. A native daughter of Iowa, Ms. Barnes completed her undergraduate degree at Coe College in Cedar Rapids. She continued her studies at Emory University’s School of Law, where I believe Metro Atlanta infused her spirit. Ms. Barnes began a career in federal service at the Department of Education in 1980 and joined the HHS Office of the General Counsel in the Region IV Atlanta Office a couple of years later.

After five years in the regional office, Ms. Barnes transitioned to the CDC’s Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), where she continued her federal career for the next 32 years. During her tenure with the ATSDR, Ms. Barnes served on the front lines of implementing policy at the intersection of environment and health policy, an issue that is near and dear to my heart. As an attorney-advisor, Ms. Barnes worked to implement the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act, a monumental bill which became public law the same year that I was elected to Congress.

As a senior attorney, Ms. Barnes continued this important effort by providing key counsel.
for interagency initiatives and memoranda on environmental health policy. In January 2014, the Centers for Disease Control promoted Ms. Barnes to the prominent position of deputy associate general counsel for the CDC/ATSDR Branch. Over the years, she contributed to litigation efforts regarding the Agent Orange exposure studies, the Federal Advisory Committee Act-National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Diesel Study, Freedom of Information Act, ATSDR cost recovery, and the precedent Handan Fordwinder cases.

Ms. Barnes also managed to find the time to advance scholarship and policy in her professional field by contributing to numerous publications, including two prominent public health law textbooks and several articles. In addition, she served as an adjunct professor at Georgia State University’s and Emory University’s law schools and as a guest lecturer at Duke University.

During her esteemed career, Ms. Barnes played a critical role in several significant public health activities and events, including emergency responses to the September 11th tragedy, anthrax threats, Ebola, Zika, and several major natural disasters. Our nation and the global family are forever grateful for Ms. Barnes and so many other CDC employees who help keep us safe, healthy, and alive. Today, I would like to thank Ms. Barnes for her 41 years of federal service, for her dedication to public health, public service, and education. As she prepares for a well-deserved retirement, I wish Ms. Barnes the very best as she embarks upon this next chapter.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JOE CUNNINGHAM
OF SOUTH CAROLINA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, December 5, 2019

Mr. Cunningham, Madam Speaker, on December 4–6, 2019, I was absent from the House chamber. I remained in my district in South Carolina to attend to a family matter. Accordingly, I was unable to vote on five legislative measures on the floor.

Had I been present and voting, I would have voted as follows:

Aye on Roll Call No. 643: H. Res. 546, On Motion to Suspend the Rules and Agree, Disapproving the Russian Federation’s inclusion in future Group of Seven summits until it respects the territorial integrity of its neighbors and adheres to the standards of democratic societies.

Aye on Roll Call No. 644 S. 178, On Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass, as Amended, Uighur Intervention and Global Humanitarian Unified Response Act.

Aye on Roll Call No. 645: H. Res. 739, On Motion Ordering the Federal Question to the Rule providing for consideration of H.R. 2534, the Insider Trading Prohibition Act.

Aye on Roll Call No. 646: H. Res. 739, On Agreeing to the Rule providing for consideration of H.R. 2534, the Insider Trading Prohibition Act.

Aye on Roll Call No. 647: S. 151, On Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass, as Amended, Pallone-Thune Telephone Robocall Abuse Criminal Enforcement and Deterrence Act.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF WHITNEY DOTSON

HON. MARK DESAULNIER
OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, December 5, 2019

Mr. DeSaulnier, Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the service of long-time community advocate, Whitney Dotson.

Whitney Dotson’s commitment to the good of his community is demonstrated by his career with the East Bay Regional Park District. Beginning as an appointed member of the Park District Advisory Committee, he later was elected to the Board of Directors where he worked on his passion for parks and health.

During his many years on the Board of Directors, Whitney has supported several significant projects, including the Atlas Road Bridge at Point Pinole, restoration of Albany Beach, and preservation of the North Richmond Shoreline. He also supported the completion of two Bay Trails, one between Pinole Shores and Bayfront Park and the other between Berkeley and Albany. Director Dotson fought to prevent commercial and residential development of the Breuner Marsh at Point Pinole, which was renamed to the Dosco Family Marsh. Through this project, Director Dotson was able to continue the work of his father, Reverend Richard Dotson, to keep the marsh a natural place for everyone in the community to enjoy.

Director Dotson has been described by his colleagues as tirelessly pursuing environmental protections in his community.

Director Dotson’s service extends beyond his work with the East Bay Regional Park District. He is the president of the North Richmond Shoreline Open Space Alliance, Associate Director of the Neighborhood House of North Richmond, and Vice Chair of the Community Advisory Group. Throughout his tenure with the East Bay Regional Park District and through his philanthropic work, Director Dotson has fought to preserve open space and ensure a clean and healthy environment for generations to come.

Director Dotson departs the East Bay Regional Park District with a legacy of championsing the environmental well-being of his community. We wish him great luck and joy in retirement.

IN HONOR OF LADY LIBERTY DAY

HON. LANCE GOODEN
OF TEXAS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, December 5, 2019

Mr. Gooden, Madam Speaker, the following Proclamation is in honor of Lady Liberty Day:

Whereas, in 1986, the City started planning, a pavilion that would showcase three flag poles—one for the American flag, the State flag and initially the Texas Sesquicentennial flag; and

Whereas, the pavilion was to provide a base for the placement of the Lady Liberty statue and for interagency initiatives and memoranda on environmental health policy. In January 2014, the Centers for Disease Control promoted Ms. Barnes to the prominent position of deputy associate general counsel for the CDC/ATSDR Branch. Over the years, she contributed to litigation efforts regarding the Agent Orange exposure studies, the Federal Advisory Committee Act-National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Diesel Study, Freedom of Information Act, ATSDR cost recovery, and the precedent Handan Fordwinder cases.

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Whereas, the pavilion was to provide a base for the placement of the Lady Liberty statue and to light flag poles at night; and

Whereas, on December 7, 1986, with a deep sense of pride for our state’s heritage, Forney held its Sesquicentennial Flag Dedication ceremony commemorating a new City landmark and gateway to the City; and

TRIBUTE TO YOUNG STAFF MEMBERS FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE OF THE 5TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF TEXAS AND THE UNITED STATES

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE
OF TEXAS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, December 5, 2019

Ms. Jackson Lee, Madam Speaker, as Members of Congress we know well, perhaps better than most, how blessed our nation is to have in reserve such exceptional young men
and women who will go on to become leaders in their local communities, states, and the nation in the areas of business, education, law, government, philanthropy, the arts, culture, and the military.

We know this because we see them and benefit from their contributions every day. Many of them work for us in our offices as junior staff members, congressional fellows, or interns and they do amazing work for and on behalf of the constituents we are privileged to represent.

Madam Speaker, I believe there is no higher calling than the call to serve a cause larger than ourselves. That is why I ran for public office. I was inspired to serve by President Kennedy who said, "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country," and by the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. who said: "Everybody can be great because anybody can serve. . . . You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love."

By this measure, there are several other great young men and women who served as volunteers this year in my offices. They may toil in obscurity but their contributions to the constituents we serve are deeply appreciated. That is why today I rise to pay tribute to three extraordinary young persons for their service to my constituents in the 18th Congressional District of Texas and to the American people. They are: Sheerine Karamzadeh, Texas Tech University; Elisabeth Foster, University of Texas; and Alejandro Izaguirre, St. Edward's University.

Madam Speaker, the energy, intelligence, and idealism these wonderful young people brought to my office and those interned in the offices of my colleagues help keep our democracy vibrant. The insights, skills, and knowledge of the governmental process they gain from their experiences will last a lifetime and prove invaluable to them as they go about making their mark in this world.

Because of persons like them the future of our country is bright, and its best days lie ahead. I wish them all well.

Ms. TLAIB. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor of Ms. Jean West, a long-time resident of Detroit, Michigan, who will celebrate her eightieth birthday on December 11, 2019.

Ms. West has never shied away from standing up for what she believes in. As an advocate, she doggedly pursues better for her community. She has remained active in the fight for civil rights, working with organizations like the NAACP to ensure equity for people of color and for her community. She continues to fight for a better life for the people of Westside. Whether it's advocating for resources or uplifting her neighbors, it is clear that she believes in the good of people and future of Detroit.

Please join me in wishing Ms. Jean West the happiest of birthdays.

CELEBRATING THE 100TH BIRTHDAY OF HATSUKO "SUSIE" KUSAKA

HON. J. LUIS CORREA
OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, December 5, 2019

Mr. CORREA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 100th birthday of Hatsuko “Susie” Kusaka from the City of Anaheim, California.

Born on November 14, 1919 in Rexburg, Idaho, Mrs. Kusaka has lived a rich life: raising a family, tending to crops of potatoes and strawberries, and caring for guests at the Disneyland Hotel.

Susie spent most of her childhood in Southern California and Japan. After marrying Shuichi Kusaka, she moved to Idaho Falls, Idaho, where she and her husband ran a potato farm. During that time, their four children—Warren, Alice, Ted, and Naomi—were born.

In 1953, the family moved to California, settling in Anaheim, where they made a living as strawberry farmers.

In 1978, at age 59, Susie began a second career with Disneyland Hotel. In 1987, she was named national “Room Keeper of the Year” by the American Hotel Association. She retired in 2009 after 22 years of hard work and dedication. In June of 2016, she moved into Walnut Village Retirement Community in Anaheim.

Along with enjoying her community’s many amenities, she delights in visits from her family members, including her grandson, Brian, and a granddaughter-in-law, Katharine.

Please join me in wishing my constituent, Susie Hatsuuko a happy 100th birthday and many more years of good health and happiness.

RECOGNIZING JOHN DITSLEAR

HON. SUSAN W. BROOKS
OF INDIANA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, December 5, 2019

Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize John Ditslear on his retirement from the Office of Mayor of Noblesville, Indiana. A well-respected public servant, Mayor Ditslear’s career has been defined by his steadfast leadership of Noblesville. His many decades of public service in a number of different roles have greatly impacted the community and its citizens.

A native son of Noblesville, Indiana, Mayor Ditslear graduated from my alma mater, Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, with a degree in finance. After graduation, Mayor Ditslear chose to serve his country by joining the United States Navy. Serving in the early 1960s, at a time of tumultuous international relations, Mayor Ditslear and his fellow sailors were tasked with transporting their Marine and Army counterparts fighting in Vietnam. During this time in the United States Navy, Mayor Ditslear rose to the rank of lieutenant while developing his leadership and situational management skills.

After completing his naval service, Mayor Ditslear moved to Noblesville in 1966, where he invested a great deal of time in his community as a volunteer. He served as a board member for many community organizations including the Chamber of Commerce, Noblesville Boys & Girls Club, Riverview Hospital Foundation, Hamilton East Public Library and the United Way of Hamilton County. Ever the leader, Mayor Ditslear is also a past president of the Indiana Association of Cities and Towns, the Noblesville Redevelopment Commission, the Life Underwriter’s Association and the Indianapolis chapter of the Chartered Life Underwriters. It is clear that Mayor Ditslear’s service to the citizens of Noblesville has reached far beyond his time in public office. After his service in the Navy, Mayor Ditslear entered into the business world joining the American United Life Insurance Company in Indianapolis. His success in the insurance business led him to start his own company Ditslear Insurance, with offices in Indianapolis and Noblesville. After many prosperous years, Ditslear Insurance merged into the Ditslear Group, where success continued.

Mayor Ditslear made his initial foray into elected office with three terms on the Noblesville School Board, from 1984 to 1992 and then again from 2000 to 2004. This experience helped to prepare Mayor Ditslear for the rigors of serving in higher public office. When the opportunity presented itself in 2003, he chose to run for mayor of Noblesville, a race that he would go on to win against four general election opponents.

After assuming the Office of Mayor of Noblesville in 2004, and later joining the Republican Party, Mayor Ditslear would lead the city in continued growth over his four terms and became the longest tenured mayor in the history of Noblesville. His successful stewardship of the local economy has had major impacts on both the operations of the city and its citizens. Since 2004, the assessed value of the taxable property increased 134 percent from $2.4 billion to $6.04 billion today. By 2016, the population of Noblesville grew by over 10,000 people to more than 60,000 residents. This growth led to the school system adding additional schools to support the younger population and helping to improve access to education.

Mayor Ditslear led several quality of life initiatives, resulting in the development of Hamilton Town Center, and Federal Commons in addition to four new parks. Mayor Ditslear also worked to increase the amount of outdoor walking trails 183 percent by extending the Midland Trace Trail from Westfield to the center of Noblesville. His focus on the heart of the city also included renovating the downtown square with new sidewalks and facades, adding additional schools to support the younger population and helping to improve access to education.
Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Madam Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Mayor Jeremy Parr for his exemplary dedication to duty and service as an Army Congressional Fellow and Congressional Budget Liaison for the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Financial Management and Comptroller). Mayor Parr is transitioning from his current assignment to serve as a Battalion Operations Officer at Fort Hood, Texas.

Hailing from Corpus Christi, Texas, Major Parr was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the Signal Corps from Army ROTC in 2007. He earned a Bachelor’s Degree in Information Systems Management from Texas A&M University and a Master’s Degree in Legislative Affairs from The George Washington University. Mayor Parr served in a broad range of assignments during his 12 years as an Army officer. He has served in one combat deployment to Iraq with Task Force 2–16 Infantry, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division.

I had the privilege of working with Major Parr who is a focused individual throughout 2017 and during his succeeding assignment as a Congressional Budget Liaison for the U.S. Army. Major Parr diligently coordinated with Members of Congress and their staffs to articulate the Army’s budget positions to the Appropriations Committees. His professional and zealous commitment to the mission, as both a fellow and liaison, are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and made a lasting impression on members and staff of the United States Congress.

Throughout his career, Mayor Parr has positively impacted soldiers, peers and superiors. Our country has benefited from his leadership, judgment and passion for the Army profession. The foundation of Jeremy’s success is his family. His wife, Yulia, and his children, Joshua, Evan and Alexander, are the light of his life. In addition, Jeremy’s parents, Debra and Earl, exemplify the selflessness and humility that characterize the families of all of our service members.

Madam Speaker, it has been a genuine pleasure to work with Mayor Jeremy Parr since the first session of the 115th Congress. It is with great appreciation that I recognize and commend Jeremy for service to our country and wish him all the best as he continues his service in the United States Army.

I rise to honor and recognize the history of the Lobosco Association, which will celebrate the 60th Lobosco Association Christmas Party on December 8, 2019 in Fredon, New Jersey. Four generations will gather to celebrate the Christmas Party this holiday season.

Four generations of Lobosco family members to continue growing towards the future. Rosario, Michele, Luigi, Giuseppina, Attilio, and Emilio. They formed the Lobosco Association to strengthen the bonds of family, peers and superiors. Their family cohesion, drive, and determination helped them to persevere and lay a foundation for a prosperous future for their descendants. As the family grew, the Association was formed to help maintain the close ties they shared.

To keep the family together, the Association has organized various festivities, picnics, and trips, the most enduring of which is now the annual Christmas Party. Since the first one on December 21, 1958, the Lobosco Association Christmas Party has been an opportunity for generations of Lobosco family members to share in the joy of the season and family company. For 60 years, the descendants of Michele and Vincenza have continued the tradition of a Christmas Party to instill in younger generations an appreciation for the meaning of family. They come to connect with seldom-seen family members, meet new ones, celebrate their heritage, instill pride, and keep the family spirit alive.

As Members of Congress, we have the deeply rewarding opportunity to learn about and recognize groups like the Lobosco Association. They represent great American stories. Their contributions have shaped this country for many years and will continue to strengthen it for many years to come.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues in this chamber to join me in recognizing the members and friends of the Lobosco Association and wishing them a joyous 60th Lobosco Association Christmas Party this holiday season.
Jerry has been a strong partner and advocate for the needs of the Delta, and I have enjoyed our working relationship. Please join me in congratulating Jerry for his dedicated service, and in wishing him luck in his future endeavors.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JAMES P. McGOVERN
OF MASSACHUSETTS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, December 5, 2019

Mr. McGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I was unavoidably absent on Tuesday, December 3rd, and Wednesday, December 4th.

On Roll Call Vote No. 643, on passage of H. Res. 546, disapproving the Russian Federation inclusion in future Group of Seven summits until it respects the territorial integrity of its neighbors and adheres to the standards of democratic societies, if I had been present, I would have voted YES.

On Roll Call Vote No. 644, on passage of S. 178, the Uighur Intervention and Global Humanitarian Unified Response Act (UIGHUR Act), if I had been present, I would have voted YES.

On Roll Call Vote No. 645, on ordering the Previous Question to H. Res. 739, if I had been present, I would have voted YES.

On Roll Call Vote No. 646, on passage of H. Res. 739, the rule providing for consideration of H.R. 2534, the Insider Trading Prohibition Act, if I had been present, I would have voted YES.

On Roll Call Vote No. 647, on passage of S. 151, the Pallone-Thune Telephone and Broadband Competition and Deployment Act, if I had been present, I would have voted YES.

CELEBRATING THE 100TH BIRTHDAY OF FRANCES BARBER MCCOMMONS

HON. J. LUIS CORREA
OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, December 5, 2019

Mr. CORREA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 100th birthday of Frances Barber McCommons from the City of Anaheim, California.

Born on November 10, 1919 in McCrory, Arkansas, Frances has lived a rich and blessed life filled with raising her five children and serving her neighborhood and at her church where she was a Sunday School teacher of 4- and 5-year-olds for more than 50 years.

Frances spent her childhood in Arkansas as the eldest of seven children. She graduated at 16 as class salutatorian. At 18, Frances married her childhood sweetheart, J.R. McCommons, and started life as a farmer’s wife. Frances, J.R., and their first four children were honored in 1949 as “The Farm Family of the Year for Woodruff County.” Frances and J.R. were married 58 years and were true life partners.

In 1955, the family moved to California, settling in Anaheim, where they lived in a neighborhood in East Anaheim surrounded by orange groves. It was here that they had another child. All five of their children would later attend and graduate from Anaheim High School.

Frances and J.R. were lay leaders in the Orange County Southern Baptist Association and helped start two churches: Crescent Southern Baptist Church in Anaheim and Lincoln Avenue Baptist Church in Orange.

In 1966, Frances and J.R.’s son, Michael McCommons, was killed in Vietnam while serving in the United States Army. He was posthumously awarded The Bronze Star with the V Device for Valor and Heroism in Combat and The Purple Heart. As a Gold Star Mother, Frances served veterans’ organizations and worked with other Gold Star Mothers to support veterans and families of those who were killed in service to their country.

For many years, Frances’s personal ministry was encouraging and celebrating others’ achievements, birthdays, and other life events through personal notes, cards, and letters. Frances remained involved in the lives of the children she taught in Sunday School and continued to celebrate their lives with them through adulthood.

Her life revolves around her immediate family and her large extended family, including eight grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. She is still an avid reader and remains interested in current events and the news. As someone whose livelihood was once dependent on the farm, Frances still loves watching the changes in the weather.

Please join me in wishing my constituent, Frances Barber McCommons, a happy 100th birthday and many more years of good health and happiness.

INTRODUCTION OF THE BANK MERGER REVIEW MODERNIZATION ACT

HON. JESÚS G. “CHUY” GARCÍA
OF ILLINOIS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, December 5, 2019

Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I rise today to support the Bank Merger Review Modernization Act.

When big banks get bigger, consumers and taxpayers usually end up losing.

Unprecedented concentration in the banking sector is hurting consumers, who pay more for critical financial services when their banks are merged out of existence. Since the 1980s, consolidation has swept the banking industry, with the number of FDIC-insured banks in the United States dropping from more than 15,000 in 1984 to less than 5,000 in 2018. Numerous studies have shown that bank mergers are associated with higher costs of credit, reductions in lending, and decreases in small business formation and local property prices.

Concentration in the banking sector also poses risks to financial stability. A wave of bank mergers by Bank of America, Citigroup, JPMorgan, and Wells Fargo in the late 1990s created the “too-big-to-fail” banks that became so central to the 2008 financial crisis.

Rather than scrutinizing the considerable risks that bank mergers pose, the regulatory agencies that oversee these mergers have increasingly “rubber stamped” them. Bank merger approval rates are at historic highs.

Last month, the Federal Reserve and FDIC approved the largest merger since the crash when they gave the green light to the merger between BB&T and SunTrust.

I am concerned that the reviewing agencies are not giving adequate attention to the systemic risks that these giant megabanks pose. I am also concerned that the considerable harms to consumers are not being considered when mergers are reviewed. The Bank Merger Review Modernization Act strengthens the bank merger review process to give the CFPB and consumers a voice, and to require that the systemic costs of too big to fail institutions are taken into full account.

I urge this body to curb the creation of too big to fail banks and pass this bill.

RECOGNIZING CHRISTOPHER FOSS

HON. ERIC SWALWELL
OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, December 5, 2019

Mr. SWALWELL. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize the dutiful work of my constituent, Dublin City Manager Christopher Foss, on the occasion of his retirement after nearly 40 years of service in local government.

Chris began his career in local government as a deputy city manager for Burbank, California, where he eventually served as the economic development director. In these roles, he enriched Burbank’s economy and local business environment.

In 1999, Chris began serving as the economic development director for my hometown of Dublin. He implemented a variety of economic development programs to bolster and retain the business community. Under Chris, Dublin’s economy flourished, and his work has had a lasting impact on the economic endurance and vitality of the Tri-Valley.

Chris served five years as assistant city manager before being promoted to city manager in 2014. His five-and-a-half-year tenure as city manager can be characterized by his superb relationship building, sound fiscal practices, and collaborative leadership style.

Under Chris’ leadership, Dublin vastly expanded its network of parks, constructed a new affordable housing project as well as key commercial projects, and increased its footprint in the medical and biotech communities.

Our community also has Chris to thank for the construction of several community facilities. One such example is the School of Imagination, to serve children with special needs. The influx of new jobs and services through these projects supports the sustainability of economic progress in our community.

Chris draws support from his amazing family. That network includes his loving wife Lisa, son Jordan, daughter-in-law Lizzie, and grandson Henry.

I want to thank Chris for the contributions he has made to the communities he has served, especially Dublin. His passionate leadership and enduring commitment to our community are very much appreciated.
Feeling by many.

vetran, friend, and mentor, Seb's loss will be
member of the Middlefield, Connecticut com-
the heaviest of hearts that I rise today to join
best as he begins the next chapter of his life.
Revish for his commitment to excellence and
fully convicted of rape—win his freedom
viewed President Barack Obama and helped
series of reports on the liberation of Haiti and
National Association of Black Journalists for a
Best International Reporting Award from the
Academy of Television Arts and Sciences.
the Silver Circle Award from the National
awards, four Edward R. Murrow Awards, and
June 1980 he became a reporter for WBNS–TV.

of the residents of Ohio's Third Congressional
District, I salute Jerry Revish on his illustrious
broadcasting career of 42 years.

In 1972, Jerry got his start in his hometown of Youngstown, Ohio at WBBW Radio and in June 1980 he became a reporter for WBNS–TV.

Over the course of his more than four decades in journalism, Jerry won 13 Emmy awards, four Edward R. Murrow Awards, and the Silver Circle Award from the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences.

In addition, he was recognized by the Associated Press for best feature, best documentary, and best spot news coverage; honored with the Carl Day Award for Outstanding Achievement; and was the recipient of the Best International Reporting Award from the National Association of Black Journalists for a series of reports on the liberation of Haiti and a half-hour documentary on the new South Africa.

His reporting skills have taken him around the world.

He was the first Columbus TV reporter to go to Saudi Arabia to cover the Persian Gulf War, and he has reported from Haiti, Barbados, South Africa, Bosnia, Bahrain, Cuba, and Japan.

Among his numerous career highlights, Jerry covered many national political conventions, Ohio State University bowl games, the dedication of the Vietnam War Memorial Wall, the Lucasville State Prison Riot, and the September 11th terrorist attack. He also interviewed President Barack Obama and helped Columbus bodybuilder Walter Smith—wrongfully convicted of rape—win his freedom through DNA testing.

In 2005, Jerry was inducted into the Ohio Broadcasters Hall of Fame.

Outside of the newsroom, Jerry is the founder and senior pastor of the Unity Temple Church of God in Christ in Columbus, Ohio alongside his wife of 45 years, Danielle. As he signs off at 10TV, I salute Jerry Revish for his commitment to excellence and service to Central Ohio—and wish him all the best as he begins the next chapter of his life.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF SEBASTIAN J. ARESCO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 5, 2019

Ms. DeLAURO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the service of long-time community advocate, Sean Casey as he begins retirement.

Sean Casey has dedicated his life and career to children and families. After graduating from Oberlin College and getting his master's degrees from UC Berkeley in both social welfare and public health, Sean worked at UC San Francisco, developing better data and analysis for maternal and child health programs.

He also created Fetal/Infant Mortality Review programs in Contra Costa and Alameda Counties.

Quickly after joining First 5, Sean became Contra Costa's Executive Director. Throughout his tenure, First 5 Contra Costa provided life-changing services to over 500 families.

While he was Executive Director, Sean oversaw the development of a county-wide preschool planning process which implemented a Quality Rating and Improvement System. He supported the development of those and other programs, identified gaps and addressed issues related to early childhood development including affordable housing, immigrant and racial justice, and the safety of neighborhood parks.

Sean also worked to establish Contra Costa County's Help Me Grow system to help parents identify potential developmental challenges their children may have and connect them with the necessary resources and services. He also developed Ready Kids, which helps young children prepare for kindergarten and their academic lives. On top of that, he helped establish the Children's Leadership Council, the Family Economic Security Partnership, the Early Learning Leadership Group, the Budget Justice Coalition, and the Contra Costa Funders Forum. Sean also served as the Chair of the First 5 Association.

Sean has always been a leader in the community and someone I have enjoyed working with greatly. Over my years in public service, I have visited First 5 and many of the other programs he is associated with and am always impressed by the impact he has on the families and children he works with. He retires from First 5, we wish him well knowing that his legacy will continue to enrich the lives of Contra Costa families. We wish him great luck and joy in retirement.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF SEAN CASEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Mr. DeSAULNIER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the service of long-time community advocate, Sean Casey as he begins retirement.

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HONORING THE CAREER OF GEORGE WOLFBERG

HON. TED LIEU
OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, December 5, 2019

Mr. TED LIEU of California, Madam Speaker, I rise to celebrate Mr. George Wolfberg, a longtime community leader in California’s 33rd Congressional District who will receive the Pride of the Palisades award from the Pacific Palisades Community Council. George worked for the City of Los Angeles for 37 years and played a hand in its bid for the 1984 Summer Olympics, divestment from South Africa over apartheid, and rewriting of the city charter.

Born on April 22, 1938 to Bernard Wolfberg and Leah Wolfberg, George was raised in Los Angeles, attending Los Angeles High School and the University of California, Los Angeles, where he received his degree in political science. George and his wife, Diane, married on February 9, 1964 and went on to have three children: Anya, David, and Michael, and four grandchildren.

George began working for the city of Los Angeles in 1961 in the City Administrative Office, where he eventually rose to Chief Administrative Analyst, the highest non-appointed position in the office. In that role, he prepared Los Angeles’ successful bid for the 1984 Summer Olympics and worked to ensure infrastructure upgrades were completed for the event. He also administered the City’s anti-apartheid program, overseeing the research necessary to ensure successful divestment from South Africa under apartheid. Even after he retired, George continued to play an outsized role in city government, serving as City Charter Commission Research Director and co-authoring the City’s administrative code.

The neighborhood of Pacific Palisades in some ways owes George a debt for its development. George helped craft and implement the Los Angeles Community Plan that has guided the growth and land use of Pacific Palisades and will for years to come. In addition to serving as Chair, Chair Emeritus, and Vice Chair on the Pacific Palisades Community Council, he served on the board of the Santa Monica Canyon Civic Association and Portrero Canyon Park citizens advisory committee, calling attention to the importance of proper landscape design and infrastructure. Even from his bed in the ICU this past September, George has been contacting Los Angeles city staff and officials to support a new park in his neighborhood.

George’s passion for engaging the youth is evident through his work on the Los Angeles County Bicycle Advisory Committee, service as a Watts Friendship Sports League commissioner following the 1992 riots, and efforts with the local American Youth Soccer Organization, where he was a National Referee still overseeing games as recently as last year. George has also received numerous awards for his volunteer work, including the Pacific Palisades Community Council’s Citizen of the Year award in 2011. George’s impact in Los Angeles and Pacific Palisades is remarkable and inspiring. I want to thank and recognize George for his efforts to improve his community and outstanding leadership throughout his career.

INTRODUCTION OF H. RES. 742

HON. JIM COSTA
OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, December 5, 2019

Mr. COSTA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to mark the important successes of the Food for Peace Act. Since 1954, Food for Peace has provided life-saving food assistance to some of the world’s most vulnerable people. While it has already saved the lives of millions, there is more work to be done. Tens of millions of children suffer from the effects of malnutrition, while natural disasters, civil strife and other crises put food supplies at risk every year. I have introduced H. Res. 742 to mark these important achievements and call for continued appropriations prioritization of Food for Peace. This resolution has strong bipartisan support and also the support of a number of interested organizations, including Action Against Hunger, Alliance to End Hunger, American Maritime Congress, American Maritime Officers, American Maritime Officers Service, American Soybean Association, Bread for the World, Cargill, Incorporated, Didion Milling, Edesia, Feed the Children, Food for the Hungry, Interaction, Land O’Lakes Venture37, Land O’Lakes, Inc., Maritime Institute for Research and Industrial Development (MIRAID), Masters, Mates & Pilots Union, National Association of Wheat Growers, National Corn Growers Association, National Milk Producers Federation, Navy League of the United States, Seafood International Union, The Borgen Project, The Port of Virginia, Transportation Institute, UNICEF USA, USA Rice, World Food Program USA, World Initiative for Soy in Human Health.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DIANA DeGETTE
OF COLORADO
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, December 5, 2019

Ms. DeGETTE. Madam Speaker, on December 4, 2019, my vote did not register on the Pallone-Thune TRACED Act (S. 151) due to a technical malfunction. I wish the record to reflect my “AYE” vote for call No. 647.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO FRED HAMPTON AND MARK CLARK

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON
OF TEXAS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, December 4, 2019

Ms. JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor the legacy of Fred Hampton. Mr. Hampton was only 21 years old when he was murdered by the Chicago Police Department and the FBI as he slept in his bedroom. The Chicago Police fired between 82 and 99 rounds into his apartment the night of his murder.

Although we lost a powerful fighter for justice on December 4, 1969, Mr. Hampton’s commitment to social, racial, and economic justice and his legacy of helping the disenfranchised did not die with him.

Working predominately on the South and West Sides of Chicago, Mr. Hampton and the Black Panther Party provided free medical services and implemented a free lunch program that fed 4,000 children daily. These social programs were valuable resources to these underserved communities.

The Black Panther Movement shed a spotlight on the disparities between the races. Mr. Hampton understood that many of the social injustices stemmed from an unjust political system and fought hard to change it.

Mr. Hampton’s cruel murder was the catalyst for a political awakening that resulted in the unprecedented election of several African-American mayors like Harold Washington of Chicago in 1983; Wilson Goode of Philadelphia in 1984; Kurt Schmoke of Baltimore in 1988; and David Dinkins of New York City in 1989.

Mr. Hampton was the champion for the disadvantaged and I am proud to honor his legacy.
Wednesday, December 5, 2019

Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S6863–S6896

Measures Introduced: Fifteen bills were introduced, as follows: S. 2982–2996.

Measures Reported:

- S. 153, to promote veteran involvement in STEM education, computer science, and scientific research, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. (S. Rept. No. 116–164)
- S. 529, to establish a national program to identify and reduce losses from landslide hazards, to establish a national 3D Elevation Program, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. (S. Rept. No. 116–165)
- S. 906, to improve the management of drift net fishing, with an amendment. (S. Rept. No. 116–166)
- S. 908, to provide for an equitable management of summer flounder based on geographic, scientific, and economic data and for other purposes. (S. Rept. No. 116–167)
- S. 914, to reauthorize the Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act of 2009, to clarify the authority of the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration with respect to post-storm assessments, and to require the establishment of a National Water Center. (S. Rept. No. 116–168)
- S. 1148, to amend title 49, United States Code, to require the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration to give preferential consideration to individuals who have successfully completed air traffic controller training and veterans when hiring air traffic control specialists, with an amendment. (S. Rept. No. 116–169)

Measures Passed:

FUTURE Act: Senate passed H.R. 2486, to reauthorize mandatory funding programs for historically Black colleges and universities and other minority-serving institutions, after agreeing to the following amendment proposed thereto:

Scott (SC) (for Alexander) Amendment No. 1255, in the nature of a substitute.

Merrill's Marauders Congressional Gold Medal Act: Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs was discharged from further consideration of S. 743, to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the soldiers of the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional), commonly known as "Merrill’s Marauders", in recognition of their bravery and outstanding service in the jungles of Burma during World War II, and the bill was then passed.

Bumatay Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Patrick J. Bumatay, of California, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit.

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, and pursuant to the unanimous-consent agreement of Thursday, December 5, 2019, a vote on cloture will occur at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, December 9, 2019.

Prior to the consideration of this nomination, Senate took the following action:

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Legislative Session.

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Executive Session to consider the nomination.

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that at approximately 3 p.m., on Monday, December 9, 2019, Senate resume consideration of the nomination; and that the motions to invoke cloture filed during the session of Thursday, December 5, 2019, ripen at 5:30 p.m., on Monday, December 9, 2019.

VanDyke Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Lawrence VanDyke, of Nevada, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit.

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of the nomination of Patrick J. Bumatay, of California, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit.
Prior to the consideration of this nomination, Senate took the following action:

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Legislative Session.

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Executive Session to consider the nomination.

**Sullivan Nomination—Cloture:** Senate began consideration of the nomination of John Joseph Sullivan, of Maryland, to be Ambassador to the Russian Federation, Department of State.

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of the nomination of Lawrence VanDyke, of Nevada, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit.

Prior to the consideration of this nomination, Senate took the following action:

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Legislative Session.

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Executive Session to consider the nomination.

**Hahn Nomination—Cloture:** Senate began consideration of the nomination of Stephen Hahn, of Texas, to be Commissioner of Food and Drugs, Department of Health and Human Services.

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of the nomination of John Joseph Sullivan, of Maryland, to be Ambassador to the Russian Federation, Department of State.

Prior to the consideration of this nomination, Senate took the following action:

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Legislative Session.

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Executive Session to consider the nomination.

**Skipwith Nomination—Cloture:** Senate began consideration of the nomination of Aurelia Skipwith, of Indiana, to be Director of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior.

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of the nomination of Stephen Hahn, of Texas, to be Commissioner of Food and Drugs, Department of Health and Human Services.

Prior to the consideration of this nomination, Senate took the following action:

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Legislative Session.

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Executive Session to consider the nomination.

**Nominations Confirmed:** Senate confirmed the following nominations:

By 68 yeas to 21 nays (Vote No. EX. 383), Richard Ernest Myers II, of North Carolina, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of North Carolina.

By 76 yeas to 13 nays (Vote No. EX. 384), Sherri A. Lydon, of South Carolina, to be United States District Judge for the District of South Carolina.

By a unanimous vote of 89 yeas (Vote No. EX. 385), Robert M. Duncan, of Kentucky, to be a Governor of the United States Postal Service for a term expiring December 8, 2025.

**Messages from the House:**

**Additional Cosponsors:**

**Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions:**

**Amendments Submitted:**

**Authorities for Committees to Meet:**

**Privileges of the Floor:**

**Record Votes:** Three record votes were taken today. (Total—385)

**Adjournment:** Senate convened at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 3:57 p.m., until 3 p.m. on Monday, December 9, 2019. (For Senate’s program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today’s Record on page S6896.)

**Committee Meetings**

(Committees not listed did not meet)

**NATIONAL DEFENSE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION**

**Committee on Armed Services:** Committee concluded a hearing to examine strategic threats, ongoing challenges, and National Defense Strategy implementation, after receiving testimony from John C. Rood, Under Secretary for Policy, and Lieutenant General David W. Allvin, USAF, Director for Strategy, Plans and Policy, Joint Staff, both of the Department of Defense.
FINANCIAL REGULATORS OVERSIGHT
Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: Committee concluded an oversight hearing to examine financial regulators, including S. 2563, to improve laws relating to money laundering, and S. 2839, to amend the Bank Holding Company Act of 1956 to regulate industrial bank holding companies, after receiving testimony from Randal K. Quarles, Vice Chair for Supervision, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System; Jelena McWilliams, Chairman, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation; and Rodney E. Hood, Chairman, National Credit Union Association.

IMPLEMENTING MOBILE NOW
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Subcommittee on Communications, Technology, Innovation, and the Internet concluded a hearing to examine the evolution of next-generation technologies, focusing on implementing MOBILE NOW, after receiving testimony from Mayor Paul TenHaken, Sioux Falls, South Dakota; Jonathan Adelstein, Wireless Infrastructure Association, Arlington, Virginia; and Scott Bergmann, CTIA, Mary Brown, Cisco Systems, Inc., and Sarah Morris, New America’s Open Technology Institute, all of Washington, D.C.

ILlicit MINING
Committee on Foreign Relations: Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere, Transnational Crime, Civilian Security, Democracy, Human Rights, and Global Women’s Issues concluded a hearing to examine illicit mining, focusing on threats to United States national security and international human rights, after receiving testimony from Patrick J. Lechleitner, Assistant Director, International Operations, Homeland Security Investigations, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Department of Homeland Security; Jeffrey Haeni, Acting Deputy Assistant Administrator, Bureau of Economic Growth, Education and the Environment, United States Agency for International Development; Carrie Filipetti, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs, and Richard H. Glenn, Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, both of the Department of State; and Regina E. Thompson, Deputy Assistant Director, Criminal Investigative Division, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of Justice.

INTELLIGENCE
Select Committee on Intelligence: Committee met in closed session to receive a briefing on certain intelligence matters from officials of the intelligence community.
material, nonpublic information, by a yea-and-nay vote of 410 yeas to 13 nays, Roll No. 649.

Pursuant to the Rule, an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 116–39 shall be considered as adopted in the House and in the Committee of the Whole, in lieu of the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Financial Services now printed in the bill.  Page H9275

Agreed to:

McHenry amendment (No. 1 printed in H. Rept. 116–320) that clarifies “relating to the market,” adds an explicit personal benefit test, and strikes the Rule of Construction.  Pages H9275–76

Rejected:

Huizenga amendment (No. 2 printed in H. Rept. 116–320) that sought to strike the term “aware of” included in the bill and replace the term “using” (by a recorded vote of 196 ayes to 231 noes, Roll No. 648).

H. Res. 739, the rule providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2534) and relating to consideration of the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 77) was agreed to yesterday, December 4th.

Senate Message: Message received from the Senate by the Clerk and subsequently presented to the House today appears on page H9265.

Quorum Calls—Votes: Three yea-and-nay votes and one recorded vote developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H9277–78, H9278–79, H9279–80, and H9280. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 5:07 p.m.

Committee Meetings

PRIVATIZED HOUSING: ARE CONDITIONS IMPROVING FOR OUR MILITARY FAMILIES?

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Readiness held a hearing entitled “Privatized Housing: Are Conditions Improving for Our Military Families?”. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

MILITARY HEALTH SYSTEM REFORM: A CURE FOR EFFICIENCY AND READINESS?


ACCOUNTABILITY AND OVERSIGHT OF THE FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Communications and Technology held a hearing entitled “Accountability and Oversight of the Federal Communications Commission”. Testimony was heard from the following Federal Communications Commission officials: Ajit Pai, Chairman; Michael O’Rielly, Commissioner; Brendan Carr, Commissioner; Jessica Rosenworcel, Commissioner; and Geoffrey Starks, Commissioner.

BUILDING A 100 PERCENT CLEAN ECONOMY: SOLUTIONS FOR ECONOMY-WIDE DEEP DECARBONIZATION

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Environment and Climate Change held a hearing entitled “Building a 100 Percent Clean Economy: Solutions for Economy-Wide Deep Decarbonization”. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

PROMOTING FINANCIAL STABILITY? REVIEWING THE ADMINISTRATION’S DEREGULATORY APPROACH TO FINANCIAL STABILITY

Committee on Financial Services: Full Committee held a hearing entitled “Promoting Financial Stability? Reviewing the Administration’s Deregulatory Approach to Financial Stability”. Testimony was heard from Steven Mnuchin, Secretary, Department of the Treasury, and Chairperson, Financial Stability Oversight Council.

AN EXAMINATION OF THE FEDERAL HOUSING ADMINISTRATION AND ITS IMPACT ON HOMEOWNERSHIP IN AMERICA

Committee on Financial Services: Subcommittee on Housing, Community Development, and Insurance held a hearing entitled “An Examination of the Federal Housing Administration and Its Impact on Homeownership in America”. Testimony was heard from Brian D. Montgomery, Commissioner, Federal Housing Administration.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on Natural Resources: Full Committee held a markup on H.R. 537, the “Bureau of Reclamation
Pumped Storage Hydropower Development Act’’; H.R. 722, the “Miracle Mountain Designation Act’’; H.R. 877, the “Modernizing the Pittman-Robertson Fund for Tomorrow’s Needs Act’’; H.R. 2642, the “Wild Olympics Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Act’’; H.R. 3742, the “Recovering America’s Wildlife Act of 2019’’; H.R. 3977, the “Justice for Native Survivors of Sexual Violence Act’’; H.R. 4479, the “Disaster Recovery Workforce Act’’; H.R. 4957, the “Native American Child Protection Act’’; and S. 209, the “PROGRESS for Indian Tribes Act’’. S. 209, H.R. 3977, H.R. 877, and H.R. 722 were ordered reported, without amendment. H.R. 4957, H.R. 4479, H.R. 3742, H.R. 2642, and H.R. 537 were ordered reported, as amended.

EXPERTS NEEDED: OPTIONS FOR IMPROVED SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY ADVICE FOR CONGRESS

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology: Full Committee held a hearing entitled “Experts Needed: Options for Improved Science and Technology Advice for Congress”. Testimony was heard from Tim Persons, Chief Scientist and Managing Director, Science, Technology Assessment, and Analytics, Government Accountability Office; and public witnesses.

WHERE’S MY STUFF? EXAMINING THE ECONOMIC, ENVIRONMENTAL, AND SOCIETAL IMPACTS OF FREIGHT TRANSPORTATION

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure: Subcommittee on Highways and Transit; and Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials held a joint hearing entitled “Where’s My Stuff? Examining the Economic, Environmental, and Societal Impacts of Freight Transportation”. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

THE STATUS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS’ FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION

Committee on Veterans’ Affairs: Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations; and Subcommittee on Technology Modernization held a joint hearing entitled “The Status of the Department of Veterans Affairs’ Financial Management Business Transformation”. Testimony was heard from Jon J. Rychalski, Assistant Secretary for Management and Chief Financial Officer, Department of Veterans Affairs.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on Veterans’ Affairs: Full Committee held a markup on H.R. 4920, the “Department of Veterans Affairs Contracting Preference Consistency Act”; and H.R. 3495, the “Improve Well-Being for Veterans Act”. H.R. 3495 was ordered reported, as amended. H.R. 4920 was ordered reported, without amendment.

RULES AND PROCEDURES IN THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: A LOOK AT REFORM EFFORTS AND STATE BEST PRACTICES


Joint Meetings

PUBLIC DIPLOMACY, DEMOCRACY, AND GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe: Commission concluded a hearing to examine public diplomacy, democracy, and global leadership, after receiving testimony from Lora Berg, German Marshall Fund of the United States, Cordell Carter, II, Aspen Institute, and Stacie Walters Fujii, American Council of Young Political Leaders, all of Washington, D.C.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR FRIDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2019

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

No meetings/hearings scheduled.

House

Committee on Financial Services, Task Force on Artificial Intelligence, hearing entitled “Robots on Wall Street: The Impact of AI on Capital Markets and Jobs in the Financial Services Industry”, 9:30 a.m., 2128 Rayburn.
Next Meeting of the SENATE
3 p.m., Monday, December 9

Senate Chamber
Program for Monday: Senate will resume consideration of the nomination of Patrick J. Bumatay, of California, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit, and vote on the motion to invoke cloture thereon at 5:30 p.m.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
9 a.m., Friday, December 6

House Chamber

Extensions of Remarks, as inserted in this issue

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CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — DAILY DIGEST
December 5, 2019

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