

(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. 401, the motion to invoke cloture on Executive Calendar No. 382, Matthew Walden McFarland, 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. 402, the confirmation of Executive Calendar No. 382, Matthew Walden McFarland, 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. 403, the motion to invoke cloture on Executive Calendar No. 465, Anuraag Singhal, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Florida.

Mr. President. I was absent, but had I been present, I would have voted no on rollcall Vote No. 404, the motion to invoke cloture on Executive Calendar No. 466, Karen Spencer Marston, of Pennsylvania, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

Mr. President. I was absent, but had I been present, I would have voted no on rollcall Vote No. 405, the motion to invoke cloture on Executive Calendar No. 480, Daniel Mack Traynor, of North Dakota, to be United States District Judge for the District of North Dakota.

Mr. President. I was absent, but had I been present, I would have voted no on rollcall Vote No. 406, the motion to invoke cloture on Executive Calendar No. 481, Jodi W. Dishman, of Oklahoma, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Oklahoma.

Mr. President. I was absent, but had I been present, I would have voted no on rollcall Vote No. 407, the motion to invoke cloture on Executive Calendar No. 490, John M. Gallagher, of Pennsylvania, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

Mr. President. I was absent, but had I been present, I would have voted no on rollcall Vote No. 408, the motion to invoke cloture on Executive Calendar No. 536, Bernard Maurice Jones II, of Oklahoma, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Oklahoma.

Mr. President. I was absent, but had I been present, I would have voted no on rollcall Vote No. 409, the motion to invoke cloture on Executive Calendar No. 354, Mary Kay Vyskocil, of New York, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of New York.

Mr. President. I was absent, but had I been present, I would have voted yes on rollcall Vote No. 410, the motion to

invoke cloture on Executive Calendar No. 383, Kea Whetzal Riggs, of New Mexico, to be United States District Judge for the District of New Mexico.

Mr. President. I was absent, but had I been present, I would have voted yes on rollcall Vote No. 412, the motion to invoke cloture on Executive Calendar No. 357, Stephanie Dawkins Davis, of Michigan, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Michigan.●

H.R. 1865

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, today the Senate passed H.R. 1865, one of two appropriations packages needed to fund the Federal Government for fiscal year 2020.

Eight appropriations bills are part of this consolidated appropriations bill—eight bills that fund programs which impact every part of our lives—and I am pleased that we have made several strong steps to better serve the American people.

For Maryland and the Chesapeake Bay, the bill provides a historic level of funding for EPA's Chesapeake Bay program and continued funding for the dredging needs of the Port of Baltimore. In addition, the bill provides funding for the Army Corps of Engineers to resume oyster restoration work in the bay. These are hard-fought wins, and I appreciate the work of those in the Maryland and Chesapeake Bay delegations to help get this done.

After years of Republican opposition, this bill finally funds critical gun violence research at the Centers for Disease Control. Gun violence is an epidemic, and we should be engaging our best minds to find solutions to keep the American people safe. I am also pleased that the bill includes funding for the CDC to research sexual abuse prevention and for the Agency for Healthcare Research Quality to support diagnostic error research—issues I have worked on in the Appropriations Committee. The bill also includes important increases for medical research at the National Institutes of Health and delivers funding to implement the Childhood Cancer STAR Act.

H.R. 1865 includes a funding increase for the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Program, which helps develop, maintain, or enhance infant and early childhood mental health promotion, intervention, and treatment programs for children at risk of developing, showing early signs of, or having been diagnosed with mental illness. The bill also includes funding to continue the National Adoption Competency Mental Health Training Initiative, which helps child welfare and mental health workers better understand and address the mental health needs of children, youth, and their families moving toward or having achieved permanency through adoption or guardianship.

I am also very pleased that the bill continues the Federal funding commit-

ment to WMATA. I, along with Senator CARDIN and our colleagues from Virginia have introduced a WMATA reauthorization bill that would authorize an additional 10 years of Federal funding. WMATA is the Nation's transit system, and maintaining our Federal support is essential for the local economy and for the people who live and work here. Given the significant Federal ridership, it is incumbent on us to ensure the Federal Government pay its fair share.

The bill fully funds a housing mobility demonstration project that Senator YOUNG and I have worked to develop. I look forward to the results of the program as we look to expand housing vouchers and give families a safe and stable place from which to build their futures. The bill also funds the community development block grant and HOME Partnership Program, two crucial economic development programs that were eliminated in the President's budget.

I am pleased that the bill rejected a number of the President's cuts to education and actually boosts funds for afterschool and student support programs. It increases funding for title I and IDEA, two foundational programs that help students in underserved areas and those with disabilities have the resources they need to get a good education. The bill expands access to early education by increasing funds for the child care and development block grant and provides more K-12 wraparound services with boosts to the Full Service Community Schools and Promise Neighborhoods Programs. The bill increases the Pell grant and continues funding for Senators to pay their interns—an initiative I have worked closely on with Senators MURPHY, SCHATZ, COLLINS, and MURKOWSKI.

While the bill is mostly focused on domestic policy, I appreciate the inclusion of language I authored to hold Saudi Arabia to the "gold standard" section 123 agreement as a condition for Export-Import Bank financing for U.S. nuclear exports. We should not be transferring sensitive nuclear technology to Saudi Arabia without the establishment of strong nonproliferation guardrails. I am also pleased that the bill retains my provisions to sanction foreign government officials responsible for the detention of American citizens and locally employed staff of U.S. diplomatic missions, urges the Indian Government to reverse course in Kashmir, bans the sale of arms to Turkish President Erdogan's bodyguards, and mandates comprehensive oversight of the administration's travel ban and refugee resettlement policies. In addition, this legislation provides critical humanitarian and development assistance for our partners and allies around the world, despite President Trump's repeated attempts to cut the foreign assistance budget dramatically.

Importantly, H.R. 1865 includes a 10-year reauthorization of the Patient-

Centered Outcomes Research Institute, PCORI. When PCORI was first created, there was broad agreement about the critical need for comparative effectiveness research, CER. The CER research being done through PCORI is helping to generate more personalized, more reliable research that is directly relevant to individual patients and doctors. There are significant evidence gaps about what medical treatments and services are most clinically effective and for whom. We need more information, and that information must quickly get into the hands of patients and providers so they can make better-informed decisions about their health care. PCORI-funded research is helping to fill that gap, and I am pleased that this bill will allow it to continue for another decade.

The bill also includes important policy improvements contained in the PCORI Reauthorization Act, S. 2897, legislation I introduced with Senators WARNER, CASSIDY, and CAPITO. H.R. 1865 will ensure that PCORI-funded research is designed to take into account and capture the full range of clinical and patient-centered outcomes, including the potential burdens and economic impacts of various medical treatments, items, and services like out-of-pocket costs and nonmedical costs to patients and families. Additionally, it adds a requirement that the Government Accountability Office report on any barriers that researchers funded by PCORI have encountered in conducting studies or clinical trials, including challenges covering the cost of any medical treatments, services, and items.

I am, however, disappointed that this bill eliminates Medicare's contribution to the PCORI Trust Fund. Medicare beneficiaries benefit greatly from PCORI-funded research. This includes a number of projects that have focused on helping older adults and their caregivers make better-informed decisions about their health care options, as well as research on diseases and conditions that disproportionately impact beneficiaries. I am concerned that divesting Medicare dollars sends a signal to PCORI that Congress is not interested in this critical research continuing to be funded. I am pleased that this bill increases the mandatory appropriation to help make up for the loss of Medicare funds, but Congress must maintain this investment over the full length of the authorization.

I am pleased that H.R. 1865 includes a number of other bills that I am proud to cosponsor, including the CREATES Act, the Patient Access to Cellular Transplant Act, and the Protecting Beneficiary Access to Complex Rehabilitation Technology Act.

While I support much of this bill, I am deeply troubled by some of its provisions.

I have serious concerns about parts of the tax extenders provisions of the package. It is unfortunate that following on the heels of a tax cut for wealthy households and big corpora-

tions that increased the national debt by nearly \$2 trillion, the tax changes in this bill increase deficits by a further \$426 billion. While I support some of the changes, we should have paid for them by scaling back wasteful tax breaks for those at the very top. And some of them represent additional giveaways to industry without sufficient benefit for everyday Americans. Moreover, I am extremely disappointed that the tax extenders package did not include tax measures for energy storage, solar energy, offshore wind, and electric vehicles. This represents a lost opportunity to take even small steps to address the climate crisis, and I urge my colleagues to address these clean energy tax measures early next year.

I am disappointed that the bill drops House language preventing the Department of Agriculture from physically relocating the Economic Research Service, ERS, and National Institute of Food & Agriculture, NIFA, outside of the National Capital Region. The relocation and reorganization will impact the quality and breadth of the work these agencies support and perform—work that is critical to informing and supporting U.S. agriculture, food security, and rural development. I appreciate that the bill includes no additional funding for the move, and I hope that the Secretary of Agriculture will with us in Congress to repair the damage that this relocation scheme has done.

While I do have concerns about aspects of this bill, I believe it supports critical health, education, and infrastructure needs. I appreciate the hard work of Senators SHELBY and LEAHY and their staffs in crafting the bill and their support for many priorities I have pushed for on behalf of my constituents in Maryland. It is an honor to serve on the Appropriations Committee, and I look forward to continuing our work to responsibly fund the government and its services for the American people in the coming fiscal year.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I rise to speak on the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020.

The National Defense Authorization Act conference agreement provides crucial resources to our Armed Forces and our national defense, including a pay increase for our men and women in uniform. I am proud that the Congress was able to come together on a bipartisan basis to pass this legislation to support our servicemembers, strengthen our national security, and invest in critical projects in my home State of Maryland.

While I have serious reservations about a number of items included in this legislation and am particularly disappointed by the exclusion of important priorities like the DETER Act to prevent Russian interference in our elections, I believe that, on balance,

this NDAA will strengthen our national security. For that reason, I voted in favor of it.

With this bill, the Federal Government will now provide 12 weeks of paid parental leave to its workforce. We have been fighting for years to provide paid family and medical leave to workers throughout the country. Now the Federal Government will finally start to lead by example. Paid leave will reduce employee turnover costs for the Federal Government and help agencies continue to recruit and retain top-notch talent into the civil service. I was proud to help secure this, and we need to keep fighting until all workers around the Nation receive paid family and medical leave benefits.

The NDAA also repeals the military widow's tax. Currently, military widows and widowers who qualify for the VA's dependency and indemnity compensation are forced to take a dollar-for-dollar offset from the DOD Survivors Benefits Plan benefit, even though their retired spouses elected to pay into the program. No other Federal surviving spouse is required to forfeit his or her Federal annuity because military service caused his or her sponsor's death. This is fundamentally unjust. In September, I met with a constituent and military widow who was subjected to this offset after the loss of her husband. Hearing her story hardened my resolve to ensure that we got this done this year, and I am proud of the Congress for coming together to repeal this offset.

Critically, this legislation also includes the Otto Warmbier North Korea Nuclear Sanctions and Enforcement Act, which I introduced with Senator TOOMEY. This legislation offers foreign banks and firms a stark choice: continue business with North Korea or maintain access to the U.S. financial system. Within 120 days of enactment of the law, this legislation mandates sanctions on the foreign banks and companies that facilitate illicit financial transactions for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. North Korea continues to perfect its ballistic missile capabilities and produce more fissile material for nuclear weapons. Our aim is to cut off North Korea's remaining access to the international financial system and create the leverage necessary for serious nuclear negotiations to achieve the goal of the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

The NDAA also includes bipartisan legislation that tracks the provision Senator GRAHAM and I included in Senate Foreign Operations appropriations bills over the years to prohibit the transfer of the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter to Turkey until President Erdogan relinquishes the Russian S-400 air and missile defense system. Turkey has recently started testing the S-400 missile system, and they have said the system will be operational early next year. The administration must not only continue blocking the transfer of the F-