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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC, February 24, 2021.

I hereby appoint the Honorable Jim COSTA 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 4, 2021, 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, with time equally allocated between the parties and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders who could start first of all by telling the truth. It is not renewable energy, it was fossil fuel that failed and continued reliance on fossil fuel is going to make events like this much, much more frequent.

We need to deal with reliability in Texas and around the country. Last, but not least, we must fight for climate justice and a low carbon future. That will help make these situations less frequent and more bearable, and it is a path forward that we can take confident that history will reflect we were right.

BIDEN COVID BAILOUT PACKAGE

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

Mr. BUDD. Mr. Speaker, over the past year, the government has appropriated over $1 trillion—that is with a T—in COVID relief. Now we are standing here this week and we are debating whether or not to add another $2 trillion to that enormous total.

But what should shock taxpayers across the country is that $1 trillion of COVID relief still remains unspent. That means funding is still left over from last December and funding is still left over from even last March. Now, that is money that the current administration hasn’t spent for vaccines, hasn’t spent for testing, hasn’t spent on schools reopening, and certainly not even to reopen our country.

Mr. Speaker, I think people in Washington often forget that the dollars that we are debating really aren’t ours. They are the next generation’s, and this money belongs to that generation and to the American people.

Is it not too much to ask what the current administration plans to do with the $1 trillion in unspent taxpayer funds. Mr. Speaker, especially before we toss another $2 trillion on to that pile?
This is a basic question that would come up during a family budget discussion with a lot less zeros, much less the Government of the United States talking about trillions of dollars.

But before and beyond the unspent funds, what the Democrat package does spend money on? Another portion of this wish list with about 9 percent of it actually going to COVID. Meaning 91 percent of it is not even COVID-related.

Mr. Speaker, this bill’s minimum wage increase, for example, would kill 1.4 million blue-collar jobs, and its unemployment insurance hike would keep incentivizing workers to stay at home, which is a real struggle in my district when an employer wants 2,000 people to come back to work and they are competing with the Federal Government. This makes it worse.

Under this bill, Mr. Speaker, stimulus checks would go to illegal immigrants. Under this bill, taxpayer funding for abortion is allowed, and Planned Parenthood is eligible for PPP loans. Under this bill, funding is allowed to flow to colleges and universities that partner with companies that are controlled by Communist China.

Under this bill, $110 billion would be sent to schools, regardless if they re-open or not. There is no support for families who are desperate for educational options for their kids.

Obviously, of course, Democrats hid irrelevant spending in this bill, just like environmental justice grants, $800 million in aid to other countries, and a $112 million earmark for a big tech subway in Silicon Valley.

The bottom line, Mr. Speaker, is we are again debating a liberal wish list disguised as COVID relief. The American people aren’t fooled by any of this. They see through the game, and they know that this town can and should do better.

COLOMBIA FAILS TO PROTECT HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

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

Mr. McGovern. Mr. Speaker, over the past two decades, I have traveled to Colombia more than a dozen times. On each trip, I have had the privilege of meeting human rights defenders and social leaders.

In cities, towns, and remote rural areas, these brave men, women, and young people have confronted violence all their lives, and they and their communities are targeted by illegal armed groups—paramilitaries, guerrillas, and criminal organizations. They have been targets of the Colombian military and too often harassed and under illegal surveillance by the state. Simply for speaking on behalf of others, organizing to meet basic needs, or carrying out their professions—teacher, doctor, farmer, lawyer, journalist, and pastor—they are threatened, assaulted, and murdered.

During my last trip to Colombia, I spent a few days in the mountains of northern Cauca. I met with indigenous leaders defending their right to ancestral lands. I met with Afro-Colombian leaders creating small enterprises to support their families and their children. I met with FARC soldiers hoping to build a new life and future. I met with campesino farmers determined to stop growing coca and move into the legal economy.

We sat together, and we ate together. They shared their dreams and they shared their dreams with me. They dream of a Colombia at peace and a Colombia that values all of its people, including those who have struggled to survive in Colombia’s most violent rural areas.

Brave, generous, intelligent, creative, vulnerable, and humble, these leaders literally have bet their lives on the peace accord being fully implemented. They are counting on the state having the courage, the economic development, truth, and justice it promised.

But the Colombian state has abandoned them, just as it has throughout all Colombia’s history. The state has failed to dismantle the criminal networks and armed actors who daily threaten the lives of social leaders. The state has failed to identify and prosecute those who finance, profit by, and order the murders and violence aimed at human rights defenders and social leaders.

Even worse, the Colombian state has chosen to remain absent from large parts of the country, failing to establish state presence, basic services, and leaving local leaders defenseless.

Since the peace accord was signed, over 500 rights defenders have been murdered, according to the United Nations human rights representative. Colombia’s own ombudsman reports even higher numbers, documenting more than 700 murders during that same period, and nongovernmental organizations place the total even higher.

Rather than seeing this grim reality as a call to action, the government of President Ivan Duque has tried to obscure the number of murder victims. His government defends all the promises it has made on paper without changing by one iota the reality on the ground. It acts as if these murders and threats were some kind of public relations crisis, a battle over statistics and optics.

But it is not a PR problem. It is lives on the line. Economic books have written books on the importance of human capital in the development of a prosperous economy. Lack of political will to prevent these murders and protect these local leaders is literally bleeding Colombia of the very human capital it needs to grow and create a more prosperous and dynamic future.

Two weeks ago, Human Rights Watch issued a report on the murders of Colombia’s social leaders and human rights defenders. It outlines practical actions and reforms the Colombian federal, state, and municipal governments could take to prevent, reduce, and even stop the murders and violence. Sadly, these recommendations met with little or no support, by expected or unexpected out of hand. They were treated more like bad press than a serious attempt to offer help and provide a road map to interrupt the spiral of violence.

That is why I am calling on the Biden administration to make the protection of human rights defenders and social leaders one of America’s highest priorities in its relationship with Colombia. The Biden administration and Congress should review the Human Rights Watch report and determine how U.S. policy and aid can advance the full implementation of the peace accord, support its protective and justice mechanisms, and help fulfill its promises of economic development in nongovernmental areas.

I call upon my colleagues to stand up for peace, for human rights, and for an end to the violence against human rights defenders and social leaders in Colombia. These courageous social leaders deserve nothing less than America’s full and unconditional support.

PROTECTING OUR MOST SACRED FREEDOMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. Foxx) for 5 minutes.

Ms. Foxx. Mr. Speaker, government intervention often causes more harm than good. I have spent my time in Congress working to protect individual freedoms from unnecessary bureaucratic burdens.

I recognize that a strong family is vital to our Nation’s progress and prosperity, which is why I have worked to advance legislation that allows families to flourish and protects life at all stages. It is unconscionable that in America, where we fight for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, we tolerate the systemic extermination of an entire generation. The right to life demands that we protect our Nation’s most vulnerable, including the unborn.

Our First Amendment is a powerful instrument that has protected our most sacred freedoms for hundreds of years.

Few other countries provide the same protections and freedoms that our First Amendment guarantees. We are the land of the free because of it. Our individual liberties are the envy of people around the world and they are the cornerstone of the world’s oldest democracy.

Yet, today, these essential rights are under attack. H.R. 5 is the latest example of Democrats’ misleading and partisan manner of legislating.
As a former educator and the Republican leader of the Education and Labor Committee, I can tell you that the bill may have equality in the title, but it certainly does not serve all Americans.

This legislation has a clever name and an allegedly noble purpose, but it is a vehicle for serious harmful consequences.

The Equality Act would empower the government to interfere in how regular Americans speak, walk, and act. Specifically, it would amend the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to make sexual orientation and gender identity protected classes. According to the National Review, this extreme legislation “redefines sex to include gender identity, undermines religious freedom, gives males who identify as females the right to women’s spaces, and sets a dangerous political precedent for the medicalization of gender-confused youth.”

Under H.R. 5, our Nation’s K-12 schools would be forced to treat gender as being fluid, subjective, and not tied to biological reality. The bill would undermine Title IX protections for girls by outlawing sex-based athletic competitions.

Even more troubling is the bill’s methodical and intentional destruction of religious freedom protections.

Religiously-affiliated colleges and universities that maintain student codes of conduct, hiring practices, or housing rules reflecting sincerely held beliefs about marriage and sexuality, risk losing Federal funding under the Equality Act, as such policies would be deemed discriminatory.

Beloved secular private colleges that maintain single-sex policies, like Smith College and Morehouse College, will be forced to change their policies or forego Federal funding.

In the State of Virginia, we have already seen the displeasure among parent groups and individuals from being forced to perform abortions.

This bill is a brazen attempt to replace longstanding constitutional rights with the identity politics of the moment.

We have entered treacherous waters by considering legislation that stifles proven, bipartisan solutions and, more seriously, our Bill of Rights. It is outrageous that Democrats would advertise these proposals as guaranteeing fundamental civil and legal rights.

Mr. Speaker, as elected Representatives, we all strive for equality before the law, but H.R. 5 is another classic example of Democrats passing a law now and figuring out what it means later. This is no way to legislate.

**AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN**

**The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. McGovern).** The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. Costa) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on behalf of the American Rescue Plan.

The critical need to provide economic relief for struggling Americans and communities across the Nation could never be more evident than it is now. A year into this pandemic, the world is reeling from the fallout of the coronavirus pandemic.

This time last year, we had a handful of people that had, sadly, passed away from COVID–19 as it slowly made its way across this country. We mourned over 500,000 lives lost and countless family members and loved ones that will be impacted forever, and we are still not out of the woods. Yesterday evening, we appropriately honor and recognized those Americans who lost their lives.

This pandemic has created a deep economic crisis for American families and small businesses. Economic inequalities continue to accelerate, sadly. Our communities are hurting. They are hurting, and the time for decisive action is now, just as we did in a bipartisan effort last year.

Think about it. America—America, the richest country in the world, and yet the numbers are staggering. Over 18 million Americans are receiving unemployment benefits. Nearly 24 million Americans are going hungry, including 12 million children—12 million children. And what Americans cannot afford to pay the rent and possibly face eviction.

We must get more funding to our States and local governments so they can help those immediately impacted. This will allow us to begin to open our schools safely, which we must do, in addition to the rest of our economy.

This is a key component of President Biden’s American Rescue Plan, which I support.

Now, let me repeat. The American Rescue Plan will work to keep communities safe and reopen schools with a robust vaccine plan for the public and educators that has been absent until the last 6 weeks.

In my own circumstance, my own constituency, the city of Fresno, in the heart of my district is facing a multimillion dollar budget shortfall. Like most cities across the country, they will be forced to cut jobs, including those of first responders, without Federal support. The same is true in the communities of Madera and Merced, also in my district.

The American Rescue Plan will bring nearly $200 million to these two local communities combined, providing critical relief needed to provide funding for services their residents require, my constituents.

But we must do more to help Americans than just providing vaccinations. Obviously, that is at the front lines, and we will produce more vaccines in the next month and in the next 2 months so that, as the President said, 300 million Americans, by this summer, will have the ability to be vaccinated. But economic relief is part of the necessity to help them, and the American Rescue Plan does that.

Now, I have heard some of my colleagues on the other side talk about the concerns about the fiscal impacts to our economy. I am a Blue Dog. I believe that we need to have fiscal discipline, and I believe here for 17 years that happens when Democrats are willing to deal with expenditures and Republicans are willing to deal with revenues. And unless we do deal with those two things together it isn’t going to happen.

The last administration indebted this Nation over $7.5 trillion—$7.5 trillion in the last 4 years. I didn’t hear much discussion during that time about the fiscal deficit. But economic relief is part of the necessity to help them, and the American Rescue Plan does that.

So let’s get real about this deficit. America is hurting today, and it needs our support and it needs our help.

Over 140 executives of major American corporations are supporting this plan. Over 140 of the major companies in America think that this is necessary, the $1.9 trillion, to get this economy going and to put our country back on a track that we can be safe from this pandemic.

So I urge my colleagues to do the right thing and to vote in favor of the American Rescue Plan, as we did previously on a bipartisan effort.

**CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION MONTH**

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize February as Career and Technical Education Month. Each year, this month highlights the benefits of a skills-based education and the valuable contributions that CTE students make to the American workforce.

A one-size-fits-all approach to education is not an effective way to prepare students for the workforce. We are
doing students a great disservice when we only promote what is considered a traditional college experience.

My appreciation for CTE came at an early age. My father, after leaving the Navy, went through a CTE program, which helped him get a job as a tool and die maker. Eventually, he decided to start his own business, which became quite successful.

As co-chair of the Career and Technical Education Caucus, and a senior member of the Committee on Education and Labor, I have also supported, and will continue to support, CTE programs that provide learners of all ages with career-ready skills.

From agriculture to the arts, from marketing to manufacturing, CTE programs work to develop America's most valuable resource, its people.

CTE has established itself as a path that many high-achieving students choose in pursuit of industry certification and hands-on skills that they can use one day to provide for their families, in skill-based education programs, or in college.

Congress recognized the importance of CTE when we passed the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act, which helps close the skills gap by modernizing the Federal investment in CTE programs and connecting educators with industry stakeholders. This bill was later signed into law by President Trump in 2018.

While this is a major milestone, there is still more work to be done. That is why I am supporting additional pieces of legislation on the horizon to keep updating and promoting workforce development throughout our Nation. These include:

The Skills Renewals Act, which creates a flexible skills training credit in the amount of $1,000 per person that may be applied to cover the cost of a wide range of training programs that build skills expected to be in high demand by employers in the coming months.

There is also the Skills Investment Act, which enhances the Coverdell education savings accounts—tax-advantaged savings accounts for educational expenses—so American workers can use the accounts to pay for their skills-based learning, career training, and workforce development.

And lastly, the Cybersecurity Skills Integration Act, which creates a $10 million pilot program within the Department of Education to award competitive grants to education-employer partnerships for the development and implementation, and/or expansion of postsecondary CTE programs that integrate cybersecurity education into curricula preparing students for careers in critical infrastructure sectors.

COVID-19 has demonstrated the need for CTE. Many of those who have been deemed as life-essential employees are those who have made their way to those jobs through the Career and Technical Education pathway. It gives people from all walks of life an opportunity to succeed and restores rungs on the ladder of opportunity.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to encourage my colleagues to join my co-chair and I, Mr. Langevin, on the bipartisan Career and Technical Education Caucus, to help us equip individuals of all ages with the skills necessary to fill jobs now and in the future.

BLACK HISTORY IS AMERICAN HISTORY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. Costa). The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Georgia (Ms. Bourdeaux) for 5 minutes.

Ms. BOURDEAUX. Mr. Speaker, this week, as February becomes March, Black History Month comes to an end. But I want to be clear, every month is Black History Month because Black history is American history.

Today, I am thinking of the amazing Black women and men who inspire us daily and who changed the world.

I am thinking of Ruby Bridges who, at only 6 years old, became the Black student to integrate a southern elementary school.

I am thinking of Gwinnett's own Beauty Baldwin, the first Black woman to be a school superintendent in Georgia.

I am thinking of Hank Aaron, who showed the world the meaning of Black excellence when he broke Babe Ruth's home run record, and he was a proud Georgian.

I am thinking of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., an Atlanta preacher who shared his dream with the world and, in the process, changed it forever.

And I am thinking of Senator Raph Warnock, who preached from the same pulpit as Dr. King, and who now follows in his footsteps as an advocate for change.

I am thinking of Kamala Harris, our Nation's first Black and first female Vice President, and of all the Black and Brown girls around the country who are finally able to look at the White House and see themselves reflected there.

Finally, I am thinking of our beloved Georgia friend, mentor, and colleague, John Lewis. Congressman Lewis would have turned 81 this weekend. Congressman Lewis spent his life getting into good trouble.

At 21, he was one of the original 13 Freedom Riders. At 23, as the chairman of SNCC, he spoke at the March on Washington. At 25, he led the march from Selma to Montgomery. At 35, he became the conscience of the Congress.

The tireless work of heroes like John Lewis pushes me to continue pursuing equitable and just policies. Over the past 2 years, our country has had a much-needed awakening to the systemic inequality people of color face every single day. I promise to continue using my privilege as a Member of Congress to try to break down that inequality wherever it is found.

In that spirit, I am proud to be co-sponsoring some critical pieces of legislation being considered in Congress: H.R. 1, the For the People Act, a transformational bill that seeks to ensure free and fair elections and easy access to the ballot box, to secure nonpartisan redistricting, and to put people over dark money and special interests in elections; the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act, the first-ever bold, comprehensive approach to holding police accountable, changing the culture of law enforcement and building trust between law enforcement and our communities by addressing systemic racism and biases in order to help save lives; and H.R. 40, a commissionsion to study reparations; H.R. 55, the Emmett Till Antilynching Act; H.R. 959 to address the Black maternal mortality crisis in America; a resolution to recognize the difficulty Black veterans face when returning home after serving our country; and a resolution to award the Congressional Gold Medal, Congress' highest honor, to the Freedom Riders.

Of course, while it hasn't been introduced, you can be certain my name will be among the first of my colleagues to co-sponsor the John Lewis Voting Rights Act, which will restore and modernize portions of the Voting Rights Act scrapped by the Supreme Court. The right to vote is sacred. John Lewis knew that better than most, and we must protect it.

Nor is it enough to sign on to these pieces of legislation and call it a day. Just as Black history should be celebrated every month, every piece of legislation we consider must also be looked at for how it will impact our Black communities.

Mr. Speaker, as I deliver remarks today in celebration of Black History Month, I would be wrong to not acknowledge that yesterday was the 1-year anniversary of the murder—yes, the murder—of Ahmaud Arbery. A young man from my State of Georgia, Ahmaud was killed while going out for a jog, a simple luxury that so many of us enjoy without fear of harm.

Ahmaud's case and the way it was handled continue to show us all that inherent biases and systemic racism remain prevalent in our society. We here on this floor must do everything we can to break those barriers down. You have my word, I will continue to do so.

CELEBRATING JACKIE SMITH’S RETIREMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. Rutherford) for 5 minutes.
Mr. RUTHERFORD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate an invaluable member of my staff on her well-deserved retirement. Jacquelyn Smith, “Jackie” to those of us who love her, retires this week, Mr. Speaker, after two decades of service to the Fourth Congressional District and more than half century of work in government, education, and politics.

Her contributions to the State of Florida and to her colleagues are immeasurable, and our Nation is truly better off thanks to her efforts.

Jackie began her life of service as a teacher, moving often because of her husband’s assignment as a United States Air Force pilot.

She eventually found herself in politics, working on a Presidential campaign before eventually becoming district director to my predecessor, former Congressman Ander Crenshaw. Where Jackie served, it was evident that Jackie stayed on as the director of special operations in my Jacksonville office.

Mr. Speaker, for over 20 years, Jackie has made northeast Florida. She has helped countless families with coursework, served as my representative throughout the district, and made a significant impact on thousands of young people and students in our community.

Jackie has truly helped shape the next generation of Americans, especially those who will be going into military leadership. Each year, Jackie runs the military academy nomination program. She works tirelessly with students who apply, coaching them through the process and vouching for their selection.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you no one knows nor works that system harder and better than Jackie Smith, and she does it simply for the benefit of her students. Thanks to her efforts, District Four historically has one of the highest selection rates in the country.

Jackie often serves as my liaison to community groups, many of which she is already a part of, including the Rotary Club, the USO, and the local Chamber of Commerce. It often seems she knows everyone in northeast Florida, and unsurprisingly, they all consider her a friend. She loves them, and they love her.

Every day, Jackie comes to work with a servant’s heart, a sharp wit, and a contagious optimistic attitude. No job is too big; no job is too small. Most importantly, she embodies the virtues of integrity, hard work, and selflessness that Americans expect from their government.

Jackie leaves big shoes to fill in my office. However, as she is known to do, she leaves it better than when she found it.

On behalf of the Fourth Congressional District of Florida, congratulations, Jackie. May your retirement be filled with warm, sandy beaches and continued memories with your husband, David, and your many friends and loved ones. We are so proud of your many achievements, and we thank you, Jackie, for your service to this Nation.

Raul, a selfless public servant, and Maria. They enjoyed traveling, and loved to sing and dance with his neighbors, and paying personal attention to anything that needed to be fixed in their homes or streets.

Raul created a block club in our neighborhood that worked to improve and beautify homes, backyards, and streets. They installed lamps in their front lawns, planted sod in the parkways, and established block watches and activities for children and teens.

This deep involvement in community life is why I appointed Raul as a Democratic precinct captain of the sixth precinct when I was a member of Chicago City Council. He was the most effective and beloved precinct captain in Chicago’s 22nd Ward. His hard work helped me and many others win elected office.

As ward superintendent in the Department of Streets and Sanitation, he was frequently seen driving down streets and alleys, conversing with neighbors, and paying personal attention to their service requests. Even after he retired, he would ride around the neighborhood, asking people if they needed anything to be fixed in their homes or streets.

Raul organized the best block parties and loved to sing and dance with his wife, Maria. They enjoyed traveling, spending time with their grandchildren, and, of course, having big parties. He also enjoyed helping out at the corner grocery store or restaurant to stay busy and catch up on what was going on in the neighborhood after he retired.

Last month, Raul died of COVID-19, leaving a huge void in his family, his neighborhood, and the entire southwest side of Chicago. Today, we recognize this hero in the House of Representatives.

(English translation of the statement made in Spanish is as follows:)

A few words in Spanish. Today in the United States Congress we recognize the friendship, work, and efforts of a great public servant. Raul Montes was a great superintendent of the 22nd District and Little Village community. We celebrate his life, all his efforts, and the fact that he was a part of the family that his life was well lived, and for that reason, we give him this recognition.

Unas palabras en español. Hoy en el Congreso de los Estados Unidos reconocemos la amistad, las labores, los esfuerzos de un gran servidor público. Raúl Montes fue un gran superintendente de nuestra comunidad en La Villa y el Distrito 22. Celebramos su vida, todos sus esfuerzos y le comunicamos a su familia que la vida de Raúl Montes fue bien vivida, y por eso le hacemos ese reconocimiento.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Illinois will provide the Clerk a translation of his remarks.

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

Mr. MANN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank the farmers and ranchers whose work does not stop. Even in the face of extreme freezing temperatures this month, the likes of which we have not seen in decades, Kansas stood strong and got the job done.

The big First District of Kansas is one of the most important agricultural areas in the country. The district is home to more than 60,000 farms and is made up of farmers, ranchers, feedlot managers, nutritionists, ethanol producers, ag lenders, and agribusiness owners who feed, fuel, and clothe the world.

I grew up in Quinter, and I spent thousands of hours on a tractor in fields and on horseback, doctoring cattle in our family’s feed yard. I know well agriculture’s working conditions are demanding on a good day, but especially so when our business partner, Mother Nature, is as unforgiving as she has been lately.

In the past month, Kansas spent 13 consecutive days with temperatures below freezing. This is a stretch of freezing temperatures we have not seen in our State for nearly 40 years.

But those who stand with snow up to their knees in the depths of winter or haul water in the drought of summer know agriculture does not take days off. No matter the temperature, our ag producers head to work long before most of us are awake and stay out until many of us have already laid our heads down at night.

They are people like Cody and Ashley Benshorn of Inman, who bust ice by hand at all hours so their cattle have access to water and are still able to joke that after several days of negative
temperatures, zero degrees feels like a heat wave.

They are people like Gary Capoun of Alma, who delivers baby calves and hauls them on the floorboard of his pickup to someplace warmer where they can be bottle-fed to ensure that they get the nutrients needed to grow and survive in the wind chills.

They are the men and women staying up through the night so a baby animal gets a shot at life, a piece of equipment is ready to go early the next morning, the neighboring producer has the help they need to milk their herd, and so people like you and I have a safe and secure food supply.

As many across the country learned this last spring, our food does not come from a grocery store shelf. The importance of the agriculture and food supply chain cannot be overstated. This supply chain represents millions of people working every day in the U.S. It begins with farmers, ranchers, and growers; proceeds to food processors and manufacturers, shippers, transportation workers, and, finally, those working in the grocery stores and restaurants. Each of these people is vital in ensuring we have food on our plates.

What most of us in the “Big First” of Kansas know how important agriculture is, I know that message can sometimes be lost on the way to the grocery store. So on behalf of Kansans and all Americans, I share a sincere thank-you to the farmers, ranchers, and producers who supply our food, fuel, and fiber.

Thank you. Thank you for pulling the baby calf out of the snowbank and nursing it back to life. Thank you for busting ice early and feeding hay late. Thank you for putting the needs of your livestock before yourselves. Thank you for your never-ending, backbreaking days. Thank you for, especially on cold days, working so hard for the extra hours and extra strength. Your efforts feed us and keep us warm, too.

It is an honor to represent you in the U.S. House of Representatives and on the House Agriculture Committee. May God bless you.

CELEBRATING NATIONAL FFA WEEK

Mr. MANN. Mr. Speaker, I also rise today to celebrate National FFA Week.

The national FFA organization was founded in 1928 as the Future Farmers of America. Their mission was to prepare future generations for the challenges of feeding the world.

Today, more than 760,000 blue corduroy jacket-wearing FFA members in more than 7,800 chapters across the country, and more than 8,800 members in 220 chapters in Kansas alone, are still working hard to advance our Nation’s most critical industry, food and agriculture.

These members are our future farmers, ranchers, engineers, doctors, lawyers, teachers, scientists, communicators, and businesspeople. They are the next generation of leaders.

This week, they will celebrate National FFA Week as a long-held tradition during George Washington’s birthday to respect agriculture’s heritage and recognize its future.

As a past chapter FFA president from Quinter, Kansas, and a proud FFA alumnus, I am honored to join nearly 80 of my colleagues to introduce H. Res. 156, expressing support for the designation of February 20 to February 27, 2021, as National FFA Week, recognizing the important role of the National FFA Organization in providing the next generation of leaders who will change the world, and celebrating 50 years of National FFA Alumni and Supporters.

Kansas FFA and the National FFA Organization have had a profound impact on me. FFA taught me belonging when I put on my FFA jacket the first time, responsibility when caring for my family’s livestock in the bitter winters and drought-ridden summers, and pride in sharing about the organization I love on the House floor today.

Because only 1 in 5 of the next generation of agriculture, I know our brightest days are ahead.

Happy National FFA Week.

HONORING THE LIFE OF W. EUGENE BURRELL

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

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of a community leader and longtime friend, W. Eugene Burrell, of Fannett, Texas, who passed away on Wednesday, December 30, 2020, at the age of 86.

Eugene was a lifelong cattle rancher, rice farmer, and civic leader in southeast Texas. He had the respect of all who knew him. Eugene was born on October the 27, 1934, in Beaumont, Texas, to Louise and Walter Burrell, and Walter Jordan Burrell.

He began farming rice at the age of 18 and worked in that role until the age of 21, when he decided to serve his country in the United States Army.

After serving the Army from 1955 to 1957, where he was stationed overseas in Germany, Eugene returned home and continued rice farming, an occupation that would last for 52 years.

Apart from farming, he was also a dedicated cattle rancher for more than 70 years. Eugene served as a board member on numerous industry and community boards, such as the American Rice, Inc., board in Houston; American Rice, Inc., Growers’ board in Cleburne, Texas; the Coastal Cattlemen’s Association board; the Equalization Board from the Jefferson County Appraisal District; the West Jefferson County Municipal Water District; and the Texas Rice Festival, where he volunteered with his wife, Sandra, who was the love of his life.

In 1999, Eugene was named the Texas Rice Festival Farmer of the Year, and subsequently its Pioneer Farmer of the Year in 2017. His steadfast faith was always very important to him. In fact, he served as a member of St. Mary’s Fannett Knights of Columbus organization.

In addition to “Eugene,” his friends and family lovingly referred to him as “Dad,” “Pawpaw,” “Boogie,” and “Fred.” Supporting his children, and later his grandchildren, by attending their sporting events and various competitions over the years was always a very top priority to him.

Eugene is survived by his loving wife of 63 years, Sandra Ray Burrell; daughter Karen Burrell Reneau and her husband, Charlie; daughter Kelly Burrell Alton and her husband, Randy; son, Troy Eugene Burrell and his wife, Shelly; grandchildren Landon Reneau and his wife, Hillary; William Reneau and his wife, Amanda; Lane Stuart; Reid Alton; Mary Alton; Abby Alton; Cody Burrell; Cameron and his wife, Lauren; great-grandchildren Eli Reneau, Ella Reneau, and Bryar Burrell; and numerous nieces and nephews.

Eugene is preceded in death by his parents, Louise and Walter Burrell; and his brother, James Jack Burrell.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to honor my friend W. Eugene Burrell for his very many years of faithful service to his community.

My thoughts and prayers remain with his family and friends during this very difficult time.

May God bless his family.

DISAPPOINTING COVID RELIEF PACKAGE

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

Mr. CRENSHAW. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep disappointment on the bloated, partisan bill that my colleagues are calling a COVID relief package.

That is the name on the bill, but the reality is far from it. The reality is that we just passed a $900 billion package in December. The package wasn’t perfect, but it was bipartisan. This one is not.

The reality is that hundreds of billions of dollars remain unspent. As of last week, there were unofficial estimates of unspent or non-disbursed relief that included $333 billion for another round of PPP; $199 billion for healthcare; $136 billion for expanded unemployment insurance; and $46 billion for direct stimulus payments. That is money we still have, unspent.

The reality is that this administration can’t or won’t even give Congress an honest estimate of where that money is and what they will do with trillions more.

The reality is that this bill is not for emergency relief, but for leftwing spending programs years from now. Nearly half of the funds under this bill won’t be spent until 2022.
There are billions of dollars for State and local governments, mostly to blue States that impose costly lockdowns, even though California is reporting a $10 billion surplus; billions to bail out multiemployer pension plans; billions for subsidies to cover the cost of rising ObamaCare premiums; and a massive expansion of Medicaid with no reforms to address waste, fraud, and abuse within the program.

Meanwhile, a mere 1 percent of this is for vaccine distribution. Really? Maybe that is, perhaps, because the Trump administration, indeed, did have a plan for vaccine distribution. I don't know.

Of the billions they provide for schools, less than 5 percent will be spent this fiscal year with zero requirements to get kids back in the classroom.

The reality is that some provisions, like the $15 minimum wage will only hurt the small businesses that Democrats claim they want to help. Many in my district have already told me they are going to lay off workers or shut down. So, on both sides of this aisle, some of my colleagues who seem to believe that the size of their heart is correlated to how much taxpay-er money they are willing to spend: This is not how you help. This is not how you govern responsibly. This is not a constructive way to move America forward. We can rack up for whatever constituency or special interest you favor at the moment.

Americans don't want handouts. They want a vaccine. They want their businesses open. They want their kids back in school because they know it is safe, despite what the teachers’ unions are saying. And they don’t want to be told to wear three masks after they get a vaccine.

If you want to work with Repub-licans, assess what has been spent and what hasn’t and focus on small business relief that increases jobs instead of killing them, then Republicans will be right there with you. Until then, expect some opposition.

recognizing the tremendous strength of the people in Houston

Mr. CRENSHAW. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the tremendous strength of the people in Houston, who I am honored to represent in Con-gress.

As we all know, last week, an his-toric arctic blast hit most of the South, including the great State of Texas, bringing millions of Texans darkness. In the middle of freezing cold temperatures, people weren't able to heat their homes or access water. I personal-ly had to gather water from a swimming pool in our apartment complex the other day last week to give to people in need a warm place to sleep, eat or just get out of the cold for a few hours.

There are countless others who stepped up. Plumbers helped their neighbors repair their pipes free of charge; food and water distribution centers opened up across the city, in-cluding in my district office; and peo-ple who had power used it minimally so electricity could flow back to their neighbors faster. This is what we call Houston strong.

It got us through Harvey and Imelda, and it is what will get us through this difficult time as well.

Happy Anniversary, Federal Protective Service

Mr. CRENSHAW. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to wish a happy 50th anniversary to the Federal Protective Service. I thank the 1,400 members of FPS, the men and women who protect the more than 9,500 Federal facilities, and the 1.4 million employees who work in those buildings on a daily basis.

All too often, you only gain atten-tion when tragedy strikes, whether it is the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing or, just last year, bravely defending the Federal courthouse in Portland.

I wish to remind Americans that it is every day that they are there holding the line.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to tell you we are thankful and we are appreciative of their service, and their commit-ment to keeping our Nation safe.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the members of the FPS and I wish them a happy 50th anniversary.

Honoring the life of Sheriff Randy Royal

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

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in remembrance of Sheriff Randy Royal, who recently passed away at the age of 57.

Sheriff Royal served Ware County in Waycross, Georgia, to the best of his ability throughout his four terms. He was known as a man of faith and deep commitment, bettering his community and those around him. Everyone he worked with can attest to his excep-tional work ethic, focus, and innova-tive mindset.

Sheriff Royal selflessly worked without ever complaining, and his legacy will surely last for countless years to come. I am thankful for the life he lived, as Waycross is better off because of him.

My thoughts and prayers go out to Sheriff Royal’s family, friends, coworkers, and all who knew him during this most difficult time.

Mighty Eighth Museum 25th Anniversary

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to wish a happy 25 birthday to the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force. Located only minutes from down-town Savannah, where the Eighth Air Force was activated in 1942, the museum features over 90,000 square feet of exhibits, interactive displays, historical artifacts, and a remarkable collection of aviation art.

Throughout its existence, the Mighty Eighth Museum has preserved stories of courage, character, and patriotism told by the men and women of the Eighth Air Force from World War II to the present.

One of the projects they worked on in recent years, is the B–17 restoration project. Once completed, the B–17 Flying Fortress “City of Savannah” will be restored to its full combat configura-tion, including operational systems and components. The goal of the project is to make the finest static B-17 bomber display in the world.

As the former mayor of Pooler, I have a deep appreciation for the museum and its contributions to the Pooler community. I am thankful for all of the Mighty Eighth’s wonderful volunteers and workers throughout the past 25 years, and I am especially grateful for the men and women the museum honors.

Thiokol Chemical explosion Woodbine

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember and honor those who lost their lives or were in-jured during the tragic explosion that occurred 50 years ago at Thiokol Chemical in Woodbine.

On Wednesday, February 3, 1971, a fire at the Thiokol munitions factory just outside of Woodbine triggered a chain reaction of blazes, culminating with an explosion that filled the sky with flames.

The horrible event caused the loss of 29 lives and at least 50 others were in-jured. Those employees were heroes, as they were working to help our country during wartime with commitment and courage.

Following the event, the Thiokol Memorial Project was founded to keep the story of that terrible day alive and to remember the victims.

I have had the pleasure of meeting folks from the organization and I have been encouraged by the work they have done to ensure every victim is properly remembered and honored. The Thiokol Memorial Project maintains a beau-tiful exhibit in Kingsland, Georgia. Although it has been 50 years, the event and the victims will never be forgotten.

Recognizing Pharmacies Nationwide

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize pharmacies assisting in the COVID–19 vaccine administra-tion across the country.

Thanks to former President Trump’s Operation Warp Speed, the vaccine is now available to about 6,500 phar-macies nationwide. It is expected that the COVID–19 vaccine will eventually be shipped to roughly 40,000 pharmacies across the country.

Many of the participating phar-macies have gone above and beyond in their administration of the vaccine doses. For instance, recently, at Costco in Oregon, an elderly couple scheduled vaccinations for themselves within 20
minutes and reported the efficiency and safety in receiving the doses.

As a lifelong pharmacist, I thoroughly understand the vital role pharmacists play in fighting viruses, from administering flu shots to COVID-19 vaccines.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all participating pharmacies for their diligent work in ensuring safe and effective vaccine administration across the country. We can look forward to a brighter future because of them.

EQUALITY ACT NEEDS TO BE STRUCK DOWN

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

Mrs. GREENE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in defense of women, girls, and children.

I would like to talk about the Equality Act. It is a bill that will be striking down the rights of women as protected classes under the federal Civil Rights Act.

We live in a nation—thank God—that declares all of us equal. There should not be discrimination of anyone in the United States of America, and I fully believe that. But I ask everyone to take pause and truly consider what the Equality Act will do, because it has very serious consequences.

You see, women have come very far in America and our rights are extremely important. The work of our grandmothers and mothers to declare women as equal and push our way into the workplace and into sports has been a remarkable achievement.

Voting, being able to own businesses, achieve education the same as men in America is a gift that I feel so honored and blessed by. I know that every American woman treasures this.

Mr. Speaker, you see, as a woman, I have competed in sports, and I am so thrilled that I was able to do that, but I competed against biological women. It is a wonderful thing to be able to compete and prove yourself. Competition is a great, great thing. Little girls all over the country play sports. They play with their hearts out, they practice, they enjoy time with their friends, then they compete at higher levels where they can earn scholarships, where they can go to college and achieve and receive an education through playing a sport for their university or college.

There are women that move on into professional sports fields and do remarkable things, incredible things for women. For example, Florence Griffith Joyner became the fastest woman in the world in 1988 when she ran the 100-meter dash in 10.49 seconds. I could only dream of being that fast. But in 2019, Matthew Boling caught the fastest high school 400-meter time ever in 9.98 seconds, an entire half-second quicker than the fastest woman in the world.

Biological women cannot compete against biological men. Biological little girls cannot compete against biological little boys. And they shouldn’t have to.

I have a daughter that is a D-1 athlete. We traveled the country for 10 years where she competed at the highest level. She earned her scholarship, and now she plays fast-pitch softball. And I can’t tell you how much fun I had watching her play this weekend, and she had a home run. But if she has to compete against boys in her sport, not only will they be her playing field and she has to compete against them, they will be in her locker room, they will be in her showers; they will be in her bathroom; they will be in her hotel room when she travels with her team—all under the Equality Act. This is wrong.

Mr. Speaker, this isn’t about political parties. It is not about Democrat, Republican. This is about right and wrong. This is about girls’ and women’s rights.

Furthermore, it affects women in prison. Trans men, biological men that identify as women, will be put with women in prison.

Battered women’s shelters, women that have been beaten and abused by men will have men in their battered women’s shelters.

Drug rehab centers—and the list goes on and on. Mr. Speaker, it is one thing to stop discrimination of a class of people, but it is another thing to completely violate and destroy the rights of girls and women in order to achieve this. This bill must be struck down. It is completely wrong.

Furthermore, we are in an institution where it says, ‘In God we trust.’ Well, it says in Genesis: God created male and female. In his image, he created us. Science has two sets of chromosomes that prove male and female.

Mr. Speaker, 80 to 95 percent of children with gender dysphoria completely outgrow it after puberty. The Equality Act will force doctors and nurses to perform mastectomies on girls that want to have their breasts removed. It will force doctors also to perform abortions, because according to the Equality Act, a doctor cannot say no.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that everyone please pause and consider, and vote “no” for the Equality Act. We can’t do this in America, and it needs to stop with political parties.

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 11 o’clock and 4 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. TAKANO) at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Margaret Gran Kibben, offered the following prayer:

By Your mercies, O Lord, we present ourselves to You this day, bringing with us not just diverse attitudes and a range of passions, but deeply held opinions which we truly believe are offered in faith.

We reluctantly admit that it is our faith that confounds us, for as we dare to interpret Your will and attempt to live into Your intent, we find ourselves viscerally at odds with the very ones with whom You have caused us to see.

Renew our minds, individually and collectively, that we would not be conformed to the divisive patterns of this world but transformed by Your grace.

May we not think so highly of ourselves that we fail to be reasonable or use careful judgment. Remind us that as Members of this one body, we are called to live in peace, to be thankful, to admonish in love.

Then together, in faith, enable us to discern Your will to determine what really is good, pleasing, and appropriate for our country, for our community, and for our Congress.

We offer ourselves, our words and deeds, praying in Your most holy name.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 5(a)(1)(A) of House Resolution 8, the Journal of the last day’s proceedings is approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentlewoman from Minnesota (Ms. CRAIG) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. CRAIG led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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.

ELECTING A CERTAIN MEMBER TO A CERTAIN STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Democratic Caucus, I
offer a privileged resolution and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. Res. 154

Resolved, That the following named Member be, and is hereby, elected to the following standing committee of the House of Representatives:

committee on Agriculture: Mrs. Kirkpatrick.

Mr. JEFFRIES (during the reading).

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be considered as read and printed in the RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

HONORING THE LIFE AND SERVICE OF SPECIALIST DERRICK AMELI

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

Ms. CRAIG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and service of Specialist Derrick Ameli, a member of the Minnesota National Guard from Savage, Minnesota.

Derrick was a husband, a brother, a friend and Guardsman whose service honored our community. Tragically, Derrick died by suicide last month, falling victim to the sometimes fatal disease of depression.

Like any alive, no one is immune. Depression can and does take the very best of us. Addressing this epidemic is one of the Nation’s most urgent challenges. But in order to combat this disease, we must first destigmatize mental health treatment.

In order to give our neighbors and our families the help they deserve, they need to feel safe and supported asking for treatment. We must begin treating mental health as the chronic illnesses they can be, for Derrick and for so many others who we have lost.

GOVERNING REQUIRES COMPROMISE

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

Mr. McCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, Democrats won the House by the slimmest of margins in November. In fact, it is the slimmest Democrat majority since 1955, a mere five seats. 31,718 votes are what determines the majority. Their victory in the other branches was also tight, 50/50 on the Senate side.

Usually, when one party has a tiny majority, they recognize that governing requires compromise. Not this majority.

Less than 2 months into controlling the House, despite promising to solve problems and restore the conservative majority, Democrats have proven that their primary goal is not governing but grievance, the politics of censorship, not common ground.

In January, they eliminated the motion to recommit, the last chance for the merits of legislation, without a single Republican vote. It will go down in history as the first time in the history of this body that a majority did that, deny the minority, the millions of constituents, their voice.

Already, millions have lost their voice in Congress due to the brazen partisanship. What Democrats are doing this week is even worse.

Today, they will hold a subcommittee hearing that will focus on broadcasters’ and cable news’ devotion to journalistic integrity. This explanation should concern every American.

It has never been Congress’ role to define and enforce journalistic standards. The First Amendment expressly prohibits the government from controlling what the press says.

But Democrats are trying to give themselves the power to dictate what you can read and watch in your own home. And their assault on free speech goes beyond today’s disgraceful hearing.

On Monday, Representatives ESHOO and MCNERNEY sent a letter to 12 cable, streaming, and satellite companies, essentially threatening them to remove “Fox News”, “Newsmax”, and “One America News Network” from their airways.

Here is just a quick snapshot of the answers they are demanding from the carriers:

“What moral or ethical principles do you apply in deciding which channels to carry or when to take adverse actions against a channel?”

“What steps did you take to monitor, respond to, and reduce the spread of disinformation, including encouragement or incitement of violence by channels your company disseminates to millions of Americans?”

Then the other question, coming from Congress in a majority of a committee: “Are you planning to continue to carry ‘Fox News’, ‘Newsmax’, ‘One America News Network’, both now and beyond any contract renewal date? If so, why?”

Now, I am not an attorney, but some people have asked me, does that reach an ethical complaint against these Members by using undue influence? I don’t know. I guess the Ethics Committee would have to decide that.

These are Members of Congress who are using their official position to coerce and control the information Americans can watch and access in their own homes. They are demanding more censorship, more deplatforming, and more control of what Americans can watch.

In their letter, Congresswoman ESHOO and Congressman MCNERNEY suggest that censorship is necessary because conservatives are not only different, but they are dangerous. This is not only false; it is the same script used in countries like China to silence speech they disagree with.

Democrats would bring those same standards to America, but those standards are dangerous, vague, and easily abused. They have no place here.

Democrats’ action this week makes it clear that the greatest threat to free speech today is not a law from Congress, which is bound by the First Amendment. The greatest threat is politicians who bully private companies to silence dissenting views.

The sad part is it’s only Democrats who have done this. They sent a letter to a company that was created to sell books, to tell them not to sell books.

Lastly, beyond these serious threats to free speech, the irony of Democrats’ actions this week should not be lost on us. For the last 4 years, we were told that the greatest danger to free speech was President Trump.

To underscore this accusation, the liberal legacy newspaper in Washington adopted its first official slogan: “Democratic dies in darkness.”

As usual, the heated rhetoric from the other side was off base—badly. The same party that is now worried about misinformation rumor mills and conspiracy theory hotbeds was comfortable with endorsing destructive and false narratives for 4 years.

Back in August, Congresswoman ESHOO herself basically alleged that the Trump administration was intentionally attacking the U.S. Postal Service. She called it election theft and a campaign of sabotage.

How about Congressman ADAM SCHIFF? For years, he said he had more than circumstantial evidence of Russian collusion. We all found that to be false. Nevertheless, networks like “MSNBC” continue to perpetuate the baseless accusation. I wonder if they sent a letter there.

Or how about our own Speaker PELOSI, who said in 2017, “Our election was hacked. There is no question.”

Mr. Speaker, the American people are capable of making decisions about how best to live their lives. They deserve to decide how to take care of their families or open their businesses during a pandemic. And they deserve to decide to watch the news, judge the information they choose, and draw their own conclusions about its accuracy. They need us to trust them, not to try to control them.

If Democrats accepted robust debate, they would find that more people would trust Washington.

Mr. Speaker, this is a body that is using its power to try to determine
what books can be printed, what shows can be seen, and what can be said.

Mr. Speaker, we have debated on this floor the things that happen in China. And in China, if you try to buy an airline ticket you could have the money, but they have an app there. And they say, is it, do we have to check.

They have had people in their own press that were told: I am sorry, you can’t take the plane.

Why?
You have said something that government doesn’t like. You should apologize.

The reporter apologized but the government thought it wasn’t sincere enough.

To me, it is something I would fight because I believe in free speech. I thought that was farfetched in a faraway land. I never thought it would be written on paper in the U.S. Congress, and the powerful members of a committee that oversees jurisdiction would threaten people of why they carry a network and will they carry that network in the future; and if so, why?

I never thought I would see Members of Congress use their power to threaten others to go against the First Amendment.

Mr. Speaker, we will not stand for it, nor will the American public. This is not a partisan issue; this is a constitutional issue.

\[1215\]

THANKING MEMBERS OF NATIONAL GUARD

(Mrs. BUSTOS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. BUSTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to thank the citizen soldiers and airmen of our National Guard for upholding their oath to the Constitution.

Just 1 week after the attack on our Capitol, the inauguration of President Joe Biden and Vice President KAMALA HARRIS was peaceful. That is thanks to the 26,700 National Guard members and women who answered our Nation’s call to serve at this moment of need.

Their motto is “Always Ready, Always There.” During the past month, their actions have fully embodied that motto.

Like Lieutenant Colonel John Bryk, who juggles his commitment to our Nation with his commitment to the students he serves in Orland Park School District in my home State of Illinois, he is one of more than nearly 1,000 Illinois Guardsmen and -women who have been deployed to Washington. There are still 500 here right now.

I met with some of them this morning. I will meet with more of them to tomorrow. Illinois’ sons and daughters, who have chosen to serve and protect this government body and this sacred building, we are stronger for their sacrifice, and I thank them for their service.

SUPPORTING NATIONAL RIGHT-TO-WORK ACT

(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. Mr. Speaker, this week I am reintroducing the National Right-to-Work Act with over 60 original cosponsors.

I, along with over 80 percent of the American people, believe that every worker should have the power to decide whether to negotiate for themselves with their employer. This bill would simply listen to the majority of American workers.

South Carolina has seen firsthand the job creation when we protect freedoms for American workers. I was present for Michelin Tire Corp.’s groundbreaking with Governor Jim Edwards to develop their largest plant in the world. I was with Governor Caroll Campbell for the BMW groundbreaking in Greer for their largest manufacturing facility. And I was with Governor Nikki Haley to see the building of Boeing aircraft in Charleston.

Congratulations to Mark Mix, president of the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation, for his success in 27 States.

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

EQUALITY ACT WILL BE LIFE-CHANGING

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

Ms. JACOBS of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Equality Act.

As the proud sister of a trans brother and a gender-nonconforming sibling and the proud representative of Hill City’s LGBTQ plus community, this bill is deeply personal.

The protections in the Equality Act will be life-changing for so many of my constituents.

Mr. Speaker, the first version of this bill was filed in 1974, 15 years before I was even born. It had one cosponsor and never got a vote. But this week, I am proud to say we are going to pass the Equality Act, cosponsored by the entire Democratic Caucus.

This was made possible by all those who marched and protested and raised their voices, like San Diego’s own Larry Baza. Last week, we lost Larry to COVID, and today would have been his 77th birthday. Larry demanded justice and equality and dignity for all. I urge my colleagues to support the Equality Act.

HAPPY 100TH BIRTHDAY, JOE BERKLICH

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

Mr. STAUBER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Joe Berklich, a World War II veteran and Hibbing, Minnesota, native, who is celebrating his 100th birthday today.

In 1943, Joe enlisted in the Army and courageously served in the Pacific theater until the end of the war. In fact, all four of the Berklich brothers were proud to serve during our country’s time of need.

Upon returning home, Joe married the love of his life, Margaret. He still lives in the family home in Hibbing, Minnesota, where they raised their four children: Michael, Danny, Timmy, and Mary. Always a family man, Joe’s favorite memories are spending the Fourth of July at their cabin on Bear Lake and spoiling his grandchildren on Christmas Eve.

After the war, Joe worked for U.S. Steel, the Sherman Mine, and Minntac in Mountain Iron. He became a foreman and also traveled the Nation working with vendors of mining equipment.

In his free time, Joe has been an active member of the Hibbing community, serving as a Hibbing city councilor to the president of the Hibbing Curling Club.

Mr. Speaker, members of the Greatest Generation like Joe Berklich are the pride of our communities. As the Hibbing community gathers today for a drive-by past his house to celebrate this major milestone, I am proud to stand here on the House floor to thank Joe for his service and wish him the happiest of birthdays.

COMMENDING COLD CHAIN TECHNOLOGIES

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

Mr. AUCHINCLOSS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of President Biden’s American Rescue Plan, a critical tool in the race between vaccines and variants.

My district is home to global leaders in the life sciences who are helping to win this race. Last week, I visited one of them in Franklin, Massachusetts.

Cold Chain Technologies is at the cutting edge of materials science, producing insulated packaging to transport and store vaccines and other biologies. They package all of Moderna’s vaccines on the critical path of getting shots into arms.

To defeat this pandemic and prevent another, we must enact the American Rescue Plan and unlock its investment in life sciences research, development, and manufacturing here in the United States. My district is an exemplar of the innovation and jobs that are the fruits of the life sciences.
RECOGNIZING ROBBY SNELTZER

(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. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and thank Robby Sneltzer of Venango County, Pennsylvania.

Robby is a 9-year-old Oil City resident with a kind heart. This holiday season, Robby decided to help his neighbors in need by starting a donation drive.

With the help of his stepmother, Angel, Robby began to collect donations of toiletries, snacks, ponchos, hats, and hand sanitizer, stuffing backpacks full of these much-needed items for those in need.

Robby’s relatives pitched in with donations, as well as Hassan Heights Elementary School and Hope Pediatrics. The backpacks were donated to The Pointe. The Pointe is a drop-in center promoting recovery and community awareness for individuals who struggle with mental health difficulties.

Angela Proper, executive director of The Pointe, said: “When Robby brought them in and we piled them up, it was pretty amazing.”

I would like to personally thank Robby for his support of his community. Acts of kindness like these make our world a better place.

CELEBRATING NEW SHIPPING ROUTE TO IRELAND

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

Ms. SCANLON. Mr. Speaker, as we emerge from the darkest months of the COVID-19 pandemic and some pretty brutal weather, I rise today to offer some good news and to celebrate a development that is bringing jobs and economic development to my district, along with a renewed connection to our shared heritage with the island of Ireland.

Since the founding of our country, the Philadelphia region has been known for some of the best ports and shipyards in America. Also since that time, our area has been home to one of the largest groups of native Irish and their descendants in North America. Fully 20 percent of the people in my congressional district claim Irish heritage, including myself.

Over the years, this robust community has developed strong relationships with Irish educational, cultural, and business institutions, including through the Irish American Business Chamber & Network.

Therefore, I am very proud and excited to celebrate the new weekly shipping route between the Port of Chester in Delaware County and Cork, Ireland, which will expand our region’s leadership as an entryway to America. In addition to bringing critical medical, pharmaceutical, food, and raw material supplies to the East Coast, the shipping route is supporting good-paying jobs and a long-hoped-for renaissance in Chester’s riverfront economy, which can be an economic driver for our entire region.

I am excited to continue working with my colleagues in the Friends of Ireland Caucus and to increase our ties with Ireland, grow our economy, and create good-paying jobs.

COMMENDING TED MCKINNEY

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

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to commend the work of Under Secretary of Agriculture for Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs Ted McKinney. Ted is the first person to hold this position, and he set a high bar for whoever succeeds him.

His work has been an integral part of shaping trade agreements, including the successful renegotiation of the NAFTA into the USMCA. His determination to help American farmers get their products to new markets has not only helped our American farmers but has helped feed the world.

Ted’s remarkable passion for agriculture began at an early age, growing up on a farm in Tipton, Indiana, and was active in 4-H and with the Future Farmers of America organization. He then graduated from Purdue University with a B.A. in agricultural economics and later served as the director of the Indiana State Department of Agriculture.

Thank you, Ted, for your outstanding work and devotion to our Nation’s farmers.

RECOGNIZING WJBE AS A KNOXVILLE MEDIA CORNERSTONE

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

Mr. BURCHETT. Mr. Speaker, February is Black History Month, as we all know. Today, I rise to recognize WJBE, Knoxville’s only Black-owned radio station and a media cornerstone in our community.

WJBE was originally founded by the good father of soul, James Brown, and WJBE actually stood for, back then, James Brown Enterprises. It was reorganized in 2013, thanks to the efforts of my good friend and former colleague in the Tennessee General Assembly, Joe Armstrong, along with his partner and station manager, Gene Thomas, Jr.

WJBE has grown into a unique home for Knoxville’s Black voices. On WJBE, musicians showcase their talents, business owners promote their services, and public officials share how the lack of opportunities impact the people they represent, and that is me included.

Thanks to this station, the successes and stories of the local Black community are heard year-round, not just during Black History Month.

WJBE is an invaluable part of east Tennessee’s culture. Mr. Speaker, and I am proud to share the station’s story here on the floor of the House of Representatives.

JESSIE CLEMENTE CELEBRATES 103 YEARS

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

Ms. TENNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of an inspiring woman in my community, Jessie Clemente.

Jessie will be celebrating her 103rd birthday on Thursday with her family. Born and raised in Utica, New York, Jessie has committed her life to being a loving wife, mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother. She enjoys spending time with her family, especially her beloved 5-month-old great-granddaughter, who she enjoys cooking and baking with. Jessie is also incredibly proud of her great-nephew David, who is serving our Nation in the U.S. Army.

The Clemente family has been a pillar of the Utica community for many generations. They own and operate Clemente Novelties, where Jessie often helps with day-to-day tasks and supported her son, who is currently running the family business.

I want to wish Jessie a very happy birthday and a safe and healthy year. Her zest for life and love of her family are an inspiration to all of us.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

Mrs. GREENE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3(8) of House Resolution 8, the yeas and nays are ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 202, nays 214, not voting 15, as follows:

[Roll No. 33]
The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 147
Resolved. That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 803) to protect certain lands in the State of Colorado as components of the National Wildlife Preservation System, and for other purposes. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. An amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print H11-2, modified by the amendment 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 having been ordered to its 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 Natural Resources; (2) the further amendments described in section 2 of this resolution; (3) the amendments en bloc described in section 3 of this resolution; and (4) one motion to recommit.

SEC. 2. After debate pursuant to the first section of this resolution, each further amendment printed in part B of the report of the Committee on Rules shall be separated from the preceding amendment by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Natural Resources or their respective designees, and shall be subject to a demand for division of the time before the question is put thereon, shall be considered as having been ordered to its 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 Natural Resources; (2) the further amendments described in section 2 of this resolution; and (3) one motion to recommit.

SEC. 3. It shall be in order at any time after debate pursuant to the first section of this resolution for the chair of the Committee on Natural Resources or his designee to offer amendments en bloc of further amendments printed in part B of the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution not earlier disposed of. Amendments en bloc offered pursuant to this section shall be considered as having been ordered to its 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 Natural Resources or their respective designees, shall not be subject to a demand for division of the time before the question is put thereon, shall be subject to a demand for division of the question.

SEC. 4. All points of order against the further amendments printed in part B of the report of the Committee on Rules or amendments en bloc described in section 3 of this resolution are waived.

SEC. 5. Upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 9.) to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, gender identity, or sexual ori-entation, and for other purposes. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. The bill shall be considered as read. All points of order against consideration of 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 the Judiciary; and (2) one motion to recommit. The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from Pennsylvania is recognized for 1 hour.
Ms. SCALON. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman and my colleague from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (Mr. RESCHENTHALER), pending which I yield myself, as I may continue. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Time yielded. The rules Committee, Congresswoman CICILLINE worked with the Judiciary Committee, Congresswoman DAVID CICILLINE of Rhode Island, and Congresswoman GRAHAM of South Carolina, and all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

Ms. SCALON. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Rules Committee met and reported a rule, House Resolution 147, providing for consideration of H.R. 5, the Equality Act, a bill that will provide full legal equality to everyone.

The rule provides for 90 minutes of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking member of the Committee on the Judiciary and one motion to recommit.

The rule also provides for consideration of H.R. 803, the Protecting America’s Wilderness and Public Lands Act, under a structured rule. The rule provides 1 hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking member of the Committee on Natural Resources and self-executes a manager’s amendment from Chairman GRIJALVA. It also makes in order 29 amendments, provides en bloc authority to Chairman GRIJALVA, and provides one motion to recommit.

Mr. Speaker, we are here today to debate the rule for two critical pieces of legislation, H.R. 5, the Equality Act, and H.R. 803, the Protecting America’s Wilderness and Public Lands Act.

This is a historic day for Congress and for equal rights. Over 45 years ago, Congresswoman Bella Abzug introduced the first version of the Equality Act, a bill that will provide full legal protections to LGBTQ people all across our country by extending the protections of the Civil Rights Act to them and making clear that we must respect, defend, and celebrate the dignity innate of everyone in our communities, including—and perhaps especially—those who are perceived as different or non-binary.

The version of the Equality Act that we consider today is the result of years of careful legislative drafting and amends existing civil rights laws to provide protection from discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in key areas of public life: employment, housing, credit, education, public spaces, and services, federally funded programs, and jury service.

Additionally, the Equality Act updates the public spaces and services covered in current law to include retail stores and services, such as banks, legal services, and transportation. These important updates would strengthen existing protections for everyone.

The journey to this final version of the Equality Act was led by a dear colleague who is a historymaker in his own right, co-chair of the LGBTQ Equality Caucus and my colleague on the Judiciary Committee, Congressman DAVID CICILLINE of Rhode Island, and Congresswoman GRAHAM of South Carolina, and with their voices, lawyers and advocates from the left and the right, religious groups, and a host of civil rights groups to make sure the language of the Equality Act achieved full legal equality while protecting existing civil rights for other marginalized groups.

The resulting bill is supported by 130 of the largest employees in the country, our largest labor unions, and the hundreds of organizations including, to name just a few, the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, the NAACP, the National Women’s Law Center, the Episcopal Church, the Union for Reform Judaism, and the United Church of Christ.

And, most importantly, it is supported by a clear and overwhelming majority of the American people. Seventy-one percent of Americans support this legislation, including majorities of Democrats, Independents, and Republicans.

The clear majority of both the House and the American people recognize that for too long LGBTQ people have faced discrimination with no Federal legal recourse. It is beyond dispute that LGBTQ people—especially transgender people and, even more so, transgender women of color—face discrimination across this country.

To echo other speakers, this issue is deeply personal for me. It has been personal since my baby sister came out to me almost 40 years ago. For many people all across this country and across this House, that is when this fight hits home.

It gets personal when someone whom you love says who they are and what matters to that person and you want to do whatever you can to make sure that your loved one can live their life to the fullest, free from hate and discrimination.

I am sad to say that my home, Pennsylvania, is one of the 30 States that defies the will of its people by not having legal protections for LGBTQ people. The idea that my sister—one of the tallest people I have ever met; who has served in the Armed Forces—could drive across State lines and lose protections is heartbreaking.

The Equality Act ends the patchwork of State laws and creates uniform, nationwide protections. LGBTQ people won’t have to worry that being transferred to another State by their employer or needing to move home to take care of ailing parents will cause them to lose civil rights protections.

From sea to shining sea, LGBTQ people enjoy a stability that comes from knowing that, if they face discrimination, they have legal recourse.

It is also important to note what the Equality Act does not do. The Equality Act does not impinge on religious freedom. Religious liberty is a cornerstone value of our Constitution and our country. Religious organizations are currently able to prefer their own membership. It is donc to happen in the hiring for religious positions, such as ministers and schoolteachers.

The Equality Act does nothing to change that. The Equality Act does not force anyone to perform or obtain abortions in violation of their religious beliefs, and it does not strip girls of their title 9 protections.

The Equality Act does clarify what has long been held: That religious freedom laws do not create an exemption to civil rights laws.

Just like a person can’t use a claim of religious freedom to refuse to sell a house to an interracial couple, under the Equality Act, LGBTQ families will be protected from discrimination regardless of its motivation.

Consider the stakes facing LGBTQ people too often all across this country and in 30 States the couple would have no legal recourse. Often, humiliation is just the tip of the iceberg. Same-sex couples are far more likely to be denied housing; qualified and high-performing transgender people are more likely to be fired from their jobs; and LGBTQ young people face rejection and discrimination in school, which can deny them an education.

These injuries compound and lead to poverty, homelessness, and violence. The impact is felt the hardest by transgender women of color, who confront racial discrimination, sex discrimination, and gender identity discrimination. The intersection of these forms of discrimination is all too often deadly.

The protections provided by the Equality Act give LGBTQ people an equal chance at the American Dream. While discrimination and rejection has ended the lives of too many transgender people, many are succeeding despite discrimination.

We are talking here about the civil rights of our friends, our family, and public servants. In Pennsylvania, Dr. Rachel Levine, a transgender woman, served in the Governor’s cabinet as Secretary for Health, and has recently been nominated by President Biden to serve as Assistant Health Secretary.

Mara Keisling, a Pennsylvania native, is the founder and Executive Director of the National Center for
Transgender Equality and a pioneer for civil rights protections.

Sarah McBride was recently sworn in as the first transgender Senator in the State of Delaware.

And Congresswoman Pete Buttigieg was recently sworn in as the U.S. Secretary of Transportation, becoming the first openly gay cabinet member to be confirmed by the Senate.

Opponents of the Equality Act keep trying to pit cisgender girls against transgender girls, when really this legislation is about strengthening opportunity for all girls and women. Whether it is women's sports, single-sex colleges, or homeless services for women, the Equality Act simply prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity in these areas. It doesn't undermine these institutions or prohibit them; it simply ensures that they are inclusive of all women and girls, including trans women and girls.

Support for this legislation is overwhelming and deserves an overwhelmingly positive response from this body. I encourage all of my colleagues to support the underlying legislation, and further encourage the Senate to swiftly act to pass this bill so that we can finally provide firm, statutory protections to the LGBTQ community.

Mr. Speaker, is H.R. 5, the Protecting America's Wilderness and Public Lands Act. This is a package of public bills from the Natural Resources Committee that will designate more than 1.5 million acres as wilderness areas and more than 1,200 river miles into the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

The bill would also withdraw more than 1.2 million acres of public land from new drilling and mining, ensuring that these landscapes like the Grand Canyon and Colorado's Thompson Divide are permanently protected for future generations to enjoy.

Few things in the United States are as universally cherished by Americans as our public lands. Our country is home to more than 111 million acres of designated wilderness, and these lands help us combat climate change, provide for an array of ecological diversity, and offer recreational activities to Americans young and old.

As we continue to endure the devastating effects of climate change, providing for millions of additional acres of wilderness will allow for these areas to continue to serve as critical ‘carbon sinks’ to capture and mitigate carbon dioxide in our atmosphere.

A similar version of this legislation passed the House last Congress, but this version includes a critical new piece from Natural Resources Committee Chairman Grijalva, the Grand Canyon Protection Act. This bill would permanently ban new mining claims on approximately one million acres of public land surrounding Grand Canyon National Park, helping to protect the clean water resources critical to the livelihoods of local Tribal communities.

The Grand Canyon Protection Act was developed by Chairman GRIJALVA in close consultation with all of the relevant stakeholders in his district and serves to protect one of the most cherished places in the United States.

You may hear my colleague from Pennsylvania argue that this bill is nothing but a land grab, an attempt to subvert private industry. Of course, this couldn't be further from the truth. Mining, like every other industry, is subject to a free market. Historically, when the demand for these minerals has dropped, mining companies are all too prepared to skip town without cleaning up any of their mess.

This bill isn't about whether or not nuclear energy and its inputs will be part of our clean energy future, but if we want to ensure that it is, then I would recommend that we first start by supporting effective regulations on new and existing nuclear plants and their capability to ensure demand for a product is to similarly ensure that its user won't decide it isn't worth pursuing or is unaffordable.

The merits of nuclear energy aside, you can't deny that its use in this country is on the downsizing or, at the very least, stagnant. This doesn't due to over-regulation; it is due to under-regulation. It is due to massive cost overruns and incompetent government oversight.

The U.S. has had only one new nuclear reactor become operational in the last 20 years. This isn't because a mining company or two hasn't been afforded the opportunity to desecrate our national resources, but because the U.S. hasn't yet proven we can responsibly operate a nuclear plant that, from start to finish, is safe and has the trust of the American people.

Public lands do not belong to those only in the Congressional district in which they are located; they belong to all of us. Wilderness areas in the great State of Colorado belong to you and me as much as Independence Hall belongs to a native of Colorado. We all have a role to play in protecting these lands and seeking carveouts for mining companies is not the right way forward.

I want to especially thank my colleague, Congresswoman DIANA DeGETTE, for her tireless and bipartisan work in getting this legislation to such a great place. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I thank the distinguished gentlewoman from my home State of Pennsylvania for yielding me the customary 30 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, the rule before us provides for consideration of two pieces of legislation. Let's just look at both pieces one at a time.

The first bill, H.R. 5, the Equality Act, provides for civil rights protections for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer individuals. Let me start by saying that Republicans believe all people should be treated equally under the law. Let me repeat that, Republicans believe all people should be treated equally under the law. But the Equality Act misses that mark.

Rather, H.R. 5 represents a radical departure from existing civil rights protections that have long been supported by Republicans. This bill, the Equality Act, represents nothing but a land grab, an attempt to subvert private industry. Of course, this couldn't be further from the truth. Mining, like every other industry, is subject to a free market. Historically, when the demand for these minerals has dropped, mining companies are all too prepared to skip town without cleaning up any of their mess.

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I want to especially thank my colleague, Congresswoman DIANA DeGETTE, for her tireless and bipartisan work in getting this legislation to such a great place.
H. R. 803 also ignores input from local communities, who voiced concern that these measures will hurt local economies and rural jobs. As we recover from the COVID–19 pandemic, the last thing that we should be doing is eliminating good-paying, family-sustaining jobs.

Further, this bill will actually increase catastrophic wildfires, as the new wilderness and scenic river designations prohibit scientific forest management.

I am especially concerned that this measure withdraws 1.2 million acres from mineral production, including uranium, a necessary component for the U.S. nuclear reactor fleet.

Currently, our Nation is relying on China for the vast majority of rare earth elements and critical materials, which are necessary for everything from building a fighter jet to a cell phone.

Just last week, we saw China threaten to cut off its mineral supply to American defense contractors. We have watched as China has done this to sister democracies such as Japan.

The Chinese Communist Party, and other unstable and hostile regimes, control over our energy and mineral needs, putting our economic and national security at risk.

We must not cut off access to the minerals and materials necessary for everyday life and for the protection of our Nation.

I would urge my colleagues across the aisle to seek a bipartisan approach to these two bills, to this rule, not just today, but also in the weeks and months ahead.

Mr. Speaker, I urge opposition to the rule, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SCANLON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. McGOVERN), the distinguished chairman of the Rules Committee.

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania, a distinguished member of the Rules Committee, for yielding me the time; and I want to thank her for her eloquent opening.

Mr. Speaker, we are just weeks away from the 53rd anniversary of Martin Luther King, Jr.’s famous speech at the National Cathedral. That is when he uttered the powerful line, “The moral arc of the universe is long, but it bends towards justice.”

In many ways, those words are as misconstrued as they are well-known, because some have taken them to mean that if you just wait long enough, justice is inevitable. Dr. King knew better, though. He knew that for the moral arc to bend, people needed to be courageous enough to actually bend it.

Just 6 years after this line was spoken, Members of this Chamber showed courage when they introduced the original Equality Act. They did so in the shadow of the Stonewall riots at a time when even discussing LGBTQ issues publicly was seen by many as taboo.

These Members recognized the fundamental unfairness in a patchwork of State laws being used to deny some Americans fundamental rights like jobs and homes, just because of who they were or who they loved.

They had the backbone to act, giving a voice in these hallowed Halls to the many advocates nationwide fighting for equality from the outside.

Getting to this point has been a long, long road, and I am a proud cosponsor of the Equality Act that is before us today, and I have pushed for this day for a long time. I know this hasn’t been easy. So many people and so many organizations, though, never wavered. And along the way, they changed hearts and minds on this issue.

What may have been a radical idea then is now not. In fact, most people today not only support such protections for LGBTQ Americans, they incorrectly believe that they are already in place. That is how common sense this bill is, Mr. Speaker.

This House made history when it passed the Equality Act for the first time last Congress, and we did so in a bipartisan way. Unfortunately, it didn’t even get a vote in the Republican-controlled Senate, and the prior Republican President didn’t support it. But now we are in the majority in the Senate and a President who has made passing this bill a top priority.

This moment represents our best chance yet to finally make the Equality Act the law of the land. This moment, Mr. Speaker, is an opportunity to bend the moral arc toward justice, toward fairness, and toward equality, and I encourage all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to seize it.

Let’s support this rule and the underlying bill, and let’s take a historic step forward. Let’s work together and pass this bill in a fair and just society for all Americans.

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Arizona (Mrs. LESSKO), my good friend.

Mrs. LESSKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this rule.

The underlying legislation we are considering in this rule is wrought with concerning provisions. One underlying bill, H.R. 803, is just another land grab that would make our Nation hostage to hostile foreign powers, restrict public access and recreation opportunities on our public lands, and threaten our energy independence.

Specifically, in my home State of Arizona, this bill has dangerous implications for our mining industry. These provisions also threaten our national security by making the United States reliant on foreign nations for critical minerals.

The other bill in this rule, the so-called Equality Act, is anything but equal. In fact, it is a threat to women’s privacy and safety. This bill effectively outlaws facilities reserved for biologically females. This includes restrooms, showers, and locker rooms. And outrageously, this also includes women’s domestic violence shelters.

As a survivor myself of domestic violence, I know the importance of these women’s shelters. They are critical for women who are trying to escape domestic violence and sometimes sexual assault. Under this Equality Act, a man, a biological man, identifying as a woman cannot legally be turned away from any of these facilities. Women will lose all rights to bodily privacy, safety, and security. Vulnerable women across America deserve better, Mr. Speaker.

In addition, this bill will end girls sports as we know it by mandating males into girls sports.

I stand in opposition to both of the underlying bills, and I urge my colleagues to vote “no” on this rule.

Ms. SCANLON. Mr. Speaker, I would just say for the record that prior 20 States already have versions of this law, the Equality Act, with respect to participation in sports, as do the Olympics, and we have not seen the kind of behavior that has just been suggested.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER).

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentlewoman’s courtesy and her careful, thoughtful explanation of what we are doing.

I strongly support the Equality Act, extending civil rights protections to all citizens. I have been honored to be a part of this process throughout my political career, dating back as a child legislator in the local, county government, in city government in Oregon, and for the last 25 years here in Congress.

The arguments that we are hearing have been heard before. The same sort of hysterical concerns have proven not to be the case. Wild claims have been proven wrong; and especially I think of marriage equality as the most compelling.

Each reform, each step of the way, has been for progress, and equality was positive, and ultimately supported by the public, as is the Equality Act. The wild claims have been proven groundless.

At the end of the day, one of the reasons is that Americans are biased in favor of fairness and equality. Another important reason, one alluded to by my friend from Pennsylvania, is personal experience. There was fear and misapprehension, but as people became experienced with a family member who married, a transgender child, when you deal with the reality of real people, what we find is that they are people like everybody else, and we do not want their lives to be turned upside down.

I come from a State where by and large these protections are in place, but they aren’t in place for everybody everywhere, and we have an opportunity to make additional progress.

One of the reasons that we have seen
this progress take place is the advocacy of those in the LGBT community who have been tireless, thoughtful, articulate, strategic, moving the agenda forward and bringing along often reluctant politicians.

Lastly, it is not a matter of raking the forest to the ground, as Donald Trump said, but having an opportunity to allow the healing power of nature to provide those protections.

While the Equality Act purports to be an inclusive piece of legislation, it is actually exclusive of those with a different viewpoint. It would ultimately put civil rights laws at odds with longstanding religious beliefs pertaining to sex, sexuality, and other moral issues.

The result would be that faith-based nonprofits, such as a Christian shelter for women or an adoption agency or other religiously affiliated providers of social services, could not minister in good conscience without suffering consequences under Federal law.

We have past history as a precedent, an ominous precedent, as we saw the Obama-Biden administration seek to close down the Little Sisters of the Poor and Catholic nuns who care for the elderly because they would not pay for their employees’ contraception or drugs inducing abortion.

A vote for the Equality Act would solidify the Biden-Harris administration’s efforts to enforce the same radical religious and moral litmus tests that leave no room for faith-based ministries and organizations to operate without subscribing to the dogma of the left.

The Equality Act essentially weaponizes civil rights laws against Americans’ fundamental liberties, and we must reject this assault on our most precious freedoms. I oppose this rule, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. SCANLON. Mr. Speaker, I would just restate that this act does not take away any of the religious freedoms that are already enshrined in multiple laws. It does not change those laws.

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

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. Good). Mr. GOOD of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, in their continued relentless assault on religious freedoms, Democrats are trying today, with this terrible bill, to make wholesale and damaging changes to our Nation’s civil rights laws with little or no debate, all in the name of appeasing the left.

Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentleman from Oregon. Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I will just say, I come from an area where the stress of scientific management of forests has resulted in more forest fires, problems with water quality, problems with habitat. We are learning that we need to make different changes, and one of the tools that we have is extending wilderness protections. It strengthens the environment, protects wildlife, water resources, and makes them more resilient, not less.

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Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentleman from Oregon. Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I will just say, I come from an area where the stress of scientific management of forests has resulted in more forest fires, problems with water quality, problems with habitat. We are learning that we need to make different changes, and one of the tools that we have is extending wilderness protections. It strengthens the environment, protects wildlife, water resources, and makes them more resilient, not less.

It is not a matter of raking the forests, as Donald Trump said, but having an opportunity to allow the healing power of nature to provide those protections.

While the Equality Act purports to be an inclusive piece of legislation, it is actually exclusive of those with a different viewpoint. It would ultimately put civil rights laws at odds with longstanding religious beliefs pertaining to sex, sexuality, and other moral issues.

The result would be that faith-based nonprofits, such as a Christian shelter for women or an adoption agency or other religiously affiliated providers of social services, could not minister in good conscience without suffering consequences under Federal law.

We have past history as a precedent, an ominous precedent, as we saw the Obama-Biden administration seek to close down the Little Sisters of the Poor and Catholic nuns who care for the elderly because they would not pay for their employees’ contraception or drugs inducing abortion.

A vote for the Equality Act would solidify the Biden-Harris administration’s efforts to enforce the same radical religious and moral litmus tests that leave no room for faith-based ministries and organizations to operate without subscribing to the dogma of the left.

The Equality Act essentially weaponizes civil rights laws against Americans’ fundamental liberties, and we must reject this assault on our most precious freedoms. I oppose this rule, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. SCANLON. Mr. Speaker, I would just restate that this act does not take away any of the religious freedoms that are already enshrined in multiple laws. It does not change those laws.

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

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from the great State of Texas (Mr. PFFLUGER).

Last week, my home State of Texas endured a harrowing winter storm that wiped out electricity and water for millions of Texans. It devastated homes and businesses and caused irreparable damage to livestock, crops, and industry production across the State. Tragically, some even lost their lives.

Our State was under an extreme emergency. Living through that underscored the need for safe, affordable, reliable energy. We absolutely must have a reliable baseload for our energy grids and a level playing field for all forms of energy. The Federal Government cannot pick favorites in energy.

What happened in Texas should shake our country into the realization that, as our population grows and our energy needs expand, any move to limit production will have dire consequences on our safety and our national security.

Unfortunately, this bill is another step in the vendetta to limit the American energy production. The partisan $1.2 million Federal land grab —

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 15 seconds to the gentleman from Pennsylvania. Mr. PFFLUGER. Mr. Speaker, the land grab is another Democrat attempt to restrict our country’s abundant natural resources under onerous regulations that will kill jobs in the energy industry and put Americans at risk.

This is a matter of national security, and I urge my colleagues to vote against this bill and to vote for the
safety and energy independence that this country so deserves. Please join me in voting “no” for both bills and both rules.

Ms. SCANLON. Mr. Speaker, I would just note that what we saw in Texas this past week was a truly astonishing, unusual snowstorm with frigid conditions that are not normal—as the Speaker knows—in Texas, and that happens because of climate change.

Because we haven’t done enough to protect our wilderness and to protect our children and end up with extreme climate events like we just saw, and this bill is a step toward redressing that imbalance.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, if we defeat the previous question, I will offer an amendment to the rule to immediately consider H.R. 682, the Reopen Schools Act.

I will do this to ensure that the $54.3 billion that Congress appropriated just last month to help schools reopen is, in fact, prioritized to meet the expenses of actually being able to open up schools in-person learning.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to include in the Record the text of my amendment, along with any extraneous material, immediately prior to the vote on the previous question.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from Iowa (Mrs. HINSON), who will explain the amendment.

Mrs. HINSON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to oppose the previous question. This is the third time here today that Republicans have called on this body to consider my bill, the Reopen Schools Act. It is a commonsense solution to get students and teachers to return to the classroom and to do it safely.

This legislation would condition a portion of State COVID relief grants for education on schools actually reopening. My Democrat colleagues already voted for these funds to be used specifically for schools to reopen safely back to school. It was a bipartisan bill, $54 billion.

The science on this is definitive. If certain safety precautions are taken, teachers and students can resume in-person learning safely. So that is why Congress sent the States this money back in December.

But after nearly a year of this pandemic lockdown, millions of students are still learning exclusively from behind a screen. Our children are struggling academically and they are falling behind. But the toll on mental health is what is most concerning to me. Even after a year, many kids haven’t seen their school friends. They haven’t been out to play on a playground. They are isolated, disconnected, and they are lonely. From increased stress and anxiety, depression, even suicidal thoughts or attempts, our youngest generation is facing a mental health crisis.

Hospitals are seeing an increase in mental health emergencies among young children. It is heartbreaking. And the longer the goal posts continue to be moved on reopening schools, the worse this mental health crisis will become, as it will become.

My home State of Iowa is leading the way to put students’ education and mental health first. My two sons got home all day because their parents and neglect who are locked in with poverty conditions, digital Disconnecting students from their teachers, and they will play with their friends at recess today.

As a parent, I am grateful that I had the ability to make the right choice for my children and send them back to class to learn in person. But millions of parents around the country have not been given this choice, with many school districts still only offering virtual learning. I have heard of so many families who are afraid that the schools remain shuttered and they have no clear timetable for reopening.

It is vulnerable families with at-risk children who are impacted the most by these decisions. Let’s think about the kids who don’t have access to a computer or WiFi to try to complete their lessons online. Or let’s talk about the kids who rely on school breakfast and lunch and they are going hungry without these vital nutrition programs. Or what about the victims of child abuse and neglect who are locked in with potential abusers. Or kids who are left at home all day because their parents have no choice but to go to work. We cannot let this happen to families to continue to suffer right now. It is time for students to get back into the classroom, and we can do it safely. With the Reopen Schools Act, they will be able to do so safely. Teachers will be back in the classroom safely, and we can get this country moving forward again.

Mr. Speaker, I hope my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will join me in supporting our students by defeating the previous question. We need to get kids back to school. So I urge a “no” vote.

Ms. SCANLON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 30 seconds to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. McGovern).

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

I have some good news for the gentlewoman from Iowa. Last week, I joined Congresswoman HINSON’s bill will address this issue by conditioning those funds on States producing a reopening plan to get students back to school as quickly as possible.
There are at least 3 months left in most school years around the country. We can’t just let schools put off returning to in-person learning until next fall or later. We need to do what is best for our students, our children, our grandchildren, our nieces and nephews. We need to get our schools open.

We can’t, for example, expect sixth-grade teachers to teach fourth graders.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in voting to defeat the previous question. I thank Congresswoman Himes for her leadership on this bill.

Ms. SCALON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I would just note, as a parent, a former school board member, and an education advocate, of course, we all want what is best for our students and what is best for our schools.

But I would also suggest that a one-size-fits-all, everybody has to go back in person to schools does not serve anybody well.

We have seen around the country—first of all, our schools in Pennsylvania are not closed. They are open. Some are virtual, some are hybrid, some are in person. But each community is doing what it needs to do in response to the conditions that are present at this time.

So I agree with my colleague on the Rules Committee that we absolutely need to get our school districts and our State and local governments the money they need to safely reopen schools, and we are looking forward to doing that with our reconciliation bill on Friday.

Mr. Speaker, I just inquire whether the gentleman from Pennsylvania is prepared to close. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. I have no further speakers at this time, and I am prepared to close.

Mr. Speaker, Republicans believe every person should be treated equally under the law. But H.R. 5 is a radical approach that will have serious, unintended consequences for female athletes, victims of sexual violence, houses of worship, and healthcare professionals. The list goes on and on. Critically, the bill undermines important freedom protections.

As for H.R. 803, let’s call this what it is. It is a land grab. This is a land grab which will job kills in rural communities. It will leave us vulnerable to hostile nations for our energy and mineral needs. It will restrict access and recreation opportunities for the American public.

For all these reasons, I urge my colleagues to vote “no” on the previous question and “no” on the underlying question.

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

Ms. SCALON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, today are a strong and necessary start to the conditions that are present at this time.

We have a long way to go in addressing the challenges we face, but the two bills before us today are a strong and necessary start to helping our Nation live up to its full potential.

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

The material previously referred to by Mr. RESCHENTHALER is as follows:

AMENDMENT TO HOUSE RESOLUTION 147

At the end of the resolution, add the following:

SEC. 6. Immediately upon adoption of this resolution, the House shall resolve into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 682) to encourage local educational agencies to resume in-person instruction at elementary and secondary schools, and for other purposes.

The vote was taken by electronic devices, and there were—yeas 219, nays 211, not voting 1, as follows:

YEAS—219

Adams
Aguilar
Allred
Arnold
Axne
Bass
Bean
Beatty
Bezich
Beziseki
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (FL)
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The Texas people have lost a real fighter, and all of us have lost a true friend. Cathy and I and our entire Texas delegation hold Ron’s wife, Susan, close to our hearts, and our deepest condolences go out to his children, grandchildren, and staff.

Godspeed to you, my friend. You will be missed.

Ms. JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I ask that we all rise for a moment of silence.

The SPEAKER. The Chair asks all Members in the Chamber to rise for a moment of silence.

Mr. STEWART changed his vote from “yea” to “nay.”

Ms. CRAIG changed her vote from “nay” to “yea.”

So the previous vote was ordered. The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.
Mr. BOST changed his vote from "yea" to "nay." "Mrs. DINGELL changed her vote from "nay" to "yea." 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.

Stated against:

Mr. STAUBER, Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "nay" on Rollcall No. 35.

MEMBERS RECORDED PURSUANT TO HOUSE RESOLUTION 8, 117TH CONGRESS

**NAYS—208**

- Aderholt
- Allen
- Amodei
- Armstrong
- Arrington
- Babin
- Bacon
- Baird
- Balderson
- Banks
- Barr
- Bentz
- Bergman
- Biggs
- Bilirakis
- Bishop (NC)
- Boebert
- Brooks
- Buchan
- Buck
- Budd
- Burgess
- Cammack
- Carter (GA)
- Carter (TX)
- Castor
- Chabot
- Cheney
- Clyde
- Cloud
- Cole
- Comer
- Crawford
- Cresshaw
- Curtis
- Davidson
- Diaz-Balart
- Donalds
- Dunn
- Emmer
- Estes
- Fallon
- Feenstra
- Ferguson
- Fischbach
- Fitzpatrick
- Fleischmann
- Fortenberry
- Franklin, C.
- Furer
- Pascrell
- Payne
- Perlmutter
- Petersen
- Poe
- Pocan
- Porter
- Price (NC)
- Quigley
- Rogers
- Rosendale
- Ryan
- Sánchez
- Scalf
- Schakowsky
- Schneider
- Neal
- Neugebauer
- Newman
- Norcross
- O’Rourke
- Omar
- Palacio
- Palazzo
- Pappas
- Smith (WA)
- NAY-S—208

**EFFECTIVE ASSISTANCE OF COUNSEL IN THE DIGITAL ERA ACT**

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CUELLAR). Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 546) to regulate monitoring of electronic communications between an incarcerated person in a Bureau of Prisons facility and that person’s attorney or other legal representative, for all purposes, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yes 414, nay 11, not voting 6, as follows:

**YEAS—414**

- Adams
- Aderholt
- Affeld
- Allard
- Amodei
- Anderson
- Anness
- Aune
- Bachman
- Bacon
- Bacharach
- Bachman
- Baicher
- Baldwin
- Banks
- Barlow
- Baxley
- Bean
- Beatty
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- Beefor
- Bell
- Berman
- Bernier
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- Berns
- Berry
- Besnard
- Biskupic
- Bissonette
- Bish
- Bischack
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- Bixler
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- Bishop (VA)
- Bishop (FL)
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CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — HOUSE

February 24, 2021

H611

LUKE CRAWFORD, U.S. REPUBLICAN CONGRESSMAN FROM GEORGIA

Mr. CRAWFORD changed his vote from “nay” to “yea.”

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MEMBERS RECORDED PURSUANT TO HOUSE RULES 8, 14, AND 27, 104TH CONGRESS:

Allred (Davide (KS))
Barragán (Beyer) (MA)
Bowers (Clark (MA))
Buchanan (Donald (Okl))
Cardenas (Gomez (CA))
Cartter (Texas (Neth))
DeSaulniers (Garon (MA))
Lofgren (Jeffries) (CA)

PUERTO RICO RECOVERY ACCURACY IN DISCLOSURES ACT OF 2021

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, the unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1192) to impose requirements on the payment of compensation to professional persons employed in voluntary cases commenced under title III of the Puerto Rico Oversight Management and Economic Stability Act (commonly known as “PROMESA”), on which the yeas and nays were ordered. The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were 429 yea’s, 0 nay’s, not voting 2, as follows:

[Roll No. 37]

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**1274**

MESSRS. STIVERS, LATTA, SCHNEIDER, MCKINLEY, MOONEY, and JOYCE of Ohio changed their vote from “nay” to “yea.”

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MEMBERS RECORDED PURSUANT TO HOUSE RULES 8, 14, AND 27, 104TH CONGRESS:

Allred (Davide (KS))
Barragán (Beyer) (MA)
Bowman (Clark (MA))
Buchanan (Donald (Okl))
Cardenas (Gomez (CA))
Cartter (Texas (Neth))
DeSaulniers (Garon (MA))
Lofgren (Jeffries) (CA)
AUTHORIZING THE CLERK TO MAKE CORRECTION IN ENGROSSMENT OF H.R. 447, NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP ACT OF 2021

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that in the engrossment of H.R. 447, the Clerk be directed to make the correction I have placed at the desk.

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

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the unanimous consent request?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 5(a)(1)(B) of House Resolution 155, the Clerk is authorized to make the correction requested and ordered to be printed.


The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States:

To the Congress of the United States:

Whereas the COVID–19 disease (hereafter referred to as “COVID–19”) continues to cause significant risk to the public health and safety of the Nation. More than 500,000 people in this Nation have perished from the disease and it is essential to continue to combat and respond to COVID–19 with the full capacity and capability of the Government. Therefore, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared in Proclamation 9994 concerning the COVID–19 pandemic, to continue in effect beyond March 1, 2021.

There remains a need to continue this national emergency, based on a disturbance or threatened disturbance of the international relations for the United States related to Cuba. The unauthorized entry of any United States–registered vessel into Cuban territorial waters continues to be detrimental to the foreign policy of the United States. The unauthorized entry of vessels subsequent to the declaration of the United States into Cuban territorial waters is currently a violation of Federal law. Further, the unauthorized entry of United States–registered vessels into Cuban territorial waters continues to be detrimental to United States foreign policy and counter to the purpose of Executive Order 12307, which is to ensure, among other things, safe, orderly, and legal migration. The possibility of large-scale unauthorized entry of United States–registered vessels into Cuban territorial waters would disturb the international relations of the United States regarding Cuba by allowing for or providing the means to facilitate a mass migration of Cuban nationals and threatening our national security.

Therefore, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency with respect to Cuba and the emergency authority relating to the regulation of the anchorage and movement of vessels set out in Proclamation 9699, as amended by Proclamation 7757 on February 24, 2016, and Proclamation 9994 on February 24, 2018, is necessary to continue in effect beyond March 1, 2021.

I have presented to the Congress a notice stating that the national emergency with respect to Cuba that was declared on March 1, 1996, in Proclamation 6867, as amended by Proclamation 7757 on February 26, 2004, Proclamation 9398 on February 24, 2016, and Proclamation 9994 on February 24, 2018, is to continue in effect beyond March 1, 2021.

JOSEPH R. BIDEN.
THE WHITE HOUSE, February 24, 2021.

RESOLVED. That the House has heard with profound sorrow the death of the Honorable Ronald J. Wright, a Representative from the State of Texas.

RESOLVED. That the Clerk communicate these resolutions to the Senate and transmit a copy thereof to the family of the deceased.

RESOLVED. That when the House adjourns today, it adjourn as a further mark of respect to the memory of the deceased.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.


The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States:

To the Congress of the United States:

Whereas the COVID–19 disease (hereafter referred to as “COVID–19”) continues to cause significant risk to the public health and safety of the Nation. More than 500,000 people in this Nation have perished from the disease and it is essential to continue to combat and respond to COVID–19 with the full capacity and capability of the Government. Therefore, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared in Proclamation 9994 concerning the COVID–19 pandemic, to continue in effect beyond March 1, 2021.

There remains a need to continue this national emergency, based on a disturbance or threatened disturbance of the international relations for the United States related to Cuba. The unauthorized entry of any United States–registered vessel into Cuban territorial waters continues to be detrimental to the foreign policy of the United States. The unauthorized entry of vessels subsequent to the declaration of the United States into Cuban territorial waters is currently a violation of Federal law. Further, the unauthorized entry of United States–registered vessels into Cuban territorial waters would disturb the international relations of the United States regarding Cuba by allowing for or providing the means to facilitate a mass migration of Cuban nationals and threatening our national security.

Therefore, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency with respect to Cuba and the emergency authority relating to the regulation of the anchorage and movement of vessels set out in Proclamation 9699, as amended by Proclamation 7757, Proclamation 9398, and Proclamation 9994.

JOSEPH R. BIDEN.
THE WHITE HOUSE, February 24, 2021.

RESOLVED. That the House has heard with profound sorrow the death of the Honorable Ronald J. Wright, a Representative from the State of Texas.

RESOLVED. That the Clerk communicate these resolutions to the Senate and transmit a copy thereof to the family of the deceased.

RESOLVED. That when the House adjourns today, it adjourn as a further mark of respect to the memory of the deceased.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ADJOURNMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 5(a)(1)(B) of House Resolution 8, and pursuant to House Resolution 155, the House stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow for morning–hour debate and noon for legislation business, as a further mark of respect to the memory of the late Honorable Ronald J. Wright.

Thereupon (at 6 o’clock and 25 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, February 25, 2021, at 10 a.m., as a further mark of respect to the memory of the late Honorable Ronald J. Wright.
H614 CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — HOUSE

February 24, 2021

and 1545-BO978 received February 2, 2021, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

EC-399. A letter from the Director, Legal Processing Division, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service’s Major final regulations — Tax on Excess Tax-Exempt Organization Executive Compensation [TD 9998] (RIN: 1545-BO99) received February 2, 2021, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

EC-400. A letter from the Secretary, Office of the Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Review of Medicare and Medicaid Program; Secure Electronic Prior Authorization; Secure Electronic Prior Authorization Funding for Fiscal Year 2021; and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. YARMUTH: Committee on the Budget H.R. 1319. A bill to provide for reconciliation pursuant to title II of S. Con. Res. 5 (Rept. 117-7). Referred to the Committee on the Whole House on the state of the Union.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper committees.

By Mr. WILSON of South Carolina (for himself, Mr. PERRY, Mr. NORMAN, Mr. Bishop of North Carolina, Mr. GAERTZ, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. CLOUD, Mr. COLE, Mr. ROSS, Mr. STEWART, Mr. Smith of Nebraska, Mr. BURGESS, Mr. KELLER, Mr. BIGOS, Mr. WEBSTER of Florida, Mr. GOSAR, Mr. TIMMONS, Mr. TIFFANY, Mr. HILL, Mr. MOOLENAAR, Mrs. CAMMACK, Mr. ISSA, Mrs. MASSIE, Mr. MULLIN, Mr. BUCK, Mr. PALAZZO, Mr. C. SCOTT FRANKLIN of Florida, Mr. CHEER, Mr. RUTHERFORD, Mr. MANN, Mr. CATHORN, Mr. FLEISCHMANN, Mr. HICK of Georgia, Mr. WITTMAN, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. COLE, Mr. REED, Mr. FENICE, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. PALMER, Mr. WALTZ, Mr. DUNCAN, Mr. ROY, Mr. CLINE, Mr. KELLY of Mississippi, Mr. GOHMERT, Mr. ROHRABACHER, Mr. WASHAM, Mr. WOACK, Mr. HERN, Mrs. MILLER-MEeks, Mr. STEUBE, Mr. CARL, Mr. BUCHSHOF, Mr. GUEST, Mr. CALVET, Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. RICE of South Carolina, Mr. SCHWINKERT, Mrs. LESSO, Ms. MACE, Mr. and Mrs. McKEE, Mr. WILK, Mr. H.R. 1275. A bill to preserve and protect the free choice of individual employees to form, join, or assist labor organizations, or to refrain from such activities; to the Committee on Education and Labor.

By Mr. TAKANO (for himself and Mr. BSTY):

H.R. 1276. A bill to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to furnish COVID-19 vaccines to certain individuals, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

By Mr. MEeks (for himself and Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York):

H.R. 1277. A bill to amend the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to require the submission by issuers of data relating to diversity, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. ALLRED (for himself, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. NORTON, Mr. SWELL, and Mr. FOSTER):

H.R. 1278. A bill to amend the Help America Vote Act of 2002 to establish minimum notification requirements for voters affected by polling place changes; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mr. ALLRED (for himself and Mr. LEVIN of Michigan):

H.R. 1279. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, relating to drug trafficking; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be determined by the Speaker.

H.R. 1280. A bill to hold law enforcement accountable for misconduct and to improve transparency through data collection, and reform police training and policies; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committees on Armed Services, and Energy and Commerce, 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. BERGMAN:

H.R. 1281. A bill to name the Department of Veterans Affairs outpatient clinic in Gaylord, Michigan, as the ‘Navy Corpsman Steve Andrews Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care Clinic’; to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

By Mr. BILIRAKIS (for himself, Mr. ROUZI, Mr. RUTHERFORD, Mr. WELCH, Mr. COON, Mr. ROY, Mr. CICILLINE of Texas, Ms. DAVIS, Mr. CIRILLO, Mr. DAVIS of Florida, Mr. LEVIN of Michigan):

H.R. 1282. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Defense to establish a new department within the Department of Defense, to be known as the United States Space Command, for the purpose of conducting a military space operation, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. BILIRAKIS (for himself, Mr. ROUZI, Mr. RUTHERFORD, Mr. WELCH, Mr. COON, Mr. ROY, Mr. CICILLINE of Texas, Ms. DAVIS, Mr. CIRILLO, Mr. DAVIS of Florida, Mr. LEVIN of Michigan):

H.R. 1283. A bill to amend the Federal Reserve Act to provide for a Federal Reserve System Board of Governors with a rotating membership, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. BILIRAKIS (for himself, Mr. ROUZI, Mr. RUTHERFORD, Mr. WELCH, Mr. COON, Mr. ROY, Mr. CICILLINE of Texas, Ms. DAVIS, Mr. CIRILLO, Mr. DAVIS of Florida, Mr. LEVIN of Michigan):

H.R. 1284. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to establish the Department of National Defense, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. BILIRAKIS (for himself, Mr. ROUZI, Mr. RUTHERFORD, Mr. WELCH, Mr. COON, Mr. ROY, Mr. CICILLINE of Texas, Ms. DAVIS, Mr. CIRILLO, Mr. DAVIS of Florida, Mr. LEVIN of Michigan):

H.R. 1285. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to establish the Department of National Defense, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. BILIRAKIS (for himself, Mr. ROUZI, Mr. RUTHERFORD, Mr. WELCH, Mr. COON, Mr. ROY, Mr. CICILLINE of Texas, Ms. DAVIS, Mr. CIRILLO, Mr. DAVIS of Florida, Mr. LEVIN of Michigan):

H.R. 1286. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to establish the Department of National Defense, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. BILIRAKIS (for himself, Mr. ROUZI, Mr. RUTHERFORD, Mr. WELCH, Mr. COON, Mr. ROY, Mr. CICILLINE of Texas, Ms. DAVIS, Mr. CIRILLO, Mr. DAVIS of Florida, Mr. LEVIN of Michigan):

H.R. 1287. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to establish the Department of National Defense, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. BILIRAKIS (for himself, Mr. ROUZI, Mr. RUTHERFORD, Mr. WELCH, Mr. COON, Mr. ROY, Mr. CICILLINE of Texas, Ms. DAVIS, Mr. CIRILLO, Mr. DAVIS of Florida, Mr. LEVIN of Michigan):

H.R. 1288. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to establish the Department of National Defense, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. BILIRAKIS (for himself, Mr. ROUZI, Mr. RUTHERFORD, Mr. WELCH, Mr. COON, Mr. ROY, Mr. CICILLINE of Texas, Ms. DAVIS, Mr. CIRILLO, Mr. DAVIS of Florida, Mr. LEVIN of Michigan):

H.R. 1289. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to establish the Department of National Defense, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. BILIRAKIS (for himself, Mr. ROUZI, Mr. RUTHERFORD, Mr. WELCH, Mr. COON, Mr. ROY, Mr. CICILLINE of Texas, Ms. DAVIS, Mr. CIRILLO, Mr. DAVIS of Florida, Mr. LEVIN of Michigan):

H.R. 1290. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to establish the Department of National Defense, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. BILIRAKIS (for himself, Mr. ROUZI, Mr. RUTHERFORD, Mr. WELCH, Mr. COON, Mr. ROY, Mr. CICILLINE of Texas, Ms. DAVIS, Mr. CIRILLO, Mr. DAVIS of Florida, Mr. LEVIN of Michigan):

H.R. 1291. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to establish the Department of National Defense, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. BILIRAKIS (for himself, Mr. ROUZI, Mr. RUTHERFORD, Mr. WELCH, Mr. COON, Mr. ROY, Mr. CICILLINE of Texas, Ms. DAVIS, Mr. CIRILLO, Mr. DAVIS of Florida, Mr. LEVIN of Michigan):

H.R. 1292. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to establish the Department of National Defense, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. BILIRAKIS (for himself, Mr. ROUZI, Mr. RUTHERFORD, Mr. WELCH, Mr. COON, Mr. ROY, Mr. CICILLINE of Texas, Ms. DAVIS, Mr. CIRILLO, Mr. DAVIS of Florida, Mr. LEVIN of Michigan):

H.R. 1293. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to establish the Department of National Defense, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Armed Services.
H.R. 1282. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to expand eligibility to certain military children for receipt of veterans’ disability compensation and re- tired pay or combat-related special compensation, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services, and in addition to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, 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. BUD (for himself, Mr. MOOLENAAR, Mr. GARTZ, Mr. PERRY, Mr. STEVERS, Mr. STEWART, Mr. ROSENDALE, Mr. MULLIN, Mr. NORMAN, Mr. RICE of Georgia, Mr. HARRIS, Mr. CAWTHORN, Mr. KELLY of Mississippi, Ms. MACK, Mr. WIEBER of Texas, Mr. CARTER of Texas, Mr. COLE, Mrs. RODGERS of Washington, Mr. CURTIS, Mr. ESSA, Mrs. HINSON, Mr. LATTA, Mr. WITTNER, Mr. WEBER of South Carolina, Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. BASS, Mr. TIFFANY, Mr. SMITH of Massachusetts, Mr. CARL, Mr. COMER, Mr. LONG, Mr. HERN, Mr. OWENS, Mr. RUTHERFORD, and Mr. ALLEN):

H.R. 1283. A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide for a full annuity for military retirees for concurrent receipt of retired pay or combat-related special compensation, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Reform.

By Mr. RUTHERFORD, and Mr. ALLEN):

By Ms. CLARKE of New York (for herself, Ms. GOAR, Ms. MENG, and Mr. SIMPSON):

H.R. 1285. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exclude from gross income payments of housing assistance under a loan program for dental school faculty; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, 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. CLYBURN, Ms. MACK, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. DUNCAN, Mr. TIMMONS, Mr. NORMAN, Mr. Rice of South Carolina, Mr. REDDING, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. BISHOP of North Carolina, and Ms. ADAMS):

H.R. 1286. A bill to establish in the States of North Carolina and South Carolina the Southern Campaign of the Revolution National Heritage Corridor, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. CLYBURN (for himself, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. DUNCAN, Mr. Redding, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. BISHOP of North Carolina, and Ms. ADAMS):

H.R. 1287. A bill to amend the Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996 to extend the authorization of the South Carolina National Heritage Corridor, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. CLYBURN (for himself, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. DUNCAN, Mr. Redding, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. BISHOP of North Carolina, and Ms. ADAMS):

H.R. 1288. A bill to amend the Gulf/Gechee Cultural Heritage Act to extend the authorization of the Gulf/Gechee Cultural Heritage Act of 1998, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. COHEN (for himself, Mr. ESPAILLAT, and Mr. GALLEGO):

H.R. 1289. A bill to require States to establish complete street programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. CONNOLLY:

H.R. 1290. A bill to establish a commission to redesignate the J. Edgar Hoover F.B.I. Training Building, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. CRAWFORD (for himself and Mr. COLI):

H.R. 1291. A bill to provide for loans to critical rural utility service providers to ensure continued service and safe operation of rural utility systems during certain emergencies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Mr. CHAFFETZ:

H.R. 1292. A bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to develop objective and performance measures for provision by the Department of Veterans Affairs of same-day services, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

By Mr. GOHMER:

H.R. 1293. A bill to amend the Help America Vote Act of 2002 to prohibit a State from counting a ballot cast in an election for Federal office which is received by the State after the date of the election; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mr. GOHMER:

H.R. 1294. A bill to amend the Help America Vote Act of 2002 to prohibit the participation of foreign entities in the administration of elections for Federal office; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mr. GOHMER:

H.R. 1295. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for bona fide residents of the District of Columbia equal in the same manner as bona fide residents of possessions of the United States; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mrs. GONZALEZ-OLON (for herself and Mr. PIETERS):

H.R. 1296. A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to require the Administrator of the Drug Enforcement Administration to provide a cash award to Administration employees with foreign language skills, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Reform.

By Mr. GROTHMAN (for himself, Mrs. DEMINGS, Ms. BROWNLEY, Ms. NOR- TON, Mr. VALLFORS, Mr. GALLARDO, Mr. MAST, Mr. WALTZ, Mr. STEWART, Mr. ESPAILLAT, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. KELLY of Mississippi, Mr. BILIRakis, Mr. KEL- LER, Mr. COLE, Mr. POCAN, Mr. GARTZ, Mr. THOMSON of California, Mr. CABRANJAL, Mr. MEJIA, Mr. GRIFFITH, Mr. STIVERS, Mr. RUTHERFORD, Mr. MEERS, Mr. TRONE, Mr. TIFFANY, Mr. LOUISEMILLER, Mr. HASTIE, Mr. GONZALEZ of Ohio, Mr. TITUS, Ms. TITUS, Mr. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. SIRES, Mr. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. SIRES, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. FOSTER, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. NOLLY, Mr. BISHOP of Illinois, Mr. THOMAS, Mr. CRUZ, Ms. BASS, and Mr. MCGOVERN):

H.R. 1297. A bill to provide redress to the employees of Air America; to the Committee on Oversight and Reform.

By Mr. HERN (for himself and Mr. MULLIN):

H.R. 1298. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1233 North Cedar Street in Owasso, Okla- homa, as the "Staff Sergeant Mar- chant Rob- erts Post Office Building"; to the Committee on Oversight and Reform.

By Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana (for himself and Mr. TAYLOR):

H.R. 1299. A bill to permit the Secretary of Transportation to approve Federal participation in the replacement or rehabilitation of certain bridges, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. JACOBS of New York (for himself and Mr. REED):

H.R. 1300. A bill to preclude absolute liability in any action against a property owner or contractor for projects receiving Federal financial assistance, and to provide for Federal transportation development, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. KEATING:

H.R. 1301. A bill to direct the Inspector General of the Department of Defense and the Comptroller General of the United States to assess the extent of white supremacy in the Armed Forces; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. KELLY of Mississippi (for himself and Mr. RYAN):

H.R. 1302. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Defense to provide space-available travel on aircraft of the Department of Defense to children, surviving spouses, parents, and siblings of members of the Armed Forces who die while serving in the active military, naval, or air service; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. KUSTOFF (for himself and Ms. SPANBERGER):

H.R. 1303. A bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act to prohibit the knowing possession of a pill press mold with intent to manufacture in violation of the cumulative counterfeit substance in schedule I or II in a capsule, tablet, and other form intended for distribution, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, 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. LARSON of Connecticut (for himself, Ms. PANETTA, Ms. DeBENNE, Mr. ESTRADA, Mr. LAHOOD, and Mr. ABBOTT):

H.R. 1304. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to restore the deduction for research and experimental expenditures; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. LEÉ of California (for herself, Miss GONZALEZ-COLON, Mr. KHANNA, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. SIRES, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. FOSTER, Ms. McCOLLUM, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Ms. WASSEMER SCHULTZ, Mr. KIL- MER, Mr. CARSON, Mr. WILSON of Flor- ida, Mr. SWALWELL, Mr. POCAN, Mrs. HAYS, Ms. POSEY, Ms. BINNS, Ms. DAVIS, Ms. ELLIS, Ms. CHU, Ms. BASS, and Mr. MCGOVERN):

H.R. 1305. A bill to modernize laws and policies, and eliminate discrimination, with respect to people living with HIV/AIDS, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Reform.

By Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mr. KEATING, and Mr. BUCHANAN:
CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY

STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statements are submitted containing the specific powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the accompanying bill or joint resolution.

By Mrs. McBath:

H.R. 1274. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 4: The Times, Places and Manner of holding Elections for Senators and Representatives, shall be prescribed in each State by the Legislature thereof; but the Congress may at any time by Law make or alter such Regulations, except as to the Places of choosing Senators.

By Mr. Wilson of South Carolina:

H.R. 1275. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution

By Ms. Brownley:

H.R. 1285. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 1 of Section 4 of Article I of the Constitution

By Mr. Emmer:

H.R. 1289. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution

By Mr. Gromlich:

H.R. 1292. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, US Constitution: 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 Legislature of the State in which the Same shall be, for the Erection of Forts, Magazines, Arsenals, dock-Yards, and other needful Buildings.

By Mr. Higgins of Louisiana:

H.R. 1299. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defense and general Welfare of the United States:

To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes:—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 Mr. Loevlie:

H.R. 1293. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The Congress shall have Power To . . . To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes;

By Mr. Grothman:

H.R. 1297. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 9, Clause 3; article I, Section 8, Clauses 1, 3 and 18 of the U.S. Constitution, which provide as follows:

The Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defense and general Welfare of the United States:—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 Mr. Allred:

H.R. 1279. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 1 of Section 4 of Article I of the Constitution in Georgia.

By Mr. Allred:

H.R. 1279. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 1 of Section 4 of Article I of the Constitution in South Carolina.

By Mr. Davidson:

H.R. 1280. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 1 of Section 4 of Article I of the Constitution.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

U.S.C. Article I Section 8
By Mr. JACOBS of New York: H.R. 1302.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

By Mr. MOULTON: H.R. 1301.

By Mr. KELLY of Mississippi: H.R. 1302.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Under Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution, Congress has 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. KELLY of Mississippi: H.R. 1302.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Under Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution, Congress has the power to enact this legislation necessary and proper for effectuating its purposes in taxing and spending.

By Mr. KUSTOFF: H.R. 1303.

By Mr. LARSON of Connecticut: H.R. 1304.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

By Mr. LEE of California: H.R. 1305.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

By Ms. MENG: H.R. 1306.

By Mr. MALINOWSKI: H.R. 1307.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

By Ms. MENG: H.R. 1308.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

By Ms. MENG: H.R. 1309.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

By Mr. MOULTON: H.R. 1310.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

By Mr. MOULTON: H.R. 1311.

Additional sponsors

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

H.R. 28: Mr. JACKSON.
H.R. 40: Mr. LEVIN of Michigan and Mr. MIVAN.
H.R. 65: Mr. YARMUTH.
H.R. 103: Mr. VAN DEERW.
H.R. 140: Mrs. MILLER of Illinois.
H.R. 151: Ms. TITUS, Ms. ADAMS, and Ms. SCANLON.
H.R. 197: Mrs. NATALIANO.
H.R. 202: Mr. VAN DEERW and Mrs. STEEL.
H.R. 243: Mr. LOUDERMILK.
H.R. 263: Mr. VAN DEERW and Mr. JOYCE of Ohio.
H.R. 322: Mr. MCCINTOCK and Mr. PERRY.
H.R. 328: Mr. BASS.
H.R. 349: Mr. KILMER and Mrs. DEMINGS.
H.R. 400: Mr. NADLER.
H.R. 451: Mr. CROW, Mr. RESCHENHAUSEN, Mr. SOUTZI, Mr. PARISI, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mrs. AXNE, Ms. STEVENS, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. COHEN, Mr. VAN DEERW, Mr. AXNE, Ms. UNDERWOOD, Ms. MANNING, Mr. SARABANES, Mr. EVANS, Mr. GOHMIERT, Mr. SQUIRES, Ms. SALAZAR, Mrs. TRAHAN, Mr. STAUBER, Ms. TLAIB, Mr. KRISNAMOORTHI, Mr. RUSH, Mr. PARCELL, Ms. DELEBRE, Mr. OWENS, and Mr. COLE.
H.R. 433: Ms. CRAIG.
H.R. 434: Ms. CRAIG.
H.R. 448: Ms. SCANLON.
H.R. 460: Ms. NKUSI.
H.R. 477: Mr. FITZPATRICK.
H.R. 485: Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mrs. MCBATH, and Ms. Wilson of Florida.
H.R. 499: Mr. SCHWEIKERT.
H.R. 535: Ms. SPERR.
H.R. 567: Mr. PERRY.
H.R. 591: Mr. CRAWFORD.
H.R. 607: Mr. KELLER, Mr. BURCHETT, and Mr. BACON.
H.R. 613: Ms. STEVENS, Ms. ISA, Ms. FLETCHER, and Mr. CASE.
H.R. 625: Mrs. LESKO.
H.R. 677: Mrs. LESKO.
H.R. 692: Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. CARL, Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania, Mr. STIVERS, Mr. MOORE of Alabama, Mrs. LESKO, Mr. LOUDERMILK, Mr. MCCINTOCK, Mr. HARDER, Mr. KADID, Ms. WAGNER, Mr. VALADAO, Mr. DUNN, Mr. EMER, and Mr. MEUSER.
H.R. 684: Mr. RUTHERFORD and Mr. SCHWEIKERT.
H.R. 685: Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. TRONE, and Mr. GOTTHEIM.
H.R. 707: Mrs. MILLER-MEeks and Mrs. NAPOLITANO.
H.R. 708: Ms. ROSS.
H.R. 721: Ms. CRAIG.
H.R. 747: Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mrs. AXNE, Mrs. HAYES, and Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER.
H.R. 769: Mr. YOUNG and Mr. SAN NICOLAS.
H.R. 791: Mr. GRIJALVA.
H.R. 793: Mr. MOULTON and Ms. CASTOR of Florida.
H.R. 812: Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. NEHLS, and Mr. JACKSON.
H.R. 816: Mr. WELCH and Mr. NEJUSE.
H.R. 819: Mr. LOUDERMILK and Mrs. LESKO.
H.R. 852: Mr. WOAMACK and Mrs. HARTZLER.
H.R. 856: Ms. MACE and Mr. WALTZ.
H.R. 867: Mr. JACKSON, Mr. LOUDERMILK, and Mr. VAN DEERW.
H.R. 872: Mrs. MILLER of Illinois.
H.R. 889: Mr. RUTHERFORD, Mr. MAST, Mr. CRENSHAW, Mr. CLOUD, and Mr. CURTIS.
H.R. 892: Mr. ARMSTRONG and Mr. JACOBS of New York.
H.R. 914: Ms. SCANLON, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. UNDERWOOD, and Mr. CICILLINE.
H.R. 921: Mrs. HAYES.
H.R. 951: Ms. AXNE.
H.R. 956: Mr. MORIELLE.
H.R. 965: Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. SHERMAN, Ms. SCHARKOWNY, Mr. FORTENBERRY, Mr. McCaul, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. KEATING, Mr. POCAJ, Mr. BROWN, Mr. MALINOWSKI, and Mr. PHILLIPS.
H.R. 987: Mr. CRAIN.
H.R. 992: Mr. ABBOTT, Mr. BUSCHON, Mr. RUTHERFORD, and Mr. CRENSHAW.
H.R. 1010: Mr. KANNA and Mr. HASTINGS.
H.R. 1029: Mr. NEJUSE.
H.R. 1036: Ms. FOXX.
H.R. 1039: Ms. FOXX.
H.R. 1053: Ms. FOXX.
H.R. 1057: Mr. DEFAZIO.
H.R. 1065: Mr. DELGADO.
H.R. 1067: Ms. FOXX.
H.R. 1080: Mr. VAN DEERW and Mr. PALMER.

By Mr. PFLUGER: H.R. 1311.

By Mr. MOULTON: H.R. 1310.

By Mr. PFLUGER: H.R. 1311.
H.R. 1084: Ms. Foxx.
H.R. 1086: Mrs. B. Oeber, Mr. G. Good of Virginia, Mrs. Greene of Georgia, Mr. Perry, Mr. Rosendale, Ms. Herrell, and Mr. Buck.
H.R. 1097: Mr. Guthrie and Mr. Joyce of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 1112: Mr. Sites, Mr. Beyer, Mr. Kelly of Mississippi, Mrs. Torres of California, Mr. Sherman, Mr. Schneider, and Mr. Cicilline.
H.R. 1113: Mr. Bacon.
H.R. 1140: Mr. Polan, Ms. Norton, Mr. Lowenthal, Mr. Torres of New York, Mr. Peters, Mr. Beyer, Ms. Schakowsky, Ms. Clarke of New York, Mr. Pappas, and Mrs. Watson Coleman.
H.R. 1211: Mr. Sherman.
H.R. 1225: Mr. Thompson of Mississippi.
H.R. 1248: Mr. Thompson of Mississippi.
H.R. 1254: Mr. Perry.
H.R. 1271: Mr. Hastings.
H.J. Res. 3: Mr. Mann.
H.J. Res. 11: Mrs. Miller of West Virginia.
H.J. Res. 25: Mr. Cawthorn.
H.R. 47: Mr. Bost, Ms. DelBene, and Mr. Sean Patrick Maloney of New York.
H.R. 71: Mr. Sites and Mr. Peters.
H.R. 89: Mr. Stanton.
H.R. 99: Mr. Hastings, Mr. Brown, Mr. Rose, Ms. Titus, Mrs. Hayes, and Mr. Smith of Nebraska.
H.R. 100: Ms. Chu.
H.R. 104: Mr. Omar.
H.R. 119: Mr. Joyce of Ohio, Mr. Suarez, Ms. Meng, Mr. Langevin, Mr. Pappas, Mrs. Bratton, Ms. DelBene, Mr. Zeldin, Mr. Panetta, Mr. Bowman, Mr. Lowenthal, Mrs. Axne, Mr. Crow, Mr. Hastings, Mr. Higgins of New York, and Mr. Foster.
H.R. 122: Mr. Welch.
H.R. 124: Mr. Wilson of South Carolina, Mr. Meeks, Mrs. Wagner, Mr. Deutch, Mr. Hastings, Mr. Vargas, Mr. Connolly, Mr. McGovern, Mr. Vicente Gonzalez of Texas, Mr. Chabot, Mr. Sherman, Mr. Melzer, Mrs. Kim of California, Mr. Lieu, Mr. Kinzinger, Mr. Castro of Texas, Mr. Wild, Mr. McCaul, Mr. Smith of New Jersey, Ms. Spanberger, Mr. Costa, Ms. Bass, Ms. Titus, Mr. Sites, and Mr. Cicilline.
H.R. 127: Mr. Mann, Mrs. Hart, Mr. Cline, Mr. Latta, Mr. Calvert, and Mr. Guthrie.
H.R. 130: Ms. Spanberger, Mr. Allred, Mr. McGovern, Mr. Costa, Mr. Beyer, Mr. Wilson of South Carolina, Mr. Sites, Mr. Cicilline, Mr. Schneider, Mr. Kim of New Jersey, Mr. Timmons, Mr. Newhouse, and Mr. Cohen.
H.R. 134: Mr. Schneider, Mr. Sites, and Mr. Cohen.
H.R. 136: Ms. Tittus, Mr. Beyer, Mr. Sites, Ms. Bass, Ms. Jacobs of California, Mrs. Kim of California, Mr. Jeffries, Mr. Cicilline, Mr. Schneider, Mr. Vargas, Mr. Brra, Mr. Issa, Ms. Omar, Mr. Kim of New Jersey, and Mrs. Wild.
H.R. 137: Ms. Tittus, Mr. McGovern, Mr. Beyer, Mr. Sites, Ms. Bass, Ms. Jacobs of California, Mrs. Kim of California, Mr. Jeffries, Mr. Cicilline, Mr. Schneider, Mr. Brra, Mrs. Wilson of South Carolina, Mr. Issa, Ms. Omar, Mr. Kim of New Jersey, and Ms. Wild.
H.R. 144: Mr. Castor of Florida, Ms. Davids of Kansas, and Mr. Mrvan.
H.R. 145: Mrs. Watson Coleman, Ms. Norton, Ms. Tlaib, Mr. Bowman, Ms. Bush, Ms. Williams of Georgia, Ms. Lee of California, Mr. Jones, and Ms. Omar.
H.R. 151: Mr. Omar, Ms. Bass, Mr. Langevin, Ms. Scanlon, and Mrs. Hayrs.
H.R. 153: Ms. Salazar.
The Senate met at 12:01 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JOHN W. HICKENLOOPER, a Senator from the State of Colorado.

PRAYER
The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:
Let us pray.
Precious Lord, You delight in those who have integrity. Lord, Your Word describes integrity as always trying to maintain a clear conscience before You and everyone else. Inspire our lawmakers to obey the voice of conscience, focusing on pleasing You by being true to duty. Lord, provide them with the determination to do what is right and leave the consequences to You. May they receive the smile of Heaven’s approval because of their striving to be faithful. Help them to ignore the shouts from the shadows and focus on glorifying You.
We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:
I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE
The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).
The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

WASHINGTON, D.C., February 24, 2021.
To the Senate:
Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JOHN W. HICKENLOOPER, a Senator from the State of Colorado, to perform the duties of the Chair.

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

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME
The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS
The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR
The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.
The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Jennifer Granholm, of Michigan, to be Secretary of Energy.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I am going to talk for just a few minutes about the need to open our schools. I think you would agree with me because I followed your career—with admiration, by the way—that our country is only as good as its dreams and we are only as valuable as our children. And, in my judgment, we are doing immeasurable damage in this country to our children.
We all know that we had to close down our public schools and our parochial schools and our private schools, pre-K to 12, because of the coronavirus, but I think most fairminded Americans understand that we need to open them. The future of this country is education. It is not the level of the stock market. It is not the unemployment rate. It is not who the President is. It is education, and we know that. So why aren’t we opening our public schools when we know it is safe to do so?
I am very proud of our efforts in Louisiana. Seventy percent of our public school students are back learning in person—70 percent. And I want to thank every teacher, every parent, every school board member, every maintenance worker in our schools, and anyone who directly or indirectly influenced this result. They are heroes in my opinion. Seventy percent—I am so proud of that.
I especially want to thank our teachers. I have been a volunteer public school teacher in Louisiana for—I don’t know—20-plus years. I do it three times a year, and I am a real substitute—none of this go for an hour and talk about how a bill becomes a law. I am a real substitute: quarter to 7 to 3, teach five classes, do your lunchroom duty, get worn out. So I have some appreciation for what it takes to teach, particularly in this difficult environment, and I especially want to thank our teachers.
But that 70 percent figure that I am talking about, the number of our public school children in Louisiana who are back to in-person learning, is only 40 percent nationwide, and that is an embarrassment. That is a disgrace. We are doing immeasurable damage—immeasurable damage—to a generation of children.
Now, I don’t need to tell you we have been struggling with elementary and secondary education for the last 40 or 50 years, and it is very frustrating because Americans can do extraordinary things. We can unravel the human genome. Americans can take a diseased human heart and replace it with a new
one and make it beat. Americans can send a person to the moon and bring him back or her back. But we struggle to teach our kids how to read and write and understand the meaning of their diplomas when we have 18 years to do it.

Now, there are a lot of reasons for that, and I am sure not blaming anybody, and I don’t want to dignify. But my point is, we were struggling before the coronavirus. That should tell us that now more than ever, given our circumstances here the coronavirus, we need to take meaningful steps to get these schools back open.

We know that it is safe. The CDC Director under President Trump has said it was safe. The CDC Director under President Biden has said it is safe. Vaccination across America is—we started out a little rocky, a lot like our testing program, but it is getting much better.

I read an article the other day in the Wall Street Journal, written by a Johns Hopkins researcher, physician, who said, in his opinion, about six or seven times more Americans have had the coronavirus than we know of; therefore, they do have immunity. And he said, with regard to the number of people who have had and survived coronavirus and our vaccine program, which is getting more aggressive every day, we could have a substantial reduction in the number of coronavirus cases by March and April. Indeed, we have seen the decline in the number of our cases now, today, starting from early January. They have declined dramatically. And people smarter than me have suggested it is our vaccines, it is the approach to herd immunity, and, of course, it is the habits that we have developed in terms of social distancing and masking and good hygiene.

But my point is that the experts, the science, all tell us that it is safe. And I have to believe, if I don’t, it would be unfair because I know it is complicated, or it can be, and I don’t mean disrespect, but I have been very, very disappointed with President Biden. He has flipped and flopped on this issue like a banked catfish. He has said we need to follow science, but he refuses to follow the science in terms of opening our schools.

We know it can be done because we have been doing it in Louisiana. We have had our own look how we have the number of private schools that are open, back with in-person education, the number of parochial schools, the number of Catholic schools—they are doing it. Why can’t we do it in our public schools?

It is not money. For our first five coronavirus bills—I am not counting President Biden’s proposed bill. Through our first five coronavirus bills, we have appropriated between $70 billion and $90 billion to our public schools. I have asked them to open back; our public schools have spent $5 billion out of 70 to 80—I think it is $70 billion. So it is not a matter of money. I think it is just—I am not sure what it is. I don’t want to be a cynic and say that it is a matter of will. But here is what I am asking President Biden to do; here is what I would do if I were King for a day. I am not; I don’t aspire to be. But here is what I am hoping that President Biden will do: Call a press conference, and look the American people in the eyes, and look our school board members in the eyes and our teachers and our parents and our maintenance workers and say that we need to open up.

If we really believe we are only as good as our dreams, we are only as valuable as our children, then we need to act like it. And I think President Biden needs to call that press conference. He doesn’t need to talk about the science, though that is important, or the politics or nibble around the edges. He needs to look the American people in the eye and say: By God, open the schools. Our kids deserve no less.

There is not much I agree with former Congressman and Mayor Rahm Emanuel on, even though I think he is a bright guy, but politically we approach the world differently. But he, in his capacity as schools chancellor, suggested it is our vaccines, it is our approach to herd immunity, and, of course, it is the habits that we have developed in terms of social distancing and masking and good hygiene.

But our friends in Europe seem to be doing a pretty good job of it.

The Navalny case shows that criticizing the Kremlin comes with a cost, but it is a cost that we and the European Union can and must bear because the price of appeasement is too high. And our European friends can do it, taken as a group. Senator SCHUMER knows this. The EU’s power surpasses Russia’s by far. The EU is a bloc of 450 million people. Its GDP is nine times larger than Russia’s.

Russia’s economy is only slightly bigger than Spain’s, and it is smaller than the economy of Italy. A lot of people don’t realize this, but Russia—look, I will concede them this: They have nuclear weapons and good spies. But the economy of Russia is smaller than the economy of New York State. So why is Europe so content to be bullied?

I am going to give you a quick case in point. Joseph Borrell visited Russia following Navalny’s imprisonment. Mr. Borrell was the EU’s foreign affairs official. He allowed—stood there and allowed—Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov—I know Mr. Lavrov. Perhaps you have met him, Mr. President. I understand his personality. He doesn’t exude himself trying to win friends. But Mr. Borrell, representing the EU, its top foreign official in foreign affairs, stood there and allowed Foreign Minister Lavrov to push him around shamelessly. The Russian Foreign Minister insulted the EU. He told an unreliable partner while Borrell stood there and said nothing—nothing.

Another example, Germany. Germany is still supporting construction of the Nord Stream 2, a project that is going to leave Europe even more reliant on Russian oil and gas. We are going backward here. This is going to make the EU even more vulnerable to Russian influence because we know that a more independent European Union is going to be more resistant to Russian energy, the more reluctant it will be to defend itself against its neighbor’s bullying.
February 24, 2021

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — SENATE

S835

I don’t want to beat this point to death. America is ready to do its part. We have imposed sanctions on Mr. Putin. I support President Biden’s attempt to engage our friends in Europe and our effort to try to convince China to become a stable part of world order, but we can’t—and we shouldn’t—do the same thing with respect to Mr. Putin. Mr. Putin’s aggression should teach us something: What you allow is what will continue.

I yield the floor to the distinguished Senator from New York.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I thank my friend from Louisiana for his erudite remarks, much of which—at least the last part I heard—I agree with.

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN

Mr. President, even now, even as we continue with President Biden’s nominees here on the floor, the Senate Democratic majority is busy working on the American Rescue Plan. The country has just suffered from a once-in-a-century event that shuttered thousands of businesses, sapped more than 10 million jobs, and, according to CBO, left a $17 trillion hole in our economy.

As the distribution of the vaccine finally begins to accelerate under the Biden administration, there is certainly hope on the horizon. But we are a far way off from a full recovery, and it is our job—our job—to help millions of Americans—struggling Americans—through the next several months of difficulty and hasten the day when our country can finally return to normal.

The American Rescue Plan is designed to do just that—keep American families and businesses and schools and workers afloat until they can get back on their feet. And there is a broad consensus that our country needs more support to get through this crisis. Mayors and Governors from both parties support the plan. The Republican Governor of West Virginia told Congress: “[W]e need to go big.”

Economists from across the political spectrum say that our economy needs further support. The Chair of the Federal Reserve, appointed by President Trump, just told us that “the economic recovery remains uneven and far from complete, and the path ahead is highly uncertain.” Chairman Powell, hardly a raving liberal, concluded: “There is a long way to go.”

And it has broad support in America. Seven in 10 Americans approve of the American Rescue Plan. In some polls I have seen, a majority of Republicans approve of this plan—Republican voters, not Republicans here in the Senate.

Now, it is easy to see why there is such broad support. The COVID pandemic is the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, the worst public health crisis our Nation has faced in 100 years. But our Republican colleagues say all these groups demanding the $1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan—business leaders, government officials from both parties, economists from across the spectrum, and 7 in 10 Americans—Republicans say all of this is too much.

According to a report in CNN, Republican leaders are maneuvering to get every single Republican Member to oppose the emerging legislation—every single one.

Make no mistake, Republicans oppose the American Rescue Plan to the detriment of the country, and they do so at their own political peril. If our Republican colleagues want to oppose direct checks to struggling families; food assistance to hungry Americans; keeping teachers, firefighters, and essential public employees on the job; providing another round of support for small business; helping schools reopen as quickly and safely as possible; speeding vaccinations around the country—well, if congressional Republicans want to oppose all that, my response is, good luck.

The country needs this final push. It is overwhelmingly popular. A new analysis this morning showed another vaccine produced by a U.S. company is safe and effective, which only underscores the need for Federal dollars to accelerate its distribution. It will help millions of American families survive the ongoing crisis, recuperate from the economic hardship of the past year, and set our country on a firm path to recovery.

That is why Senate Democrats have made it the first legislative item on our agenda. By stark contrast, the first action item taken by the Republican Senate majority when they got the majority in 2017 was an attempt to repeal our Nation’s healthcare law and rip health coverage away from millions of Americans. Republicans followed it up with a giant tax cut disproportionately aimed at rich corporations and the uber-rich.

The Democratic Senate majority is going to start on a much different note. This week, the House—and soon thereafter the Senate—will start working on President Biden’s American Rescue Plan to deliver desperately and urgently needed assistance to the American people.

One final note on this topic—the minimum wage. As it has been reported widely, the Senate Parliamentarian is hearing arguments today on the $15 minimum wage policy included in the House version of the bill. According to the Congressional Budget Office, raising the Federal minimum wage to $15 an hour has a significant budgetary impact, which should make it permissible under the Senate’s reconciliation rules.

I want to thank all of the hard-working Senate staff, Sen. Sanders’ staff, and many others in participating in these arguments today.

CHINA

Mr. President, on another matter. Everyone knows our country and our economy face daunting challenges beyond COVID–19. While our two parties don’t agree on a whole lot, both Republicans and Democrats agree one of the main challenges of the 21st century will be competing with and confronting China.

The roots of this challenge go back decades. When I was first elected to the Senate, visiting New York, I saw entire industries going under as a result of unfair Chinese competition and the manipulation of the currency by China. For decades, China has effectively cheated and stolen its way to economic growth, engaging in brazen theft of American intellectual property via cyber operations, forced technology transfers, the dumping of cheap goods in our economy, and for a while, the pernicious manipulation of its currency. American workers, American families, and businesses of all sizes have paid the price to the tune of millions of jobs and trillions of dollars of wealth.

More recently, China has directed its energy and mercantilist policies toward beating the United States and like-minded countries to the pole position on all leading technologies in the 21st century.

When I say “China,” I mean the Chinese Government and the China Communist Party. The American people have nothing against the Chinese people. I have made no secret of America’s failure to hold the Chinese Government accountable, and that has been a failure of both parties—both parties in the past. After another bout of tough talk, we are not much closer to reining in China’s predatory behavior than we were 4 years ago. That is why yesterday, I asked the chairs and members of the Senate to begin work on legislation to enable the United States to outcompete China and create American jobs.

At the core of this effort will be the Endless Frontier Act. This is a bipartisan legislation that Senator Young and I sponsored and drafted together over a year ago. It would surge resources into the National Science Foundation and the Department of Commerce to advance American innovation in a number of critical technologies.

We must also consider significant investments, even through emergency appropriations, to rebuild the capacity of the U.S. semiconductor industry. This, too, is a bipartisan effort that Senators Cotton and Coons joined Senator Warner and I, and we placed the original authorizing legislation in the Defense bill.

Right now, semiconductor manufacturing is a dangerous weak spot in our economy and in our national security. Our auto industry is facing significant chip shortages. This is a technology the United States created, and we
ought to be leading the world in. The same goes for building out 5G, the next-generation telecommunications network. There is bipartisan interest on both these issues.

Overall, the new legislation must achieve three goals: one, boost American competitiveness by investing in our economy and our workers; two, leverage our alliances abroad; and, three, stop once and for all China’s predatory practices. A number of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle have strong bipartisan ideas on these issues, including Senators Menendez and Risch, Brown and Toomey, Cantwell and Wicker. I hope we can all work together to craft a bill that meets that moment.

It is my intention to put this legislation on this topic on the Senate floor for a vote this spring. I urge the committee to continue their work in a bipartisan way so we can have strong legislation before us.

It is hopeful that today, at the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue, significant work will be done on the same issues. President Biden has invited a bipartisan group of lawmakers to the White House to discuss concerns with the U.S. supply chain, particularly the semiconductor shortage, and will sign an Executive order aimed at plugging the holes. I applaud both the meeting and the Executive order. The new administration is taking a strong first step to America’s critical supply chains and putting a spotlight on American competitiveness.

PROTESTS

Mr. President, finally, I want to commend the Rules Committee and the Homeland Security Committee yesterday for holding an important hearing examining the attack on January 6, a horrible, horrible attack. It was the first of what will be many examinations of the events on January 6 and how we can prevent such an attack from happening again.

The hearing revealed several security and communication failures that must be addressed going forward and followed up on in future investigations. Regrettably, the hearing also revealed that there are still Members of the Senate Republican minority who are willing to continue the campaign of misinformation, deception, and conspiracy that helped fuel the attack on January 6 in the first place.

Let me be very clear. Blaming the January 6 attack on provocateurs and fake Trump protesters is mindless garbage. It has no basis in fact. Perpetuating and giving a platform to those lies is a preposterous contribution to a Senate hearing devoted to Capitol security. Everyone—everyone needs to move forward by sticking to the facts and engaging in a very serious discussion about the security of the Capitol Complex.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, yesterday, I discussed the K–12 crisis facing American families. The science shows that in-person schooling can easily be made safe. Private and religious schools and schools in Europe have been open for months.

But Washington Democrats have apparently bought into Big Labor’s myth that schools cannot reopen without even more Federal funding, even though their K–12 proposals would only spend about 5 percent—5 percent of the money this fiscal year.

This is just one illustration of how Democrats started with preconceived ideological views, which failed backward, instead of starting with the actual needs of American families.

Let’s take a look at the economy. When we had to stall our economy to protect our health system, the Senate wrote the bipartisan CARES Act, the biggest rescue package in American history. It spent $2.2 trillion to save the healthcare system, find vaccines, and support families. We refilled many of those programs with another $920 billion just last December.

Today, we stand at a very different kind of crossroads. More than 13 percent of Americans have received at least one dose of the vaccine. Manufacturers expect vaccine supply to keep ramping up dramatically in the weeks ahead.

The trillions we spent on rescue policies in 2020 had the economy prepped to come roaring back as health conditions keep improving.

Unemployment today is already lower than where, at one point in this crisis, the Federal Reserve predicted it would be by the end of the year. In some blue-collar sectors, both total employment and job openings are already higher than they were before the pandemic. Retail sales just smashed records. In February alone, the overall personal savings rate in the United States was 28.2 percent, the highest since 1981.

The former head of President Obama’s Council of Economic Advisers says:

We have no historic parallel with anything like this level of excess saving.

He says we have never seen this much “dry powder.”

Even mainstream liberal economists agree that our country does not need an indiscriminate, massive flow of money. This is not April of 2020. This is a different chapter. Washington should focus on practical policies to finish this fight: accelerate vaccinations; get kids back in school; help the families and small businesses that actually pay taxes; and get Americans matched with job openings ASAP.

Unfortunately, the Democrats’ partisan proposal would not just be wasteful but, in certain ways, actually counterproductive. It would have Washington go out of its way to discourage hiring, discourage a return to work, and actually keep things shut down longer.

Take the minimum wage policy. The CBO says this abrupt, one-size-fits-all change would kill about 1½ times as many jobs as the many workers it would lift out of poverty.

Or take their proposal for another long-term extension of a big Federal supplement to unemployment benefits. Even in the middle of last year, it was questionable the policy to push people more to stay home than essential workers were earning while actually on the job. Now another long-term, flat supplement would make even less sense.

Here is how one leading economist puts it:

In an expanding economy that is putting the virus behind it, paying people more in unemployment than they could receive from working is an act of substantial economic self-harm. It would keep workers on the sidelines, stop the unemployment rate from falling as rapidly as it otherwise would, and slow the overall recovery.

Then there is the $350 billion bailout for State and local governments, many of whom have already seen revenues and receipts rebound. It is several multiples of any sober estimate of the actual need. Apparently, even Senators on the Democratic side are trying to pare back this absurd request—just one more way this proposal seems to be stuck back in April of last year.

I haven’t even talked about the hundreds of millions of dollars for pet projects without a shred of relevance to the pandemic or the recovery—money for “climate justice,” transportation earmarks for the Democratic leader’s home State—all kinds of liberal wish list items that would do nothing to help American families put COVID behind them. Just about 1 percent of the money is for vaccines, so either the new administration has completely taken their eye off the ball or they were not actually starting from scratch at all, like they claimed. Only 5 percent of the education funding would even go out this fiscal year. Only 5 percent of the financing funding would go out this fiscal year.

Our own Senate Democratic colleagues are reportedly admitting parts
of this are poorly targeted. Liberal economists and the Washington Post’s editorial board are saying Americans deserve more bang for their buck—a predictably chilly reception for a partisan bill that started with an outdated, ideological wish list instead of the current needs of American families.

**PROTESTS**

Now, Mr. President, on a completely different matter, I have been outspoken and clear about the crimes that were committed here on January 6. In my discussions with Judge Garland, the President’s nominee to be Attorney General, I specifically raised the need to continue investigating and prosecuting anyone who broke the law that day. I am glad he has repeatedly emphasized this would remain a priority. Everyone agrees that day’s events must occasion a serious and thorough review of the specific institutions and security procedures within Congress that proved so insufficient. That process is always underway with the joint hearing conducted yesterday by two Senate committees.

The Speaker of the House proposes even more investigation through a new commission. She cites the precedent of the 9/11 Commission, but her draft bill fails to track with that precedent in key ways.

The 9/11 Commission was intentionally built to be bipartisan. The 50-50 bipartisan split of the commission was a key feature. It both helped the effectiveness of the investigation itself and helped give the whole country confidence in its work and its recommendations. This time, however, Speaker Pelosi started by proposing a commission that would be partisan by design—seven appointments for Democrats, just four for Republicans. The 9/11 Commission also built consensus by requiring bipartisan support for subpoenas. The Speaker’s bill would vest subpoena power in one appointee chosen by the Democrats.

Both the Democratic and Republican leaders of the 9/11 Commission are speaking out against this bizarrely partisan concept. Let me say that again. The leaders of the 9/11 Commission—one Republican, one Democrat—are speaking out against the way this proposal is crafted by the Speaker.

Lee Hamilton, the Democratic Vice Chairman of the 9/11 Commission, says: That is not something I would support, and I do not see anything that would make it better for the American people.

Any undertaking along these lines needs to be fair and needs to be even-handed. That really shouldn’t be controversial. It goes beyond just a makeup of the panel.

For example, the Speaker’s proposal imagines something more than an investigation into the specific security failures that occurred here at the Capitol. It sets the stage for a somewhat broader inquiry into “domestic violent extremism” beyond just that day, but the partisan panel would get to decide which other incidents are and are not “related to terrorism.”

Rioting and political violence are abhorrent and unacceptable no matter what cause the mob is advancing. These are not forms of political speech. For almost a year now, we have seen political violence and riots become an increasingly normalized phenomenon across our national life. None of us should accept that.

January 6 was uniquely grave because the intent was to interrupt a constitutional duty of Congress, but if this new commission is to go beyond a targeted, after-action analysis of the security failures here at the Capitol complex and if Congress is going to attempt some broader analysis of toxic political violence in the country, then, in that case, we cannot have an artificial cherry-picking of which terrible behavior does and which terrible behavior does not deserve scrutiny. We could do something narrow that looks like the Capitol riot, but we could also do something broader to analyze the full scope of the political violence here in our country. We cannot land at some artificial, politicized halfway point.

Don’t take it from me. Take it from the leaders of the Democratic and Republican leaders of the 9/11 Commission. An inquiry with a hard-wired partisan slant would never be legitimate in the eyes of the American people. An undertaking that is uneven or unjust would not help our country.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The assistant majority leader.

**CORONAVIRUS**

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, last week, I was home, as most Members of the Senate were and I was asked to participate in a Zoom call with two people I highly respect, Dr. Anthony Fauci and Dr. Collins, with the National Institutes of Health. While sitting at my dining room table in Springfield, IL, there were about a dozen Senators who had access to Zoom to be a part of that conversation. I felt like I was privileged to really hear some information which most Americans wanted to hear, and I knew it had to be important for them to ask for a briefing in the middle of the week.

What they were talking about during the course of that hour were variants, what is happening to this coronavirus as it replicates over and over and over again millions of times. What they told us—and I am a liberal arts lawyer, so I don’t profess any sort of medical expertise here—was that there were dominant variants that were starting to emerge, and they told us the shorthand description that they used in the laboratories.

I just remember that the first one was the UK, United Kingdom, variant. They said, by the end of March, which is not that far away—4 weeks plus—it will be the dominant strain of coronavirus in the United States. I was taken aback by that to think that a variant could become that dominant that quickly, but it was fair warning that was about to occur. Then they talked about the South African variant, which is just starting to appear.

The good news is they have done enough testing to believe that both of the major vaccines we are now using—Moderna and Pfizer—I have Pfizer, and my wife has Moderna—are effective against the UK, United Kingdom, variant. The jury is still out when it comes to the South African variant. There is a third variant, and I won’t venture into trying to remember exactly what that was about, but I remember it had some origin in South Africa.

I heard that news, and I thought to myself, this is an ongoing battle. We haven’t run up any kind of score against this coronavirus. We can’t sit back and relax. We are in a very busy third quarter in trying to vaccinate America and in watching for each and every new threat.

So, in that circumstance, if you were the President of the United States, what would you do?

Well, Joe Biden, President Joe Biden, decided that we needed to be aggressive, that we needed to face reality, not only with regard to the half a million Americans who have died but that we need to put together the tools to fight this coronavirus as we know it and as it is likely to evolve. He needs an army to do that. It is that big a war. He came to us with a proposal to start that effort, in a substantial way, under his leadership. He calls it the American Rescue Plan. I hear my colleagues come to the floor and really raise the question as to whether this is needed, and I just heard the speech of the minority leader, Senator MCCONNELL.

What President Biden wants to do to deal with this pandemic, as we know it and as it is likely to evolve, is to provide $20 billion more for our vaccination program. Does anyone doubt the need for that? I don’t. I think it is the key to getting America back to business.

It provides $50 billion for testing, lab capacity improvements, and genomic sequencing of this virus mutation. Again, I am not an expert in science, but it seems perfectly reasonable to me, after listening to Drs. Fauci and Collins, to make that investment right now.”

President Biden wants to invest in 100,000 community health workers to help with the vaccinations and contact tracing—100,000. It seems like a lot, but in a nation of 350 million, I am not sure it is that overwhelming a number. He wants to fund the community health centers so that they will be able to tackle this issue and particularly address the issue of health disparities;
use the Defense Production Act to provide $10 billion for America’s manufacturer of the key equipment we need to fight this pandemic and the next one. God forbid, whenever it may be; and to expand healthcare coverage for Americans in the time of pandemic by subsidizing COBRA, and why we have to do better for the working people? We do it all the time, and everybody knows it is a fact. Wages in America, salaries have not kept up. People at the top have done quite well, thank you, but those at the bottom have struggled to get by.

Try to make it on $7.25 an hour. I was trying to do a calculation earlier on the table. They spend the money. That is what unemployment is all about.

So to have the other side question President Biden’s proposal to give unemployment benefits beyond March 14 really says that they are turning their backs on millions of Americans who have no place else to go.

Oh, there is a fear on the other side that we just may be paying people too much. You know, if you give them a too much money, we fund unemployment, they just might sit home and binge on Netflix and chocolate-covered cherries. Well, I suppose that is always going to happen no matter how you write the laws, but I think a lot more Americans want to get back to work anywhere near the salaries that they left behind.

I think they are desperately looking for those opportunities, and we ought to help them in the meantime keep their families together.

Emergency paid leave is still an absolute necessity in light of this coronavirus and the way it deals with us.

I want to also make a plea here for the minimum wage, and I know there is some controversy associated with it. Mr. President, glad to have you. You are new to the Senate.

Back at that desk there, a fellow named Ted Kennedy used to stand. I used to love to come to the floor when Senator Ted Kennedy of Massachusetts would give his speeches. When he got into it, he was amazing. His booming voice could be heard all over the Senate. I would ask him more energized than when he argued for increasing the minimum wage.

Sometimes he was a lonely voice—there were no proposals before us and none likely to appear—but he never failed to come to this floor and remind us on a regular basis of how we had failed year after year after year to increase the minimum wage.

He would tell the stories of people in America getting up every morning going to work every single day, sometimes two jobs a day, to try to keep their families together and still qualifying for food stamps and assistance from our government. He would ask us when we were going to give them the dignity of passing an increase in the minimum wage. I can still hear him thundering across the Chamber. I wouldn’t want to be in the place of arguing a different position than the one he held because he hit it over, I think, and did it well. I wish I did. I am glad to have seen him use that skill so effectively to help people who were just doing their best to get by and struggling.

How many times do all of us give speeches about equality in America and why we have to do better for the working people? We do it all the time, and everybody knows it is a fact. Wages in America, salaries have not kept up. People at the top have done quite well, thank you, but those at the bottom have struggled to get by.

Try to make it on $7.25 an hour. I was trying to do a calculation earlier on
just what that is. Is that $15,000 a year? Is that $1,200 a month? Is that $300 a week? Could you make it on $300 a week? I am talking about everything, now. I am talking about rent and mortgage and car payment, food, utilities—the basics. I could talk for hours about how anyone can afford this. They fail deeply into debt and into despair.

So when President Biden talks about us reopening the conversation about our Federal minimum wage, it is long overdue—and it is an easier issue for me than some because our Governor, J. B. Pritzker, when he took over the State of Illinois, set us on course to reach $15 an hour as a State over the same period of time that Joe Biden has suggested, by 2025.

I just want to say that those people who are really struggling with the notion of increasing the minimum wage in all fairness really ought to think about the people out there who are struggling to go week by week and month to month.

There is another proposal that is in this bill that is currently being debated, and it is the $1,400 addition to the cash payment for many families. I thought it was an easier issue for me than some because the President signed the CARES Act measure last December, and for most people, I thought it was written it differently? Yes. Are there benefits to rewarding individuals if the President steps in and forgives student loan debt? Well, I will tell you what happens—nothing. These individuals who have worked hard for years to pay off their debt will see no benefit from the Democrats’ blanket loan forgiveness. Meanwhile, many Americans who have made no more than a month or two of payments will see their student loans entirely disappear. That is incredibly unfair.

In addition to being unfair, forgiving student loan debt does absolutely nothing to address the problems that created this debt crisis in the first place. In fact, the Democrats’ solution is likely to make things worse.

What possible incentive will students have to take the responsible approach to their education when the Federal Government will step in and solve their debt problem? What incentive will colleges have to restrain tuition growth if they think they can rely on the Federal Government to subsidize their students’ tuition fees through loan forgiveness? Forgiving $50,000 in student loans would also set a terrible precedent on the sanctity of contracts. While it may at times be ill-advised, students freely enter into the agreements they make when they take out a loan. Should we really be teaching that agreements and contracts mean nothing, that people can incur debt and then not have to pay it off? And about that “not paying it off,” the long-observed “student loan forgiveness” carries with it a suggestion that these debts will just disappear, that $50,000 can be wiped off each American’s slate and vanish into the ether.

But, of course, we know that is not the case either. This is money students have borrowed from the Federal Government, and if the Government doesn’t get that money back, the Government will be facing an unexpected debt.

Now, some people, especially some Democrats, tend to talk as if the Government draws on an unlimited pot of money, but, of course, we know that is not true. Government funds aren’t anywhere close to being unlimited, and Government coffers are not filled from a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. They are filled by taxpayer dollars, and the President is a fiscally responsible tax payer who foot the bill for any loan forgiveness program, including the many taxpayers who opted not to attend college or chose a debt-free way of doing so. There are a lot of Americans out there who saved up to get a degree or went part-time to avoid incurring debt. Are they really supposed to foot the bill for other Americans’ student loans?

While you might think that Democrats’ plan is largely targeted to low-income or disadvantaged individuals, that is not actually the case. Under the Democrats’ plan, an American making $20,000 and an American making $120,000 would receive the same loan relief. In fact, since more loan dollars are held by those in higher income brackets, higher income Americans could end up benefiting the most. And that brings up another thing that we need to remember.

Yes, a certain number of Americans carry a significant amount of student loan debt, but some of those Americans have incurred that debt for a career that will bring significant financial rewards.

Plus, a substantial portion of student loan debt is not for undergraduate degrees but for graduate and professional degrees. Under the Democrats’ student loan forgiveness proposal, taxpayers could be subsidizing not just bachelor’s degrees but master’s degrees and Ph.D. degrees, as well as law and medical degrees.

Instead of putting taxpayers on the hook for billions, we should be focused on exploring ways to drive down education costs and educate students on the dangers of taking on excessive debt.

We should also be highlighting affordable education options like our Nation’s community and technical colleges. These colleges, like the outstanding institutions we have in South Dakota, provide students with associate’s degrees, certificates, apprentice- ships, opportunities to learn a trade, and more.

There are also things we could do to help students pay off loans without putting taxpayers on the hook for such massive amounts of money. In December, Congress passed a 5-year legislation that I introduced with Senator WARNER to allow employers to help employees repay their loans. Our Employer Participation and Repayment Act amends the Educational Assistance Program to permit employers to make tax-free payments on their employees’ student loans. Additionally, employers could make tax-free contributions to their employees’ tuition if their employees were currently taking classes, but they...
couldn’t provide tax-free contributions to help employees with education debts that they had already incurred. Our bill allows them to make tax-free contributions to help with employees’ already existing student loan debt. That is a win-win situation. It is a win for employees who want to help pay off their student loans, and it is a win for employers who have a new option for attracting and retaining talented workers.

Our bill is not a silver bullet, but it will certainly help ease the pain of paying back student loans for a number of young Americans. I am pleased it was enacted into law for a 5-year period, and I hope Congress will act to make it permanent.

Another big thing we could do is make sure that graduates have access to good-paying jobs. This is key to enabling people to pay off their debt, and we should resolve to build on the economic progress that we had made before the pandemic. I focus on policies that will allow our economy to grow and to thrive.

High college costs and student debt are a problem, but blanket loan forgiveness is not the answer. I hope that President Biden will resist calls to put taxpayers on the hook for literally billions and billions of dollars in student loans. I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The Acting President pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, in recent days the Biden administration has backed away from its original goal to reopen most schools within the first 100 days. This comes despite new Centers for Disease Control and Prevention research recommending that schools can safely reopen for in-person instruction.

Arkansas schools reopened their doors in August of 2020. Currently, the Arkansas Department of Education reports that 67 percent of K–12 students are attending school in-person full time, but 33 percent have a hybrid schedule, and 20 percent are entirely remote.

Natural State school districts invested in cleaning supplies, barriers, and retrofitting classrooms. Educators thought creatively and found solutions to these new problems. And although every school and community has different challenges, they moved ahead with the same goal: finding the best and the safest way to get and keep children and teachers in the classroom.

I had the opportunity to visit several school districts last fall. I was so impressed with their daily efforts to keep their doors open, keep their staff healthy, and provide the learning that children desperately need.

These heroes need our support. Over the course of this past year, Congress has delivered $113 billion—and over $886 million to Arkansas—to support education through the COVID–19 pandemic, demonstrating nearly $886 billion to help bring K–12 students back into the classroom. That money is already hard at work. However, much of it remains to be spent.

Parents can see that virtual learning simply isn’t working. If you need more evidence of the unbalanced impact of 100-percent virtual learning, a study by the RAND Corporation in fall 2020 highlighted tremendous areas of concern. Researchers surveyed educators across the country and concluded that State and Federal Governments needed to prioritize making schools safe to attend. One particularly shocking result of the survey found that principals in America’s highest poverty schools reported that 90 percent of their students had adequate Internet access at home. When schools are virtual, we are knowingly failing 20 percent of those students without even getting to the question of how effective the instruction is or addressing the negative effects of students’ social needs and development.

This crisis in education also means that families are falling behind. Women, in particular, are shouldering an incredible burden through this pandemic. In February 2020, women held the majority of nonfarm payroll jobs. They outnumbered men in the workforce for the first time in American history. Today, the number of women in the workforce is at a 33-year low. Much of this is attributed to the outsized role women are playing in balancing their families’ financial, educational, and caregiving needs.

Of all the challenges we have faced through the COVID–19 pandemic, the mission of childhood continues to be one of the most critical and complex. It has been rewarding to see educators receive their much-needed COVID–19 vaccine. These heroes are essential to our recovery.

Arkansas is setting the example. The Natural State can be proud of the teachers, administrators, and elected leaders who continue to find ways to keep schools open and provide critical services that children deserve. It is time that students of other States have the same opportunities.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The Acting President pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

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

The Acting President pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Opening Schools

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I had the opportunity to visit several school districts last fall. I was so impressed with their daily efforts to keep their doors open, keep their staff healthy, and provide the learning that children desperately need.

These heroes need our support. Over the course of this past year, Congress has delivered $113 billion—and over $886 million to Arkansas—to support education through the COVID–19 pandemic, demonstrating nearly $886 billion to help bring K–12 students back into the classroom. That money is already hard at work. However, much of it remains to be spent.

Parents can see that virtual learning simply isn’t working. If you need more evidence of the unbalanced impact of 100-percent virtual learning, a study by the RAND Corporation in fall 2020 highlighted tremendous areas of concern. Researchers surveyed educators across the country and concluded that State and Federal Governments needed to prioritize making schools safe to attend. One particularly shocking result of the survey found that principals in America’s highest poverty schools reported that 90 percent of their students had adequate Internet access at home. When schools are virtual, we are knowingly failing 20 percent of those students without even getting to the question of how effective the instruction is or addressing the negative effects of students’ social needs and development.

This crisis in education also means that families are falling behind. Women, in particular, are shouldering an incredible burden through this pandemic. In February 2020, women held the majority of nonfarm payroll jobs. They outnumbered men in the workforce for the first time in American history. Today, the number of women in the workforce is at a 33-year low. Much of this is attributed to the outsized role women are playing in balancing their families’ financial, educational, and caregiving needs.

Of all the challenges we have faced through the COVID–19 pandemic, the mission of childhood continues to be one of the most critical and complex. It has been rewarding to see educators receive their much-needed COVID–19 vaccine. These heroes are essential to our recovery.

Arkansas is setting the example. The Natural State can be proud of the teachers, administrators, and elected leaders who continue to find ways to keep schools open and provide critical services that children deserve. It is time that students of other States have the same opportunities.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The Acting President pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

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

The Acting President pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, a year ago, schools began to close due to the coronavirus. Teachers quickly scrambled to try to figure out how they were going to teach kids who weren’t there. They set up virtual classrooms on the internet. Parents started googling activities to keep their children motivated and active, but they didn’t start a year ago. They finished up the last school year—has become, in many places, permanent, full time now, where students for a year have not been in school. That is despite a lot of widespread consensus that both students and parents think that kids can be back in the classroom.

The science on studying and learning is also clear that when schools are closed, students suffer. There have been a lot of studies showing that remote learning puts kids at higher risk for failing behind, for failing classes, for suffering from mental health problems, and, in many cases, just deciding not to show up. And you know, the one thing about virtual is it is pretty easy to not virtually be there as well.

The risks on all those areas—the mental health problems, the falling behind, the falling grades—are even greater for students with disabilities or for minorities or people who live in generally underserved areas. A study by McKinsey looked at the toll prolonged remote learning has taken on students. It estimated that when it comes to mathematics, students, on average, are likely to lose 5 to 9 months of learning by the end of this school year. It said that students of color—this is according to McKinsey—could be 6 to 12 months behind at the end of this school year. Think about that. One year of remote learning could leave students 1 year behind where they should be in math if you look at these expert studies.

In addition to the academic damage, remote learning has led to an increase in mental health challenges facing students. A report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that mental health problems accounted for a growing proportion of students’ visits to hospital emergency rooms. Visits were up 31 percent for kids between ages 5 and 11, and according to the CDC, many of those visits are based on a mental health challenge rather
than some other kind of health challenge. The risk of keeping kids at home are significant. What is worse, they are unnecessary by the growing number of people who are looking at this. Dr. Rochelle Walensky, who is the head of the CDC, recently appointed by President Biden—she began her work there on January 21—talked about what we should do earlier this month. She said that the CDC was releasing new data—"increasing data that schools can safely reopen." That ends the quote, but she went on to say, even if teachers aren’t vaccinated for the virus.

Anthony Fauci, Dr. Fauci echoed that point. He said: “I would back the CDC recommendation because that is really based on data...we need to try and get the children back to school.” That ends Dr. Fauci’s quote. He went on a step further by saying that it is not only the teachers that need to have the first vaccine today in the double-vaccine world. It will still in. It will be the end of March before teachers will have their first vaccine, and you are so far down the line, before you know it, the school might not be able to reopen in that circumstance.

Dr. Darien Rossen, a professor of pediatric infectious diseases at Washington University in St. Louis, said:

There is no situation in which schools can’t be open unless they have evidence of in-school transmission. The White House just keeps repeating that. It is not impacting our kids. It is not impacting our teachers. It is not impacting our parents. It is not impacting our communities. The CDC guidelines are helpful, but they need to be more flexible. We need to be sure we get back to school. Our goal should not be to keep the schools closed. If it is, why are we providing all this evidence so that schools can reopen, even though it will be a long time before that is spent? I started out my career, after college, as a high school history teacher and then later I was a university president. I know the challenges educators face every day and the ways well-meaning policy experts sometimes miss the reality of the classroom. I also know that teachers are used to big challenges. They see them every day. They meet them every day. They try their best every day to overcome the challenges in front of them. Teachers want to help kids learn, and they don’t know what to do when they can’t have the contact they need to have with the kids. They know that kids won’t be doing as well as they need to do, in more cases than not, until they are back to school.

In a recent Axios poll, teachers said they would return to school and are ready and there is time for a commonsense appraisal of what needs to be done to get kids back in school. This should not be something that we wait till next fall to do. It is something that needs to happen right now. The CDC is helpful, but they need to be more flexible. We need to constantly look at all the data. As people working hard to get kids back to school, we need to be sure that we understand where that is working, why that is working, how that is working, and we are getting that information out to school districts all over America. It is time to go back to school.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Iowa.

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, the experts, the health officials, and the data have made it clear, we can and we must safely reopen from the standpoint of parents, students, and even some teachers are asking the question: Why have we failed to do that? There is a pretty simple answer. Politicians are putting political interests above the lives of our kids and our families. According to the science presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC, schools can dust off their books and safely open up classrooms to students with commonsense precautions. "Transmission of COVID among students is relatively rare, and classrooms have not been a significant source of community transmission, according to the CDC. Furthermore, the CDC says..." It is possible for communities to reduce the incidence of COVID-19 while keeping schools open for in-person instruction."

So what is the holdup? Despite his own advice, President Biden’s administration continues to play games to ignore the science, and to send mixed messages to the American people.

Their lack of clarity and their reluctance to get students back in the classroom is a detriment to our children, our working families, and our economy.

Just recently, President Biden’s own CDC Director stated that the “vaccination of teachers is not”—not—“a prerequisite for safe reopening of schools” and that “there is increasing data to suggest that schools can safely reopen.” But shortly after her statement, the White House Press Secretary moved the goalposts once again, claiming that the Biden administration’s aim is to have more than 50 percent of the schools offer “some teaching” in person “at least one”—one day a week—by the 100th day of Joe Biden’s Presidency. One day a week, folks. Yes, you heard it right, have kids in school only one day per week and no sooner than the end of April.

Just days after this, after coming under immense pressure from the American people, including folks on the left, the President moved the goalposts again and those communications staff under the bus—a school bus—for the one-day-a-week goal.

Folks, our youngest generation is falling behind. Virtual learning does not give them the attention they need to be successful, and the isolation it creates has had an enormous impact on their mental health.

But it is not just impacting our kids. The closure of schools and childcare centers has disproportionately impacted women, most notably our mothers and caregivers. An analysis from the National Women’s Law Center found that 275,000 women left the workforce in January alone, with many staying home to care...
for their kids and often becoming their de facto teachers and tutors. Women across the country have made enormous strides in all fields of service, and our moms shouldn’t be forced to put their careers on hold because our schools, at the direction of this administration, are failing to do their jobs.

In Iowa, because of Governor Reynolds’ bold leadership, many of our kids have safely been back at school since August. The Iowa General Assembly properly passed and the Governor signed legislation to require safe in-person learning in our State’s public school system. Now the rest of the country needs to follow Iowa’s lead and get our kids safely back in the classroom.

At the Federal level, I am helping lead an effort that would require schools to offer a safe in-person learning option to students by April 30, 2021. It is increasingly clear that the Biden administration, one that prides itself on following the science, is actually more loyal to leftist special interests than the well-being of our kids. Science, not special interests, should be guiding these decisions, and that means Washington should not be locking us out of the classroom.

This type of meddling is precisely why I have always been leery of the overinvolvement of the Federal Government in education. So to get our bureaucrats and special interests out of the way and put students first, we are helping lead that effort to require schools to offer safe in-person learning to our students by April 30, 2021.

To guide us through this pandemic, I suggest we follow these revised and updated three Rs of education: first, respect the science; second, reopen our schools safely; and third, return students, teachers, and learning to the classroom.

It is long past time schools across the country follow the science and the data. Let’s do the right thing by safely getting our kids back in the classroom and help get our parents back to work. The well-being of our children, our working moms and dads, and our Nation’s economy depend on it.

Thank you.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, I want to thank the Senator from the great State of Iowa for bringing forth her three r’s. I think they are very succinct. They are the message that certainly I want to convey with my colleague from the great State of Florida here today: respect the science, reopen our schools safely, and return students, teachers, and learning to the classroom.

A year ago, we were only just starting to realize what COVID–19 was about, almost a year to this date practically. Yet no one could have foreseen that many children would leave their classrooms in 2020 and still not have returned in March of 2021.

Fortunately, during these past few months, we have come a long way in our knowledge of COVID–19. We knew little about how the virus spread when most schools closed last March, but now experts have had the opportunity to learn more about the spread of the disease. We know that CO–19 would spread in a K–12 school environment.

At the end of January, the CDC, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, published data showing that in-person learning for K–12 students infected with COVID–19 had widespread transmission. This is, indeed, possible. The schools studied adhered to the public health practices many of us have followed—wearing a mask, social distancing, washing hands, avoiding large groups, and quarantining after exposure to the virus.

Since this data was released, CDC has gone on and issued additional guidance for reopening our schools. This guidance focuses on many of the same public health strategies as well as cleaning facilities and additional ventilation.

In addition to the improved knowledge of how COVID–19 affects our schools, we also have safe and effective vaccines. By enabling our teachers and other education professionals to have the vaccine on a priority basis, we continue to forge ahead with reopening our schools.

Yesterday, Dr. Clay Marsh, who is our State’s coronavirus czar—he has done an incredibly great job. He has been one of the most successful vaccine efforts. And I want to remind the Nation that West Virginia is No. 1 in vaccine distribution per capita. We have done a fantastic job.

Dr. Marsh said yesterday:

The classroom is a safe place to be.

He continued by saying:

The K-8 classroom—there is a tremendous amount of really good data to suggest that it is even a safer place to be than staying in your community.

Following these comments, our State’s board of education voted in favor of our students in kindergarten through eighth grade returning to a full 5-day, in-person learning. It had some blended, some in class, and some at home.

While data we have seen makes a very compelling case for why we can get children safely back into the classroom with the right mitigations, other realities make it even more necessary.

With children learning at home, there are still many children, especially in States like mine, West Virginia—who struggle with connectivity. Despite robust funding from Congress to attempt to address these issues, the digital divide is very real, and it begins to exacerbate the have-and-have-not phenomenon. As a result, these children can be affected for years.

I hear concerns from parents all over my State. Last year, I had a Mercer County parent write to me that many of the students’ parents in their class had to drive their students to a parking lot of a fast food restaurant so they could get Wi-Fi so they could do their homework.

A constituent from Lewis County recently wrote to me about her frustration with balancing her work with also the remote learning that her children are doing. To make matters worse, they can’t get on the internet at the same time in their home.

Another parent from Berkeley County wrote to me with a heartbreaking story about how her daughter cries at the computer because she requires extra help on certain assignments. Parents helping their children on schoolwork can only go so far. In-person attention is absolutely necessary, and something that the internet can’t solve through a Zoom meeting or a video meeting or what a lot of this is—going to certain assignments on your computer where there is nobody to interact with whatsoever.

These are very real concerns that parents have, a fear that their children will fall behind and are falling behind without access to their schoolwork. And more distant are the concerns I have heard from child abuse advocates throughout our State. The heightened stress, school closures, loss of income, and social isolation from this pandemic have increased the risk of child abuse and neglect. Yet, without the safe space of the school and the watchful eyes of our teachers and other caring professionals, I fear too many children are falling through the cracks and would have nowhere to turn.

Last week, our West Virginia DHHR deputy secretary said there were 8,000 fewer referrals to child protective services this year in our State. Sadly, we know it is not because it is not occurring; it is because teachers and school employees aren’t there to notice the abuse and neglect and report it. This is where our teachers are so incredibly caring and invaluable.

According to data from the CDC, between April and October, emergency departments nationwide have experienced a rise in the share of total visits from children with mental health needs. In my State of West Virginia, our State board of education has reported a spike in attempted suicides in Cabell County.

In addition, parents have had to make hard decisions as they attempt to balance their careers with their children’s education, especially more difícil for those parents of children who can’t leave their child at home for any period of time as they are doing their schoolwork.

As more workers are being asked to physically return to their workplaces, and the internet is a learning aid and adequate childcare is hindering many from returning to work. This is especially true for many women who work outside the home. In fact, many women are having to quit their jobs as a result.

According to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the January jobs report showed that some 275,000 women
Continuing to subject kids to this unnecessary virtual-learning system is not backed by science or facts. I applaud my State of Florida for getting schools reopened quickly and safely.

The science is overwhelming and clear about reopening our Nation's schools. It is safe and it is necessary for the well-being and the future of students. The CDC confirmed last month that in-person instruction does not pose an increased risk of community transmission. Schools can and should be open, and they can do so safely.

We need to be honest about why we are even having this conversation today. The only reason schools across the Nation remain closed is because my Democratic colleagues and the Biden administration are standing with teachers unions instead of standing up for our children.

For months, we have heard Democrats preach about following the science, but now Democrats don’t want to act on the scientific evidence that school reopenings are safe. They are blindly following the teachers unions because they are afraid of losing campaign contributions, and they are pushing a lie that schools can’t reopen without vaccines.

Here is the truth: The funding they claim is absolutely necessary for schools to reopen would not even be allocated for 2 or 3 years. According to the Congressional Budget Office, Biden's COVID spending bill would distribute only $6.4 billion to K-12 schools this year. The remaining $122 billion would be spent between the years 2022 and 2028.

Here is another fact: Congress has already provided $68 billion for K-12 schools, but so far States have spent just $1 billion of that money. Schools don't need more money to open safely. Yet the Biden administration keeps clinging to this lie and doing everything possible to keep schools closed.

Last week, Speaker Pelosi said: We want as many kids to be back in school as possible. For that to happen, it takes some money.

Also last week, Vice President Harris would not directly answer whether it is safe for teachers to go back to school if they are not vaccinated, despite clear CDC guidelines that it is not a prerequisite if other safety measures are in place.

And earlier this month, all 50 Senate Democrats voted against students safely returning to classrooms even after teachers have been vaccinated. We all agree that teachers should be able to receive vaccinations. I will work with any of my colleagues on a way to get vaccines to teachers more quickly.

We all agree that schools should have additional resources to ensure our students and teachers have safe, clean, and healthy classrooms, and we have allocated $68 billion to do just that right now. But keeping schools closed doesn’t make sense. It is hurting our children and America’s poorest families the most.

I grew up in a poor family that struggled to make ends meet, and education was life-changing for me, just as it is for families across our great country. Every student in this Nation deserves the option of in-person learning.

It is time for the Biden administration to acknowledge that the best place for children to learn is in the classroom, and it is time for my Democratic colleagues and the President to stop putting union bosses ahead of America’s students and families.

Let’s get our schools open now.

I yield the floor.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. 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. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 8.

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 majority leader.

Charles E. Schumer, Sherrod Brown, Sheldon Whitehouse, Benjamin L. Cardin, Robert Menendez, Patrick J. Leahy, Alex Padilla, Jacky Rosen, Richard J. Durbin, Tammy Baldwin, Jack Reed, Chris Van Hollen, Richard Blumenthal, Tim Kaine, Martin Heinrich, Christopher Murphy, Maria Cantwell.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President. I move to proceed to legislative session. The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam 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. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to Executive session to consider Calendar No. 13.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Cecilia Elena Rouse, of New Jersey, to be Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers.

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

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 13, Cecilia Elena Rouse, of New Jersey, to be Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers.


Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call be waived.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I come to the floor today, as I have done twice before over the past month, to sound the alarm about the new administration’s attacks on American energy. Yet there is still more to talk about.

President Biden has continued this assault on American energy as well as the American economy. Now he is taking that attack further. He is taking the attack on energy around the world as well as attacking the needs for energy of a number of our allies around the world. President Biden signed an Executive order to cut off all loans for coal, oil, and gas projects in some of the poorest nations in the world.

Now, some of these nations are our friends that we work with and we try to help, and these are people who desperately need affordable energy, and they don’t have it.

Democrats close to the administration have reported that what the administration and President Biden are trying to do is “isolate” the Chinese Communist Party.

The Biden administration thinks that by refusing to make these loans to folks around the world, that the Chinese Communist Party will be shamed for using coal and fossil fuels for energy and will shame the Communist Party of China for loans that they make to countries to develop coal-fired powerplants, natural gas plants, and other projects that use fossil fuel.

Let me tell you, the Chinese Communist Party will not be shamed. China has a totalitarian regime; China puts Uighurs in concentration camps. So I am not sure what makes President Biden and his administration think that the Chinese Communist Party will be ashamed of an affordable reliable source of energy—coal.

In reality, President Biden, by this Executive order, is giving China a gift. President Biden is giving China another advantage on the world stage and putting ourselves at a disadvantage, if you think about it.

If the United States and those that we fund through the World Bank refuse to provide loans to those countries to build the powerplants that they need, that is going to leave a vacuum. They are going to need to use the resources that they have—if they have plenty of coal or natural gas—and the Chinese Communist Party is going to come in and make the loan.

China already funds 7 out of 10 new coal plants around the world, and thanks to President Biden’s misguided effort, that is likely soon going to be close to 10 out of 10.

Just like President Biden’s other energy orders, this new policy will make China stronger. It will make America weaker. China will have more influence, and the United States will have less.

Now, this order is not going to hurt China at all. The people whom it will hurt are those who look to the United States for help and for friendship. It is going to especially hurt the 840 million people around the world who don’t have access to electricity today.

Developing countries desperately need the electricity. They need it to be affordable. They need it to be reliable. So if you help developing countries in terms of helping them get a stable supply of energy, it is one of the best things we can do to help people around the world in their fight against poverty.

Many parts of the world, countries with abundant energy resources, just need our help and turn to us for our help so they can use the resources that they have.

And let me give you a good example, Madam President, because you and I have traveled to various places around the world and had a chance to see men and women in uniform and thank them for their services, as we have done, and gone to battlefields, as we have had family members who have served in the military and defended this country and freedom. And it has been a pleasure to be able to do that with you and share that with your family because of our united heritage of fighting or our family history of fighting for the country.

So a good example of what I am talking about is Kosovo. I have been there on three separate occasions specifically to visit members of our troops—the men and women in uniform, people from Wyoming who are serving in Kosovo. I have been there three separate times. I was there in 2019, was there previously for Thanksgiving, was there on Easter Sunday one time to be with the troops.

Well, Kosovo is one of the poorest nations in Europe, but it has vast energy resources. Despite being physically smaller than the State of Connecticut, Kosovo has the fifth largest reserves of coal in the world: small geography, massive resources of coal.

So the World Bank has cut off Kosovo’s funding for a new state-of-the-art coal-fired powerplant. They have old coal-fired powerplants. They are burning coal right now.

I have talked to the leaders of the country, and they say: We need to build a new coal-fired powerplant. We need to borrow the money to do it.

Well, the World Bank has said it is opposing to support new energy projects from renewable sources. So this is what Kosovo’s Minister of Economic Development is saying. He said: “In a poor country [like Kosovo . . . we don’t have the luxury . . .’’—the luxury of focusing only on renewable sources when they don’t have that much access to renewable energy. The wind doesn’t blow that much; in terms of sunny days, not at all during the winter, and they have this incredible resource of coal.

Well, the Minister of Economic Development is absolutely correct—because I have been there in the spring; I have been there in the winter; I have been there different times throughout the year. Developing countries cannot afford the elitist environmental agendas of Presidents who become climate elitists, especially those being put in charge of those issues, former Secretary of State John Kerry.

Let me repeat myself—so I want to just make this absolutely clear: We, the United States, have peacekeeping troops in the country of Kosovo. We have them right there in Kosovo. And the United States, as directed by the Government of Kosovo into the clutches of the Communist Chinese Party because of a holier-than-thou attitude of the climate alarmists in the White House.

So we pay to put our troops on the ground, and then we say: Go to China if you need help providing power to your country.
people need affordable, reliable energy. Traditional energy projects are still the most affordable, still the most reliable. If we really care about the people in developing countries, then we ought to help them turn on the lights. So I urge the Biden administration to pause, to reevaluate, to rethink this, to look at all the implications of the decisions they are making.

We need to stop this senseless attack on energy jobs. We need to stop this reckless attack on developing nations. We need to stop pushing our allies into the waiting arms of the Chinese Communist Party.

The American people and our friends around the world—we are better than what we are getting right now from this administration, and we need to reverse course.

I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 4 p.m. Thereupon, the Senate, at 3:07 p.m., recessed until 4 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. KELLY).

EXECUTIVE SESSION—Continued

CLOTURE MOTION

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to close debate on the nomination of Jennifer Granholm, of Michigan, to be Secretary of Energy, and to move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Jennifer Granholm, of Michigan, to be Secretary of Energy, by discharging the impanelled committee on this nomination.

I move to discharge the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, which is empowered to consider the nomination of Jennifer Granholm, of Michigan, to be Secretary of Energy, and that the presiding officer, on completion of the roll, do cause a vote to be taken on the motion to confirm the nomination of Jennifer Granholm, of Michigan, to be Secretary of Energy, and also on the nomination of Jennifer Granholm, of Michigan, to be Secretary of Energy, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby discharge the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, which is empowered to consider the nomination of Jennifer Granholm, of Michigan, to be Secretary of Energy, and that the presiding officer, on completion of the roll, do cause a vote to be taken on the motion to confirm the nomination of Jennifer Granholm, of Michigan, to be Secretary of Energy, and also on the motion to confirm the nomination of Jennifer Granholm, of Michigan, to be Secretary of Energy.

The motion is agreed to. The Senator from Iowa.

BIG TECH

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, last week I held 12 meetings in Iowa. Those meetings are for the purpose of having dialogue with my constituents, mostly answering their questions. As many of my colleagues know, I host face-to-face meetings with Iowans in all 99 counties every year. It has been a privilege to get to every county in every corner of the State every single year for the past four decades.

People have asked me why I do this. The simple answer is, in our system of self-government, I am one half of a representative government; my constituents are the other half. My county meetings are a good way for me to keep in touch and see for myself the challenges and successes going on in communities across my home State. In recent years, it has become an important way for me to counter disinformation, correct misinformation, and sidestep censorship that Americans digest daily in the mainstream and social media.

Big tech and big data companies, much like State surveillance and Big Brother, share something in common: If left unchecked, Big Tech can undermine the privacy, civil liberties, and constitutional freedoms that every citizen holds sacred and should never take for granted.

Responsible digital citizenship is more important now than ever, particularly with the censuring that is going on. Consumers must be mindful about their digital footprint. Anything typed into a search engine is effectively a digital diary, saved in the cloud for some rainy day. Consumers must be mindful about what is posted, what is downvoted, what is shared, and what is liked on social media platforms.

The road to responsible and accountable digital citizenship isn’t solely the consumer’s responsibility. Social media companies, as well as content and internet providers, are not exempt from ethical corporate stewardship, especially when the welfare of the next generation is at stake. Keep in mind that human trafficking is a pervasive crime that grooms and blackmails young people on Main Street but also in online communications.

However, having said all those questions about Big Tech, I think we all realize that Big Tech isn’t all bad. Technology companies have revolutionized our way of life and how we connect with friends and family. During the pandemic—and we are still in that pandemic—technology delivered invaluable connections for e-commerce, for digital learning, for teleworking, and for telehealth. However, that doesn’t give big tech and big data companies license to undermine constitutional protections or disregard harmful impacts their products and services have on our personal lives and public trust in our American democracy.

Titan’s of technology need to take responsibility for the products they build, sell, and profit from fellow Americans.

Policymakers and regulators have a duty to shape and enforce the rules of the road. Big Tech and all of its stakeholders, from content makers, social media platforms, and internet service providers, all bear responsibility to understand how their business model puts our democracy at risk. They need to stop up all over the digital frontier, from recurring data breaches to online censorship, misuse of user profiles, and the recent mess with an online brokerage app.

In the last two Presidential elections, Big Tech has had a big influence on information that appeared or didn’t appear in Americans’ social media feeds.

Big Tech can’t hide behind its business model when its revenue streams cash in on an infrastructure that sows division and distrust among Americans. This ecosystem has been exploited to radicalize political extremism and mobilize civil unrest. Social media companies have reaped the benefits of their enterprise. These companies bear some responsibility to help repair the cracks in the architecture of our civic institutions and also to heal the wounds festering in American life.

Our economic freedom allows social media companies to create a business model that grows their bottom line. Americans need to understand their personal data is harvested for profit.
Advertisers buy the data to influence consumer and voter behavior. The bottom line for every American ought to be ensuring that constitutional protections aren’t archived—out of sight, out of mind—in the annals of history.

I am not Big Tech’s bad actor, but I am calling on Big Tech to be a good actor. Take responsibility for the online ecosystem you created.

Congress also must take a good, hard look at this famous section 230 we all talk about that has given these platforms great protection—more protection than they probably deserve—and whether, in regard to section 230, there is a need to reform immunity laws on the books. I think there is great reason to do that.

We have seen what happens when conversations take place online versus in person. Take it from me. The tone of conversation was neighborly and civil when I talked with these Iowans last week in Forest City, IA, or Ogden, IA, to ask questions. However, civil that is, it is sure offset by the incivility on these platforms. Incivility outflanks kindness, I think, tenfold in the responses posted on my Twitter account.

We need to work together to heal the unholy civil divide that has taken root online. It is bleeding into our way of life, pitting neighbor against neighbor, and harming the ability of elected leaders to build bipartisan consensus for the public good.

I am here to put social media platforms, the mainstream media, Congress, and the American public on notice: The digital landscape needs a reboot. What we do with this space will influence how young people participate in civic and political life for generations to come.

So, in closing, in the coming days, I am going to have more conversations with my colleagues on this through a series of speeches. I will be talking about the digital landscape needs a reboot. What we do with this space will influence how young people participate in civic and political life for generations to come.

"The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. SMITH). The Senator from Maryland.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, each February, we mark Black History Month by coming together to highlight the achievements and contributions of Black Americans to our national story and remember the centuries of struggle that have shaped our society.

At every turning point in American history, Black American achievements and calls for action have driven our Nation’s political, economic, and social progress forward, helping to hold to account the promises of freedom and equality for all people that our founding doctrine failed to uphold.

For too long, this history and the names and faces of those who marched, sacrificed, and fought for change have been obscured by prejudice and hate. It is our charge to remember those who marched for justice and the forces they marched against.

When we ignore the injustices of our past, we cannot make amends in the present. The consequences of such inaction are grave and live on in present-day racial profiling, brutality, and killing of Black Americans by police; the high rates of COVID–19 transmission and death in Black communities; and the disproportionate impact this current economic crisis is having on Black-owned businesses.

The unemployment rate for Black workers reached 9.9 percent, for instance—far beyond the national average of 6.7 percent, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

These issues, including the broader economic and health consequences of the pandemic, result from systemic failures in place far before the current crisis, and they have worsened racial gaps in wealth, health outcomes, and opportunities for years to come.

Last year, our Nation’s fight against racism gained new urgency by a police officer’s killing of George Floyd in May. The Trump administration and law enforcement’s response to peaceful protests further displayed the double standard that still exists in our society today. Protesters were attacked with tear gas and rubber bullets across the Nation and here in our capital as they organized and marched to make it known that Black lives matter. We watched on television as the National Guard forcefully removed peaceful protesters from Lafayette Park to make way for President Trump to walk to St. John’s Episcopal Church for a photo op. President Trump brandished a Bible in front of the church while he continued to fan the flames of bigotry, hatred, and fear.

The historic election of KAMALA HARRIS as our Nation’s first Black female Vice President serves as a reminder of the power of collective action. The Biden-Harris administration gives us opportunities to not just act in government to create a more just society. In the year ahead, we must work together to advance the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act to bring accountability to law enforcement and the John Lewis Voting Rights Act to combat voter suppression and restore the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

It is our charge to mobilize all levels, from our communities to the Oval Office, to honor the civil rights and justice to all Americans. It is time to expel all remaining vestiges of slavery and White supremacy that continue to plague our Nation.

As our National Youth Poet Laureate Amanda Gorman said so eloquently in her inaugural day address, “[B]eing American is more than [just] a pride we inherit, it’s the past we step into and how we repair it.” Black History Month is a reminder to look to this past and to act on our responsibilities in the present to make our Nation a better place for all of us.

We are still fighting against the vestiges of the institutions of slavery, of targeted violence and resistance in the Reconstruction and the Jim Crow eras, and of the tactics to keep Black Americans from the polls and out of government.

They are not merely footnotes in our history textbooks; they are the lineage of our Nation, the obstacles that have left millions of our citizens behind in the effort to obtain the American dream.

The realization of justice and true equality depends on our work to build a country committed to righting historic wrongs, closing gaps in the opportunity to achieve, and dismantling vestiges of inequality in our foundations. The 28 days in February must set the tone for the entire year—a continued commitment to justice, equality, and opportunity.

Cler, Bettina Angelou once said: “I sustain myself with the love of my family. The lasting bonds we have with our families sustain us through life. For many, our families serve as our home base through times of triumph, trial, and tragedy.

The past year was a tumultuous year, from the COVID–19 pandemic, which has disproportionately harmed African Americans much more severely than others, to the resounding calls for racial justice and racial equity, which have long been overdue. Through all of the turmoil, 2020 brought us together ever closer, and it made clear the importance of family and community. Diversity. As we celebrate Black History Month and moving forward, we can recommit ourselves to promoting and celebrating diversity and advancing civil rights in our society and in the history of our country. It is a story of oppression, struggle, and, if we are to be true to our founding premise, redemption and equality.
I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

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

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

(The remarks of Ms. COLLINS pertaining to the introduction of S. 436 are printed in today’s RECORD under “Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.”)

Ms. COLLINS. Seeing no one seeking recognition, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

REOPENING SCHOOLS

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, I know that some of my colleagues have been talking about schools getting children back to school; getting schools reopened. Indeed, in Tennessee, that is a topic that has received a good bit of conversation. All but two of our school systems have been open and working this entire school year, and those other two systems have reopened early first of the year. Our school superintendents, our directors of school, our parents, our teachers, and the students have all worked together as a team—a solid, cohesive team—to make this happen.

I think there are two main points that we have seen, and as we are holding meetings with our county elected officials and city officials and as they talk about the efforts that they have made in getting children back into the classroom, we hear a lot about one point. That is that our Governor, Tennessee Governor Bill Lee, made it clear that the school districts would be responsible for the “how” they were going to open and the “when” they would do it. I really thank him for listening and recognizing that local officials and individuals in the community really do know what is best for their school districts and their students.

The second point is that these plans didn’t just drop out of the sky. As I said, this has been a team effort in our communities, and it has happened because there was an agreement between the administrators and the parents and they walked through that and where they were going to make decisions that were going to be best for the children. So when you look at Tennessee and how they have approached this—indeed, the schools reopening and how they proceeded—it was done with the children in mind.

Last week, I had the privilege of speaking with school administrators from West Tennessee, who played a part in developing their own reopening plans. I cannot adequately describe to you with the time that we have on the floor today the amount of work and the thoughtfulness that they put into these schedules, from health and safety considerations, to scheduling changes, to the complicated logistics of social distancing and cramped classrooms. They thought it all through by walking through the day and listening to what teachers and parents had to say as to how they would walk through this day.

They took the millions of dollars in CARES Act funding that the area received, and what did they do with that money? They invested in the best possible plan for these kids—no Federal mandate or sweeping litmus test required. They said: We are going to do what is right by these children.

Then, of course, they turned on the TV, and they saw that the Biden administration was busy walking back their own enthusiastic scientific guidance on safely reopening schools—walking it back—and they didn’t have to flip too many channels to figure out why. Powerful teachers unions had taken their own stands in refusing to make a plan, in refusing to think things through, and in some cases in refusing to go to work at all—not doing what is best for the children but doing what was going to serve their interests first and, in their opinions, what would best serve their interests. That, I think, they will see were regrettable actions.

Educators in Tennessee were not just confused by what they saw; they were insulted because they knew exactly what was happening. On January 26, CDC officials released a study showing that, if we were careful, safe reopening was indeed possible. Administration officials touted that report as a light at the end of a very long COVID pandemic, but now, just a few weeks later, those same officials are defying their own experts, insisting that safe reopening can only happen if Congress approves additional funding contained in the Democrats’ latest, untargeted spending bill.

Students in this country are suffering. They are lonely, they are bored, and many of them are struggling with clinical depression and anxiety. Teen pregnancy, teen alcohol, and suicide rates are rising. Children need to be in-person learning.

The American Academy of Pediatrics has repeatedly stated—bear in mind, this isn’t something that I am saying; it isn’t something that is partisan; it is the American Academy of Pediatrics—CDC officials released a study showing that necessary for students to be back in school, back in the classroom, back to seeing their friends, back to participating in extracurricular activities and sports.

I would ask my colleagues across the aisle to keep this in mind when they hear from so-called stakeholders who are willing to hold a child’s mental health hostage in exchange for a political win that will serve their power and their purposes and not that of the children. They might have powerful voices in the cable news circuit, but those sound bites will provide you no voices in the cable news circuit, but those sound bites will provide you no
cover back home with the teachers and administrators who have rolled up their sleeves, have gotten to work, and have figured out a way to get schools open for the children.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. DAINES. Madam President, out—range—that is what American families should be feeling right now, and many are. We are seeing President Biden and the Democrats support opening the border so that they can be leaders for illegal immigrants while bowing to political pressure and keeping many of our Nation’s schools closed for our students—opening the southern border for illegal immigrants, closing our Nation’s schools for our students.

Schools across the Nation remain closed to in-person instruction largely due to teachers unions and their influence on many of our local and Federal leaders on the other side of the aisle—leaders on the other side of the aisle who have never dealt with. Children are continuing to cope with the unprecedented hardship of virtual classrooms, a lack of social interaction with their peers, and other impediments to their education. But this isn’t just about the pandemic itself; it is because President Biden, the Democrats, and local leaders have caved to the political pressures of teachers unions and have kept many classrooms closed and students at home despite what the available science and other experts are telling us. The science is clear: Schools are not major COVID-19 spreading grounds, and younger students are a low-risk group. Studies indicate that students across the country are months behind where they should be learning. The hardships our students face go beyond academics because the mental and physical health of children has also taken a toll. We are seeing depression and anxiety rates skyrocket among our young people. I was on a call today, a Zoom call, with several elementary school principals in Montana, hearing their firsthand, frankly, tragic accounts of what is happening with the mental health of our students in elementary school students assaulting teachers. A whole year without full-time, in-person learning has done irreparable damage. The status quo is truly devastating to many of our students. Despite data—despite the science, despite the overwhelming data—schools across the country, in many parts of our country, remain closed.

Frankly, it is unacceptable that many of my colleagues across the aisle and the Biden administration are willing by default because of our students across our country. They have chosen to play politics with our Nation’s students instead of ensuring that
Our children are getting the very best education possible, which is full-time, in-person instruction. They are intent on jamming through this partisan $1.9 trillion COVID package, which does include billions of dollars for schools.

In fact, as working together, we have passed five bipartisan COVID relief packages. Yes, it is harder to work in a bipartisan fashion, but that is why we sent back here to Washington—to work together. Yet President Biden and the Democrats are saying: We are going to do this one alone. It is going to be their way or the highway.

The sad reality is, the more the American people hear what is in this $1.9 trillion package, the more they are not going to like it. Most of the money in this package is not to be spent now. In fact, 95 percent of it will be spent over the next 7 years, after the crisis. We should not use this COVID crisis as a library of items here where, in 95 percent of it gets spent in the outer-years. How does this help our students and our schools now? The answer is, it doesn’t.

This is not how we solve the problems that our students are facing. Fortunately, there is a pretty simple solution. It is this: Listen to the experts. Listen to the science. Reopen our schools, and let’s get our students back in the classroom. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, we have had some bizarre weather in my State in the last week or so. We are still reeling from a deadly winter storm that hit all 254 counties in the State of Texas last week.

The snowstorm brought snow, ice, and prolonged subfreezing temperatures. We don’t have temperatures below zero in Texas—or at least we haven’t for a long, long time, but we did last week. As a result, it paralyzed much of our critical infrastructure, leaving millions without electricity, leaving them without heat, and leaving them without running water for days on end.

The good news is that power has now been restored for the vast majority of Texans, and cities are slowly lifting boil notices as water filtration systems come back online.

But a number of families are still facing outages, and as we have seen during previous disasters, low-income and minority communities are the hardest hit. Our top priority is to restore power and clean water to every single Texan.

This is not unlike what we have to do periodically for hurricanes that seem to find their way to the State of Texas. But in this case we know that some of the problem was not an act of nature; it was a failure to anticipate these sub-freezing, subzero cold temperatures. So I ask my colleagues: What happened? But “how can we prevent it from happening again in the future?”

As I said, we experience, from time to time, hurricanes, occasionally tornadoes and tropical storms or record-low temperatures, but we cannot allow our infrastructure to go offline for days on end.

I want to thank the countless Texans who supported each other during this crisis. There are those that have gone above and beyond the call of duty in their official capacities, whether it is as first responders, emergency dispatchers, utility and energy workers, healthcare workers—the list goes on and on.

But there are also the unsung heroes—those who invited neighbors into their homes, delivered hot meals to those in need, checked on an elderly neighbor, those who towed vehicles stuck in the snow, and so much more. It just takes the hands of our constituents that we are in this together, and we will do everything we can not only to find out how this happened but what we can do to make sure it never happens again.

CORONAVIRUS

Madam President, on another matter, as you know, this week our Democratic colleagues in the House are continuing to take action on President Biden’s relief bill, using the budget reconciliation process.

It is really not so much an issue in the House, where you can do anything you want, basically, with a majority vote. But if all goes their way, our Democratic colleagues will write a $1.9 trillion support bill for taxpayers—future taxpayers because it will be borrowed money—without the input of a single Republican in Congress, either in the House or in the Senate.

We know that there are 10 Republicans who went over to the White House, had a very pleasant meeting with President Biden, but were essentially told: My way or the highway. Any effort to try to come up with a bipartisan compromise was rejected.

The new $1.9 trillion relief legislation affords or views on this particular bill, that fact alone should trouble every single American. After all, there was no need for partisan maneuvering to pass a coronavirus relief bill last year. As a matter of fact, we passed five of them. All of them were signed into law with overwhelming bipartisan support. No bill received fewer than 90 votes here in the Senate. One even passed unanimously.

Of course, the reason for the widespread support wasn’t because Members thought these relief packages were perfect. There were things I would have changed if I had had a chance, and I am sure others would have made other changes.

But each bill was a clear response to the crisis at hand and free from any unrelated partisan priorities. In other words, it was focused on COVID–19 relief.

Suffice it to say that the same cannot be said about this latest piece of legislation, this $1.9 trillion bill being rammed through Congress by our Democratic colleagues.

On Capitol Hill, I have thrown concerns with this legislation. First, it would dramatically overspend in areas that aren’t even in need of additional funding.

In the early days of the pandemic, we had no real expectation about how long the crisis would last or how big a blow it would deal to our economy. After the CARES Act was signed into law in March, late March, it made sense to hit the pause button so we could see how what we did was working—what was working well and working so well. Where was more assistance needed? Where was it sufficient?

These needs became obvious pretty quickly. One example was the Paycheck Protection Program. Within 2 days of its passage of items worth of relief, it ran dry—in 2 weeks. So we quickly came together on a bipartisan basis to replenish the fund with additional money, and we did so again at the end of the year.

This sort of bipartisan, step-by-step approach is the most effective way to get funding where it is needed without wasting money on already well-funded programs.

But, unfortunately, our friends across the aisle didn’t apply that same logic to this $1.9 trillion piece of legislation, which sends hundreds of billions of dollars to areas that are nowhere near running out of money.

One example is public education. So far, Congress has provided more than $110 billion to support K–12 education, including $68 billion in the relief bill passed just in December. Schools in Texas have used this money to update their ventilation systems, purchase masks and personal protective equipment, and make other investments in classroom safety. But the vast majority of the funding that was provided in December is still waiting to be used. In other words, there is no current need for any more money from Congress.

As a matter of fact, as of February 9, States have spent just under $5 billion of the $68 billion we have already provided for K–12 education. They have spent just $5 billion out of the $68 billion.

This is a reminder, in December, the CDC—the Centers for Disease Control—estimated schools would need only about $22 billion to reopen safely, meaning there is already more than enough money to support safe school reopenings. But that data-driven estimate from the experts doesn’t seem to matter to our Democratic colleagues or the administration, who are preparing
to drop another $130 billion for public education. So $5 billion has been spent out of the $68 billion we have already appropriated, and our Democratic colleagues now want to spend another $130 billion.

Since most of the existing funds remain to be spent, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimates that the bulk of spending of this new proposed funding would occur after this year, after 2021; that is, the majority of the $5 billion in this new so-called COVID relief bill wouldn’t even be touched until next year, when God willing, the pandemic is already in the rearview mirror.

I have advocated for funding to help our schools prepare for a safe return to the classroom, and the experts tell us that there is more than sufficient funding already out there to make that happen. So I am left to conclude, as I think most would, any reasonable person would agree, that it is irresponsible to have taxpayers foot the bill for another $130 billion when there is no need for the funding.

And this isn’t like we are spending money that we have. We are actually borrowing money from future generations, exacerbating an already huge Federal debt.

That brings me to the second concern I have with this bill. It completely ignores the trajectory of our economic recovery. At the start of the pandemic, we all knew the economic hammer came down hard and fast. As States imposed lockdown measures, businesses closed their doors, people lost their jobs, and consumer spending plummeted.

But as the pandemic has gone on, even the more moderate predictions about an economic depression have proven wrong. By any measure, our economy has recovered faster than any of us expected. That should be a positive thing. We should be happy about that.

The unemployment rate has steadily declined, going from 14.8 percent in April to 6.3 percent last month. State tax revenues have largely rebounded. As a matter of fact, California has fared so well that it is adding money to their rainy day fund. In other words, they don’t need any more money. Their revenues have exceeded their revenues from years before the pandemic even hit.

The Congressional Budget Office projects that the U.S. economy will return to its prepandemic size by the middle of this year, even if Congress doesn’t approve another penny of money. Let me say that again. The Congressional Budget Office projects that the U.S. economy will return to its prepandemic size in the middle of this year—just a few months away—even if Congress does not approve any more Federal money to aid the recovery.

Well, it is tough to reconcile that fact that at this point, we have funds, money, others want us to spend another $1.9 trillion, money that we don’t have.

Despite all the data that shows our economy is recovering, rebounding in a robust way, this bill sends another $350 billion to State and local governments that are not facing the dire budget shortfalls that we worried about last March. And it is not without negative consequences. Everyone remembers the infamous earmark now known as the bridge to nowhere. At least in this case we know where the bridge will end up. But a pandemic relief bill should not serve as a Trojan horse in order to pursue such parochial and local desires or any other part of an unrelated liberal wish list.

So the Biden bill of $1.9 trillion actually creates more problems than it solves or it tries to solve nonexistent problems. It drives up our national debt by spending money that experts say is not needed. It ignores the data—the facts about our economic recovery—and it creates even more problems, all in the name of securing a win for the administration and our Democratic colleagues. It is as though this bill were drafted in a vacuum with no attention paid to what has already been done, how things are going, or what we anticipate the need will be in the future.

If the evidence and the experts tell us that more funding is needed to bolster our response to the virus, I will be one of the first people to advocate for additional targeted relief. But this race to spend money for the sake of spending money and ignore what the experts are saying is absolutely disgraceful.

The two parties have done much better than this. As I said, last year, we passed five COVID relief bills on a bipartisan basis because we all were trying to come together and meet a common enemy—the COVID-19 virus and the consequences of the pandemic. But it seems like this $1.9 trillion wish list is divorced, really, from the COVID-19 relief that we did in the past and is designed purely for partisan purposes, and I think it is an unfortunate development in an area where we have so successfully worked together in a bipartisan way.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. Ossoff). The Senator from Minnesota.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES RULES OF PROCEDURE

Mr. REED. Mr. President, pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 2, of the
Standing Rules of the Senate, on behalf of myself and Senator INHOFE, I ask unanimous consent that a copy of the committee rules governing the procedure of the Committee on Armed Services be printed in the RECORD. These Rules are by committee, by voice vote on February 11, 2021.

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

1. Regular Meeting Day—The Committee shall meet at least once a month when Congress is in session, except that regular members of the Committee shall be Tuesday and Thursday, unless the Chairman, after consultation with the Ranking Minority Member, directs otherwise.

2. Additional Meetings—The Chairman, after consultation with the Ranking Minority Member, may call such additional meetings as he deems necessary.

3. Special Meetings—Special meetings of the Committee may be called by a majority of the members of the Committee in accordance with paragraph 3 of Rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate.

4. Open Meetings—Each meeting of the Committee or any subcommittee thereof, including meetings to conduct hearings, shall be open to the public, except that a meeting or series of meetings by the Committee or any subcommittee thereof on the same subject for a period of no more than fourteen (14) calendar days may be closed to the public on a motion made and seconded to go into closed session to discuss only whether the matters enumerated below in clauses (a) through (f) would require the meeting to be closed, followed immediately by a record vote by a majority of the members of the Committee or subcommittee when it is determined that the matters to be discussed or the testimony to be taken at such meeting or meetings:

(a) will disclose matters necessary to be kept secret in the interests of national defense or the conduct of foreign relations of the United States;

(b) will relate solely to matters of Committee staff personnel or internal staff management;

(c) will tend to charge an individual with a crime or misconduct, to disgrace or injure the professional standing of an individual, or otherwise to expose an individual to public contempt or obloquy or will represent a clear and present danger to the safety of any individual;

(d) will disclose the identity of any individual necessarily required to be kept secret in order to prevent undue injury to the national defense or the conduct of foreign relations of the United States;

(e) will disclose information relating to the trade secrets of a United States corporation or the commercial or secret information pertaining specifically to a given person if:

(1) an Act of Congress requires the information to be kept confidential by Government officers and employees; or

(2) the information has been obtained by the Government on a confidential basis, other than through application by such person for a specific Government financial or other benefit, and is required to be kept secret in order to prevent undue injury to the competitive position of such person or

(f) may divest matters required to be kept confidential under other provisions of law or Government rules.

5. Presiding Officer—The Chairman shall preside at all meetings and hearings of the Committee except that in his absence the Ranking Majority Member present at the meeting or hearing shall preside unless by majority vote the Committee provides otherwise.

6. Quorum—(a) A majority of the members of the Committee are required to be actually present to report a matter or measure from the Committee, unless Standing Rules of the Senate XXVI.7(a)(x). 

(b) Except as provided in subsections (a) and (c), and other than for the conduct of hearings, the Standing Rules of the Senate, including one member of the minority party; or a majority of the members of the Committee, may by quorum for the transaction of business of the Committee be considered by the Committee.

(c) Two members of the Committee, one of whom shall be a member of the minority party, shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of taking sworn testimony, unless otherwise ordered by a majority of the full Committee.

(d) No measure or matter or recommendation shall be reported by the Committee in the absence of the concurrence of a majority of the members of the Committee who are present. The Chairman of the Committee shall transmit notice of a tie vote to the Secretary of the Senate in accordance with Section 3 of S. Res. 27, February 3, 2021.

(e) Proxy votes may not be considered for the purpose of establishing a quorum.

7. Proxy Voting—Proxy voting shall be allowed on all matters before the Committee. The vote by proxy of any member of the Committee may be counted for the purpose of reporting any measure or matter to the Senate if the absent member casting such vote has been informed of the matter on which the member is being recorded and has affirmatively requested that he be so recorded. Proxy must be in writing.

8. Announcement of Votes—The results of all roll call votes taken in any meeting of the Committee on any measure, or amendment thereto, shall be announced in the Committee report, unless previously announced by the Committee. The announcement shall include a tabulation of the votes cast in favor and votes cast in opposition to each such measure and amendment by each member of the Committee who was present at such session, together with the name of the member of the Ranking Minority Member present on a confidential basis, no member of the Committee or subcommittee or any report of the proceedings of such hearing shall be made public in whole or in part by way of summary unless authorized by a majority vote of the Committee or subcommittee.

9. Legislative Calendar—(a) The clerk of the Committee shall keep a record of the bills introduced and referred to the Committee until no later than midnight of the day on which the Committee votes on such measure or matter.

(b) The clerk of the Committee shall keep a roll call calendar showing the bills introduced and referred to the Committee and the status of such bills. Such calendar shall be revised from time to time to show pertinent changes in the contents thereof.

(c) Hearings shall be held only in the District of Columbia unless specifically authorized by the Committee.

10. Hearings—(a) Hearings shall be open to the public unless the Committee determines that good cause exists for beginning such hearings.

(b) Hearings may be held only in the District of Columbia unless specifically authorized by the Committee.

(c) Hearings shall be held only in the District of Columbia unless specifically authorized by the Committee.

11. Nominations—Unless otherwise ordered by the Committee, nominations for appointment to the Senate shall be referred by the Committee to the Committee on Armed Services for its report and recommendation.

12. Real Property Transactions—Each member of the Committee shall furnish with a copy of the proposals of the Secretary of the Army, Navy, and Air Force, submitted pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 2692 and with a copy of any other submitted pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 2692 and with a copy of any other.

13. Legislative Calendar—(a) The clerk of the Committee shall keep a printed calendar for the information of each Committee member showing the bills introduced and referred to the Committee, and the status of such bills. Such calendar shall be revised from time to time to show pertinent changes in the contents thereof.

(b) Unless otherwise ordered, measures referred to the Committee shall be referred by the clerk of the Committee to the appropriate department or agency of the Government for report thereon.

(c) Hearings shall be held only in the District of Columbia unless specifically authorized by the Committee.

15. Powers and Duties of Subcommittees—Each subcommittee is authorized to meet,
hold hearings, receive evidence, and report to the full Committee on all matters referred to it. Subcommittee chairmen, after consultation with Ranking Minority Members of the subcommittee, shall set dates for hearings and meetings of their respective subcommittees after consultation with the Chairman and other subcommittee chairmen with the object of avoiding simultaneous scheduling of full Committee and subcommittee meetings or hearings whenever possible.

**NOMINATION OF JENNIFER GRANHOLM**

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today in support of Governor Jennifer Granholm’s nomination to be Secretary of the Department of Energy. I can think of no one better than Governor Granholm to lead the Department of Energy during this critical and transformative period for our country.

Governor Granholm has the experience to lead and oversee the 13,500 employees at the Energy Department. She served as the Governor of Michigan from 2003 to 2011 and as Michigan’s attorney general from 1998 to 2002.

During her tenure as Governor, she led Michigan through the tumultuous years of the 2008 financial crisis and the resulting bailout of the auto industry. She shepherded over a billion dollars in Federal funding to her State to manufacture electric vehicles and batteries. She diversified Michigan’s energy portfolio and signed into law the State’s first renewable energy standard.

I won’t hold against the Governor the fact that she is a graduate of UC Berkeley—I am sure a Stanford Cardinal and a Golden Bear can still find some of Energy Ground and I am sure it will help that she will bring the innovative spirit of California along with her to her new role as Secretary.

Following her tenure as Governor, Jennifer became a faculty member at the UC Berkeley Goldman School of Public Policy. She has spent her career, both inside and outside of public office, as a steadfast advocate for clean energy. I have no doubt she will bring the same passion if confirmed as Secretary.

With this appointment, Governor Granholm has gained the opportunity to understand our unique national lab system, which is a critical aspect of the Department of Energy. She was a project scientist at Lawrence Berkeley National Lab, and I look forward to her getting to know our 16 other National Labs. From basic science to nuclear safety, these are gems of the Energy Department.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not mention the trailblazing nature of the Governor’s career. She was Michigan’s first female attorney general; Michigan's first female Governor; and, if confirmed, will be only the second woman to lead the Energy Department since the agency was founded in 1977. She has been and will continue to be a role model for young women across this country.

The Governor does not have an easy task ahead of her, but I have full confidence that she is up to the challenge. As chair of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water, I look forward to working with her closely over the coming years to fund clean energy programs, combat climate change, and fulfill the energy and water infrastructure needs of California and our country.

**NOMINATION OF JENNIFER GRANHOLM**

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, now is the time to take substantive action to transition to renewable resources, combat climate change, and build a brighter future for Americans. To help manage that transition, President Biden has nominated Jennifer Granholm to be the Secretary of Energy.

As the first female Governor and first female attorney general in Michigan history, Granholm oversaw the State’s response to the great recession and worked closely with the Obama administration to save the Nation’s auto industry and 1 million jobs. Granholm transformed the automobile industry by bringing new ideas to electrify the auto industry, stimulate statewide job growth, and build the State’s clean energy sector. She founded the American Jobs Project to promote technological advancements and clean energy policies to spark job creation and continues to push for clean energy policy nationwide.

Additionally, Granholm backed tax credits and incentives for wind and solar and signed legislation requiring Michigan to get 10 percent of its energy from renewable sources. She is eminently qualified to spearhead research and development and set policies to reach President Biden’s stated goal of getting to a 100-percent carbon pollution-free power sector by 2035.

Granholm received bipartisan support from the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, and we should follow their lead. She knows that clean energy is the key to creating millions of good jobs and mitigating climate change and is dedicated to advancing our Nation’s nuclear security. For these reasons, I support Jennifer Granholm’s nomination for Secretary of Energy.

**DARFUR**

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I rise today to express my concern about increasing insecurity in the Darfur region of Sudan and to call for immediate action to prevent further violence and protect civilians.

As many of my colleagues will recall, in 2003 the regime of toppled Sudanese dictator Omar al-Bashir began a vicious and deadly campaign against his own citizens. Over 2 million people were displaced from their homes, and hundreds of thousands killed and sometimes raped by militia armed and supported by the government. In 2004 Congress and the State Department stood united in determining that what was taking place in Darfur was, in fact, genocide. Three years after that determination, the United Nations-African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur, UNAMID, was established.

UNAMID has not been perfect. However, despite numerous obstacles the Government of Sudan put in place under al-Bashir to obstruct the mission’s ability to carry out its mandate to protect civilians, UNAMID has provided critical support for the people of Darfur. UNAMID peacekeepers have served as trusted confidants for Darfur women to report sexual and domestic violence, and UNAMID soldiers have provided a protective presence, deterring violence against civilians in areas where they have been deployed. Overall, the presence of international forces has reinforced some sense of security and stability for the hundreds of thousands of people in Darfur who remain displaced, so that that they can continue to live full and dignified lives. These efforts have come at significant cost both in blood and treasure: 64 UNAMID peacekeepers have been killed and billions of dollars spent, in support of the mission.

With the fall of Bashir, many had hoped that the situation in Darfur would improve. However, those hopes have not yet to be fulfilled. Violence in West Darfur in late December of 2019 killed dozens and displaced an estimated 40,000 people. In January 2020, two separate violent incidents in North Darfur were additional indicators that all was not well in the region, as were deadly attacks on internally displaced camps in July. In January of this year, communal clashes in West and South Darfur resulted in the death of over 250 people and the displacement of over 100,000. These episodes raise the specter of a return to the calculus of genocidal violence that engulfed the region in 2003. But instead of redoubling its commitment to Darfur’s long-suffering people at this critical time, the international community risks abandoning them.

This past December, the United Nations Security Council made the decision to dissolve UNAMID. Although it will retain a presence in the region until it completes its full drawdown at the end of June 2020, core civilian protection functions have now ceased. UNAMID is to be replaced by the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan, or UNITAMS. UNITAMS is a Sudan-wide political mission that is aimed at assisting with the transition. I agree that such a mission is needed to ensure that Sudan’s transition to democracy is successful. However, supporting the transition and protecting vulnerable civilians are not mutually exclusive, and the mandate of UNITAMS could have included both. Unfortunately, Sudan’s transitional government refused to accept this course of action, and
UNITAMS therefore lacks UNAMID’s Chapter VII authorities to deploy military tools in service of civilian protection and the advancement of peace in Darfur. Officials in the transitional government at the highest levels have argued that a Chapter VII mission is not necessary because the security situation in Darfur has improved; that many of the warring parties in Darfur have made peace with the Government of Sudan through the Juba Peace Agreement; that Bashir’s genocidal regime, which bore primary responsibility for the crisis in the region, is no longer in power; and that the transitional government is implementing a security plan for Darfur that will adequately protect civilians.

I do not share this assessment of the situation in Darfur, and recent clashes, as well earlier rounds of violence that have plagued Darfur since Sudan’s transition began in 2019, demonstrate that the region remains fragile. Communal tensions over land, water, and political power persist, and Darfur is awash in weapons. The government’s protracted security vacuum in the region, including through its National Plan for Civilian Protection, has yet to be adequately fleshed out and implemented. Just last week, the UNAMID team site at Saraf Umrah that was transferred to the Sudanese Government on January 21 was looted by unnamed assailants, and all of the buildings on the site were reportedly destroyed despite the government’s prior commitment to securing it. The Juba Peace Agreement, while promising, has not been endorsed by all of Darfur’s warring parties. And most worryingly, those likely to be charged with protecting civilians in Darfur, including components of the Sudanese military and the Rapid Support Forces, RSF, of Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, are the same actors that for years worked to implement Bashir’s campaign of terror and genocide in the region.

In the United Nations Security Council’s ill-timed and poorly-conceived decision to end UNAMID’s mandate—facilitated by the Trump administration’s lack of a well-thought-out diplomatic strategy and approach—and to rapidly draw down the mission exposes the Darfuri people to significant harm. It could derail Sudan’s civilian-led transition to democracy, resulting in another round of instability that Sudan and the broader region can ill afford. In February 2020 I led a group of Senators in writing to the Trump administration, urging it to ensure that the U.N. maintain a mission in Darfur with an adequate number of peacekeeping troops operating under a robust mandate to protect civilians from violence; and that is why I am raising the alarm again here today. The United States, along with its international partners, must work rapidly to put in place mechanisms to protect civilians until such a time that Sudan’s transitional government is capable of providing security to the region.

Fortunately, the plight of Darfur has long attracted the bipartisan support of Congress and multiple administrations. At this critical time, it is vital that our commitment remain steadfast. I hope to work with the Biden administration to urgently address the threat to Sudan’s civilian-led transition and call upon Secretary of State Blinken and United Nations Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield to take urgent steps.

First, let us use our voice and vote at the UNSC to encourage a temporary reauthorization of UNAMID so that it can carry out critical protection of civilian functions, at the very least until it fully draws down in June 2021. Second, we must work actively at the UNSC to strengthen the mandate of the UNITAMS so that it includes robust civilian protection mechanisms. Third, we should press Sudan’s civilian-led transitional government to develop a credible civilian protection plan that can be taken in concert by a sitting President. Fourth, the administration should carefully monitor progress on civilian protection in Darfur and provide support where necessary, including by considering how much of the recently appropriated $700 million for Sudan needs to be set aside to support civilian security in Darfur. Fifth, we must make clear to all that sustainable peace in Darfur requires justice and accountability for those who committed violence in the past and who had violent intent.

Mr. President, I strongly support a closer bilateral relationship with Sudan and will continue, as I have for the past 2 years, to do what I can to ensure the United States does its part to see to it that Sudan’s civilian-led transition to democracy is successful. We have what may be a once in a generation opportunity. A healthy political transition at the national level will only aid the cause of peace in Darfur, and vice versa.

Mr. President, the situation in Darfur requires our urgent and considered attention. Let us continue our strong tradition of bipartisan support for the long-suffering people of Sudan at this critical time.

IMPEACHMENT

Mr. ROMNEY. Mr. President, once again, I have listened to the arguments of the respective counsel, studied briefs, and weighed evidence in an impeachment trial of President Donald Trump. This is not a responsibility I sought or expected. I certainly did not anticipate having to serve a second time as a Senator-juror in an impeachment trial.

An initial question shaping the context of this trial was whether or not the Senate has constitutional jurisdiction totry a President who is no longer in office. The Constitution gives the Senate the power to try all impeachments. In this case, where the House impeached the President while he was in office, it is particularly clear that the impeachment is constitutional and therefore that this trial is constitutional. The weight of legal opinion and historical precedent affirms this conclusion. Further, the Senate decided that the question following the trial of the President should have been presented to the Senate and that it believe its decision was correct: The Senate must not surrender its power to hold accountable those who abuse their office or threaten our Republic, even in their final days in office.

In this case, an impeachment trial and in our deliberations on the final question, I believe it is up to every Senator to determine what to consider and what the Constitution and their conscience require of them. The conclusion I reached on the final verdict will not surprise anyone who read my reasoning in the first impeachment trial: I consider an attempt to corrupt an election to keep oneself in power one of the most reprehensible acts that can be taken by a sitting President. The second impeachment resulted from the President’s continued effort to do just that.

His attempt to pressure Georgia’s secretary of state to falsify the electoral results was itself an act that merited impeachment. President Trump summoned his supporters to Washington on the very day of the electoral vote count, knowing that among the people he gathered were many who had committed violence in the past and who had violent intent. Despite the obvious and well-known threat of violence, he incited and directed thousands to descend upon the seat of Congress as it was undertaking the constitutionally prescribed process to certify his successor. And then he not only failed to defend the Vice President and the others at the Capitol who he saw were in mortal danger, he also incited further violence against the Vice President.

The President’s conduct represented an unprecedented violation of his oath of office and of the public trust.

There is a thin line that separates our democratic republic from an autocracy: It is a fine and fair election and the peaceful transfer of power that follows it. President Trump attempted to breach that line, again. What he attempted is what was most feared by the Founders. It is the reason they invested Congress with the power to impeach.

Accordingly, I voted to convict President Trump.

We must also consider how we came to a point where a President felt he could do as he did without suffering meaningful consequence. It has become almost cliché to say that America is divided as never before in modern history. So, too, is the observation that this division is the product of a decline in trust in our government and the social bonds forged in churches and charities and communities, of expanding income inequality, and of trusted
news sources replaced by cable and internet algorithms calculated to inflame our prejudices.

Less unanimous are the predictions of where this division will lead. Even so, no one suggests that it will lead to a better, more equal or more unified nation buffeted by policies drafted by the extreme wings of the political parties. Others claim that authoritarianism will replace democracy. Some anticipate social unrest and violence. A few even say that a weakened America will become vulnerable to an opportunistic foreign foe.

We instinctively know that the growing division represents a growing danger. Academics and pundits may promote cures, but in our hearts, we know that their bromides won’t heal the rift. People aren’t going to return to mainstream media; churches aren’t going to experience a resurgence, and income inequality will remain a persistent feature of the global digital economy.

Throughout history, only one thing has been able to unite a divided nation: great leaders—leaders like Churchill who united a deeply divided nation; leaders like Lincoln who mustered the national will to save the Union; and leaders like Reagan who raised our spirits from suffocating malaise. Leaders like these also have been essential in our churches and universities and businesses and charities, and just as importantly, in our homes.

With our Nation so divided, so vulnerable to economic distress or to civil violence— even to foreign aggression— the need for leadership that unites and uplifts, that calls on our better angels, is as great as we have ever known. The corollary is that the failure of leaders to unite, to speak truth, to place duty above self, is as dangerous as we have ever known.

With the country as divided as it assuredly is, a person in a position of leadership who inflames passions with the purpose of perpetuating untruth commits a singularly dangerous sin against the Republic. We Senator-jurors did not all vote in the same way in this impeachment trial. Differences in perception of the facts that were presented are to be expected. So, too, are the differences in our respective estimations of the impact of the outcome of the trial. People of conscience reached different conclusions. National unity does not require unanimity.

But civic unity does require truth. There is one untruth that divides the Nation today like none other: it is that the election was stolen, that there was a massive conspiracy, more secret and widespread than any in nation history, so brilliant in execution that no evidence can be found of it and no observer among the tens of thousands in our intelligence agencies will speak of it.

That lie brought our Nation to a dark and dangerous place. Invented and disseminated by the President, it poisoned our politics and our public discourse. Like you, I hear many calls for unity. It is apparent that calling for unity while at the same time appeasing the big lie of a stolen election is a fraud. It is the lie that caused the division. It is in the service of that lie that a mob invaded the Capitol on January 6.

Now that the impeachment trial is behind us, it falls to each of us to affirm what we all know: President Biden won the election through the legitimate vote of the American people. The division already began to heal in the light of this truth, a truth which must now be affirmed by each of us in this Chamber.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

REMEMBERING DR. SEAN MCCAGH

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I rise today to honor Dr. Sean McCagh, a Marylander whom we should all emulate for his selflessness and passion for helping others. Sean touched the hearts and lives of his family, friends, coworkers, patients, and the entire Allegany County community.

Sean was born and raised in Cumberland, MD. He graduated from Bishop Walsh High School and completed his undergraduate studies at Mount St. Mary’s University. He earned his medical degree from Georgetown University School of Medicine and completed his dermatology residency at the University of West Virginia. He returned to the hometown he loved so well and joined his brother Mike’s dermatology practice in 1996.

Sean was born and raised in Cumberland, MD. He graduated from Bishop Walsh High School and completed his undergraduate studies at Mount St. Mary’s University. He earned his medical degree from Georgetown University School of Medicine and completed his dermatology residency at the University of West Virginia. He returned to the hometown he loved so well and joined his brother Mike’s dermatology practice in 1996.

Sean was a man of vision who was passionate about helping others. When his middle son, Cory, graduated from college, Sean encouraged him to follow his dream to open a brewery. With Cory’s vision and Sean’s support and investment, they christened the 200-year-old barn on the family’s farm as the “1812 Brewery,” which set the stage for a growing and mutually supportive family of small brewers to attract tourists and enhance the lives of local residents.

While the people of Allegany County grieve the sudden, stunning loss of a cherished husband, father, friend, doctor, businessman, and community leader, I ask my Senate colleagues to join me in remembering and honoring the life of Dr. Sean McCagh who, through his service and love for people, has left his community a better place.

TRIBUTE TO BIRGIT KLOHS

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I rise today to honor a lifelong leader of West Michigan’s economic development community, Birgit Klohs, president and CEO of The Right Place in Grand Rapids, MI. Ms. Klohs has made an immense impact on western Michigan over the past 33 years and has helped revitalize the region during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Born in West Germany, Ms. Klohs left her home country to attend Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, where she graduated with a bachelor’s degree in business administration. Subsequently, she began her economic development career in service to the Berrien County Economic Development Corporation as an industrial consultant and then eventually moved to the Michigan Department of Commerce where she served as an account executive focusing on western Michigan.

Later, as assistant director of the Office for Economic Expansion at Grand Valley State University, Ms. Klohs was asked to join the region’s first-ever European foreign investment mission in conjunction with The Right Place. The Right Place, an organization started in 1985 by Grand Rapids area business executives, was conceived when the region was missing out on economic opportunities. That trip involved discussions with a German company that 2 years later broke ground on a new manufacturing plant just north of Grand Rapids, a highlight in Klohs’ career dedicated to keeping and growing jobs in the region.

Mrs. Klohs applied for the directorship of The Right Place and began leading the organization in 1987. At that time, The Right Place had a small staff serving one county; after Ms. Klohs’ dynamic leadership and expertise, it grew into a
today to recognize Mr. Stephen Bates, who was Vermont’s first Black sheriff and chief of police. Mr. Bates was elected sheriff and chief of police of Vergennes, VT, in 1879, where he served as a public official until his death in 1907.

Mr. Bates faced many obstacles on his journey to his elected positions in Vergennes. Born in Shirley, VA, in 1842, historical records show that he and his family members were enslaved on the Shirley plantation. In August of 1862, Mr. Bates successfully escaped from the Shirley plantation. Several months prior to the Emancipation Act of 1863, Mr. Bates courageously helped many other enslaved people escape to freedom.

After the Civil War, when Mr. Bates was in the service of officers at Harrison’s Landing, Mr. Bates was employed by U.S. Representative Frederick E. Woodbridge, of Vergennes, VT. Mr. Bates worked as Congressman Woodbridge’s coachman and moved with him to Vergennes in 1866. In 1871, Mr. Bates married Frances Mason of Elizabethtown, NY, and had two children, Rose and Fredrick. The Bates family lived on North Street in Vergennes until 1888 when their home was destroyed by a fire. The residents of Vergennes showed much support to the family following the fire, rallying to raise money to help them during that difficult time.

During his time as chief of police, Mr. Bates was responsible for some notable arrests, including “Brooklyn Slim” and “Ottawa Red,” two members of a gang of post office burglars. He also had in his custody Oliver Curtis Perry, an infamous New York train robber of the time. Newspaper articles describe Mr. Bates as the arresting officer in murder, grand larceny, check forgery, and vagrancy cases in Vergennes and the surrounding area. In 1897, Mr. Bates was awarded $100 by the Vermont Assistant Post Office Department for his extraordinary work in arresting two people involved with robbing post offices in Morrisville, Glover, and Windsor, VT, in 1894.

Though Mr. Bates dedicated his life to his community, he still faced many challenges as the first Black sheriff in Vermont. During one incident, a man tried to kill Sheriff Bates while he was responding to a call. And while the patient was charged with murder, he was found guilty of obstructing, beating, and wounding an officer. Vergennes community members stated that Mr. Bates “was almost entirely a self-taught man, and in the discharge of the duties of his office was cool and self-restrained, rarely if ever acting hastily.” Despite this, Mr. Bates was not well-compensated for his work and was required to work a number of other jobs to provide for his family. As he was skilled at handling and caring for horses, he managed a company owned by Congressman Woodbridge’s son. He also worked as a trusted night watchman at a local bank, as well as a custodian. Uniquely dedicated to his community despite the hardship he faced, Mr. Bates also served as an appointed agent for the Humane Society, and he and his family were active members of St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Vergennes. Mr. Bates died from a cardiac arrest while milking a cow on June 10, 1907.

I am proud to honor the life and work of Mr. Stephen Bates. Though he remains relatively unknown by many Vermonters, it is encouraging to know that Vergennes and its residents came together not long after the end of the Civil War to elect Vermont’s first Black sheriff and chief of police, who was an exemplary public servant and community leader. It is a remarkable American story that I am glad to honor and celebrate.

TRIBUTE TO THE CLEMMONS FAMILY

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I rise today in recognition of Dr. Jack and Lydia Clemmons of Charlotte, VT. The Clemmons family’s positive impact on Vermont is powerful every single day, but it is especially palpable and vital today as we commemorate their work and contributions during Black History Month. The Clemmons family has been instrumental in preserving and promoting African-American farm heritage in my home State of Vermont, and for that, I applaud them greatly.

In 1962, Dr. and Mrs. Clemmons moved to Vermont, where Dr. Clemmons joined the University of Vermont’s department of pathology and became the second African-American on the faculty of the College of Medicine. Dr. Clemmons is nationally recognized for his ground-breaking work in perinatal pathology and cytogenetics. He has long advocated for universities to implement recruitment strategies that attract and retain more students and faculty of color. Mrs. Clemmons was the first African-American nurse anesthetist at the University of Vermont Medical Center.

During the same year that they began their careers in Burlington, VT, Dr. and Mrs. Clemmons purchased a historic farm in Charlotte, which was in need of significant repair and improvement. They raised five children on their farm, while working hard to restore its many buildings and working lands. For the Clemmons family, as it is for 1 of only 17 Black-owned farms in Vermont, the work was always about more than one farm; it was about the massive loss of Black-owned farmland in Vermont and across the Nation.

Dr. and Mrs. Clemmons have worked tirelessly to ensure their farm can continue under African-American ownership for generations to come. They, along with their family, have also dedicated themselves to fighting for racial justice and creating opportunities for Vermonters to learn about Black arts, farming, heritage, and culture. The arts are a particular passion of Mrs. Clemmons, who ran a
shop in their town of Charlotte, which featured sculptures and other artwork imported from Africa. Additionally, the Clemmons farm is now 1 of 22 official landmarks on Vermont’s African-American Heritage Trail, also serving as a multicultural arts center, with a gallery accommodating all Vermonters to enjoy.

I am grateful to Dr. and Mrs. Clemmons for their enormously important contribution to Black farming and cultural heritage in our State. I wish the entire Clemmons family all the best today, and for generations to come.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT
Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Roberts, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED
In executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.

PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

REPORT OF THE CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY THAT WAS ORIGINALLY DECLARED IN PROCLAMATION 6867 OF MARCH 1, 1996, WITH RESPECT TO THE UNAUTHORIZED ENTRY OF ANY UNITED STATES-REGISTERED VESSELS INTO CUBAN TERRITORIAL WATERS—PM 2

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation:

To the Congress of the United States:
Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the Federal Register and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the Federal Register for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency with respect to Cuba that was declared on March 1, 1996, in Proclamation 6867, as amended by Proclamations 7757 on February 28, 1999, Proclamation 5998 on February 24, 2016, and Proclamation 9994 on February 22, 2018, is to continue in effect beyond March 1, 2021.

There remains a need to continue this national emergency, based on a disturbance or threatened disturbance of the international relations for the United States related to Cuba. The unauthorized entry of any United States-registered vessel into Cuban territorial waters continues to be contrary to the foreign policy of the United States. The unauthorized entry of vessels subject to the jurisdiction of the United States into Cuban territorial waters continues to be contrary to the foreign policy of the United States. Further, the unauthorized entry of United States-registered vessels into Cuban territorial waters continues to be detrimental to United States foreign policy and counter to the purpose of Executive Order 12907, which is to ensure, among other things, safe, orderly, and legal migration. The possibility of large-scale unauthorized entries of United States-registered vessels into Cuban territorial waters would disturb the international relations of the United States toward Cuba by allowing for or providing the means to facilitate a mass migration of Cuban nationals and threatening our national security.

Therefore, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency with respect to Cuba and the emergency authority relating to the regulation of the anchorage and movement of vessels set out in Proclamation 6867, as amended by Proclamations 7757, Proclamation 9386, and Proclamation 9994.

JOSEPH R. BIDEN.
THE WHITE HOUSE, February 24, 2021.

PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

REPORT OF THE CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY THAT WAS ORIGINALLY DECLARED IN PROCLAMATION 9994 OF MARCH 13, 2020, WITH RESPECT TO THE CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID–19) PANDEMIC—PM 3

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on Finance:

To the Congress of the United States:
Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the Federal Register and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the Federal Register for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency declared in Proclamation 9994 of March 13, 2020, beginning March 1, 2020, concerning the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID–19) pandemic, is to continue in effect beyond March 1, 2021.

There remains a need to continue this national emergency. The COVID–19 pandemic continues to cause significant risk to the public health and safety of the Nation. More than 500,000 people in the Nation have died from the disease, and it is essential to continue to combat and respond to COVID–19 with the full capacity and capability of the Federal Government. Therefore, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared in Proclamation 9994 concerning the COVID–19 pandemic.

JOSEPH R. BIDEN.
THE WHITE HOUSE, February 24, 2021.

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE
At 12:03 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 208. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 500 West Main Street, Suite 102 in Tupelo, Mississippi, as the "Colonel Carlyle ‘Smitty’ Harris Post Office".

H.R. 264. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1101 Charlotte Street in Georgetown, South Carolina, as the "Joseph Hayne Rainey Memorial Post Office Building".

H.R. 722. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 229 Minnetonka Avenue South in Wayzata, Minnesota, as the "Jim Ramstad Post Office".

H.R. 813. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1050 Sunset Road Southwest in Albuquerque, New Mexico, as the "Jose Hernandez Post Office Building".

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

H.R. 208. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 500 West Main Street, Suite 102 in Tupelo, Mississippi, as the "Colonel Carlyle ‘Smitty’ Harris Post Office"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 264. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1101 Charlotte Street in Georgetown, South Carolina, as the "Joseph Hayne Rainey Memorial Post Office Building"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 722. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 229 Minnetonka Avenue South in Wayzata, Minnesota, as the "Jim Ramstad Post Office"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 813. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1050 Sunset Road Southwest in Albuquerque, New Mexico, as the "Jose Hernandez Post Office Building"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.
The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC–499. A communication from the Secretary of Defense, transmitting a report on the approved retirement of General Robert B. Abrams, United States Army, and his advancement to the grade of general on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–500. A communication from the Secretary of Defense, transmitting a report on the approved retirement of Admiral S. Davidson, United States Navy, and his advancement to the grade of vice admiral on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–501. A communication from the Secretary of Defense, transmitting a report on the approved retirement of Vice Admiral Michael J. Dumont, United States Navy Reserve, and his advancement to the grade of vice admiral on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–502. A communication from the Secretary of Defense, transmitting a report on the approved retirement of Vice Admiral Nancy C. Norton, United States Navy, and her advancement to the grade of vice admiral on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–503. A communication from the Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Establishment of a Domestic Hemp Production Program" (77 FCF Part 909 (Docket No. AMS–SC–19–0042)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 18, 2021; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–504. A communication from the Acting Chief Privacy Officer, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Department of Homeland Security Privacy Office's Fiscal Year 2020 Semiannual Report to Congress"; to the Committees on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs; Select Committee on Intelligence; and the Judiciary.

EC–505. A communication from the Associate General Counsel for General Law, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Identification of a vacancy in the position of Secretary, Department of Homeland Security, received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 18, 2021; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.


EC–508. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 23–615, "UDC PR Harris Exclusive Use Repeal Temporary Amendment Act of 2021"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.


**EXECUTIVE REPORT OF COMMITTEE**

The following executive report of a nomination was submitted:

*By Mr. CARDIN, for the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.*

Isabella Casillas Guzman, of California, to be Administrator of the Small Business Administration.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.*

**INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS**

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

By Mr. WICKER (for himself, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. CASPER, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. CASEY, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. INHOFE, and Mr. BARRASSO):

S. 400. A bill to designate the headquarters building of the Department of Transportation located at 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE, in Washington, DC, as the "William T. Coleman, Jr., Federal Building"; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. LANKFORD (for himself, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. RISCH, Mr. MORAN, Mr. Daines, Mr. Fischer, Mr. BOOKMAN, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. CRAMER, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. THUNE, Mr. HIRONES, Mr. Sasse, Mr. INHOFE, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. ROUNDS, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. HAWLEY, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mr. LEIT, and the Committee on Environment and Public Works).

S. 401. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to prohibit governmental discrimination against health care providers that participate in the Public Health Service Act; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. THUNE (for himself, Ms. STABE-GUARDIANI, and Mr. WARNER):

S. 402. A bill to amend the Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Account-
services under the Older Americans Act of 1965; to the Committee on Appropriations.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mrs. SHAH, Mr. BENNET, Mrs. SANDErs, Mr. MURPHY, Ms. ROB?, Mrs. HERNANDEZ, Ms. STEBBINS, Mr. VA?N HOLLEN, and Mr. SANDERS):

S. 415. A bill to improve Federal efforts with respect to the prevention of maternal mortality, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. MORAN:

S. 419. A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide for a full annuity of more than one year unless certain circumstances, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.


By Mr. MURPHY (for himself, Mr. RUBIO, Ms. WARREN, and Mr. CASSIDY):

S. 411. A bill to improve Federal efforts with respect to foreign persons that knowingly spread malign disinformation as part of or on behalf of a foreign government or political party for purposes of political warfare and to require a determination regarding the United Front Work Department of the Chinese Communist Party; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. MARKEY (for himself and Ms. WARREN):

S. 420. A bill to direct the Secretary of Transportation to establish a grant program for projects to strengthen and protect vulnerable infrastructure used during mass evacuations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Mr. CARPER, Ms. FEINSTEIN, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. SANDERS, and Mr. PADDILA):

S. 421. A bill to direct the Secretory of Transportation to establish a grant program to protect vulnerable mothers and babies from climate change risks, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. MARKEY:

S. 422. A bill to establish the Commission on the Judiciary.

By Mr. INHOFE (for himself, Mr. BROWN, Mr. RUBIO, and Mr. CRUZ):


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

S. 424. A bill to amend the America’s Water Infrastructure Act of 2018 to expand the Indian reservation drinking water program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Mr. KLOBUCHAR:

S. 425. A bill to establish the Commission on the Judiciary.

By Mr. MURPHY (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. SANDERS, and Mr. BERNSTEIN):

S. 426. A bill to require States to establish complete street programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. MERKLEY (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Mr. SCHUMER):

S. 427. A bill to require States to establish complete street programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. FEINSTEIN, Mr. MURPHY, Ms. WARNER, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. VA?N HOLLEN, and Mr. MERKLEY):

S. 428. A bill to amend the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Ms. ROSEN):

S. 429. A bill to provide Federal matching funding for State-level broadband programs; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

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

S. 430. A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide for a full annuity of more than one year unless certain circumstances, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Appropriations.

By Mr. COTTON:

S. 431. A bill to impose sanctions with respect to foreign persons that knowingly spread malign disinformation as part of or on behalf of a foreign government or political party for purposes of political warfare and to require a determination regarding the United Front Work Department of the Chinese Communist Party; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. MARKEY (for himself and Ms. WARREN):

S. 432. A bill to direct the Secretary of Agriculture to develop a program to provide Federal funds for projects to strengthen and protect vulnerable infrastructure used during mass evacuations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. MERKLEY (for himself, Mr. CARPER, Ms. FEINSTEIN, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. SANDERS, and Mr. PADDILA):

S. 433. A bill to establish the National Office of New Americans, to reduce obstacles to United States citizenship, to support the integration of immigrants, to promote economic, cultural, and civic life of the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Ms. SANDERS):


By Mr. MERKLEY (for himself, Ms. FEINSTEIN, Mr. ROY, Mr. MURPHY, Ms. BROW, and Mr. VA?N HOLLEN):
S. 438. A bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to clarify the Food and Drug Administration’s jurisdiction over certain tobacco products, and to protect jobs and small businesses involved in the sale, manufacturing and distribution of traditional and premium cigars; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

S. Res. 71. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that aliens convicted of drug driving offenses qualify as a public safety threat for the purposes of immigration enforcement; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. COTTON (for himself, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. HAWLEY, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. SAENZ, Mr. Daines, Mr. ROUND, Mr. Young, Mr. BARRASSO, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. THUNE, Mr. INHOFE, Mrs. HOEVEN, Mr. HAGERTY, Mr. LANKFORD, and Mr. CRAPO):

S. Res. 72. A resolution opposing the lifting of sanctions imposed with respect to Iran without addressing the full scope of Iran’s malign activities, including its nuclear program, ballistic and cruise missile capabilities, weapons proliferation, support for terrorism, hostage-taking, gross human rights violations, and other destabilizing activities; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Ms. ERNST (for herself and Mr. RUBIO):

S. Res. 73. A resolution reaffirming the commitment to media diversity and pledging to work with media entities and diverse stakeholders to develop common ground solutions for the preservation of media diversity; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. BROWN (for himself, Mr. BARROS, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, Ms. KLOBuchar, Mr. WICKER, Mr. MARKEY, and Mr. BOOKER):

S. Res. 74. A resolution designating February 28, 2021, as “Rare Disease Day”; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. BOOKER (for himself, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, Mr. DUHRIN, Mr. BLUNT, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. TILLIS, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. REED, Ms. SMITH, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. WICKER, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. BROWN, Mr. SHELEY, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. RUHLE, Mr. SANCHEZ, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. HAGERTY, Mr. COONS, Mr. LANKFORD, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BRUIN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. WARNER, Ms. ERNST, Mr. KAIN, Mr. BUEH, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. YOUNG, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. SMITH, Ms. SINDA, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. SCHATZ, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. KLOBuchar, Mr. KING, Mr. BENNET, Ms. WARREN, Mr. HENIF, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. CARPER, Mr. CASEY, Mr. REED, Mr. CARDIN, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. LIUJAN, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mrs. BLACKBURN, and Mr. HOEVEN):

S. Res. 75. A resolution celebrating Black History Month; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 25

At the request of Mrs. BLACKBURN, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. KENNEDY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 25, a bill to restrict certain Federal grants for States that grant driver licenses to illegal immigrants and fail to share information about criminal aliens with the Federal Government.

S. 51

At the request of Mr. CARPER, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LIUJAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 51, a bill to provide for the admission of the State of Washington, D.C. into the Union.

S. 134

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 134, a bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a retraining assistance program for unemployed veterans, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 134, supra.

S. 158

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 158, a bill to promote international efforts in combating corruption, kleptocracy, and illicit finance by foreign officials and other foreign persons, including through a new anti-corruption action fund, and for other purposes.

S. 200

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 200, a bill to provide for the admission of the State of Washington, D.C. into the Union.

S. 233

At the request of Mr. DURHIN, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 233, a bill to establish a National Climate Bank.

S. 313

At the request of Mr. DURHIN, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 313, a bill to amend the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 to expand online benefit redemption options under the supplemental nutrition assistance program, and for other purposes.

S. 347

At the request of Mr. SMITH, the names of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) and the Senator from Nevada (Ms. ROSEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 347, a bill to improve the collection and review of maternal health data to address maternal mortality, serve maternal morbidity, and other adverse maternal health outcomes.

S. 361

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 361, a bill to establish a 90-day limit to file a petition for judicial review of a permit, license, or approval for a highway or public transportation project, and for other purposes.

S. 395

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, the names of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) and the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) were added as cosponsors of S. 395, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend certain tax credits related to electric cars, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 43

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from California (Mr. PADILLA) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 43, a resolution recognizing the contributions of the Federal Government to implement an agenda to Transform, Heal, and Renew by Investing in a Vibrant Economy (“THRIVE”).

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTION

By Mr. THUNE (for himself, Ms. STABENOW, Mrs. FISCHER, and Mr. WARNER):

S. 402. A bill to amend the Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015 to include a trade negotiating objecting relating to addressing the security of the global communications infrastructure; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. THUNE, Ms. KLOBuchar, and Mr. HOEVEN:

S. 730. A bill to safely and orderly reopen American schools, workplaces, and communities, and for other purposes.

SEC. 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Network Security Trade Act of 2021”.

SEC. 2. TRADE NEGOTIATING OBJECTIVE RELATING TO SECURITY OF COMMUNICATIONS NETWORKS.

Section 102(a) of the Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015 (19 U.S.C. 4201(a)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (14), by striking “; and” and inserting a semicolon;

(2) in paragraph (15), by striking the period at the end and inserting “; and”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following: “(16) to ensure that the equipment and technology that create the global communications infrastructure are not compromised by addressing—

“(A) barriers to the security of communications networks and supply chains; and

“(B) unfair trade practices of suppliers of communications equipment that are owned, controlled, or supported by a foreign government.”;
resentatives of the United States of America in

the prevention of maternal mortality and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.
This Act may be cited as the “Mothers and Offspring Mortality and Morbidity Awareness Act” or the “MOMMa’s Act”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.
Congress finds the following:

(1) Every year, across the United States, nearly 40,000 give birth, about 700 women suffer fatal complications during pregnancy, while giving birth or during the postpartum period, and about 70,000 women suffer near-fatal, partur-related complications.

(2) The maternal mortality rate is often used as a proxy to measure the overall health of a population. While the infant mortality rate in the United States has reached its lowest point, the risk of death for women in the United States during pregnancy, childbirth, or the postpartum period is higher than such risk in many other high-income countries. The estimated maternal mortality rate (deaths/live births) for the 48 contiguous States and Washington, D.C. increased from 14.5 percent in 2000 to 17.3 in 2017. The United States is the only industrialized nation with a rising maternal mortality rate.

(3) The National Vital Statistics System of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicates that there were 74,000 maternal deaths for every 100,000 live births in the United States. This ratio is more than double that of most other high-income countries.

(4) It is estimated that more than 60 percent of maternal deaths in the United States are preventable.

(5) The State of Louisiana to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the maternal mortality rate varies drastically for women by race and ethnicity. There are about 13 deaths per 100,000 live births for White women, 40.8 deaths per 100,000 live births for non-Hispanic Black women, and 29.7 deaths per 100,000 live births for American Indian/Alaska Native women. While disparities are evident for women, which is one of the most disconcerting racial disparities in public health. This disparity widens in certain cities and across the country.

(6) In the United States, non-Hispanic Black women are about 3 times more likely to die from causes related to pregnancy and childbirth compared to non-Hispanic White women, which is one of the most disconcerting racial disparities in public health. This disparity widens in certain cities and across the country.

(7) According to the National Center for Health Statistics of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the maternal mortality rate heightens when are, as women 40 and older die at a rate of 81.9 per 100,000 births compared to 10.6 per 100,000 for women under 25. This translates to women over 40 being 7.7 times more likely to die compared to their counterparts under 25 years of age.

(8) The COVID-19 pandemic risks exacerbating existing maternal health problems. A recent study of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggests that pregnant women are at a significantly higher risk for severe outcomes, including hospitalization, and death from COVID-19 as compared to non-pregnant women. The COVID-19 pandemic has also decreased access to prenatal and postpartum care.

(9) The National Program of Cancer Registries in paragraphs (1) through (8) are of major concern to researchers, academics, members of the business community, and providers as it is the obstetric continuum represented by organizations such as—

(A) the American College of Nurse-Midwives;

(B) the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists;

(C) the American Medical Association;

(D) the Association of Women’s Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses;

(E) the Black Mamas Matter Alliance;

(F) the Black Women’s Health Imperative;

(G) the California Maternal Quality Care Collaborative;

(H) EverThrive Illinois;

(I) the Illinois Perinatal Quality Collaborative;

(J) the March of Dimes;

(K) the National Association of Certified Professional Midwives;

(L) the National Birth Equity Collaborative;

(M) the National Partnership for Women & Families;

(N) the National Polycystic Ovary Syndrome Association;

(O) the Preeclampsia Foundation;

(P) the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine;

(Q) the What To Expect Project.

(10) Hemorrhage, cardiovascular and coronary conditions, cardiomyopathy, infection or sepsis, embolism, mental health conditions (including substance use disorder), hypertensive disorders, stroke and cerebrovascular accidents, and anesthesia complications are the predominant medical causes of maternal-related deaths and complications. Most of these conditions are largely preventable or treatable when these conditions are not preventable, mortality and morbidity may be prevented when conditions are diagnosed and treated in a timely manner.

(11) According to a study published by the Journal of Perinatal Education, doula-assisted mothers were twice as likely to have a low-birthweight baby, 2 times less likely to experience a birth complication involving themselves or their baby, and significantly more likely to initiate breastfeeding. Doula care has also been shown to produce cost savings resulting in part from reduced rates of cesarean and preterm births.

(12) Intimate partner violence is one of the leading causes of maternal death, and women are more likely to experience intimate partner violence during pregnancy than at any other time in their lives. It is also more dangerous than pregnancy. Intimate partner violence during pregnancy and postpartum crosses every demographic and has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

(13) Oral health is an important part of perinatal health. Reducing bacteria in a woman’s mouth during pregnancy can significantly reduce her risk of developing oral diseases and spreading decay-causing bacteria to her baby. Moreover, some evidence suggests that women with periodontal disease during pregnancy are at a greater risk for poor birth outcomes, such as preeclampsia, pre-term birth, and low-birth weight. Furthermore, a woman’s oral health during pregnancy is a good predictor of her newborn’s oral health, and since mothers can unintentionally spread oral bacteria to their babies through their saliva, prevention efforts should happen even before children are born, as a matter of pre-pregnancy health and prenatal care for pregnancy.

(14) In the United States, death reporting and analysis is a State function rather than a Federal process. States report all deaths—maternal death and non-maternal death—voluntarily on a confidential basis, without standardization across States. While the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has the vision for collecting death-related data based on death certificates, these data are not sufficiently reported by States in an organized and standard format such that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is able to identify causes of maternal death and best practices for the prevention of such death.

(15) Vital statistics systems often underestimate maternal mortality and are insufficient data sources from which to derive a full scope of medical and social determinant factors contributing to maternal deaths, such as intimate partner violence. While the addition of pregnancy checkboxes on death certificates since 2003 has improved States’ abilities to identify pregnancy-related deaths, they are not generally completed by obstetric providers or persons trained to recognize recognized maternal mortality. Thus, these vital forms may be missing information or may capture inconsistent data. Due to varying maternal mortality-realted analyses, lack of reliability, and granularity in data, current maternal mortality informatics do not fully encapsulate the medical and statistical determinant factors that contribute to such high maternal mortality rates within the United States compared to other developed nations. Lack of standardization of data and data sharing across States and between Federal entities, health networks, and research institutions keep the Nation in the dark about ways to prevent maternal deaths.

(16) Having reliable and valid State data aggregated at the Federal level are critical to the Nation’s ability to quell surges in maternal mortality by identifying cases of maternal morbidity, including complications that result in chronic illness and future increased risk of death, be investigated at a national level and then shared to States for collecting death-related data based on death certificates, these data are not sufficiently reported by States in an organized and standard format such that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is able to identify causes of maternal death and best practices for the prevention of such death.

(17) Leaders in maternal wellness highly recommended that maternity care networks and health networks, and research institutions keep the Nation in the dark about ways to prevent maternal deaths.

(18) The United Nations’ Millennium Development Goal 5a aimed to reduce by 75 percent, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality rate, yet this metric has not been achieved. In fact, the maternal mortality rate in the United States has been estimated to have more than doubled between 2000 and 2017.

(19) Many States have struggled to establish or maintain Maternal Mortality Review...
toxic stress, the repetition of high-doses of cortisol to the brain, can harm healthy neuro-

ulogical development and other body sys-
tems, which can have cascading physical and

mental effects for the pregnant women in the Adverse Childhood Experiences study of the Centers for Disease Control and Pre-

vention.

A growing body of evidence-based re-

search has shown the correlation between the stress associated with systematic racism and one’s birthing outcomes. The undue stress of sex and race discrimination paired with institutional racism has been dem-

onstrated to contribute to a higher risk of

maternal mortality, particularly among non-

White persons, and increasing the risk of one’s gestational age, maternal age, socio-

economic status, educational level, or indi-

vidual-level health risk factors, including poverty, limited access to prenatal care, and poor physical and mental health (although these are not nominal factors). Black women remain the most at risk for pregnancy-asso-
ciated or pregnancy-related causes of death. When it comes to preeclampsia, for example, for which obesity is a risk factor, Black

women of normal weight remain at a higher risk. In the immediate prepartum period compared to non-Black obese women.

(23) The rising maternal mortality rate in the United States is driven primarily by the disproportionately high rates of Black maternal mortality.

(24) A growing body of evidence-based re-

search shows that stress, called weathering, and experiencing pre-term birth. Racism is a risk-factor for these aforementioned experi-

ences. This cumulative stress, called weathering, can start in utero, and is situated in everyday spaces where Black women establish livelihood. Systemat-

ic racism, structural barriers, lack of ac-

cess to care, lack of access to nutritious food, and social determinants of health exac-

erbate Black women’s likelihood to experi-

ence poor or fatal birthing outcomes, but do not fully account for the great disparity.

(25) Compared to women from other racial and ethnic demographics, Black women experience a more truncated spectrum experi-

ence prolonged, unrelenting stress related to systematic racial and gender discrimination, contributing to higher rates of maternal mortality, giving birth to low-birthweight babies, and experiencing pre-term birth. Racism is a risk-factor for these aforementioned experi-

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ence poor or fatal birthing outcomes, but do not fully account for the great disparity.

All of these stressors are exacerbated by the reality that Black women are more likely to experience poverty, limited access to prenatal care, and poor physical and mental health (although these are not nominal factors). Black women remain the most at risk for pregnancy-asso-
ciated or pregnancy-related causes of death. When it comes to preeclampsia, for example, for which obesity is a risk factor, Black

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Not all people who have been pregnant of the Centers for Disease Control and Pre-

vention.

(29) Not all people who have been pregnant

and severe maternal morbidity;
(B) to ensure, in developing and implementing maternal safety bundles under subparagraph (A), that such maternal safety bundles—

(i) identify the quality improvement needs of a State, perinatal quality collaborative, or health care system by factoring in the results and findings of relevant data reviews, such as reviews conducted by a State maternal mortality review committee and

(ii) address topics which may include—

(I) information on evidence-based practices to improve the quality and safety of maternal health care in hospitals and other health care settings of a State or health care system, including by addressing topics commonly associated with health complications or risks related to prenatal care, labor care, birth, and postpartum care;

(II) best practices for improving maternal health care based on data findings and reviews conducted by a State maternal mortality review committee that address topics of relevance to common complications or health risks related to prenatal care, labor care, birth, and postpartum care;

(III) information on addressing determinants of health that impact maternal health outcomes for women before, during, and after pregnancy;

(IV) obstetric hemorrhage;

(V) obstetric and postpartum care for women with substance use disorders, including opioid use disorder;

(VI) maternal cardiovascular system;

(VII) maternal mental health;

(VIII) postpartum care basics for maternal safety;

(IX) reduction of peripartum racial and ethnic disparities;

(X) reduction of primary caesarean birth;

(XI) severe hypertension in pregnancy;

(XII) maternal morbidity reviews;

(XIII) support after a severe maternal morbidity event;

(XIV) thromboembolism;

(XV) optimization of support for breastfeeding;

(XVI) maternal oral health; and

(XVII) Intimate partner violence; and

(C) to provide ongoing technical assistance at the national and State levels to support implementation of maternal safety bundles under subparagraph (A).

(4) MATERNAL SAFETY BUNDLE DEFINED.—For purposes of this subsection, the term “maternal safety bundle” means standardized, evidence-informed processes for maternal health care.

(5) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—For purposes of carrying out this subsection, there is authorized to be appropriated $14,000,000 per year for each of fiscal years 2021 through 2023.

(6) FUNDING FOR STATE-BASED PERINATAL QUALITY COLLABORATIVES DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY.—

(I) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Health and Human Services (referred to in this subsection as the “Secretary”), acting through the Division of Reproductive Health of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, shall establish a grant program to be known as the State-Based Perinatal Quality Collaborative Development and Sustainability program under which the Secretary awards grants to eligible entities for the purpose of development and sustainability of perinatal quality collaboratives in every State, the District of Columbia, and eligible territories, in order to measurably improve perinatal care and perinatal health outcomes for pregnant and postpartum women and their infants.

(II) GRANT AMOUNTS.—Grants awarded under this subsection shall be in amounts not to exceed $250,000 per year, for the duration of the grant period.

(3) STATE-BASED PERINATAL QUALITY COLLABORATIVE DEFINED.—For purposes of this section, “State-based perinatal quality collaborative” means a network of teams that—

(A) is multi-disciplinary in nature and includes the full range of perinatal and maternity care providers;

(B) works to improve measurable outcomes for maternal and infant health by advancing evidence-informed practices using quality improvement principles;

(C) works with hospital-based or out-patient based clinical teams, experts, and stakeholders, including patients and families, to spread best practices and optimize resources to improve perinatal care and outcomes;

(D) employs strategies that include the use of the collaborative learning model to provide opportunities for hospitals and clinical teams to collaborate on improvement strategies, rapid-response data to provide timely feedback to hospital and other clinical teams to track progress, and quality improvement guidance to providers and coaching to hospital and clinical teams;

(E) has the goal of improving population-level outcomes in maternal and infant health; and

(F) has the goal of improving outcomes of all birthing people, through the coordination, integration, and collaboration across birth settings.

(4) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—For purposes of carrying out this subsection, there is authorized to be appropriated $14,000,000 per year for each of fiscal years 2021 through 2023.

(5) EXPANSION OF MEDICAID AND CHIP COVERAGE FOR PREGNANT AND POSTPARTUM WOMEN.—

(I) REQUIRING COVERAGE OF ORAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR PREGNANT AND POSTPARTUM WOMEN.—

(A) MEDICAID.—Section 1902 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396a) is amended—

(i) in subsection (a)(4)—

(1) in subsection (a)(4)—

(A) MEDICAID.—Section 1902 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396a) is amended—

(i) in subsection (a)(4)—

(II) Oral Health Services for Pregnant and Postpartum Women.—

(A) in subsection (e)—

(B) CHIP.—Section 2105(d) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 300e) is amended by striking “60-day” and inserting “1-year”.

(5) MAINTENANCE OF EFFORT.—

(A) MEDICAID.—Section 1902(1)(C) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396a) is amended by striking “60-day” and inserting “1-year”.

(6) INFORMATION ON BENEFITS.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services shall submit a plan to the Senate Committee on Appropriations of the Senate and the House Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives containing information on—

(A) the payment of premiums for the MedICAID program for pregnant women who are eligible for such assistance under section 1902(c)(5)(A) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396a(c)(5)(A)), including information on—

(i) the amount of such payments; and

(ii) the extent to which such payments reduce the premiums paid by beneficiaries who are eligible for such assistance under such section.

(B) the payment of premiums for the CHIP program for pregnant women who are eligible for such assistance under section 1139C(c) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396t-5(c)), including information on—

(i) the amount of such payments; and

(ii) the extent to which such payments reduce the premiums paid by beneficiaries who are eligible for such assistance under such section.
(A) benefits that States are required to provide to pregnant and postpartum women under such programs; 

(B) optional benefits that States may provide to pregnant and postpartum women under such programs; and 

(C) the availability of different kinds of benefits for pregnant and postpartum women, including oral health and mental health benefits, under such programs. 

(7) FEDERAL FUNDING FOR COST OF EXTENDED MEDICAID AND CHIP COVERAGE FOR POSTPARTUM WOMEN. 

(A) MEDICAID.—Section 1905 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396d), as amended by paragraph (6), is amended— 

(i) in subsection (b), by striking “(i), (ii), and (iii)” and inserting “(a), and (b)”; and 

(ii) by adding at the end the following: 

“(B) optional benefits that States may provide during the 305-day period that begins on the 60th day after the last day of her pregnancy (including any such period that begins during the month in which such period ends), shall be equal to—” 

(1) 100 percent for the first 20 calendar quarters during which this subsection is in effect; and 

“(2) 90 percent for calendar quarters thereafter.” 

(B) CHIP.—Section 2105(c) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1397e(c)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph: 

“(B) ENHANCED PAYMENT FOR EXTENDED ASSISTANCE PROVIDED TO PREGNANT WOMEN.—Notwithstanding subsection (b), the enhanced FMAP for extended medical assistance for a woman who is eligible for such assistance on the basis of being pregnant or having been pregnant that is provided during the 305-day period that begins on the 60th day after the last day of her pregnancy (including any such period that begins during the month in which such period ends), shall be equal to—” 

(1) 100 percent for the first 20 calendar quarters during which this subsection is in effect; and 

“(2) 90 percent for calendar quarters thereafter.” 

(8) GUIDANCE ON STATE OPTIONS FOR MEDICAID COVERAGE OF DOULA SERVICES.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, acting through the Administrator of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, shall make publicly available on the internet website of the Department of Health and Human Services information submitted to the Secretary by States concerning options for Medicaid coverage and payment for support services provided by doulas. 

(9) BUREAUCRACY.—(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subparagraph (B), the amendments made by this subsection shall take effect on the first day of the first calendar quarter that begins on or after the date that is 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act. 

(B) EXCEPTION FOR STATE LEGISLATION.—In the case of a State plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act or a State child health plan under title XXI of such Act that the Secretary determines requires State legislation in order for the respective plan to meet any requirement imposed by amendments made by this section, the State plan shall not be regarded as failing to comply with the requirements of such title solely on the basis of its failure to meet such an additional requirement. 

(2) EVALUATION.—The Secretary shall evaluate each regional center established or supported pursuant to subsection (a) and disseminate the findings resulting from such each evaluation to the appropriate public and private entities. 

(3) DISTRIBUTION.—The Secretary shall share evaluations and overall findings with State departments of health and other relevant State level offices to inform State and local best practices. 

(4) MATERNAL MORTALITY DEFINED.—In this section, the term ‘maternal mortality’ means death of a woman that occurs during pregnancy or within the one-year period following the end of such pregnancy. 

(5) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—For purposes of carrying out this section, there is authorized to be appropriated $75,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2021 through 2025.”. 

(6) SPECIAL SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION PROGRAM FOR WOMEN, INFANTS, AND CHILDREN.—Section 17(b) of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 1766n(b)(A)(ii)) is amended— 

(1) by striking the clause designation and heading and all that follows through “A State” and inserting the following: 

“(ii) WOMEN.—” 

(1) BREASTFEEDING WOMEN.—A State;” 

(2) in subclause (I) (as so designated), by striking “1 year” and all that follows through “earlier” and inserting “2 years postpartum”; and 

(3) by adding at the end the following: 

“(II) POSTPARTUM WOMEN.—A State may elect to certify a postpartum woman for a period of 2 years.”. 

(7) DEFINITIONS.—In this section: 

(1) MATERNAL MORTALITY.—The term “maternal mortality” means death of a woman that occurs during pregnancy or within the one-year period following the end of such pregnancy. 

(2) PREGNANCY RELATED DEATH.—The term “pregnancy related death” includes the death of a woman during pregnancy or within one year of the end of pregnancy from a pregnancy complication or a condition that was initiated by pregnancy, or the aggravation of an unrelated condition by the physiologic effects of pregnancy. 

(3) SEVERE MATERNAL MORBIDITY.—The term “severe maternal morbidity” includes unexpected outcomes of labor and delivery that result in significant short-term or long-term consequences to health. 

(4) INCREASING EXCISE TAXES ON CIGARETTES AND ESTABLISHING EXCISE TAX AMONG ALL TOBACCO PRODUCT TAX RATES. 

(a) TAX PARITY FOR ROLL-YOUR-OWN TOBACCO.—Section 5709(g) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking “$24.78” and inserting “$49.56.”. 

(b) TAX PARITY FOR PIPE TOBACCO.—Section 5709(b) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking “$2.8311 cents” and inserting “$4.56.”. 

(c) TAX PARITY FOR SMOKELESS TOBACCO.—Section 5709(e) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended— 

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking “$1.51” and inserting “$6.43”; 

(B) in paragraph (2), by striking “50.33 cents” and inserting “$10.74”; and 

(C) by adding at the end the following: 

“(4) SMOKELESS TOBACCO SOLD IN DISCRETE SINGLE-USE UNITS.— ‘Smokeless tobacco’ means— 

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking “or chewing tobacco” and inserting “, chewing tobacco, or discrete single-use unit”;
(B) in paragraphs (2) and (3), by inserting "that is not a discrete single-use unit" before the period in each such paragraph; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

"(4) TAX-PARITY FOR SMALL CIGARS.—The term ‘discrete single-use unit’ means any product containing, made from, or derived from tobacco or nicotine that—

(A) is intended to be smoked; and

(B) is in the form of a lozenge, tablet, pill, pouche, dissolvable strip, or other discrete single-use or single-dose unit.

(d) (1) SMALL CIGARETS.—Paragraph (1) of section 5701(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking "$56.33" and inserting "$100.66".

(2) CIGARETTE TAXES.—Section 5701(b)(2) of such Code is amended by striking "$105.69" and inserting "$211.38".

(g) T AX RATES ADJUSTED FOR INFLATION.—Section 5701 of such Code, as amended by subsection (g), is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

"(f) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of section 5701 of such Code, as amended by subsection (g), the amount specified in section 1(f)(3) for the calendar year 2021, determined by subtracting ‘calendar year 2020’ from subpara-

graph (A)(i) thereof.

"(g) ROUNDED.—If any amount as adjusted under paragraph (f) is not a multiple of $0.01, such amount shall be rounded to the nearest higher multiple of $0.01.".

(k) FLOOR STOCKS TAXES.—(1) IMPOSITION OF TAX.—On tobacco products manufactured in or imported into the United States which are removed before any tax due date and held on such date for sale by any person are imposed a tax in an amount equal to the excess of—

(A) the tax which would be imposed under section 5701 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 on the article if the article had been re-

moved on such date, over

(B) the prior tax (if any) imposed under section 5701 of such Code on such article.

(2) CREDIT AGAINST TAX.—Each person shall be allowed as a credit against the taxes imposed by paragraph (1) an amount equal to $500. Such credit shall not exceed the amount of taxes imposed by paragraph (1) on such date for which such person is liable.

(3) LIABILITY FOR TAX AND METHOD OF PAY-

MENT.—(A) LIABILITY FOR TAX.—A person holding tobacco products on any tax due date to which any tax imposed by paragraph (1) ap-

plies shall be liable for such tax.

(B) METHOD OF PAYMENT.—The tax imposed by paragraph (1) shall be paid in such man-

ner as the Secretary shall prescribe by regu-

lations.

(3) TIME FOR PAYMENT.—The tax imposed by paragraph (1) shall be paid on or before the date that is 120 days after the effective date of the tax due date.

4. ARTICLES IN FOREIGN TRADE ZONES.—Notwithstanding the Act of June 18, 1934 (commonly known as the Foreign Trade Zones Act, 19 U.S.C. § 202 et seq.), or any other provision of law, any article (including a tobacco product) which is located in a foreign trade zone on any tax due date shall be subject to the tax imposed by paragraph (1) if—

(A) the article is held on such date under the supervision of an officer of the United States Customs Service or the Department of Homeland Security pursuant to the 2d proviso of section 3(a) of such Act, or

(B) such article is held on such date under the supervision of an officer of the United States Customs Service or the Department of Homeland Security pursuant to the 2d proviso of such section 3(a).

5. DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this sub-

section—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Any term used in this subsection which is also used in section 5702 of such Code shall have the same meaning as such term has in such section 5702.

(2) TAX INCREASE DATE.—The term “tax increase date” means the effective date of any increase in any tobacco product excise taxes imposed by paragraph (4) of this subsection made by this section (other than subsection (j)) there-

of.

(1) SMALL CIGARETTE TAX.

(a) AMOUNT.—Section 5702(b)(1) of such Code is amended by inserting "$50.33" and inserting "$100.66".

(b) TAX PARITY.—Section 5702(b)(2) of such Code is amended by inserting "$105.69" and inserting "$211.38".

(c) EFFECTIVE DATES.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraphs (2) through (4), the amendments made by this section shall apply to articles removed (as defined in section 5702(e) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986) after the last day of the month which includes the date of the enactment of this Act.

(ii) DISCRETE SINGLE-USE UNITS AND PROCESSED TOBACCO.—The amendments made by subsections (c)(1), (c)(2), and (f) shall apply to articles removed (as defined in section 5702(e) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986) after the date that is 6 months after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(iii) LARGE CIGARS.—The amendments made by subsection (g) shall apply to articles removed after December 31, 2021.

(iv) OTHER TOBACCO PRODUCTS.—The amendments made by subsections (a), (b), and (j) shall apply to articles removed after the last day of the month which includes the date which the Secretary of the Treasury (or the Secretary of the Treasury’s delegate) issues final regula-

tions establishing the level of tax for such product.

By Ms. ROBUCHAR.

S. 422. A bill to allow Senators, Sen-

ators-elect, committees of the Senate, leadership offices, and other offices of the Senate to share employees, and for other purposes; considered and passed.

S. 422.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Rep-

resentatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Senate Shared Employee Act”.

SEC. 2. ALLOWING SENATORS, COMMITTEES, LEADERSHIP OFFICES, AND OTHER OFFICES OF THE SENATE TO SHARE EMPLOYEES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 114 of the Legis-

lative Branch Appropriation Act, 1978 (2 U.S.C. 4576) is amended—

(1) by inserting “(a)" before “Notwith-

standing";

(2) by striking “position, each of and all that follows through the period at the end and inserting the following: “qualifying position if the aggregate gross pay from those positions are removed after the last day of the month which includes the date which the Secretary of the Treasury (or the Secretary of the Treasury’s delegate) issues final regula-

tions establishing the level of tax for such product.

(1) The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of the Treasury or the Secretary’s delegate.

(c) CONTROLLED GROUPS.—Rules similar to those of section 501(c)(3) of such Code shall apply for purposes of this subsection.

(d) OTHER LAWS APPLICABLE.—All provi-

sions of law, including penalties, applicable to the floor stocks tax imposed by paragraph (1), to the same extent as if such taxes were imposed by such section 5701. The Secretary may treat any person who bore the ultimate burden of the tax imposed by this section as a person to whom a credit or refund under such provisions may be allowed or made.

(e) EFFECTIVE DATES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—This section takes effect on the date of the enactment of this Act.
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February 24, 2021
S864
(a), the cost of any travel for official business
shall be paid by the office authorizing the
travel.
(2) Messages for each electronic mail ac-
count shall be in connection with carrying out
the official duties of an individual serving in
more than 1 qualifying position under sub-
section (a) shall be paid at the basic pay received by
the individual from all such positions.
(3) For purposes of the Ethics in Gov-
ernment Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.), the rate of basic pay for an individual serving in more
than 1 qualifying position under subsection (a) shall be the total basic pay received by the
individual from all such positions.
(4) A position—
(A) that is in any committee of the Senate
(including a select or special committee) or
a joint committee of Congress; and
(B) the pay of which is disbursed by the
Secretary of the Senate.
(5) A position—
(i) that is in any committee of the Senate
(including a select or special committee) or
a joint committee of Congress; and
(ii) the pay of which is disbursed by the
Secretary of the Senate.
(6) A position—
(i) that is in another office (excluding the
Office of the Vice President and the Office of
the Chaplain of the Senate); and
(ii) the pay of which is disbursed by the
Secretary of the Senate out of an appropri-
ation under the heading ‘‘SALARIES, OFFICERS
and Employees’’.
(7) A position—
(i) that is filled pursuant to section 105 of
the Second Supplemental Appropriations
Act, 1978 (2 U.S.C. 6311); and
(ii) the pay of which is disbursed by the
Secretary of the Senate out of an appro-
piation under the heading ‘‘MISCELLANEOUS
ITEMS’’.
(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments
made by subsection (a) shall take effect be-
going on the day that is 6 months after the
date of enactment of this Act.
By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr.
LEE, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. GRASSLEY,
Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. RUBIO, Ms.
KLOBUCHAR, Mr. CRUZ, Mr.
COONAN, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr.
BLUMENTHAL, and Ms. HIRONO):
S. 426. A bill to amend the Inspector
General Act of 1978 relative to the pow-
ers of the Department of Justice Inspect-
ger General; to the Committee on the
Judiciary.
Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask
unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.
There being no objection, the text
of the bill was ordered to be printed in
the RECORD, as follows:
S. 426
Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Rep-
resentatives of the United States of America in Congress
assembled,
SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.
This Act may be cited as the ‘‘Inspector
General Access Act of 2021’’.
SEC. 2. INVESTIGATIONS OF DEPARTMENT OF
JUSTICE INSPECTOR GENERAL.
Section 8E of the Inspector General Act
of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.) is amended—
(1) in subsection (b)—
(A) in paragraph (2), by striking ‘‘and para-
graph (3)’’;
(B) by striking paragraph (3);
(C) by redesignating paragraphs (4) and (5)
as paragraphs (3) and (4), respectively; and
(D) in paragraph (4), by striking ‘‘or’’ and
inserting ‘‘and’’; and
(2) in subsection (d), by striking ‘‘, except
with respect to allegations described in sub-
section (b)(3)’’.
By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and
Ms. ROSEN):
S. 436. A bill to provide Federal
matching funding for State-level
broadband programs; to the Committee
on Commerce, Science, and Transporta-
tion.
Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise
today to introduce the American Broadband
Buildout Act. This legisla-
tion would help ensure that rural
Americans have access to broadband
services at the speeds they need to par-
ticipate fully in the benefits of our
modern society and economy. I want to
thank my colleague Senator ROSEN for
joining me in introducing this bill
today.
Twenty-five years ago, Americans
typically accessed the Internet using
their home phone lines via modems, cap-
able of downloading data at just 56
kilobits per second, too slow even to
support MP3-quality streaming music.
Today, the Federal Communications
Commission defines broadband service
as having a threshold download speed
nearly 500 times faster.
Many areas of our country, particu-
larly our rural communities, simply do
not have the infrastructure to achieve
these speeds and fully tap into the op-
portunities that digital connectivity
can deliver. According to a 2019 Pew
Research Center survey, nearly 37 per-
cent of rural Americans lack a
broadband connection compared to 25
percent of urban Americans.
Similar disparities occur in terms of
broadband adoption. That is the rate at
which Americans subscribe to
broadband service once they have ac-
cess to it.
The survey also found that 15 percent
of rural Americans don’t use the In-
ternet at home compared to just 9 percent
of urban Americans.
The current pandemic has brought
these connectivity challenges into
stark focus as many families have had
to move their education, their work-
places, and their healthcare services online.
Andrea Powers, the town manager of
Fort Fairfield in northern Maine, re-
cently described a number of chal-
enges in her community: students who
have to sit on the town’s library steps
in order to finish research projects
and submit their papers; a business
owner who was forced to relocate his
company to another community in order
to have a chance to succeed; a senior cit-
izen who requires services from a
distant doctor but does not have the capa-
city to travel nor access the telehealth
options.
Andrea told me the story of one fam-
ily whose jobs rely heavily on access to
high-speed broadband. They were told
that it would cost them $15,000 to bring
that connection to their doorstep. And-
rea summed up the reality facing so
many rural communities that lack ac-
cess in this way. She said: ‘‘We will
continue to see a loss of business reten-
tion and expansion along with job cre-
ation. We simply cannot afford to allow
this to happen. Online schooling, busi-
ness growth and development, tele-
health care, and economic agriculture
are all reasons for the project... an
affordable fiber optic broadband.’’
Telehealth services are an essential
piece of the national broadband con-
versation. Often, rural communities
are forced to rely on telehealth care to
retain healthcare providers that they need to
ensure access to quality care. Broadband is vital to bridging that gap
to enable innovative healthcare delivery.
Let me give you an example. Hospice
workers at Northern Light Homecare
were able to use the internet and video
technology to help support a patient
living on an island off the coast of
Maine—not far as the seagull flies, but
hours away in travel time. Although
the connection was poor, the video en-
abled nurses to monitor the patient’s
condition and symptoms and, equally
important, to provide emotional sup-
port to her and to her family. As one
Hospice worker described, ‘‘the whole
team could be doing so much more
with video and telemonitoring tech-
nologies if only Maine had better
connectivity.’’
The American Broadband Buildout
Act would help close this ‘‘digital di-
vide’’ between urban and rural America
by providing up to $15 billion in match-
ing grants to assist States and State-
approved entities in building that “last-mile” infrastructure to bring high-speed broadband directly to homes and businesses in areas that lack it.

Projects would have to be located in unserved areas—that is, areas where broadband is unavailable at speeds that meet the FCC standards. Focusing on those areas will direct support where it is most needed and will protect against overbuilding where infrastructure is already in place.

The Federal funding authorized in our bill would be matched through public-private partnerships between the broadband service provider and the State where they provide service. This means that States and their private sector partners will have “skin in the game” so that the projects will be well thought out and sustainable. This model will also incentivize existing service providers to extend their networks to rural areas and swiftly connect new households.

Third, the bill would require that projects be designed to be “future proof,” meaning that the infrastructure installed must be capable of delivering higher speeds as broadband accelerates in the future. We want these investments to serve rural Americans now and in the future without having to rebuild every time technology advances.

Our bill would also prioritize projects in States that have traditionally lagged behind the national average in terms of broadband subscribers and those that are at risk of falling further behind as broadband speeds increase.

Finally, the bill would provide grants for digital literacy and public awareness campaigns to encourage wider broadband adoption once access is available. Increasing broadband adoption will help drive down the cost of the service and make it more affordable for everyone.

Rural Americans need access to high-speed internet just as urban Americans do. In fact, one could argue they need it even more, especially during these times that can require remote work, education, and healthcare. The bill that Senator ROSEN and I are introducing today will help bridge this digital divide by funding “future proof” broadband where it is needed most and give a boost to job creation in rural America.

As the Presiding Officer well knows, businesses will not locate in areas that do not have this essential service, in businesses will not locate in areas that do not have this essential service, in areas where broadband is unavailable at speeds that meet the FCC standards. Focusing on those areas will direct support where it is most needed and will protect against overbuilding where infrastructure is already in place.

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(7) respecting the sovereignty of Iraq by demobilizing Iranian-controlled Shia milîtias in the country; 
(8) ending its military support for the Houthis in Yemen; and 
(9) withdrawing all forces under Iranian command in Syria; 
(10) cutting off support for the Taliban in Afghanistan and for senior al Qaeda leaders around the region; 
(11) denying the IRGC’s support for terrorists and militant partners around the world; and 
(12) halting its threatening behavior against its neighbors.

Whereas President Donald Trump announced the withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA on May 8, 2018, and gradually implemented sanctions that were suspended by the Obama administration under the JCPOA, depriving the regime of valuable funds that the regime could have used to support its malignant activities; 

Whereas the JCPOA defined the sanctions that the Obama administration suspended under the JCPOA as “nuclear-related”, but “nuclear-related” is not a term recognized under existing United States statutory sanctions related to Iran; 

Whereas the Obama administration agreed to define the most significant bilateral sanctions imposed by the United States on Iran as “nuclear-related”, waive the application of those sanctions under the JCPOA, and commit the executive branch to work to repeal the provisions of law providing for those sanctions upon the expiration of the JCPOA; 

Whereas, pursuant to the terms of the JCPOA, sanctions were lifted on Iranian financial institutions, cargo vessels, aircraft, fraudulent charities, and other entities that were not linked to Iran’s nuclear program, but were sanctioned for illicit conduct; 

Whereas, pursuant to section 401(a) of the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010 (22 U.S.C. 8551(a)), in order to terminate sanctions against the Central Bank of Iran and other Iranian financial institutions, the President is required to certify that “the Government of Iran . . . no longer satisfies the requirements for designation as a state sponsor of terrorism”; and that “Iran has ceased its pursuit of a nuclear bomb and verifiably dismantled its nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons and ballistic missiles and ballistic missile launch technology”. 

Whereas, on December 12, 2020, President Trump extended the national emergency declared by Executive Order 12957 (50 U.S.C. 1701 note; relating to prohibiting certain transactions with the government of Iran for perpetrating human rights abuses); 

Whereas, on March 12, 2020, President Trump signed the Omnibus Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020 (P.L. 116-94); 

Whereas, pursuant to section 103 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020 (P.L. 116-94), in order to terminate sanctions imposed by the United States on Iran for perpetrating human rights abuses; 

Whereas, pursuant to section 8 of the Iran Sanctions Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-172; 50 U.S.C. 1701 note), in order to terminate sanctions imposed with respect to the energy sector of Iran, the President is required to certify “that Iran—

“(1) has ceased its efforts to design, develop, manufacture, or acquire—

“(A) a nuclear explosive device or related materials and technology;

“(B) chemical and biological weapons; and

“(C) ballistic missiles and ballistic missile launch technology; 

“(2) has been removed from the list of countries the government of which has been determined . . . to have repeatedly provided support for acts of international terrorism; and

“(4) poses no significant threat to United States national security, interests, or allies.”;

Whereas the concept of “nuclear-related” sanctions does not exist in statute, and existing statutes likely require a treaty to terminate such sanctions: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that the lifting or termination of sanctions related to Iran pursuant to section 8 of the Iran Sanctions Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-172; 50 U.S.C. 1701 note); 

(1) reaffirms that it is the policy of the United States not to allow Iran to develop or otherwise acquire a nuclear weapons capability; 

(2) resolves that the lifting or termination of sanctions with respect to Iran must take place only as provided for under section 8 of the Iran Sanctions Act of 1996 (P.L. 104-172; 50 U.S.C. 1701 note); 

(3) rejects and opposes the reapplication of sanctions relief, including the use of waivers, de-listing individuals or entities, or the application of sanctions (with the exception of, for instance, those provided for in, or incident to, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, including on any sectors of the Iranian economy or any individuals or entities designated as sanctions targets by the United States law for supporting terrorism, missile development and proliferation, human rights abuses, corruption, or Iran’s other destabilizing activities; 

(4) opposes reversing the finding that identifies Iran as a jurisdiction of primary money laundering concern under section 5318(k) of title 31, United States Code; 

(5) opposes the lifting of the “U-Turn” prohibition, which bans Iran from accessing the United States financial system for the purpose of conducting dollarized transactions; and 

(6) opposes the suspension or lifting of the call for countermeasures by the Financial Action Task Force with respect to the financial sector until Iran fully completes its action plan.

SENATE RESOLUTION 73—REAFFIRMING THE COMMITMENT TO MEDIA DIVERSITY AND PLEDGING TO WORK WITH MEDIA ENTITIES AND DIVERSE STAKEHOLDERS TO DEVELOP COMMON GROUND SOLUTIONS TO ELIMINATE BARRIERS TO MEDIA DIVERSITY

Ms. ROSEN (for herself and Mr. RUBIO) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation;

S. Res. 73

Whereas the principle that an informed and engaged electorate is the lifeblood of a vibrant democracy is deeply rooted in our laws of free speech and underpins the virtues on which we established our Constitution, “in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity . . .”;

Whereas having independent, diverse, and local media that provide exposure to a broad range of viewpoints and the ability to contribute to the political debate is central to sustaining that informed engagement;

Whereas it is in the public interest to encourage source, content, and audience diversity on our Nation’s shared telecommunications and media platforms;

Whereas the survival of small, independent, and diverse media outlets that serve diverse audiences and local media markets is essential to preserving local culture and building understanding on important community issues that impact the daily lives of residents;

Whereas research by the American Society of News Editors, the Radio Television Digital News Association, the Pew Research Center, and others has documented the continued challenges of increasing diversity among all types of media entities;

Whereas with increasing media experience and sophistication, it is even more important to have minority participation in local media that measure a community’s information sources are available and different ideas and viewpoints are expressed to strengthen social cohesion among different communities; and

Whereas the constriction in small, independent, and diverse media outlets and limited participation of diverse populations in media ownership and decision-making are combining to negatively impact our goal of increasing local civic engagement and civic knowledge through increased voter participation, membership in civic groups, and knowledge of local political and civic information: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) reaffirms its commitment to diversity as a core tenet of the public interest standard in media policy; and

(2) pledges to work with media entities and diverse stakeholders to develop common ground solutions to eliminate barriers to media diversity.

SENATE RESOLUTION 74—DESIGNATING FEBRUARY 28, 2021, AS ‘‘RARE DISEASE DAY’’

Mr. BROWN (for himself, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. WICKER, Mr. MARKEY, and Mr. BOOKER)
Whereas a rare disease or disorder is a disease or disorder that affects a small number of patients;
Whereas, in the United States, a rare disease or disorder typically affects fewer than 200,000 individuals;
Whereas, as of the date of the adoption of this resolution, more than 7,000 rare diseases or disorders affect approximately 1 in 10 individuals in the United States;
Whereas rare diseases and disorders account for a significant portion of the population affected by rare diseases or disorders in the United States;
Whereas rare diseases and disorders are serious and life-threatening and lack effective treatments;
Whereas, as a result of the enactment of the Orphan Drug Act (Public Law 97–414; 96 Stat. 2049), important advances have been made in the research and treatment of rare diseases and disorders;
Whereas the Food and Drug Administration has made strides in gathering patient perspectives to inform the drug review process as part of the Patient-Focused Drug Development initiative, which has been reaffirmed under the FDA Reauthorization Act of 2017 (Public Law 115–52; 131 Stat. 1005); whereas the Food and Drug Administration has removed more than 890 orphan indications for drugs and biological products for the treatment of rare diseases and disorders, 90 percent of individuals in the United States with a rare disease or disorder are not receiving an FDA-approved treatment for their condition;
Whereas limited treatment options and difficulty obtaining reimbursement for life-altering and lifesaving treatments can be challenging for individuals with rare diseases or disorders and their families;
Whereas rare diseases and disorders include sickle cell anemia, spinal muscular atrophy, common variable immune deficiency, median arcuate ligament syndrome, glycogen storage disease type V, pulmonary hypertension, hemophilia, cystic fibrosis, sarcoidosis, amytrophic lateral sclerosis, and autosomal recessive polycystic kidney disease;
Whereas individuals with rare diseases or disorders can experience difficulty in obtaining access to specialists and finding physicians or treatment centers with expertise in their rare disease or disorder;
Whereas the 116th Congress passed a 4-year extension of the Pediatric Device Priority Review Voucher program under section 529(b) of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 360ff(b)) as part of the Consensus-Based Standards for Consumer-facing Health Information Act of 2021 (Public Law 116–260; 134 Stat. 1182), providing an incentive for the development of therapies for children with rare diseases;
Whereas the 116th Congress passed the Advancing Care for Exceptional Kids Act (Public Law 116–16; 133 Stat. 852), improving access to coordinated, patient-centered health care for complex and rare medical conditions in Medicaid;
Whereas the Food and Drug Administration and the National Institutes of Health supported the treatment of rare diseases and disorders;
Whereas 2021 marks the 38th anniversary of the enactment of the Orphan Drug Act (Public Law 97–414; 96 Stat. 2049);
Whereas Rare Disease Day is observed each year on February 28, 2022, and was observed in more than 100 countries in 2020; and
Whereas Rare Disease Day is expected to be observed globally for years to come, providing hope and information for rare disease and disorder patients around the world: Now, therefore, be it
Resolved, That the Senate—
(1) designates February 28, 2023, as "Rare Disease Day"; and
(2) recognizes the importance of, with respect to rare diseases and disorders—
(A) improving awareness;
(B) encouraging accurate and early diagnosis; and
(C) supporting national and global efforts to develop effective treatments, diagnostics, and cures.

SENATE RESOLUTION 75—CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Mr. BOOKER (for himself, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. BLUNT, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. TILLIS, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. RISCH, Ms. SMITH, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. WICKER, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. HAGERTY, Mr. COONS, Mr. LANKFORD, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BROWN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. WARNER, Ms. ERNST, Mr. KANE, Mr. BURR, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. YOUNG, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. MURPHY, Ms. SINEMA, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. SCHATZ, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. KLOBuchar, Mr. KING, Mr. WARRINER, Mr. OSBOFF, Mr. HEINICH, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. CARPER, Mr. CASEY, Mr. REED, Mr. CARDIN, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. LUJÂN, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mrs. BLACKBURN, and Mr. HOOVEN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 75

Whereas, in 1776, people envisioned the United States as a new nation dedicated to the proposition stated in the Declaration of Independence that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness; Whereas Africans were first brought involuntarily to the shores of the United States as early as the 17th century; Whereas African Americans suffered enslavement and subsequently faced the injustices of lynching mobs, segregation, and denial of the basic and fundamental rights of citizenship;
Whereas, in 2021, the vestiges of those injustices and inequalities remain evident in the society of the United States; Whereas, in the face of injustices, people of good will and of all races in the United States have distinguished themselves with a commitment to the noble ideals on which the United States was founded and have fought courageously for the rights and freedom of African Americans and others;
Whereas African Americans, such as Leonidas Sexton; Thomas A. Dorsey; Maybelle Jones; Maya Angelou, Arthur Ashe, Jr., James Baldwin, James Beckwourth, Clara Brown, Blanche Bruce, Ralph Bunche, Shirley Chisholm, H'intel Collier, Miles Davis, Langston Hughes, Larry Doby, Frederick Douglass, W. E. B. Du Bois, Ralph Ellison, Medgar Evers, Aretha Franklin, Alex Haley, Dorothy Height, Jon Hendricks, Olivia Hooker, Lena Horne, Charles Hamilton Houston, Mahalia Jackson, Stephenie Tubbs Jones, B.B. King, Martin Luther King, Jr., Coretta Scott King, Bishop Marshall, Constance Baker Motley, Rosa Parks, Walter Payton, Bill Pickett, Homer Plessy, Bass Reeves, Hiram Revels, Amelia Earhart, Pat Robinson, Andrea Jackson, Aaron Shirley, Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, Booker T. Washington, the Greensboro Four, the Tuskegee Airmen, Prince Robinson, Nelson Rollock, Taylor, Fred Shuttlesworth, Duke Ellington, Langston Hughes, Muhammad Ali, Elijah Cummings, Senator Ralph Yarrow, Geraldine Ferraro, Gwen Ifill, Diannab Carroll, Chadwick Boseman, John Lewis, Katherine Johnson, Rev. C.T. Vivian, Hank Aaron, Edith Savage-Jones, Senator Septima Preston Beulah, Cicely Tyson, Mary Wilson, John Thompson, John Hope Franklin, and Chief Justice of South Carolina Ernest Finney, along with many others, worked against racism to achieve success and to make significant contributions to the economic, educational, political, artistic, athletic, literary, scientific, and technological advancement of the United States;
Whereas the contributions of African Americans from all walks of life throughout the history of the United States reflect the greatness of the United States;
Whereas many African Americans lived, toiled, and died in obscurity, never achieving the recognition they deserved, and yet paved the way for future generations to succeed;
Whereas African Americans continue to serve the United States at the highest levels of business, government, and the military;
Whereas the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Jackie Robinson inaugurated the celebration of Black History Week, the precursor to Black History Month;
Whereas Negro History Week represented the culmination of the efforts of Dr. Carter G. Woodson, the "Father of Black History", to enhance knowledge of Black history through The Journal of Negro History, published by the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, which was founded by Dr. Carter G. Woodson and John E. Airbnb;
Whereas Black History Month, celebrated during the month of February, originated in 1926 when Dr. Carter G. Woodson set aside a special period in February to recognize the heritage and achievements of Black people in the United States;
Whereas Dr. Carter G. Woodson stated, "We have a wonderful history behind us. . . If you are unable to demonstrate to the world that you have this record, the world will say to you, 'You are not worthy to enjoy the blessings of democracy or anything else.'";
Whereas, since its founding, the United States has imperfectly progressed toward noble ends;
Whereas the history of the United States is the story of people regularly affirming high ideals, striving to reach those ideals but often failing, and then struggling to come to terms with the disappointment of that failure, before committing to try again;
Whereas, on November 4, 2008, the people of the United States elected Barack Obama, an African-American man, as President of the United States; and
Whereas, on February 22, 2012, people across the United States celebrated the groundbreaking of the National Museum of African American History and Culture, which opened to the public on September 24, 2016. . .
(1) acknowledges that all people of the United States are the recipients of the wealth of history provided by Black culture; (2) recognizes the importance of Black History Month as an opportunity to reflect on the complex history of the United States, while remaining hopeful and confident about the path ahead; (3) acknowledges the significance of Black History Month as an opportunity to commemorate the tremendous contributions of African Americans to the history of the United States; (4) encourages the celebration of Black History Month to provide a continuing opportunity for all people in the United States to learn from the past and understand the experiences that have shaped the United States; and (5) agrees that, while the United States began as a divided country, the United States must— (A) honor the contribution of all pioneers in the United States who have helped to ensure the legacy of the great United States; and (B) move forward with purpose, united tirelessly as a nation “indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I have 8 requests for committees to meet during today’s session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today’s session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 24, 2021, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

The Committee on Environment and Public Works is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 24, 2021, at 10:15 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

The Committee on Finance is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 24, 2021, at 10:15 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

The Committee on Indian Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 24, 2021, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 24, 2021, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS’ AFFAIRS

The Committee on Veterans’ Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 24, 2021, at 4 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 24, 2021, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 24, 2021, at 1 p.m., to conduct a closed hearing.

AUTHORIZING EXPENDITURES BY COMMITTEES OF THE SENATE

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 6, S. Res. 70.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 70) authorizing expenditure by the Senate for the periods March 1, 2021 through September 30, 2021, October 1, 2021 through September 30, 2022, and October 1, 2022 through February 28, 2023.

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

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

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

The resolution (S. Res. 70) was agreed to.

(The resolution is printed in the RECORD of February 23, 2021, under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

SENATE SHARED EMPLOYEE ACT

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 422, which was introduced earlier today.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 422) to allow Senators, Senators-elect, committees of the Senate, leadership offices, and other offices of the Senate to share employees, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Ms. SMITH. I further ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The bill (S. 422) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time and passed, as follows:

S. 422

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 “Senate Shared Employee Act”.

SEC. 2. ALLOWING SENATORS, COMMITTEES, LEADERSHIP, AND OTHER OFFICES OF THE SENATE TO SHARE EMPLOYEES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 114 of the Legislative Branch Appropriation Act, 1978 (2 U.S.C. 4576) is amended— (1) by inserting “(a)” before “Notwithstanding”; and (2) by striking “position, each of” and all that follows through the period at the end and inserting the following: “qualifying position if the aggregate gross pay from those positions does not exceed— (1) the maximum rate specified in section 105(d)(2) of the Legislative Branch Appropriation Act, 1968 (2 U.S.C. 4575(d)(2)), as amended and modified; or (2) in a case where 1 or more of the individual’s qualifying positions are described in subsection (d) of section 105(e)(3) of the Legislative Branch Appropriation Act, 1968 (2 U.S.C. 4575(e)(3)), as amended and modified.”;

and (3) by adding at the end the following: “(b) In a case where 1 or more than 1 qualifying position under subsection (a) may be delivered to and sent from a single handheld communications device provided to the individual for purposes of official business.

“(B) For purposes of the Ethics in Government Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.), the rate of basic pay for an individual serving in more than 1 qualifying position under subsection (a) shall be the total basic pay received by the individual from all such positions.

“(B) For an individual serving in more than one qualifying position under subsection (a), for purposes of the rights and obligations described in, or described in the provisions applied under, title II of the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 131 et seq.) required to practices used at a time when the individual is serving in such a qualifying position with an employing office, the rate of pay for the individual shall be the individual rate of pay received from the employing office.

“(c)(1) If the duties of a qualifying position under subsection (a) include information technology services and support, an individual may only serve in the qualifying position and 1 or more additional qualifying positions under such subsection if the individual is in compliance with each information technology standard and policy established for Senate offices by the Office of the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper of the Senate.

“(B) Notwithstanding subsection (a), an employee serving in a qualifying position in the Office of the Secretary of the Senate or the Office of the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper of the Senate may serve in an additional qualifying position only if— (A) the other qualifying position is with the other Office; or (B) the Committee on Rules and Administration of the Senate has approved the arrangement.

“(D) In this section, the term ‘qualifying position’ means a position that—
February 24, 2021

RARE DISEASE DAY
Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 74, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions."

CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH
Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 75, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The resolution (S. Res. 75) was agreed to.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT
Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate adjourn.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The resolution (S. Res. 75) was agreed to.

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2021
Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate comes to order, it adjourn until 11 a.m., Thursday, February 25th.

The resolution (S. Res. 75) was agreed to.

CORONAVIRUS
Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, it is the end of February. Almost exactly a year ago, America was getting its first cases of COVID–19, and they were being reported in the media. We were learning about it but didn’t know much at that point. We knew it spread across China. We knew what was happening there. But in the weeks ahead and by the middle of March, just a few weeks from now, our country started going into lockdown. We experienced something we had never experienced as a country: a mandatory shutdown across the entire country, followed by instructions to senior adults and people with comorbidities to stay in their homes and not get out. For millions of those senior adults, they asked the same question almost a year ago: When can I get out of my home? When can I see people? And the answer consistently was: Once there is a vaccine. When we get a vaccine in place, this will be better. We don’t know how long that will take, but once we get a vaccine, we will be able to turn this around.

Seniors heard that over and over and over again for the last 11½ months. And, now, thankfully, millions of seniors have been vaccinated. We have 42 million Americans that have gone through the full regimen. In my State, almost 20 percent of the adults in my State have already had their vaccine. We are one of the top States in the country, by percentage, getting vaccines out to individuals. Almost every person in every assisted-living nursing home, critical care facility, staff, and residents have been vaccinated. Almost every single senior adult in my State has been fully vaccinated, and we are into the second round now of teachers and those with comorbidities and other folks that has already begun.

But interestingly enough, seniors are still asking the same question. I had my shot. I had my second shot. It has now been the 10 days past my second shot, but nothing is changed. A couple of weeks ago, I asked CDC a very simple question. It is the question that so many have been asking: When will instructions come out on when seniors need to do now? Can they get out? Can they hug their grandkids? Can they go to Walmart? Can guests come to assisted-living facilities?

They were all together during Christmas and Halloween and now Valentine’s Day, and they are used to having their kids come in and sing songs and people come to visit them. None of that happened last year, and now they are asking a simple question: When will CDC give guidelines for what happens now? CDC currently has said over and over again: Wait. We are thinking about it. We are researching it. CDC needs to act on this. Seniors have been cooped up for a year. They were told months ago, “Once you get a vaccine, this will get better,” and they are now finding they had their vaccine and not get out. For millions of those senior adults, they asked the same question almost a year ago: When can I get out of my home? When can I see people? And the answer consistently was: Once there is a vaccine. When we get a vaccine in place, this will be better. We don’t know how long that will take, but once we get a vaccine, we will be able to turn this around.

So my simple challenge to CDC has been: Do for the seniors what you did for the schools. CDC put out extensive...
guidelines: here is how schools can re-open, it is safe to reopen for schools, here is what needs to be done. Help our seniors out by getting clear guidelines out into the public. Give instructions to assisted-living facilities; give instructions to the grandparents. What do they want to know that they have been vaccinated? How much travel can they have? What are the risks? And let them make the decisions on it.

Folks are counting on them to be able to lay some of the science out there to get the information out to those folks so they can make the right decision. CDC, we need you to step up.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

OPIOID EPIDEMIC

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I am here on the floor today to talk about the need for all of us to redouble our efforts to combat drug addiction. One of the top priorities I have had in my time in public service has been to combat this crisis, which has devastated so many families, so many communities, and impacted us in so many negative ways.

Unfortunately, under the cover of the coronavirus pandemic, there is an epidemic that is growing, and that is the drug addiction epidemic. It is heartbreaking because to actually had several years of progress. We were making progress, finally, in turning the tide, and now, it is coming back with a vengeance to the point that overdoses and overdose deaths, hospitalizations, and all the other negative consequences of drug addiction is being raised up again in the context of the coronavirus.

Here, in the Congress, we have taken a leadership role on addressing this issue. Over the last several years, Congress has appropriated billions of dollars—and not that money solves everything, but the money has been pretty well spent on programs that are actually tested, evidence-based programs on prevention, on treatment, and longer term recovery.

Once called the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act, which I authored with my colleague, SHELDON WHITEHOUSE, on the other side of the aisle, and other legislation, too, called the 21st Century Cures Act. All of this has provided help that goes down to the local level, the community level, to be able to create a network, to be able to push back against the addiction crisis.

In 2017, Ohio’s overdose opioid death rate was almost three times the national average. Ohio was one of the worst States in the country in terms of our opioid addiction. In terms of opioid deaths, we were top three in the country. If you look at the top of. Nearly a dozen Ohioans were dying from these dangerous drugs every single day. This is in 2017. It surpassed car crashes as our country’s No. 1 killer among young people and, for Ohio, the No. 1 overall.

But that next year, in 2018, much of what we were doing here in Congress, the work again on the CARA Act, the work that we did that were, at the time, were doing at the State level and local level that were being supported by our Federal legislation, they were starting to work. So, in 2018, Ohio led the country again, but this time it wasn’t in overdose deaths. It was in the reduction of overdose deaths. We actually had a 22-percent reduction from 2017 to 2018. By the way, the same thing happened nationally. We had a reduction in overdose deaths nationally in 2018 for the first time since 1990. Think about that. From 1990 until 2018, every single year, we had more people dying from overdoses in this country, driven in large part by opioids, and, more recently, by the most deadly of opioids, synthetic opioids like fentanyl and Carfentanil.

Unfortunately, again, under the cover of this coronavirus pandemic, drug addiction has flourished, and that positive progress has been reversed. It is heartbreaking to re-main committed to solving the healthcare challenges of COVID–19, there is increasing evidence that the stresses of this unprecedented time are driving a spike in drug abuse and substance use disorders, this marks the worst year in the history of our country in terms of overdose deaths and other measurements of drug addiction.

Why? Well, I have asked a lot of people that. Common sense would tell you people are lonelier. Many people are distraught. Maybe they have lost their job. Maybe they have had someone in their family die of COVID–19. People are feeling anxious. People are unable to access recovery programs in person, some cannot talk to their recovery coach, which they might have been able to do but for COVID–19 and the isolation that is required. Many of those in recovery from addiction are stalled in their progress, or they are suffering from relapses.

There is a story that ran last week about a record number of overdose deaths in my home State of Ohio. It was on FOX 8 in Cleveland. One of the people they interviewed was a Cleveland County recovery coach, this marks the worst year in the history of our country in terms of overdose deaths and other measurements of drug addiction. It was pretty powerful. She talked about how important it is for people fighting addiction to have that network of support. It was hard to find during COVID–19. She said: “An addict needs to talk to someone, they need constant reassuring from their support group.”

She is right. There are a lot of troubling statistics out there that should be a cause for concern and a call to action for all of us. The Centers for Disease Control reported that more than 81,000 people died of drug overdoses in the 12 months ending in May 20 of 2020, the highest 12-month total in our Na-tion’s history. So, again, it looks like 2020 is going to be the worst year ever.

The American Medical Association reports that more than 40 States have reported an increase in opioid-related deaths during the COVID–19 pandemic. A report earlier this year in the JAMA Psychiatry journal found that a 45-percent in-crease was the overdose death increase in emergency rooms from April to October of 2020 compared to that same time in 2019.

It would be worse, in my view, without the Federal response to the coronavirus pandemic, including some measures to ensure those suffering from addiction can continue to get the care they need through telehealth. We have cut redtape. We have provided some regulatory relief to expand telehealth and telehealth options specifically for opioid treatment, like eliminating requirements for in-person visits before prescribing lifesaving drugs like naltrexone.

Without these expanded services, I believe the overdose spike would be even worse. Although there is no substitute for face-to-face interaction to help along an individual’s journey to recovery, telehealth has kept patients connected with their providers and allowed physicians to prescribe medication-assisted treatment remotely.

In talking to those who are recovery coaches or those doctors back home who specialize in addiction, they tell me that the telehealth option has been extremely important, so even though it has gotten worse, it would have gotten even worse if people had not had at least the ability to access their recovery program through a remote means.

Interestingly, these telehealth options for addiction treatments were put in place temporarily, but they have proven to be such a viable option for addiction treatment that now people are eager for it. This telehealth option has been extremely important, so even though it has gotten worse, it would have gotten even worse if people had not had at least the ability to access their recovery program through a remote means.

Let’s turn to a couple of things spe-cifically. First, it allows for a patient to be prescribed long-scheduled drugs like Sroxon through the telehealth visit on their first visit, as opposed to having to go in person for that first visit.

Current law requires an in-person visit when you need an initial prescription for controlled substances, but this has been a real deterrent for patients in crisis and in urgent need of treatments from Schedule III or Schedule.
IV drugs like Suboxone or certain drugs for reoccurring mental health conditions, so our bill is important in that regard.

It also limits abusive practices by limiting telehealth visits to those who have face-to-face visits and video capabilities to be able to interact with the treatment providers to reduce fraud and abuse when it is your first visit. It would also keep the existing requirements for in-person visits when prescribing Schedule II drugs like opioids or stimulants are more likely to be being abused during these telehealth visits. So we have provisions in there to avoid abuse, but it is important to continue this telehealth option when other options just aren’t there.

Second, our bill would allow for Medicare to bill for audio-only or telephone telehealth services for mental health and substance abuse treatment if it is not the patient’s first visit. Due to distance or access to broadband, in-person visits are not always a possibility for our seniors. We still need to focus on safety and robust treatment options, but in order to balance the needs of patients, we propose to allow our Nation’s seniors to have Medicare to use phones for subsequent mental health or behavioral health visits when they don’t have access to the internet and where face-to-face interaction just isn’t as necessary.

I believe this TREATS legislation will make a difference in the addiction treatment space and will help us prevent more untimely overdoses, but it is also important that we ensure that law enforcement officials can continue to go after the supply of lethal drugs coming into our communities, lethal drugs that are fueling these overdoses.

The most important thing, in my view, is reducing the demand dealing with prevention, treatment, and recovery, but as we talk about some of the flow of these drugs, among other things, you are reducing the supply, which raises the cost of the drugs on the street. And, unfortunately, some of these drugs are unbelievably inexpensive, given how incredibly powerful and deadly they can be.

Data from the Center for Disease Control shows that the biggest driver of these surge in overdose deaths has been the class of drugs called synthetic opioids. We talked about that at a moment ago. They are far deadlier than the traditional opioids like heroin but still cause far too many overdoses.

The most well known of these drugs, fentanyl, is about 50 times deadlier than heroin, and it is often less expensive. It is illegally manufactured primarily in China, and then it is smuggled across our southern border or through the U.S. mail. A pound of fentanyl is lethal enough to kill half a million people. Think about that. One pound is enough to kill half a million people.

We have made some progress keeping it out of the mail system. The STOP Act is now in effect. We are working with the Postal Service and also working with Customs and Border Protection to properly implement that legislation, which I authored on a bipartisan basis here several years ago, and it is finally being implemented to keep our mail system from delivering poison into our communities.

But the traffickers have changed patterns, and a lot of it is now going to Mexico and then coming over land across our southern border. Across the country, law enforcement have had their hands full trying to stop the flow of synthetic opioids. Ohio State Patrol troopers seized a total of 129 pounds of fentanyl last year, enough to kill more than 60 million people. We have 11.8 million people in Ohio, but our troopers, just in Ohio, seized enough fentanyl to kill 60 million people.

In one Ohio county, Cuyahoga County, there were more than 1,700 seizures of fentanyl shipments in 2020. One DEA initiative to fight drug trafficking that started just last August of 2020 has resulted in the seizure of nearly 440 pounds of fentanyl.

Fentanyl itself is a schedule II drug, which means that law enforcement is able to take appropriate actions to crack down on it, and that is good. But there is a hidden challenge with fentanyl, and that is that manufacturers can alter its chemical makeup in a lab to change how it looks. It is a fentanyl analog or a copiycat. It is all synthetic. So if some evil chemist somewhere can adjust the formula and make it an analog, it is not subject to the schedule II charges that law enforcement can bring. Because the chemical makeup is different in fentanyl, it is not automatically illegal at all, in fact. What is worse, these copycats can often be deadlier than fentanyl—take, for instance, carfentanil, which is 10,000 times deadlier than fentanyl and about 10,000 times more deadly than morphine. Just handling carfentanil, if you were to spill some on yourself, can kill you.

In 2018, the Drug Enforcement Agency, DEA, made the right call by temporarily making these fentanyl-related substances illegal to possess, transport, or manufacture. Thanks to that designation, our law enforcement officials have been better able to protect our communities by seizing and destroying these fentanyl-related substances. Unfortunately, the temporary extension by DEA ends in only a few months. After May 6, 2021, these incredibly dangerous substances will no longer be subject to strict regulation by law enforcement. It will be easier for drug manufacturers in China and elsewhere to flood the United States with carfentanil and other synthetic opioids. We can’t allow that to happen.

Of course, we can’t allow that to happen, which is why yesterday I introduced the bipartisan Federal Initiative to Guarantee Health by Targeting Fentanyl, or FIGHT Fentanyl Act, along with my colleague Senator JOE MANCHIN from West Virginia, another State that has been devastated by the opioid epidemic. Our bill simply codifies the existing DEA precedent to permanently schedule fentanyl-related substances, allowing our law enforcement officials to continue to crack down on synthetic opioids in all of its forms. Let’s provide some certainty, some predictability here, and make this permanent.

Just as importantly, it is going to send a signal to both the American people and the manufacturers and smugglers that produce synthetic opioids that we have not forgotten about this threat, and we are going to do everything in our power to keep these deadly drugs out of our communities.

The FIGHT Fentanyl Act and the TREATS Act are a couple of things that we could do right now on a bipartisan basis, and we should. I urge my colleagues to support them.

But we have a lot more work to do in the months ahead. The authorization for the Comprehensive Addiction Recovery Act, the CARA bill we talked about earlier, expires in fiscal year 2023. And Senator WHITFIELD and I will soon introduce a CARA 2.0 Act to build on the successes of CARA with an unprecedented investment in expanding access to proven treatment and recovery programs—again, programs that are shown to work by evidence for treatment and recovery over longer terms.

CARA 2.0 includes dozens of provisions to address addiction from all fronts—research and education, treatment and recovery, criminal justice reform, dealing with prescription drugs—making it the most comprehensive legislation in our country’s history. When added with the existing CARA programs that are reauthorized through 2023, we would be investing well over $1 billion to address this longstanding epidemic, again, at a time when under the pandemic the epidemic is growing.

We need to be sure that as we continue to invest in the coronavirus vaccine development and distribution, we are also focusing on this epidemic. As we come out of this coronavirus pandemic—and I believe we are starting to see some signs of that—let’s be sure we are not leaving in its wake more and more deaths and more and more addiction with regard to the drug addiction crisis.

We need to all recognize the urgency of working to reverse this surge and nationwide overdoses and overdose deaths. As we emerge from this coronavirus pandemic, let’s act now to ensure we have the tools in place to also turn the tide on this disease and get those affected the help they need.

I yield my time.
ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 11 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 11 a.m. tomorrow. Thereupon, the Senate, at 6:36 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, February 25, 2021, at 11 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

KIRAN AJANDAS AHUJA, OF MASSACHUSETTS, TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT FOR A TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE DALE CABANISS, RESIGNED.

IN THE NAVY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be rear admiral (lower half)

CAPT. KRISTIN ACQUAVELLA

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be rear admiral (lower half)

CAPT. MARIA L. AGUAYO

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be rear admiral (lower half)

CAPT. JOSEPH R. BIRNIE

CAPT. ANTHONY E. ROSSI

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be rear admiral (lower half)

CAPT. STUART C. SATTERWHITE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be rear admiral (lower half)

CAPT. ROBERT J. FINCH

CAPT. RALPH B. SMITH III

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be rear admiral

REAR ADM. (LH) DEAN A. VANDERLEY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be rear admiral

REAR ADM. (LH) JOSEPH D. NOBLE, JR.

REAR ADM. (LH) CHRISTOPHER C. FRENCH

REAR ADM. (LH) WILLIAM C. GREENE

REAR ADM. (LH) SCOTT W. PAPPANO
IN RECOGNITION OF MIGUEL PÉREZ

HON. JOHN JOYCE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 24, 2021

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Miguel Perez upon his appointment to serve as manager of the Altoona Curve for 2021’s minor league season, which will be Mr. Perez’s 14th season in the Pittsburgh Pirates’ system.

Mr. Perez will be the first former Altoona Curve player to serve as the team’s manager. Prior to his appointment as manager of the Altoona Curve, he served as a manager for the West Virginia Power, the Greensboro Grasshoppers, and the Bristol Pirates.


It is my honor to congratulate Mr. Perez on his appointment as manager of the Altoona Curve and welcome him back to Altoona. As the 2021 season begins, I wish Mr. Perez and the Altoona Curve team a safe, healthy, and successful season ahead.

HON. BOBBY L. RUSH

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 24, 2021

Mr. RUSH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commemorate and celebrate the life of an extraordinary and influential figure from Chicago’s South Side, Bishop Charles Edward Davis.

A native of Leland, Mississippi, Bishop Davis’s life was guided by service to his country, his community, and his faith. After graduating high school in 1940, Bishop Davis relocated to Chicago’s Bronzeville neighborhood, at the beginning of the Second Great Migration and the year before the United States entered World War II. Heeding the call to serve his country after the outbreak of war, Bishop Davis joined the U.S. Army at the age of 19, serving as a sergeant in the Army. In the Army, Bishop Davis would complete tours of duty in Germany, France, and Holland.

After the war, Bishop Davis would enter the upholster business with his dear friend Brother James McDonald, a step which would lead him towards his lifetime of faith and good works. Brother McDonald’s mother-in-law, Sister Anastasia Anderson, introduced him to the Indiana Avenue Pentecostal Church of God (IPC), and he became a member of the church in 1954 when it was under the pastorate of Elder Charles Ellis.

Recognizing the deep faith, commitment, and talent of Bishop Davis, Elder Ellis’s successor, Elder Odee Akines, encouraged the further development of his faith and leadership. With Elder Akines at the helm of IPC, Bishop Davis served as the church’s Sunday School superintendent, Young People’s Leader, and President of the senior choir. By his side throughout his energetic leadership of the church was Dr. Geraldine Olivia Davis, his dear wife of 43 years until her passing in 1998. Bishop Davis was also a devoted father to a son, Lermy Bush, Jr., and a daughter, Yolanda Davis.

After Elder Akines passed away in 1970, Bishop Davis was elected pastor of IPC. Himself a Doctor of Divinity and Master of Theology, Bishop Davis made this a central focus during his leadership of IPC, establishing scholarships and programs for young people seeking to further their educations in both the secular and Christian traditions. In 1986, Bishop Davis was elevated to the Bishopric by the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, serving as a Diocesan Bishop in New York State, Washington State, and Wyoming, eventually accepting a role as Diocesan of the 6th Episcopal District of the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, their Illinois District Council, in 2008.

Bishop Davis would come to be widely recognized as one of the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World’s most exemplary leaders, admired both in Chicago and nationally for his character and conviction. This caused him to become fondly known as “Chief.” Bishop Davis was a mentor to many young people who came to his churches seeking salvation, and always conducted robust community outreach efforts, making sure that his good works did not only benefit IPC, but the entire neighborhood and city. Bishop Davis’s work was recognized by the City of Chicago in 1992, when the 3500–3600 block of South Indiana Avenue was named in his honor.

In 2004, Bishop Davis became united in marriage with Dr. Jessie Davis, and they were inseparable from one another, always working together for the spiritual benefit of their community. They would remain by each other’s sides until Dr. Davis’s death in April of 2020.

Madam Speaker, on February 9th, Bishop Davis was called to heaven after a lifetime of good works. My deepest prayers and sympathies go out to Bishop Davis’s family, friends, and the IPC community on the passing of this supremely devoted and talented leader, who gave so much in service to his faith, community, and country.

IN RECOGNITION OF RAFAEL A. MELGAR

HON. JOHN JOYCE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 24, 2021

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Master Sergeant Rafael A. Melgar of Altoona, Pennsylvania on his retirement after 20 years of service in the United States Air Force.

Sergeant Melgar enlisted in the Air Force in 2000. His service has included six years of active duty with the 74th Fighter Squadron, the 23rd Fighter Wing, at Pope Air Force Base, North Carolina as an A–10, F–15, and U–2 Avionics Systems Journeyman. He also has served with the 152nd Medical Squadron at the Reno-Tahoe International Airport as a Biomedical Equipment Repair Technician. Currently, he is a Biomedical Equipment Support Specialist at the James E. Van Zandt VA Medical Center in Altoona, Pennsylvania.


Sergeant Melgar is an outstanding American and Pennsylvanian. It is my honor to recognize this distinguished service to our nation and to our community. On behalf of Pennsylvania’s 13th Congressional District, I congratulate Sergeant Melgar on his retirement and wish him the best as he and his family embark on a new chapter.
HONORING DR. HEIDI SHRECK
HON. CYNTHIA AXNE
OF IOWA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, February 24, 2021

Mrs. AXNE, Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Dr. Heidi Shreck, a pediatrician who serves as Chief Medical Officer for Primary Health Care, a community health center located in central Iowa. Dr. Shreck is a dedicated, trusted physician who works each day to support the health of our communities, and it is my distinct honor to name her Iowan of the Week.

Dr. Shreck leads with care and compassion, and she is committed to achieving excellence. If you were to ask any of her patients—or the parents of some of her little patients—they would without doubt echo that her kindness, devotion, and concern for their health and wellbeing is at the core of everything she does.

PHC offers high-quality, affordable care to underserved and vulnerable populations in Des Moines, Ames, and Marshalltown. As Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Shreck helps ensure these patients receive comprehensive health services, including medical and dental care, behavioral health care, homeless support, and pharmacy services. In 2019, PHC provided care for more than 38,000 lowans.

Dr. Shreck has been instrumental in advancing the care-driven mission of community health centers in Iowa. When we began to see cases of COVID-19 in our state, Dr. Shreck led PHC’s early response efforts and coordinated with other healthcare organizations to establish a community-wide strategy. She has continued to lead our medical, dental, and behavioral health staff through the challenging circumstances of the past nine months.

PHC’s staff—including Dr. Shreck—has gone above and beyond to make sure patients and clients received continuing health care from the onset of this pandemic. Their accomplishments are truly too many to list, so I’d like to highlight a few.

With Dr. Shreck’s leadership, PHC medical staff rapidly adapted to providing care in new ways. For example, behavioral health providers worked alongside primary care teams to set up telehealth systems to meet increasing demand for mental health care among kids and adults during this pandemic. In the early days of the pandemic when most dental offices had to shutter, dedicated dental teams juggled work adjustments, staffing challenges, and new requirements for PPE in order to provide emergency care—which kept patients healthy while ensuring emergency room space remained available to treat those with COVID-19.

I cannot thank Dr. Shreck enough for her hard work and resolve in the face of this threat to the health of communities across Iowa. Despite the long hours, stress, and concern for their own families, friends, and neighbors, Dr. Shreck and her team keep showing up to provide exceptional care. They do so with compassion, dignity, and respect; their resolve is deeply humbling.

It is an honor to name Dr. Shreck who embody lowans commitment to community and service. I thank her once again for her achievements and, it is my distinct honor to name her this week’s Iowan of the Week.
In addition to the state championship, the New Oxford Marching Colonials also earned special awards for High Music, High Visual, High Percussion, and High Colorguard. The band also competed in the V-US Bands National Championship, in which the students placed fourth and received a special award for Best Colorguard.

I congratulate the dedicated members of the New Oxford Marching Colonials, their instructors, and families on this remarkable achievement, and I wish the students every continued success.

RECOGNIZING JOHN DIAZ

HON. ERIC SWALWELL
OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, February 24, 2021

Mr. SWALWELL. Madam Speaker, along with Speaker of the House NANCY PELOSI and Representatives MARK DESAULNIER, ANNA G. ESCHOO, JARED HUFFMAN, RO KHANNA, BARBARA LEE, ZOE LOFGREN, JERRY McNERNEY, JACKIE SPEIER, and MIKE THOMPSON, I rise to recognize California journalist John Diaz on the occasion of his retirement from the San Francisco Chronicle.

John’s superb stewardship of the Chronicle’s editorial pages over the past 25 years has kept California readers talking and thinking about the most pressing issues facing the state. His own columns, exploring complex issues in ways that laypeople can easily understand and engage, have been a big part of that.

John, a graduate of California’s Humboldt State University, started his career at the Red Bluff (CA) Daily News, where after two years he was promoted to the parent company’s Washington, D.C. bureau. He later reported for the Associated Press in Philadelphia and reported and edited for the Denver Post before starting at the Chronicle in 1990 as an assistant city editor and becoming its editorial page editor in 1996.

Both in maintaining the Chronicle’s editorial voice and in expressing his own opinions and analysis through his column, John unflinchingly has delved into tough issues without resorting either to oversimplification or to mean-spiritedness. His balanced presentation of facts is a credit to the Chronicle and to journalism at large, and a boon to his readers.

The Bay Area political landscape has changed enormously on his watch, as has the region’s media landscape. Through it all, John has kept our communities well-informed and a well-informed populace is a necessary part of our democratic republic.

We thank John for his many years of service to our constituents, and we wish him the best in his next endeavors.

ST. DAVID’S DAY

HON. H. MORGAN GRIFFITH
OF VIRGINIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, February 24, 2021

Mr. GRIFFITH. Madam Speaker, I rise to note the upcoming celebration of St. David’s Day on March 1. The feast day of St. David, the patron saint of Wales, offers the opportunity to honor Welsh culture and heritage and note the links between Wales and the United States.

The Welsh were among the early settlers who emigrated from the British Isles to North America, and their contributions to the same motivations that drove so many generations from all over the world to our shores, including the pursuit of religious liberty and the opportunity to create a better life for themselves and their descendants. The man remembered as the first Welsh settler, Howell Powell, arrived in Virginia from Brecon in 1642. After William Penn founded Pennsylvania in 1681, having considered naming it New Wales, a large group of Welsh Quakers settled in the colony.

A century later, the Industrial Revolution brought a renewed wave of Welsh settlement to the United States. Immigrants from Wales farmed land, mined coal, made steel, and worked in a variety of other industries that powered U.S. economic ascendancy.

We see the contributions of Wales to American history and culture in other ways, too. At least five signers of the Declaration of Independence had a Welsh background, including its primary author Thomas Jefferson. At least eight of our presidents have similarly come from Welsh descent.

The ties between Wales and the United States are not merely historic but remain vibrant today. Welsh companies conduct business in the United States and keep Americans on their payrolls. As of 2019, the United States was the largest export market for Wales outside Europe.

In the House of Representatives, I serve as Chairman of the Congressional Friends of Wales Caucus, devoted to celebrating and strengthening the ties between our two nations. Each year I look forward to our St. David’s Day reception on Capitol Hill, attended by leading officials in the Welsh government, and Members of Congress. Unfortunately, the reception will not go on as usual this year, but I will nevertheless be wearing a daffodil on March 1 to mark the holiday.

The last words of St. David were said to be, “Be joyful, keep the faith, and do the little things that you have heard and seen me do.” People of Welsh heritage have come to embody this message in their contributions to the United States and have not done only little things but great things as well. On this St. David’s Day, as one of the millions of Americans with Welsh ancestry, I take pride in the accomplishments produced by the partnership between Wales and the United States and look forward to those to come.

NEW DEAL FOR NEW AMERICANS ACT

HON. GRACE MENG
OF NEW YORK
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, February 24, 2021

Ms. MENG. Madam Speaker, immigrants are an essential part of our nation. And our nation can only be made stronger if we assist the efforts of new Americans to integrate, contribute to the growth of our economy, and be civically engaged.

The United States is the nation that it is today because of immigrant contributions. In fact, I am proud to represent one of the most diverse congressional districts in the country, in Queens, New York; it is a place where immigrant communities have thrived for decades and decades.

Madam Speaker, I am a proud daughter of immigrants. I know firsthand the difficulties my parents and grandparents encountered when they immigrated to the United States for a better life for their children. This is not an uncommon story. While the levels of hardships of new immigrants vary, there are common challenges—from language barriers to finding work.

That is why, I am so proud to reintroduce the “New Deal for New Americans Act.” I am honored and grateful to lead this bill with Senators MARKY and HIRONO and Representatives JAYAPAL and GARCÍA. The New Deal for New Americans Act would ensure a more inclusive and welcoming immigration system to help new Americans achieve their American Dream. Among many provisions, this bill would help immigrants overcome common challenges such as language barriers and employment attainment, and help start a business and break down barriers to naturalization.

Specifically, the “New Deal for New Americans Act” would:

- Establish a National Office of New Americans in the Executive Office of the White House to promote and support immigrant and refugee integration and inclusion and coordinate efforts of federal, state, and local governments to support social, economic, and civic integration of immigrants and refugees.
- Establish a Federal Initiative on New Americans to coordinate federal response to address issues that affect the lives of new immigrants and refugees and communities with growing immigrant and refugee populations.
- Create a Legal Services and Immigration Assistance Grant Program to support organizations that provide direct immigration assistance to those in need of immigration screening; know-your-rights education; assistance in applying for citizenship, lawful permanent resident status or other legal status (DACA, TPS, asylum, etc.); or seeking relief from a removal order.
- Create an English as a Gateway to Integration Program for organizations that teach English or help individuals prepare for naturalization or earn a GED.
- Create a Workforce Development Grant Program to ensure that immigrant and refugee adults have equitable access to education and workforce programs that help equip them with occupational skills needed to secure or advance in employment.
- Reduce barriers for individuals to naturalize by establishing a flat application fee for naturalization, amending the English and civics exam requirements for older individuals, and exempting eligible U.S. high school graduates from taking the naturalization exams.
- Limit USCIS’s ability to raise fees without congressional approval, plus require authorization of appropriations to cover USCIS’ need to operate and adjudicate cases.
- Promote civic engagement through automatic voter registration of newly naturalized individuals.
- Expand family integration by reducing the age of citizens who are able to petition eligible family members from 21 years old to 18 years old.
Increase Refugee Admissions level to 125,000 per fiscal year.

Provide social, economic, and civic support to refugees and rebuild the capacity and infrastructure of local communities to welcome refugees.

Amend the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) to no longer allow deportation of an individual deemed to have become a public charge.

Madam Speaker, the rich tapestry of our nation that is comprised of diverse cultures, languages, and experiences has always been America’s strength—and that is why improving our system to welcome new Americans will ensure our nation continues to thrive. This bicameral legislation is a down payment for future generations to succeed in the United States. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation and join me in moving our diverse nation forward by helping new Americans.

IN RECOGNITION OF MIKE TEDESCO

HON. JOHN JOYCE
OF PENNSYLVANIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, February 24, 2021

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise to congratulate Mike Tedesco on his new role as President and CEO of Vision Together 2025 in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. Vision Together 2025 is a volunteer-based organization that works to improve life in the Greater Johnstown region by laying a groundwork for better educational and economic opportunities. Vision Together 2025 already is making great strides in its mission, and I am confident that Mike will continue this work for the community.

Mike holds a degree from the University of Idaho and a master’s degree in Urban & Regional Planning from the University of Kansas. An expert in urban planning, Mike was most recently the Executive Director of the Spokane Tribe of Indians in Spokane, Washington. He also previously served as Executive Director of the Pueblo Urban Renewal Authority.

On behalf of Pennsylvania’s 13th Congressional District, it is my privilege to welcome Mike Tedesco to Johnstown and wish him success in his new role.

HONORING THE LIFE OF W. EUGENE BURRELL

HON. BILL POSEY
OF FLORIDA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, February 24, 2021

Mr. POSEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of a community leader and friend, W. Eugene Burrell of Fannett, Texas, who passed away on Wednesday, December 30, 2020, at the age of 86. Eugene was a life-long cattle rancher, rice farmer, and civic leader in Southeast Texas. He had the respect of all who knew him.

Eugene was born on October 27, 1934, in Beaumont, Texas, to Louise DeVillier Burrell and Walter Jordan Burrell. He began farming rice at the age of 18 and worked in that role until the age of 21, when he decided to serve his country in the United States Army. After serving in the Army from 1955 to 1957, where he was stationed overseas in Germany, Eugene returned home and continued rice farming—an occupation that would unknowingly last for 52 years. Apart from growing rice, he was also a dedicated cattleman for more than 70 years. Eugene served as a board member on numerous industry and community boards, such as: the American Rice Incorporate Board in Houston, the American Rice Growers Board in Cheek, Texas, the Coastal Cattlemen’s Association Board, the Equalization Board for the Jefferson County Appraisal District, the West Jefferson Municipal Water District, and the Texas Rice Festival, where he volunteered with his wife, Sandra. In 1999, Eugene was named the Texas Rice Festival Farmer of the Year and subsequently its Pioneer Farmer of the Year in 2017. His steadfast faith was always important to him. In fact, he served as a member of St. Mary’s Fannett Knights of Columbus organization.

In addition to “Eugene,” his friends and family lovingly referred to him as “Dad,” “Pawpaw,” “Boo,” and “Fred.” Supporting his children, and later his grandchildren, by attending their sporting events and various competitions over the years was always a top priority to him. Eugene is survived by his wife of 63 years, Sandra Ray Burrell; daughters, Karen Burrell Reneau and her husband, Charlie, and Kelly Burrell Alton and her husband, Randy; son, Troy Eugene Burrell and his wife, Shelly; grandchildren, Landon Reneau and his wife, Hillary, William Reneau and his wife, Amanda, Lane Stuart, Reid Alton, Mary Alton, Abby Alton, Cody Burrell, and Cameron Burrell and his wife, Ely Reneau, Ella Reneau, and Bryar Burrell and numerous nieces and nephews. He is pre-deced in death by his parents, Louise and Walter Burrell, and brother, James “Jack” Burrell.

Madam Speaker, I would like to honor my friend W. Eugene Burrell for his many years of faithful service to his community. My thoughts and prayers remain with his family and friends during this difficult time.

HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS AND SERVICE OF CAPT. (RE) JAMES MICHAEL KUZMA

HON. BILL POSEY
OF FLORIDA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, February 24, 2021

Mr. POSEY. Madam Speaker, it is with a heavy heart and an overwhelming sense of pride that I rise to pay tribute to a great man and my longtime friend, Capt. (Ret) James Michael Kuzma. Jim passed away unexpectedly on Friday, February 5, 2021, just three days shy of his 60th birthday.

Jim was born on February 8, 1961 in Steuben, Ohio. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering from the U.S. Naval Academy, a Master of Science in Engineering Management from the Catholic University of America, and a Master of Science in National Resource Strategy from the Industrial College of the Armed Forces (ICAF).

Jim served 28 years with the U.S. Navy before “retiring” to Cocoa Beach in 2011. I say “retiring” in quotes because anyone who knew Jim knew that it was nearly unthinkable for him to rest. He was always thinking of creative ways to solve challenges. For the last decade, Jim served as Space Florida’s Senior Vice President and General Manager of the Cape Canaveral Spaceport, working to cement the state’s position as a world leader in aerospace.

Recruited to Space Florida to strengthen and grow its operational support for the commercial space industry at Cape Canaveral Spaceport, Jim embraced the mission and excelled at finding ways to respond to industry’s needs. He led efforts to secure Federal Aviation Administration spaceport operating licenses for both the former Shuttle Landing Facility (SLF) and other Government sites on Cape Canaveral Air Force Station. Jim spearheaded the transfer of the SLF to Space Florida’s management and operation, and he was instrumental in attracting Blue Origin to base its orbital program in Florida. For the past two years, he worked tirelessly to ensure a solution for replacing NASA’s 1964 Indian River Bridge that would meet the spaceport’s needs far into the future. These were only a few examples of Jim’s accomplishments to further America’s space program in positive ways.

Jim visited my office frequently in Washington, advocating for the commercial space industry, offering creative solutions to problems, and urging needed regulatory reform to ensure America’s leadership in space. He served on the Board of the Commercial Spaceflight Federation, and more recently on the Cape Canaveral Executive Board. Jim began his Naval service on the USS Jacksonville SSN 699. He went on to Naval Sea Systems Command, serving during 1988 through 90 as a Fleet Liaison and Systems Test Director for various submarine Combat and Weapons System Program Offices. He served as Engineering Officer on the USS Newport News SSN 750 from 1991 to 1994. In 1994, he was assigned to the Commander in Chief, U.S. Atlantic Fleet (CINCLANTFLT) Nuclear Propulsion Examining Board. He served as the Executive Officer on the USS 712 from October 1996 to July 1998 before reporting to Submarine Warfare Division of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (OPNAV) staffer where he served as Submarine Combat Systems Requirements Officer. Following that, he served as the Commanding Officer of the USS Boise 764 from March 2001 until October 2003. He then became Deputy Director for Operations on the staff of the Commander, Naval Submarine Forces from 2003 to 2005. From October 2005 to August 2007, Jim served as Special Activities Division Chief on Strategic Command’s Joint Functional Component Command for Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance staff before attending the Industrial College of the Armed Forces (ICAF) from August 2007 to June 2008. He rounded off his impressive Naval career as the Commanding Officer of the Naval Ordnance Test Unit in Cape Canaveral (2008–2011).

Captain Kuzma’s personal decorations include the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star, Defense Superior Service Medal, two Meritorious Service Medals, Bronze and Marine Corps Commendation Medals and four Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medals. Yet, he never spoke about them. Jim was indeed...
passionate about his work, but his greatest joy in life was his family. Anyone who spent time around Jim instantly knew that he was a family man; he delighted in attending concerts and visiting theme parks with his family, especially his grandchildren. He is survived by Karen, his wife of 36 years, their four children, James Michael (Garcia), William Jordan (Patricia Kuzma), Lauren Rose (Aaron Possinger) and Candace Marie and five grandchildren, Ariana, Lillian, Camilo, Adele, and Maverick. He is also survived by innumerable friends and colleagues, who all miss him dearly.

On a personal note, I am proud to have called Jim my friend for many years. Jim served on my selection board for the U.S. Naval Academy. He believed in the importance of serving our nation and was a strong supporter of our brave men and women in military uniform as well as our military veterans. Jim was proud of our nation’s space program, worked tirelessly to promote America’s mission in Space along with our commercial space endeavors, and was champion for local businesses in Brevard County, Florida.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in saluting Captain James Kuzma for a lifetime of service to the United States and his fellow citizens. I would also like to ask my colleagues in the House to join us in extending our deepest sympathies to Jim’s family, friends, colleagues, and loved ones during this difficult time.

RECOGNIZING DR. WILLIAM “BILL” GOLDSTEIN

HON. ERIC SWALWELL
OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 24, 2021

Mr. SWALWELL. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize Dr. William “Bill” Goldstein on the occasion of his upcoming retirement as Director of Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL) and President of Lawrence Livermore National Security, LLC on March 1, 2021.

Before landing at LLNL, Bill received a bachelor’s degree in physics from Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania, a doctorate in theoretical physics from Columbia University in New York, and was a postdoctoral research associate with the Theoretical Physics Group at the Stanford Linear Accelerator Center. His first assignment at LLNL was in the Physics Directorate, where his portfolio included diverse national security and science programs. This positioned him well to take on supervisory and senior management roles, such as Associate Director of Physical and Life Sciences, then Deputy Director for Science and Technology, where he was tasked with leading the strategic deployment of LLNL’s science and technology capabilities. He continued to impress and was named LLNL’s 12th director and LLNS’ 3rd president on March 31, 2014.

Under Bill’s leadership during the past seven years, LLNL’s budget and workforce have grown by 50 percent and 25 percent respectively. In fact, in 2020, LLNL was listed in the top ten of GlassDoor’s 100 best large places to work in the United States. All of this occurred despite ever-increasing competition for talent from nearby Silicon Valley.

LLNL has experienced significant growth in all programs and operations with Bill at the helm. He has prepared it and its personnel to lead a new era of nuclear stockpile stewardship, ensuring that our nuclear weapons are responsibly maintained and kept safe at the United States at the forefront of innovation. Much of this is made possible by Sierra, a new class of supercomputer brought into the field in the last few years. Bill’s holistic and multi-jurisdictional thinking continues to enable growth and flexibility throughout LLNL operations and our national security.

Most recently, Bill not only helped his LLNL team navigate the new workforce realities brought about by the COVID–19 pandemic, but he and his management team also did their part to make significant contributions to the fight against the disease, fabricating emergency ventilators, using 3D printing to fabricate nasal swabs, and providing predicted structures of a key COVID–19 viral protein to help accelerate the development of potential medical treatments for the disease.

As if all that was not enough, Bill has authored or co-authored more than 70 papers on a variety of topics while a fellow of the American Physical Society and the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

I thank Bill for his nearly four decades of service. Enjoy a well-earned retirement, and we wish him all the best while he spends more time with his wife, Kathy, and twin daughters, Emma and Sarah.

IN RECOGNITION OF LESLIE KELLY

HON. JOHN JOYCE
OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 24, 2021

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize Leslie Kelly of Altoona, Pennsylvania for her work as founder of Service Paws of Central Pennsylvania.

Leslie Kelly understands firsthand the barriers that family can face when purchasing a service dog, which can cost between $4,000 and $35,000. To help families with this costly process, Leslie founded Service Paws of Central Pennsylvania. Last year, her organization was able to assist several people in need of a service dog.

Service Paws of Central Pennsylvania now serves 14 of Pennsylvania’s 67 counties. As an all-volunteer organization, Service Paws of Central Pennsylvania is able to use its resources to directly place service dogs with individuals and families in need.

Leslie is an incredible and servant-hearted leader in Blair County and across our Commonwealth. On behalf of Pennsylvania’s 13th Congressional District, I thank Leslie Kelly for her work to improve the lives of Pennsylvanians and wish her continued success in this mission.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate of February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Thursday, February 25, 2021 may be found in the Daily Digest of today’s RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

MARCH 2

9:30 a.m.
Committee on Armed Services
To hold hearings to examine global security challenges and strategy.

10 a.m.
Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Gary Gensler, of Maryland, to be a Member of the Securities and Exchange Commission, and Rohit Chopra, of the District of Columbia, to be Director, Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection.

11 a.m.
Committee on the Budget
To hold hearings to examine the nomination of Shalanda D. Young, of Louisiana, to be Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

WEBEX

MARCH 3

10 a.m.
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
To hold hearings to examine the nomination of Polly Ellen Trottenberg, of New York, to be Deputy Secretary of Transportation.

SR-253
Committee on Environment and Public Works
To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Brenda Mallory, of Maryland, to be a Member of the Council on Environmental Quality, and Janet Garvin McCabe, of Indiana, to be Deputy Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

SD-562
Committee on Foreign Relations
To hold hearings to examine pending nominations.

SD-106 VTC
Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S833–S872

Measures Introduced: Thirty-nine bills and five resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 400–438, and S. Res. 71–75.

Measures Passed:

Committee expenditures: Senate agreed to S. Res. 70, authorizing expenditures by committees of the Senate for the periods March 1, 2021 through September 30, 2021, October 1, 2021 through September 30, 2022, and October 1, 2022 through February 28, 2023.

Page S868

Senate Shared Employee Act: Senate passed S. 422, to allow Senators, Senators-elect, committees of the Senate, leadership offices, and other offices of the Senate to share employees.

Pages S868–69

Rare Disease Day: Senate agreed to S. Res. 74, designating February 28, 2021, as “Rare Disease Day”.

Page S869

Black History Month: Senate agreed to S. Res. 75, celebrating Black History Month.

Messages from the President: Senate received the following messages from the President of the United States:

Transmitting, pursuant to law, a report of the continuation of the national emergency that was originally declared in Proclamation 6867 of March 1, 1996, with respect to the unauthorized entry of any United States-registered vessels into Cuban territorial waters; which was referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. (PM–2)

Page S855

Transmitting, pursuant to law, a report of the continuation of the national emergency that was originally declared in Proclamation 9994 of March 13, 2020, with respect to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID–19) pandemic; which was referred to the Committee on Finance. (PM–3)

Page S855

Granholm Nomination—Agreement: Senate resumed consideration of the nomination of Jennifer Mulhern Granholm, of Michigan, to be Secretary of Energy.

Pages S833–843, S845–49

During consideration of this nomination today, Senate also took the following action:

By 67 yeas to 32 nays (Vote No. EX. 65), Senate agreed to the motion to close further debate on the nomination.

A unanimous-consent-time agreement was reached providing for further consideration of the nomination, post-cloture, at 12 noon, on Thursday, February 25, 2021; that there then be up to 10 minutes for debate equally divided in the usual form; that upon the use or yielding back of time, all post-cloture time be considered expired, and Senate vote on confirmation of the nomination; and that notwithstanding Rule XXII, the vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination of Miguel A. Cardona, of Connecticut, to be Secretary of Education, occur at 1:30 p.m., on Thursday, February 25, 2021.

Page S845

Raimando Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Gina Marie Raimando, of Rhode Island, to be Secretary of Commerce.

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 Miguel A. Cardona, of Connecticut, to be Secretary of Education.

Page S843

Prior to the consideration of this nomination, Senate took the following action:

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Legislative Session.

Page S843

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Executive Session to consider the nomination.

Page S843

Rouse Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Cecilia Elena Rouse, of New Jersey, to be Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors.

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 Gina Marie Raimando, of Rhode Island, to be Secretary of Commerce.
Prior to the consideration of this nomination, Senate took the following action:

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Legislative Session. 

Pages S843–44

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Executive Session to consider the nomination.  

Page S844

Nominations Received: Senate received the following nominations:

Kiran Arjandas Ahuja, of Massachusetts, to be Director of the Office of Personnel Management for a term of four years.

14 Navy nominations in the rank of admiral.

Messages from the House:

Pages S872

Measures Referred:

Pages S855

Executive Communications:

Pages S856

Executive Reports of Committees:

Pages S856

Additional Cosponsors:

Pages S858

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions:

Pages S858–68

Additional Statements:

Pages S853–55

Authorities for Committees to Meet:

Pages S868

Record Votes: One record vote was taken today.  

(Total—65)  

Adjournment: Senate convened at 12:01 p.m. and adjourned at 6:35 p.m., until 11 a.m. on Thursday, February 25, 2021.  

(For Senate’s program, see the remarks of the Acting Majority Leader in today’s Record on page S869.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Armed Services: On Tuesday, February 23, 2021, Committee ordered favorably reported 237 nominations in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Space Force.

NOMINATION

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nomination of Debra Anne Haaland, of New Mexico, to be Secretary of the Interior, after the nominee testified and answered questions in her own behalf.

INVESTING IN TRANSPORTATION

Committee on Environment and Public Works: Committee concluded a hearing to examine investing in transportation while addressing climate change, improving equity, and fostering economic growth and innovation, after receiving testimony from Michigan Governor Gretchen E. Whitmer, Lansing; Maryland Governor Lawrence J. Hogan, Jr., Annapolis; Mayor Michael B. Hancock, Denver, Colorado; and Victoria F. Sheehan, New Hampshire Department of Transportation Commissioner, Washington, D.C., on behalf of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials.

NOMINATION

Committee on Finance: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nomination of Xavier Becerra, of California, to be Secretary of Health and Human Services, after the nominee, who was introduced by Senators Feinstein and Padilla, testified and answered questions in his own behalf.

NATIVE COMMUNITIES’ PRIORITIES

Committee on Indian Affairs: Committee concluded an oversight hearing to examine native communities’ priorities in focus for the 117th Congress, after receiving testimony from Carmen Lindsey, Board of Trustees Office of Hawaiian Affairs Chair, Honolulu, Hawaii; Fawn R. Sharp, National Congress of American Indians, Washington, D.C.; Leonard Forsman, Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, Portland, Oregon; and Julie Kitka, Alaska Federation of Natives, Anchorage.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship: Committee ordered favorably reported the nomination of Isabella Casillas Guzman, of California, to be Administrator of the Small Business Administration.

VACCINES FOR VETS

Committee on Veterans’ Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine vaccines for vets, focusing on ending the COVID–19 pandemic, after receiving testimony from Richard A. Stone, Acting Under Secretary for Health, Veterans Health Administration, Jane Kim, Chief Consultant for Preventive Medicine, Ralph T. Gigliotti, Network Director, Veterans Integrated Service Network 19: VA Rocky Mountain Network, and William P. Patterson, Network Director, Veterans Integrated Service Network 15: VA Heartland Network, all of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

NOMINATION

Select Committee on Intelligence: Committee concluded open and closed hearings to examine the nomination of William Joseph Burns, of Maryland, to be Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, after the nominee testified and answered questions in his own behalf.
House of Representatives

Chamber Action
Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 45 public bills, H.R. 1,274–1,318; and 10 resolutions, H. Con. Res. 18; and H. Res. 154–162, were introduced.

Additional Cosponsors:

Report Filed: A report was filed today as follows:
H.R. 1319, to provide for reconciliation pursuant to title II of S. Con. Res. 5 (H. Rept. 117–7).

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein she appointed Representative Costa to act as Speaker pro tempore for today.

Recess: The House recessed at 11:04 a.m. and reconvened at 12 noon.

Committee Election: The House agreed to H. Res. 154, electing a certain Member to a certain standing committee of the House of Representatives.

Motion to Adjourn: Rejected the Greene (GA) motion to adjourn by a yea-and-nay vote of 202 yeas to 214 nays, Roll No. 33.

Colorado Wilderness Act of 2021 and Equality Act—Rule for Consideration: The House agreed to H. Res. 147, providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 803) to designate certain lands in the State of Colorado as components of the National Wilderness Preservation System, and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 5) to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, gender identity, and sexual orientation, by a yea-and-nay vote of 218 yeas to 208 nays, Roll No. 35, after the previous question was ordered by a yea-and-nay vote of 219 yeas to 211 nays, Roll No. 34.

Moment of Silence: The House observed a moment of silence in memory of the late Honorable Ronald J. Wright.

Suspensions—Proceedings Resumed: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures. Consideration began Tuesday, February 23rd.

Effective Assistance of Counsel in the Digital Era Act: H.R. 546, to regulate monitoring of electronic communications between an incarcerated person in a Bureau of Prisons facility and that person’s attorney or other legal representative, by a 3/5 yea-and-nay vote of 414 yeas to 11 nays, Roll No. 36; and


Clerk to Correct Engrossment: Agreed by unanimous consent that in the engrossment of H.R. 447, the Clerk be directed to make the correction placed at the desk.

Expressing the profound sorrow of the House of Representatives on the death of the Honorable Ronald J. Wright: The House agreed to H. Res. 155, expressing the profound sorrow of the House of Representatives on the death of the Honorable Ronald J. Wright.

Presidential Messages: Read a message from the President wherein he notified Congress that the national emergency with respect to Cuba that was declared on March 1, 1996, in Proclamation 6867, as amended by Proclamation 7757 on February 26, 2004, Proclamation 9398 on February 24, 2016, and Proclamation 9699 on February 22, 2018, is to continue in effect beyond March 1, 2021—referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed (H. Doc. 117–17).

Read a message from the President wherein he notified Congress that the national emergency declared in Proclamation 9994 of March 13, 2020, concerning the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID–19) outbreak is to continue in effect beyond March 1, 2021—referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce and the Committee on Ways and Means and ordered to be printed (H. Doc. 117–18).

Quorum Calls—Votes: Five yea-and-nay votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H601–02 and H608–12.

Adjournment: The House met at 10 a.m. and at 6:25 p.m., pursuant to House Resolution 155, it stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow, February 25th, as a further mark of respect to the memory of the late Honorable Ronald J. Wright.

Committee Meetings
FUTURE DEFENSE SPENDING

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Defense held a hearing entitled “Future Defense Spending”.

Testimony was heard from Elizabeth Field, Director of Defense Capabilities and Management, Government Accountability Office; and public witnesses.

**APPROPRIATIONS—JUDICIARY**
Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government held a budget hearing on the Judiciary. Testimony was heard from John W. Lungstrum, Chair, Committee on the Budget, Judicial Conference of the United States; and Roslynn R. Mauskopf, Director, Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts.

**READY OR NOT: U.S. PUBLIC HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE**
Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies held a hearing entitled “Ready or Not: U.S. Public Health Infrastructure”. Testimony was heard from Marilyn Bibbs-Freeman, Deputy Director, Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services, Office of the Secretary of Administration, Virginia; Jennifer Kertanis, Director of Health, Farmington Valley Health District, Connecticut; Umair Shah, M.D., Secretary of Health, Washington; and Kathryn Turner, Deputy State Epidemiologist and Chief, Bureau of Communicable Disease Prevention, Idaho Division of Public Health.

**HEALTH AND WELLNESS OF EMPLOYEES AND STATE OF DAMAGE AND PRESERVATION AS A RESULT OF THE JANUARY 6 INSURRECTION**
Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Legislative Branch held a hearing entitled “Health and Wellness of Employees and State of Damage and Preservation as a Result of the January 6 Insurrection”. Testimony was heard from Brett Blanton, Architect of the Capitol; Farar Elliott, Curator, U.S. House of Representatives; and Catherine Szpindor, Chief Administrative Officer, U.S. House of Representatives.

**FANNING THE FLAMES: DISINFORMATION AND EXTREMISM IN THE MEDIA**
Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Communications and Technology held a hearing entitled “Fanning the Flames: Disinformation and Extremism in the Media”. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

**MONETARY POLICY AND THE STATE OF THE ECONOMY**
Committee on Financial Services: Full Committee held a hearing entitled “Monetary Policy and the State of the Economy”. Testimony was heard from Jerome H. Powell, Chairman, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System.

**HOW INVIDIOUS DISCRIMINATION WORKS AND HURTS: AN EXAMINATION OF LENDING DISCRIMINATION AND ITS LONG-TERM ECONOMIC IMPACTS ON BORROWERS OF COLOR**
Committee on Financial Services: Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a hearing entitled “How Invidious Discrimination Works and Hurts: An Examination of Lending Discrimination and Its Long-term Economic Impacts on Borrowers of Color”. Testimony was heard from Cheryl Cooper, Analyst, Financial Economics Division, Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress; and public witnesses.

**AMERICA FORWARD: RESTORING DIPLOMACY AND DEVELOPMENT IN A FRACTURING WORLD**
Committee on Foreign Affairs: Full Committee held a hearing entitled “America Forward: Restoring Diplomacy and Development in a Fracturing World”. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

**CONFRONTING THE CORONAVIRUS: PERSPECTIVES ON THE COVID–19 PANDEMIC ONE YEAR LATER**
Committee on Homeland Security: Full Committee held a hearing entitled “Confronting the Coronavirus: Perspectives on the COVID–19 Pandemic One Year Later”. Testimony was heard from A. Nicole Clowers, Managing Director, Health Care Team, Government Accountability Office; Ngozi O. Ezike, M.D., Director, Illinois Department of Public Health; J. Ryan McMahon II, County Executive, Onondaga County, New York; and a public witness.

**THE NEED FOR NEW LOWER COURT JUDGESHIPS, 30 YEARS IN THE MAKING**
Committee on the Judiciary: Subcommittee on Courts, Intellectual Property, and the Internet held a hearing entitled “The Need for New Lower Court Judgeships, 30 Years in the Making”. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

**THE RISE OF DOMESTIC TERRORISM IN AMERICA**
Committee on the Judiciary: Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security held a hearing entitled “The Rise of Domestic Terrorism in America”. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.
LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS TO PUT THE POSTAL SERVICE ON SUSTAINABLE FINANCIAL FOOTING

Committee on Oversight and Reform: Full Committee held a hearing entitled “Legislative Proposals to Put the Postal Service on Sustainable Financial Footing”. Testimony was heard from Ron Bloom, Chairman, U.S. Postal Service Board of Governors; Louis DeJoy, Postmaster General, U.S. Postal Service; Tammy Whitcomb, Inspector General, U.S. Postal Service; and public witnesses.

PERSPECTIVES FROM MAIN STREET: RAISING THE WAGE

Committee on Small Business: Subcommittee on Oversight, Investigations, and Regulations held a hearing entitled “Perspectives from Main Street: Raising the Wage”. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

EXAMINING EQUITY IN TRANSPORTATION SAFETY ENFORCEMENT

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure: Subcommittee on Highways and Transit held a hearing entitled “Examining Equity in Transportation Safety Enforcement”. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2021

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Armed Services: to hold hearings to examine Department of Defense support to the COVID–19 response, 9:30 a.m., SD–G50.

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: to hold hearings to examine the coronavirus crisis, focusing on next steps for rebuilding Main Street, 9:30 a.m., WEBEX.

Committee on the Budget: to hold hearings to examine poverty wages at large profitable corporations, 10:15 a.m., SD–608.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: business meeting to consider subcommittee assignments, 10 a.m., SD–106.

Committee on Finance: business meeting to consider committee rules and designation of subcommittees for the 117th Congress, designation of members to serve on the Joint Committee on Taxation, and designation of members to serve as Congressional Trade Advisors on Trade Policy and Negotiations, 9:45 a.m., SD–215.

Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine the nomination of Katherine C. Tai, of the District of Columbia, to be United States Trade Representative, with the rank of Ambassador, 10 a.m., SD–215.

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: to hold hearings to examine the nominations of Vivek Hallegere Murthy, of Florida, to be Medical Director in the Regular Corps of the Public Health Service, and to be Surgeon General of the Public Health Service, and Rachel Leland Levine, of Pennsylvania, to be an Assistant Secretary, both of the Department of Health and Human Services, 10 a.m., SH–216.

House

Committee on Agriculture, Full Committee, hearing entitled “Climate Change and the U.S. Agriculture and Forestry Sectors”, 12:30 p.m., 1300 Longworth and Webex.

Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies, oversight hearing on the Office of Inspector General, Department of Agriculture, 10 a.m., Webex.

Subcommittee on Legislative Branch, hearing entitled “U.S. Capitol Police and House Sergeant at Arms, Security Failures Hearing” 10 a.m., Webex.


Committee on Ethics, Full Committee, organizational meeting, 3 p.m., 1015 Longworth and Webex.


Committee on Foreign Affairs, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 1157, the “Department of State Authorization Act of 2021”; H.R. 1251, the “Cyber Diplomacy Act”; H. Res. 124, supporting the people of Belarus and their democratic aspirations and condemning the election rigging and subsequent violent crackdowns on peaceful protesters by the illegitimate Lukashenka regime; H.R. 241, the “Tropical Forest and Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2021”; H.R. 567, the “Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership Program Act of 2021”; H. Res. 130, condemning the continued violation of rights and freedoms of the people of Hong Kong by the People’s Republic of China and the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region; H. Res. 134, condemning the military coup that took place on February 1, 2021, in Burma and the Burmese military detention of civilian leaders, calling for the release of all those detained and for those elected to serve in Parliament to resume their duties, and for other purposes; H.R. 1112, the “Protect Democracy in Burma Act of 2021”; H. Res. 137, reaffirming the importance of upholding democracy, human
rights, and the rule of law in United States foreign policy; H. Res. 136, emphasizing the importance and interdependence of diplomacy and international development to American interests and national security; H.R. 965, to establish a comprehensive United States Government initiative to build the capacity of young leaders and entrepreneurs in Africa, and for other purposes; and H.R. 1211, the “American Values and Security in International Athletics Act”, 10 a.m., 2172 Rayburn and Webex.

Committee on House Administration, Full Committee, hearing entitled “Strengthening American Democracy”, 4 p.m., Webex.

Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Antitrust, Commercial, and Administrative Law, hearing entitled “Reviving Competition, Part 1: Proposals to Address Gatekeeper Power and Lower Barriers to Entry Online”, 10 a.m., 2141 Rayburn and Webex.

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Full Committee, hearing entitled “Building Back the U.S. Research Enterprise: COVID Impacts and Recovery”, 10 a.m., Webex.
Next Meeting of the SENATE

11 a.m., Thursday, February 25

Senate Chamber

Program for Thursday: After the transaction of any morning business (not to extend beyond 12 noon), Senate will continue consideration of the nomination of Jennifer Mulhern Granholm, of Michigan, to be Secretary of Energy, post-cloture, and vote on confirmation thereon at approximately 12:10 p.m.

Senate will vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination of Miguel A. Cardona, of Connecticut, to be Secretary of Education, at 1:30 p.m.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

10 a.m., Thursday, February 25

House Chamber


Extensions of Remarks, as inserted in this issue

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