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 and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

GREEN ENERGY

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, the Nation watched in horror at the terrible situation in Texas this last week with horrific weather conditions and then the aftermath dealing with problems with safe drinking water and supply. It was leavened a little bit by the plight of Ted Cruz who is notoriously struggling to tell the truth this time as he fled his State and leaving his constituents behind and then watching him contort trying to change his story over the course of the next few days. It was sort of a national joke. But what was happening in Texas was not a joke. These conditions were unprecedented. But they found Texas unable to really respond in a way despite the fact that 10 years ago there was a similar situation. It is fascinating. Ted Cruz isn’t the only one struggling with the truth. The Governor of Texas, Governor Abbott, was raising millions of dollars to help people in Texas cope. Blaming a Green New Deal which has never actually been enacted—it is an aspirational goal—is foolish. What we have seen in Texas with those extreme weather events are a preview of coming attractions.

What we saw in Australia this last year and in the Western United States with horrific wildfires, looking at a once-in-a-century weather event is becoming routine, and it is going to happen more and more frequently.

I would suggest that Texas leadership could take a look at what they have done. Their famously deregulated energy system has given the family with a $16,000 electric bill or former Governor and Energy Secretary Rick Perry said: Well, people would just be happy to have a few days without energy to be free of the dangers of Federal regulation.

I think people in the surrounding States that survived much better and states that survived much better and with the $1 trillion in unspent taxpayer funds, Mr. Speaker, especially before we toss another $2 trillion on to that pile?

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 is another $112 million earmark for a big tech subsidy. Under this bill, $110 billion would be 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, a teacher, doctor, farmer, lawyer, journalists, 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 former 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 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 acting on the promises of 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 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 allows these murders and threats 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 America’s 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 dress, speak, 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 "redeems 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 mendacious 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, would be forced to change their policies or forego Federal funding. In the State of Virginia, we have already had a measure among parents regarding such policy implementation. In an opinion piece published by the Washington Post in 2019, a former middle and high school teacher whose children attend Arlington public schools said: "It would erode parents' rights over their children's education, corrode Title IX protections for girls, and risk convincing healthy, normally developing boys and girls that their bodies are wrong and must be altered by hormones and be vandalized by surgery."

The bill also lacks any pro-life protections, which is why I am submitting my amendment that will protect religiously affiliated 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 the country. This week, 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 honored and recognized those Americans who lost their lives.

This pandemic has created a deep economic crisis for American families and small businesses. Economic inequities 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 24 million Americans cannot afford to pay the rent and possibly 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.

If vaccines are being administered, with millions inoculated so far, we have to continue to build on that momentum, for gaining the upper hand over this disease is on the horizon if we stay the course and implement the plan the President has outlined.

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 the $1.9 trillion, here 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 discipline. 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 previous measures 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 also helped him build 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 bring to the job of school, in skill-based education programs, or in college.

Congress recognized the importance of CTE when we passed the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for 21st Century Act (S. 557/ H.R. 1890), 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.

Additionally, 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 gentlwoman 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 Raphael 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. Congressmen and women fought our fellow Congressman to save 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, and countless times in the process withstanding all the violence and hatred local and State officials could throw at him.

Congressman Lewis went on to serve Atlanta on both the city council and in Congress for more than 35 years, becoming 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; Section 4, which tamper permission to study reparations; H.R. 55, the Emmett Till Anti-Lynching 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 one of the first on my legislation to co-sponsor the John Lewis Voting Rights Act, which will restore and modernize portions of the Voting Rights Act scapped 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. Jacqueline 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 a 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. When I took office in 2017, I was fortunate to convince Mr. Crenshaw to encourage Jackie to stay on as the director of special operations in my Jacksonville office.

Mr. Speaker, for over 20 years, Jackie has seen northeast Florida. She has helped countless families with casework, 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 runs our congressional arts program and the congressional medal program, both recognizing the many talented students in our community of northeast Florida.

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. I look forward to hearing all about her next career as a used shoe salesman for Ocean Sole Africa, as they improve the lives of citizens of Kenya and boost the economy here at home.

HONORING THE LIFE OF RAUL MONTESES, SR.

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

Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I want to honor a family man, a caring neighbor, and a selfless public servant, my dear friend Raul Montes, Sr.

Raul was the Ward Superintendent for the 22nd Ward in the city of Chicago, a community known as Little Village. Raul and I share a common background. We both came to this country at a young age, settled in the Chicago neighborhood of Little Village, and started organizing for the improvement of our neighborhood and for the greater political representation of Chicago’s Latino community.

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 both the singing and dance with his wife, Maria. They enjoyed traveling, spending time with their grand-children, 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 his hero in the House of Representatives.

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

Unas palabras en español. Hoy en el Congreso de los Estados Unidos reconocemos la amistad, las labores, los servicios de esta gran servidor público. Raul 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 Raul Montes fue bien vivida, y por eso le hacemos ese reconocimiento.

Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois, Raul Montes, rest in power, my friend.

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

PRODUCERS WORKING HARD FOR AMERICA

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

Mr. MANN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank the farmers and ranchers whose work does not stop.

Every day, 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 rural 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 Bornholdt 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 who provide 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. When 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 workers 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 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.

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

The national FFA organization was founded by a group of young farmers 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 of the important role 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. CRENSHAW) 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 Miller 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 Cattlemen’s Association board in Creek, Texas; the Texas 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 community events 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, 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 $183 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. That means 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 multimillionaire 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 direct aid to states. 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 I say this to my colleagues who seem to believe that the size of their heart is correlated to how much taxpayer money they are willing to spend: This is not how you help. This is not how you govern responsibly. This is not a contest to see how much debt 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 Republicans, 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 also rise today to recognize the tremendous strength of the people in Houston, who I am honored to represent in Congress.

As we all know, last week, an historic 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 personally had to gather water from a swimming pool in our apartment complex after our water shut off.

I know that many had it much, much worse than I did. But through it all, the community came together. My friend Jim McIngvale, known as Mattress Mack, in Houston opened up his furniture store as a shelter last week to give 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, including in my district office; and people 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 1.4 million 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 attention when tragedy strikes, whether it is the 1985 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 commitment 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 to bettering his community and those around him. Everyone he worked with can attest to his exceptional work ethic, focus, and innovative 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 downtown 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 configuration, 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.

THIELKOL CHEMICAL EXPLOSION WOODBINE

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember and honor those who lost their lives or were injured 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 injured. 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 beautiful exhibit in Kingsland, Georgia.

Although it has been 50 years, the event and the victims will never be forgotten.

RECOGNIZING PHARMACIES NATIONWIDE

Mr. CRENSHAW. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize pharmacies assisting in the COVID–19 vaccine administration across the country.

Thanks to former President Trump’s Operation Warp Speed, the vaccine is now available to about 6,500 pharmacies 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 pharmacies 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.

EQUITY ACT NEEDS TO BE STRUCK DOWN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman 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 Equity Act. It is a bill that will open a new era in the story of women. It is a bill that was passed before, but it is a bill that needs to be struck down. This is a bill that will add sexual orientation and gender identity as protected classes under the Federal 1964 Civil Rights Act.

We are created in the image of God—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 Equity 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 1999, Matthew Boling caught the fastest high school 400-meter time ever in 9.88 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 she be in her locker room; she will be in her showers; they will be in her bathroom; they will be in her hotel room when she travels with her team—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 us 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.

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 serve.

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 in order 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 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.

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
CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — HOUSE

February 24, 2021

H599

OFFER A PRIVILEGED RESOLUTION AND ASK FOR ITS IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION.

THE SPOKESPERSON FOR THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE.

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 SPOKESPERSON FOR THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the gentleman from New York? There was no objection. The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

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 ailment, 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: 217 to 212. This is 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 order and decorum, 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 minority to offer amendments or improve 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. Today’s 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 homes. 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 airwaves.

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 Majority 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 and 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 socialist standards to America, but those standards are dangerous, vague, and easily abused. They have no place here.

Democrats’ action this week make 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 isn’t 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: “Democracy 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, '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 for 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 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 Carroll 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 Hillcrest, the heart of San Diego’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 biologics. 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

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and thank Robby Snelterz 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 godfather of soul, James Brown, and WJBE actually stood for, back then, Knoxville’s only Black-owned radio station. Today, I want to recognize WJBE, an invaluable part of east Tennessee’s culture.

WJBE has grown into a unique home for Knoxville’s Black voices. On WJBE, musicians showcase their talents, businesses promote their services, and public officials share how the latest policies 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 helped 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. The question is on the motion to adjourn offered by the gentlewoman from Georgia (Mrs. GREENE).

The motion was taken and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mrs. GREENE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3(s) 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 the bill (H.R. 803, Colorado Wilderness Act of 2021) and 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 Natural Resources; (2) the further amendments described in section 2 of this resolution; (3) the amendments on b. 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 subject to a demand for a division of the question. The amendment shall be in order, and shall not be subject to a demand for a division of the question.

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 to offer amendments in b. consisting of further amendments printed in part B of the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution not earlier disposed of. Amendments on b. offered pursuant to this section shall be subject to a demand for a 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 on b. described in section 3 of this resolution are waived.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages in writing from the President of the United States were communicated to the House by Miss Kaitlyn Roberts, one of his secretaries.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 803, COLORADO WILDERNESS ACT OF 2021, AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 5, EQUALITY ACT

Ma. SCANLON, Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 147 and ask for its immediate consideration.

RESOLUTION OF CONGRESSIONAL RECORD—HOUSE

February 24, 2021
Ms. SCANLON. 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, yesterday, the Rules Committee met and reported a rule, House Resolution 147, providing for consideration of H.R. 5, the Equality Act, under a structured rule. The rule provides 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 GRAJALVA. It also makes in order 29 amendments, provides on bloc authority to Chairman GRAJALVA, 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 would 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. Mr. CICILLINE and I collaborated with our colleagues in Congress, 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, transgenders 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: This is who I am. It gets personal when you know and value 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—someone who put her life on the line for our country when she served in our 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 can go about their daily business knowing that if they face discrimination, they have legal recourse.

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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 members to other applicants in situations where they are 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 across this country. Same-sex couples wish to have a baby. They go to a doctor. Having hired a babysitter to look after their young children, they are hoping to have a relaxing night out. But, instead, when they are seated and looking at the menu, the manager comes over and tells them that they have to leave. They aren't welcome.

This kind of insecurity and humiliation occurs on a daily basis 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 Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

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 finally, 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 transgender 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 rule, and I urge 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. 803, 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 iconic 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 are 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 lands surrounding Grand Canyon National Park, thereby 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 or may not 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 the 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 isn’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. has not 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 colleagues, Congresswoman DIANA DEGETTE, for her tireless and bipartisan work in getting this legislation to such a great place. I want to also acknowledge the lack of committee action, this bill has not been fully thought out and it may be difficult, frankly, if not impossible, to actually implement in line with the congressional intent.

Perhaps the most pressing example of this is the term “gender identity,” which is so vague that even the special interest groups backing this bill cannot agree on a single definition of that. Further, I have concerns that, due to the lack of committee action, this bill has not been fully thought out and it may be difficult, frankly, if not impossible, to actually implement in line with the congressional intent.

Mr. Speaker, the second part of this rule provides for consideration of H.R. 803, the Protecting America’s Wilderness and Public Lands Act. This legislation consists of 8 natural resources bills, and will create nearly 1.5 million acres of wilderness, establish the most restrictive Federal land use classifications, as well as lock up rivers and other lands across four western States.

Like all my Republican colleagues, I strongly support responsible preservation of our Nation’s natural resources. However, I was proud of Teddy Roosevelt who started this movement. However, my colleagues across the aisle have ignored this and have gone way too far. This bill takes a partisan approach to public land protection, and not a single Republican cosponsored the underlying measures.

Further, some of the lands affected by this legislation lie in congressional districts where Members of Congress do not support such actions. These Members 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 does nothing to address the significant implications on everyday life, and eliminate laws ensuring women and girls have the same opportunities as men and boys.

Just take student athletics. H.R. 5 would redefine sex to include gender identity, meaning a transgender woman, a person who was born genetically male but identifies as a woman, could not be barred from participating in girls’ or women’s athletics.

Further, I have concerns that, due to the lack of committee action, this bill has not been fully thought out and it may be difficult, frankly, if not impossible, to actually implement in line with the congressional intent.

Religious freedom was once an issue that all Americans, regardless of political party, strongly supported. It is incredibly disappointing to see my colleagues across the aisle abandon this principle in an effort to appease their far-left radical progressive base.

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Religious freedom was once an issue that all Americans, regardless of political party, strongly supported. It is incredibly disappointing to see my colleagues across the aisle abandon this principle in an effort to appease their far-left radical progressive base.
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.

That 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 that 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 co-sponsor 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 not now. 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 this important bill 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 have bipartisan support 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 toward a more fair and just society for all Americans.

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

Mrs. LESKO. 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, in my view. 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 female. 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 those 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. These 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 sports as we know it by mandating boys and girls sports as we know it by mandating boys and 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 like to thank the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania for the sort of discussion we have in the House. 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 leg of minority 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, as I alluded to by my friend from Pennsylvania, is personal experience. There was fear and misapprehension, but as people became more open-minded, the public, as is the Equality Act. The wild claims have been proven groundless.

I come from a State where by law 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
Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Oregon.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I will just say, I come from an area where we have a scientific management of forests that 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 protection. 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.

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentleman from Oregon.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Georgia (Mrs. GREENE).

Mrs. GREENE of Georgia. 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 Georgia (Mrs. GREENE).

Mrs. GREENE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, in the spirit of the debate here for religious freedom, there is quite a disagreement between each side over what exactly this bill says, so for a parliamentary question, I would like to request that the entire bill be read.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman yielded to the gentleman from Georgia (Mrs. GREENE).

Mrs. GREENE of Georgia. Well, then, let’s read some of the rules. You keep saying it doesn’t violate religious freedoms when, in fact, it does. It says so directly here in the bill in these sections, and it is a shame that we aren’t reading the exact text because it is the text that matters. It doesn’t matter what you have to say or what I have to say. It is the actual wording.

In section 1107, it actually talks about: “The Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993 shall not provide a claim concerning, or a defense to a claim under, a covered title, or provide a basis for challenging the application or enforcement of a covered title.”

This bill, in the text, also specifically talks about: “With respect to gender identity, an individual shall not be denied access to a shared facility, including a restroom, a locker room, and a dressing room, that is in accordance with the person’s gender identity.”

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 Georgia (Mrs. GREENE).

Mrs. GREENE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, in the wording in the text of the bill of the Equality Act, it also says: “With respect to sex, pregnancy, childbirth or a related medical condition shall not receive less favorable treatment than other physical conditions.”

As a parliamentary question, what does that mean? Does that mean that anyone can demand an abortion? And if that determination to be refused this medical service?

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

Ms. SCANLON. Mr. Speaker, with respect to the gentleman’s question, with respect to the language in question, it has long been held by our courts that the Religious Freedom Restoration Act does not apply to civil rights laws.

The Equality Act looks to treat discrimination against LGBTQ individuals the same way as other forms of discrimination, including racial discrimination. So, these arguments just don’t hold water.

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. PFLUGER).

Mr. PFLUGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to both bills. However, I am here to talk about the partisan Federal land grab package.

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 stable base load 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. PFLUGER. 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 own health, we end up with extreme climate events like what 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 school 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.

Mr. Speaker, are you temporarily out of order? There is 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 in December, $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 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 experiencing 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.

My home State of Iowa is leading the way to put students’ education and mental health first. My two sons got on the school bus this morning in Iowa. They are now receiving hands-on attention 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 whose 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 can’t leave 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 defeat 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 (Mrs. HINSON), who just spoke. The reconciliation bill that is coming to the floor, which is styled as a whole bunch of resources in it to help States safely reopen schools. So I hope we will get a good bipartisan vote on that.

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mr. WENSTRUP), the good school doctor.

Mr. WENSTRUP. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to the previous question. If the previous question is defeated, Republicans will amend this rule to immediately consider H.R. 682, the Reopen Schools Act, which I am proud to cosponsor.

As a father of two small children, their overall health and well-being is my top priority; not just my children, but all of America’s children. And as I have looked around this Chamber, I see lots of Members on both sides of the aisle who I know to be great parents of great grandparents, and I know they want the best for their children, too.

I am also a doctor, and I am co-chair of our Doctors Caucus. Throughout this pandemic, we have heard calls from Members, and now from President Joe Biden, that we need to trust the science.

As a doctor, I wholeheartedly agree—and the science is clear—students and teachers can go back to in-person learning safely. I know this because my own children have been fortunate enough to go back to school in person all of this school year safely.

The American Academy of Pediatrics has expressed the importance of students returning to school for their overall health and well-being, and the CDC research is clear that transmission in schools is extremely low.

Last week, I joined Congresswoman Hinson, Whip Scalise, and Ranking Member Foxx on a call with parents from all across the country who want their children to be able to go back to school. It was a bipartisan event. To them, this wasn’t a partisan issue. The parents on the call were from across the entire political spectrum: Republicans, Democrats, and Independents.

We heard heartbreaking stories from them about some of their children falling into depression, losing their reading comprehension, and struggling to focus.

Kids are attempting or committing suicide at an alarming rate. In one county in Nevada, the suicide rate doubled from the previous year. Hospitals across the country are seeing unprecedented increases in children suicide attempts and mental health admissions.

Yes, there is some risk to returning, but nothing in life is zero risk. The consequences of staying closed are far too grave and our children are suffering both socially and academically because of it.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support the Reopen Schools Act because we believe that every school needs the funding needed to reopen safely. However, some schools, seemingly under pressure from powerful teachers’ unions, refuse to return to in-person learning.

Congress has provided over more than $54 billion in State COVID relief grants for education to help reopen schools. We didn’t, however, require the schools to actually reopen if they were to access the money, and that was a mistake.

Congresswoman Hinson’s bill will address that issue by requiring 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 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 Hinson for her leadership on this bill.

Ms. SCANLON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. I would just note, as a parent, a former school board member, and 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 and at this time, and I am prepared to close.

Mr. Speaker, Republicans believe everyone 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 federal 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 kill jobs 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. SCANLON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, today, we are moving forward on two pieces of legislation whose timely consideration is long overdue. And I would note that H.R. 5 did pass last Congress with a bipartisan majority.

So we are looking forward, at long last, to passing the Equality Act through both chambers and removing the barrier of discrimination that can move us closer to a country where members of the LGBTQ community have an equal opportunity to achieve the American Dream.

The Equality Act isn’t going to be the end of our long journey toward full LGBTQ equality, but it will bring our laws into line across the country with values that our country was founded upon.

We must continually take steps to make our country more perfect. Acknowledging in law the challenges that actually face LGBTQ people and taking concrete action to correct them brings us another step closer.

Mr. Speaker, we will pass the Protection of America’s Wonders and Public Lands Act in order to ensure that the sacred lands that all Americans share equally cannot be tarnished for the benefit of a few.

We have a long way to go in addressing the challenges facing this country, 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 RULE 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 reinstate instruction at elementary and secondary schools, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Education and Labor. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. All points of order against provision in the bill are waived. When the committee rises and reports the bill back to the House with a recommendation that the bill do pass, the previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit. If the Committee of the Whole rises and reports that it has come to no resolution on the bill, then on the next legislative day the House shall, immediately after the third daily order of business under clause 1 of rule XIX, resolve into the Committee of the Whole for further consideration of the bill.

SEC. 7. Clause 1(c) of rule XIX shall not apply to the consideration of H.R. 803.

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

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

The question was taken; and the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

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

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

[Yeast—219]

Adams
Aguilar
Alford
Alvarez
Anne
Barragan
Beatty
Bera
Bass
Bishop (GA)
Blinnemaun
Bkin
Braunsteiner
Bonamici
Bourne
Braun
Brownley
Bustos
Butlerfield
Cardenas
Carson
Cartwright
Case
Castañeda
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu
Cushing-Reed
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clerr
Cl Lily
Cohen
Cohen
Copper
Correa
Cortez
Courtney
Craig
Crow
Cuccinelli
David (KS)
Davis
DeLauro
DeFazio
DeGette
DeLauro
DelBene
Delgado
DeSaulnier
Deutch
DeVito
Doggart
Doyle
Escarav
Eshoo
Eveland
Evans
Fletcher
Foreman
Frankel, Lois
Garcia Aguirre
Garcia (IL)
Garcia (TX)
Golden
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.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 803, COLORADO WILDERNESS ACT OF 2021, AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 5, EQUALITY ACT

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the unfinished business is the vote on adoption of the pending motion (H. Res. 147) for 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 for other purposes, and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 5) to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, gender identity, and sexual orientation, and for other purposes, on which the yeas and nays were ordered. The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER. The question is on the resolution. The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 218, nays 206, not voting 5, as follows:

[Roll No. 35]
MR. BOST CHANGED his vote from “yea” to “nay.”

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated against:

Mr. STABER, 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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman 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 232 ayes, 238 noes, not voting 2, as follows:

[Vote results listed with no votes shown]
Continuation of the National Emergency with Respect to Cuba and of the Emergency Authority Relating to the Regulation of the Anchor Age and Movement of Vessels—Message from the President of the United States (H. Doc. No. 117–203)


The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed:

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 6687, as amended by Proclamation 7757 on February 26, 2004, Proclamation 9398 on February 24, 2016, and Proclamation 9994 on March 1, 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 detrimental 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 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 anchor age and movement of vessels set in Proclamation 6687, as amended by Proclamation 7757, Proclamation 9398, and Proclamation 9994.

JOSEPH R. BIDEN.


Continuation of the National Emergency Concerning the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID–19) Pandemic—Message from the President of the United States (H. Doc. No. 117–18)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce and the Committee on Ways and Means and ordered to be printed:

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 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.

JOSEPH R. BIDEN.


Expressing the Profound Sorrow of the House of Representatives on the Death of the Honorable Ronald J. Wright

Ms. JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I offer a privileged resolution and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution as follows:

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.

The resolution was agreed to.

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.
and 1545-BO79 received February 2, 2021, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 1383(a)(1); Public Law 101-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce and 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’s Program for Oversight of Accrediting Organizations and the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Validation Program, FY 2019, pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 13316(a); Aug. 14, 1985, ch. 811, title XVIII, Sec. 1875 (as amended by Public Law 104-193, Sec. 231); (110 Stat. 2197); jointly to the Committee on Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON 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 calendar, as follows:

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 of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mrs. McBATH:
H.R. 1274. A bill to amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to prohibit campaign activities by chief State election officials; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mr. WILSON of South Carolina (for himself, Mr. Perry, Mr. Norman, Mr. Bishop of North Carolina, Mr. Gaetz, Mr. Allen, Mr. Cloud, Mr. Cole, Mr. Rice, Mr. Trone, Mr. DeSaulnier, Mr. Smith of Nebraska, Mr. Burgess, Mr. Kelly, Mr. Rigs, Mr. Webster of Florida, Mr. Gosar, Mr. Timmons, Mr. Tiffany, Mr. Hill, Mr. Moulênaar, Mrs. Camack, Mr. Issa, Mr. Massie, Mr. Mullin, Mr. Buck, Mr. Palazzo, Mr. C. Scott Franklin of Florida, Mr. Crenshaw, Mr. Rutherford, Mr. Mann, Mr. Cawthorn, Mr. Fleischmann, Mr. Hick of Georgia, Mr. Wittman, Mr. Weber of Texas, Mr. Lance, Mr. Pocan, Mr. Pence, Mr. Lance, Mr. Lambring, Mr. Palmer, Mr. Waltz, Mr. Duncan, Mr. Roy, Mr. Cline, Mr. Kelly of Mississippi, Mr. Gomez, Mr. McCaul, Mr. Young, Mr. Womack, Mr. H. Meeks, Mr. Streube, Mr. Carl, Mr. Buchanon, Mr. Guest, Mr. Calvert, Mr. Austin Scott of Georgia, Mr. Rice of South Carolina, Mr. Schwerkert, Mrs. Lesko, Ms. Mace, and Mr. Moulton).

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. Bost):
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. MEekiS (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. Norten, Ms. Sewell, 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. LeVinh of Michigan):
H.R. 1279. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit the establishment of a corporation to conceal election contributions and donations to federal political committees; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. BASS (for herself, Mr. Nadler, Ms. Jackson Lee, Ms. Pelosi, Mr. Ro Khanna, Ms. Clark of Massachusetts, Mr. Jeffries, Mr. Aguiar, Ms. Lee of California, Ms. Lofgren, Mr. Cohen, Mr. Johnson of Georgia, Ms. Scalise, Mr. Cicilline, Mr. Swalwell, Mr. Lieu, Mr. Raskin, Ms. Jayapal, Ms. Demings, Ms. Correa, Ms. Garcia of Texas, Ms. Nunez, Mrs. McBath, Mr. Stanton, Ms. Dran, Ms. Escobar, Mr. Jones, Ms. Ross, Ms. Adams, Mr. Auchincloss, Ms. Barron, Ms. Beatty, Ms. Beatty of Ohio, Mr. Bishop of Georgia, Mr. Blumenauer, Ms. Bonamici, Ms. Bourdeaux, Mr. Bowser, Mr. Brandon F. Boyle of Pennsylvania, Ms. Brownley, Mr. Butterfield, Mr. Carabajal, Mr. Cardenas, Mr. Carson, Mr. Carte, Mr. Casten, Ms. Castor of Florida, Ms. Clarke of Texas, Mr. Cleaver, Mrs. Watson Coleman, Mr. Connolly, Mr. Cooper, Mr. Courtney, Mr. Crenshaw, Mr. Danny K. Davis of Illinois, Mr. DeFazio, Ms. DeGette, Ms. DelBene, Mr. Desaulnier, Mrs. Dingell, Mr. Doggett, Mr. Michael F. Doyle, Mr. Eshoo, Mr. Espaillat, Mr. Evans, Ms. Leger Fernandez, Mr. Foster, Ms. LoFink Frankel of Florida, Ms. Fudge, Mr. Gallagher, Mr. Garamendi, Mr. Garcia of Illinois, Mr. Green of Texas, Ms. Haaland, Mr. Hastings, Ms. Hayes, Mr. Horsford, Ms. Howard, Mr. Jacobs of California, Ms. Johnson of Texas, Mr. Keahey, Ms. Kelly of Illinois, Mr. Khanna, Mr. Kildee, Mr. Kilmer, Mr. Kildee of Michigan, Mr. Kirkpatrick, Mr. Krishnamoorthi, Ms. Kuster, Mr. Lamborn, Mr. Larsen of Washington, Mr. Larson of Connecticut, Mr. Lawson of Florida, Mr. Levin of Michigan, Mr. Levin of California, Mr. Lowenthal, Mr. Malinowski, Mrs. Carolyn B. Maloney of New York, Mr. Sean Patrick Maloney of New York, Ms. Manning, Ms. Matsui, Ms. McCarthy of California, Mr. McGovern, Mr. McNerney, Ms. Meeks, Ms. Meng, Ms. Mupumi, Ms. Moore of Wisconsin, Mr. Morelle, Mr. Moulton, Mr. Mr. Napolitano, Mr. Neal, Ms. Norton, Mr. O’Halleran, Mr. Omar, Mr. Palone, Mr. Panetta, Mr. Payne, Mr. Perlmutter, Mr. Peters, Ms. Pingree, Ms. Plaskett, Mr. Pocan, Mr. Price of North Carolina, Ms. Rice of New York, Ms. Blunt Rochester, Ms. Roybal-Allard, Mr. Ruiz, Mr. Rush, Mr. Sarbanes, Ms. Schakowsky, Mr. Schiff, Mr. Schneider, Mr. Scott of Virginia, Mr. David Scott of Georgia, Ms. Sewell, Mr. Sherman, Mr. Smith of Washington, Mr. Soto, Ms. Speier, Mr. Lynch, Ms. Stevens, Ms. Strickland, Ms. Suozzi, Mr. Takano, Mr. Thompson of Mississippi, Ms. Tuit, Ms. Traill, Mr. Tonko, Mrs. Torres of California, Mr. Torres of New York, Mrs. Trahan, Mr. Trumbo, Mr. Vargas, Mr. Vrasy, Ms. Velázquez, Ms. Wasserman Schultz, Ms. Waters, Mr. Welch, Mr. Wild, Ms. Wild of Georgia, Ms. Wilson of Florida, Mr. Yarmuth, Ms. Chu, Mr. Bera, Ms. Delauro, Mr. Sires, Mr. Ruppersberger, Mr. Grigalva, Mr. Westcott, Mr. Kaptur, Mr. Norcross, Ms. Davids of Kansas, Mr. Allred, Mrs. Axne, Mr. Higgen of New York, Ms. Newman, Mr. Thompson of California, Mr. Sablan, Mr. Gomez, Mr. Ryan, and Mr. Delgado):
H.R. 1280. A bill to hold law enforcement accountable for misconduct in court, 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 provisos 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. Ruiz, Mr. Bishop of Georgia, Mr. Rutherford, Mr. Welch, Mr. Courtney, Mr. Fortenberry, Mr. Pappas, Mr. Posey, Mr. Gallagio, Mr. Nourse, Ms. Blunt Rochester, Mr. Brownley, Mr. Mullin, Ms. Norten, Mr. Massie, Mr. Ng, Mr. Hartley, Mr. Ryan, Mr. Hudson, Ms. Sherrill, Mr. Van Drew, Ms. Omar, Mr. Vessay, Mr. Gaetz, Mr. Malinowski, Mr. Rush, Ms. Craig, Mr. Budd, Mr. Cole, Mr. Sean Patrick Maloney of New York, Ms. Slotkin, Mr. Gruelva, Ms. Beatty, Ms. Rodgers of Washington, Mr. Fortenberry, Mr. Hastings, Ms. Pingree, Mr. Lee of California, Mr. Raskin, Mr. Zeldin, Mr. Connolly, Ms. DeGette, Ms. DelBene, Mr. Lieu, Mr. Pocan, Mr. Tajiri, Mr. Kelly of Mississippi, Mrs. Lee of Nevada, Mrs. Axne, Mr. Schneider, Mr. Malinowski, Mr. Levin of Illinois, Mr. Levin of California, Mr. Swalwell, Mr. Titus, Mr. Carraja...
Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mr. KEATING, and Mr. BUCHANAN:

H.R. 1282. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to expand eligibility to certain military veterans for current 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 addi- tion to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consider- ation of such provisions as fall within the jurisdic- tion of the committee concerned.

By Mr. BUD (for himself, Mr. MOOLENAAR, Mr. GARTZ, Mr. PERRY, Mr. STEUBE, Mr. STROE- ART, Mr. ROSENDALE, Mr. MULLIN, Mr. NORMAN, Mr. HICK of Georgia, Mr. HARRIS, Mr. CAWTHORN, Mr. KELLY of Mississippi, Mr. JACKSON, Ms. MACK, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. CARTER of Texas, Mr. COLE, Mrs. ROGERS of Washington, Mr. CURTIS, Mr. ESSA, Mr. HINSON, Mr. LATTA, Mr. WITT- MAN, Mr. RICE of South Carolina, Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. BABB, Mr. TIFFANY, Mr. SMITH of Missouri, Mr. CARL, Mr. COMER, Mr. LONG, Mr. HERN, Mr. OWENS, Mr. RUTHERFORD, and Mr. ALLEN):

H.R. 1294. A bill to preserve open competition and Federal Government neutrality to- wards the labor relations of Federal Govern- ment contractors on Federal and federally funded construction projects, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Reform.

By Ms. CLARKE of New York (for her- self and GOSAR, Ms. MENG, and Mr. SIMPSON):

H.R. 1285. A bill to amend the Internal Rev- enue Code of 1986 to exclude from gross in- come, and tax as bona fide residents of possessions of the United States; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committees on House Administration.

By Mr. CLYBURN (for himself, Mr. DIMINGS, Ms. BROWNLY, Mr. NORTON, Mr. Quigley, Mr. GALLARDO, Mr. MAST, Mr. WALITZ, Mr. STEUART, Mr. ESPAILLAT, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. KELLY of Mississippi, Mr. PILBARIS, Mr. KEL- LER, Ms. CASTRO, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. DESALVIER, Mr. STEUDE, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. FOCO, Mr. GARCIA, Mr. GAUTZ, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. CARBALLO, Mr. TALENT, Mr. GRAY, Mr. MILLER, Mr. HENRY, Ms. HOPE, Mr. McKEE, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. ROY, Mr. CHRISS, Mr. DAVIS, Mr. HARRIS, Mr. McCARTY, Mr. GONZALES, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. LIU, Mr. SANCHEZ, Mr. BROWN, Mr. GRIFFITH, Mr. SCHWARTZ, Mr. DAVIS of California, Mr. HARTZLER, Mr. GOZALEZ of Ohio, Ms. TROUSDALE, Mr. BROWN of New York, Mr. GALLAGHER, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Mr. JOHNS- ON of Michigan, Mr. HARVEY, Mr. CASTRO, Mr. KILMER, Mr. HOULAHAN, Mrs. LEON of California, Mr. CASCIA, Mr. TROY, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. HAYES, Mr. CHU, Ms. BASS, and Mr. ROGERS):

H.R. 1298. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to reduce the deduction for research and experimental expenditures; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. LEVY of California (for herself, Miss GONZALEZ-COLON, Mr. KHANNA, Mrs. WATSON-COLEMAN, Mr. HAYES, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Ms. DELBENE, Mr. ESPRIT, Mr. LAHOOD, and Mr. ARRINGTON):

H.R. 1304. A bill to amend the Internal Rev- enue Code of 1986 to reduce the deduction for research and experimental expenditures; to the Committee on Ways and Means.
on Energy and Commerce, and Armed Services, 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. MALINOWSKI (for himself and Mr. DIAZ-BALART): H.R. 1286. To establish the Commission on the Coronavirus Pandemic in the United States; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Ms. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York: H. Res. 1. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the extension and reauthorization of the Smith-Mundt Act.

By Mr. MITCHELL: H. Res. 16. A resolution calling for the President to refrain from deploying military personnel to the Northern Triangle region of Central America.

By Mr. ROY: H. Res. 17. A resolution recognizing and supporting law enforcement agencies and first responders.

By Mr. MILLER (for himself and Mr. McTHURST): H. Res. 18. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the extension and reauthorization of the Smith-Mundt Act.

By Mr. WRIGHT: H. Res. 19. A resolution congratulating the Tampa Bay Buccaneers for winning Super Bowl LV; to the Committee on Oversight and Reform.

By Mr. CRABTREE (for himself and Mr. PSWEEDE): H. Res. 20. A resolution supporting the Special Olympics.

By Mr. STEFANIK (for herself, Mr. CROW, Mr. TURNER, Mr. WALTZ, Mr. GAETZ, Mr. CARL, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. BARRAGAN, Ms. BLUNT-RHODES, Mr. ROY, Mr. CRAWFORD, Mrs. RODGERS of Georgia, Mrs. HARTZLER, Mr. KATKO, Ms. SALAZAR, and Mr. STEWART): H. Res. 21. A resolution congratulating the Tampa Bay Buccaneers for winning Super Bowl LV; to the Committee on Oversight and Reform.

By Ms. CASTOR (for herself, Mr. DUNN, Mr. RUTHERFORD, Mr. LAWSON of Florida, Mr. WALTZ, Mrs. MURPHY of Florida, Mr. SOTO, Mrs. DEMINGS, Mr. ORR, Mr. CRIST, Mr. C. SCOTT FRANKLIN of Florida, Mr. BUCHANAN, Mr. STEUDE, Mr. MAST, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. WASHINGTON of Florida, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, and Ms. SALAZAR): H. Res. 22. A resolution congratulating the Tampa Bay Buccaneers for winning Super Bowl LV; to the Committee on Oversight and Reform.

By Mr. GALLAGHER (for himself, Ms. CHEN, Mr. KATKO, Mr. STEWART, Mr. LAMBORN, Mrs. HARTZLER, Mr. CURTIS, Mr. BERGMAN, Mr. REED, Mr. CHUBOT, Mr. GROTHMAN, Mrs. RICE of Oklahoma, Mrs. WALORSKI, Mr. WOMACK, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, Mr. GAETZ, Mr. CRAWFORD, Mr. BUDD, Mr. STEUDE, and Ms. HINSON): H. Res. 23. A resolution opposing the lifting of sanctions imposed with respect to Iran.

By Ms. HIGGINS of Louisiana: H. Res. 24. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that Vice President Kamala Harris should provide a progress report on her trip to the Middle East.

By Ms. MALONEY of New York: H. Res. 25. A resolution opposing the inclusion of an article of impeachment or conviction in the articles delivered by the House of Representatives to the Senate for consideration in the impeachment of President Donald J. Trump.

By Mr. CROW (for himself and Mr. MURPHY of Georgia): H. Res. 26. A resolution congratulating the Tampa Bay Buccaneers for winning Super Bowl LV; to the Committee on Oversight and Reform.

By Mr. STEFANIK (for herself, Mr. CROW, Mr. TURNER, Mr. WALTZ, Mr. GAETZ, Mr. CARL, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. BARRAGAN, Ms. BLUNT-RHODES, Mr. ROY, Mr. CRAWFORD, Mrs. RODGERS of Georgia, Mrs. HARTZLER, Mr. KATKO, Ms. SALAZAR, and Mr. STEWART): H. Res. 27. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that Vice President Kamala Harris should provide a progress report on her trip to the Middle East.

By Ms. MCGovern (for Mr. McNERNEY, Ms. RICE of New York, Mr. BASS, Mr. MURPHY of Ohio, Mr. BASS, Mr. COLE, Mr. POCAN, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, and Ms. SEWELL): H. Res. 28. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that Vice President Kamala Harris should provide a progress report on her trip to the Middle East.

By Mr. TONKO (for himself and Mr. MCKINNEY): H. Res. 29. A bill to direct the Secretary of Transportation to limit the sale of a certain personal watercraft; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. MOULTON (for himself, Mr. KATKO, Ms. ESCOBAR, Mr. DURCHIE, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. CROW, Ms. CHU, Mr. COURTNEY, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. RYAN, Mrs. AXN, Mr. CONDONI, Miss RICE of New York, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. RUSH, Mr. MCDONALD, Ms. SHUSTER, Mr. FOSTER, Mr. KERRING, Ms. OMAAR, Mr. CLEAVER, and Mr. LEVIN of California): H. Res. 30. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to provide for eating disorders treatment for members of the Armed Forces of the United States; to provide for eating disorders treatment for Department of Veterans Affairs beneficiaries; and for other purposes; to the Committees on Education and Labor, House Administration, Foreign Affairs, and Homeland Security.

By Mr. EVANS: H. Res. 31. A bill to express the sense of the House of Representatives that the United States must continue to seize, capture, and destroy weapons of mass destruction and to use all available means to hold Iran fully accountable for its malign activities, including its nuclear program, ballistic and cruise missile capabilities, weapons proliferation, support for terrorism, state-sponsored terrorism, gross human rights violations, and other destabilizing activities; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on Financial Services, 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. MILELLE (for himself and Ms. VELAZQUEZ): H. Res. 32. A resolution expressing appreciation for essential employees with disabilities during the current pandemic, and beyond; to the Committee on Education and Labor.

By Mr. PERRY (for himself, Mr. GALLEGEO, Mr. ROY, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. JACKSON, Mr. CRAWFORD, Mrs. RODGERS of Washington, Mr. GIMENEZ, Mr. VAN DREW, Mr. BALDERS, Mr. STEUDE, Mr. LAMBERT, and Mr. BUCKLEY): H. Res. 33. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the International Olympic Committee should rebid the 2022 Winter Olympic Games to be hosted by a country that recognizes and respects human rights; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Ms. STEFANIK (for herself, Mr. CROW, Mr. TURNER, Mr. WALTZ, Mr. GAETZ, Mr. CARL, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. BARRAGAN, Mr. ORR, Mr. CRIST, Mr. C. SCOTT FRANKLIN of Florida, Mr. BUCHANAN, Mr. STEUDE, Mr. MAST, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. WASHINGTON of Florida, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, and Ms. SALAZAR): H. Res. 34. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the International Olympic Committee should rebid the 2022 Winter Olympic Games to be hosted by a country that recognizes and respects human rights; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. MURPHY (for himself and Mr. HARRIS of Maryland): H. Res. 35. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the International Olympic Committee should rebid the 2022 Winter Olympic Games to be hosted by a country that recognizes and respects human rights; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Ms. JOHNSON of Texas: H. Res. 36. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives on the death of the Honorable Ronald J. Wright; considered and agreed to.

By Ms. CASTOR (for herself, Mr. DUNN, Mr. RUTHERFORD, Mr. LAWSON of Florida, Mr. WALTZ, Mrs. MURPHY of Florida, Mr. SOTO, Mrs. DEMINGS, Mr. ORR, Mr. CRIST, Mr. C. SCOTT FRANKLIN of Florida, Mr. BUCHANAN, Mr. STEUDE, Mr. MAST, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. WASHINGTON of Florida, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, and Ms. SALAZAR): H. Res. 37. A resolution opposing the lifting of sanctions imposed with respect to Iran.

By Ms. HIGGINS of Louisiana: H. Res. 38. A resolution expressing appreciation and support for essential employees with disabilities during the current pandemic, and beyond; to the Committee on Education and Labor.

By Mr. PERRY (for himself, Mr. GALLEGEO, Mr. ROY, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. JACKSON, Mr. CRAWFORD, Mrs. RODGERS of Washington, Mr. GIMENEZ, Mr. VAN DREW, Mr. BALDERS, Mr. STEUDE, Mr. LAMBERT, and Mr. BUCKLEY): H. Res. 39. A resolution expressing appreciation and support for essential employees with disabilities during the current pandemic, and beyond; to the Committee on Education and Labor.

By Mr. MURPHY (for himself and Mr. HARRIS of Maryland): H. Res. 40. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the International Olympic Committee should rebid the 2022 Winter Olympic Games to be hosted by a country that recognizes and respects human rights; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Ms. STEFANIK (for herself, Mr. CROW, Mr. TURNER, Mr. WALTZ, Mr. GAETZ, Mr. CARL, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. BARRAGAN, Mr. ORR, Mr. CRIST, Mr. C. SCOTT FRANKLIN of Florida, Mr. BUCHANAN, Mr. STEUDE, Mr. MAST, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. WASHINGTON of Florida, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, and Ms. SALAZAR): H. Res. 41. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the International Olympic Committee should rebid the 2022 Winter Olympic Games to be hosted by a country that recognizes and respects human rights; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.
CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

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

By Mrs. McSATH:
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 Mr. TAKANO:
H.R. 1276.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution and Article I, Section 8, Clause 8 of the Constitution of the United States.

By Mr. MILLER of Texas:
H.R. 1277.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution

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.
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. 1318.

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

By Mr. PRICE of North Carolina:

H.R. 1312.

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

By Ms. MENG:

H.R. 1315.

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

By Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. AXNE, Mrs. AXNE, Mrs. MOORE of Alabama, Mrs. LESKO, Mr. LOUDERMILK, Mr. MCCINTOCK, Mr. HARGROVE, Mrs. WADDLES, Mr. VALADAO, Mr. DUNN, Mr. EMER, and Mr. MEUSER.

H.R. 1313.

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

By Mr. RYAN:

H.R. 1316.

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

By Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER.

H.R. 1314.

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

By Mr. KELLY of Mississippi:

H.R. 1302.

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

By Mr. TAKANO:

H.R. 1315.

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

By Mr. BACON.

H.R. 1316.

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

By Mr. KEATING.

H.R. 1314.

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

By Mr. MALINOWSKI:

H.R. 889.

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

By Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York:

H.R. 1397.

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

By Ms. LEE of California:

H.R. 1305.

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. SCHWEIKERT.

H.R. 1304.

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

By Mr. MALINOWSKI:

H.R. 889.

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By Ms. LEE of California:

H.R. 1305.
H.R. 1084: Ms. FOXX.

H.R. 1086: Mrs. BOEHRINGER, Mr. Good of Virginia, Mrs. GREENE of Georgia, Mr. PERRY, Mr. ROSENDALE, Ms. HERRING, and Mr. BUCK.

H.R. 1097: Mr. GUERRINI and Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 1112: Mr. SIRES, Mr. BEYER, Mr. KELLY of Mississippi, Mrs. TORRES of California, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. SCHNEIDER, and Mr. CICILLINE.

H.R. 1113: Mr. BAUN.

H.R. 1140: Mr. POCAH, Ms. NORTON, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. NEWHOUSE, Mr. WAGNER, Mr. WATSON COLEMAN, Ms. CHU, Mr. OMAR.

H.R. 1156: Ms. FOXX.

H.R. 1192: Mr. SWALWELL.

H.R. 1193: Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. GUTHRIE, Mr. KILMER, Mr. ROYDEN DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. TIMMONS, Mrs. WAGNER, Mr. HUIZenga, Mr. AHRINGTON, Mr. McHENRY, Mr. TAYLOR, Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky, Mr. COMER, Mr. GOODEN of Texas, Mr. DAVIDSON, Mr. RUTHERFORD, Mr. SMUCKER, Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania, Mr. MEeks, Mr. FERGUSON, Mr. KRISHMAMOORTHI, Mr. REED, Mr. BOST, Mr. NEWHOUSE, Mr. PALAZZO, Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, Mr. MURPHY of North Carolina, Mr. JOYCE of Ohio, Mr. YARMOUTH, Ms. TENNEY, Mr. LOUDERMILK, Mr. STAUFFER, Mr. TONKO, Mr. WELCH, Mr. FORTENBERRY, Mr. STIVERs, and Mr. BUCHAN.

H.R. 1211: Mr. SHERMAN.

H.R. 1225: Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi.

H.R. 1254: Mr. PERRY.

H.R. 1271: Mr. HASTINGS.

H.R. 1275: Mr. HASTINGS.

H.R. 1276: Mr. HASTINGS.

H.R. 1284: Mr. HASTINGS.

H.R. 1285: Mr. HASTINGS.

H.R. 1286: Mr. HASTINGS.

H.R. 1287: Mr. HASTINGS.

H.R. 1288: Mr. HASTINGS.

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H.R. 1299: Mr. HASTINGS.

H.R. 1300: Mr. HASTINGS.

H.R. 1301: Mr. HASTINGS.

H.R. 1302: Mr. HASTINGS.

H.R. 1303: Mr. HASTINGS.

H.R. 1304: Mr. HASTINGS.

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H.R. 1318: Mr. HASTINGS.

H.R. 1319: Mr. HASTINGS.

H.R. 1320: Mr. HASTINGS.

H.R. 1321: Mr. HASTINGS.

H.R. 1322: Mr. HASTINGS.

H.R. 1323: Mr. HASTINGS.

H.R. 1324: Mr. HASTINGS.

H.R. 1325: Mr. HASTINGS.

H.R. 1326: Mr. HASTINGS.

H.R. 1327: Mr. MANN, Mrs. HARTZLer, Mr. CLINE, Mr. LATTa, Mr. CALVERt, and Mr. GUTHRIE.

H.R. 1328: Mr. SPANBERGER, Mr. ALLREED, Mr. McGOVERN, Mr. COSTA, Mr. BEYER, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. SIRES, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. SCHNEIDER, Mr. KIM of New Jersey, Mr. TIMMONS, Mr. NEWHOUSE, and Mr. COHEN.

H.R. 1329: Mr. SCHNEIDER, Mr. SIRES, and Mr. COHEN.

H.R. 1330: Mr. SIRES, Ms. BASS, Ms. JACOBS of California, Mrs. KIM of California, Mr. JEFFRIES, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. SCHNEIDER, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. BRA, Mr. ISSA, Mrs. OMAr, Mr. KIM of New Jersey, and Ms. WILD.

H.R. 1331: Ms. TITUS, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. BEYER, Ms. SIRES, Ms. BASS, Ms. JACOBS of California, Mrs. KIM of California, Mr. JEFFRIES, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. SCHNEIDER, Mr. BRA, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mrs. OMAr, Mr. KIM of New Jersey, and Ms. WILD.

H.R. 1332: Mr. MANN, Mrs. HARTZLer, Mr. CLINE, Mr. LATTa, Mr. CALVERt, and Mr. GUTHRIE.

H.R. 1333: Mr. SPANBERGER, Mr. ALLREED, Mr. McGOVERN, Mr. COSTA, Mr. BEYER, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. SIRES, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. SCHNEIDER, Mr. KIM of New Jersey, Mr. TIMMONS, Mr. NEWHOUSE, and Mr. COHEN.

H.R. 1334: Mr. SCHNEIDER, Mr. SIRES, and Mr. COHEN.

H.R. 1335: Ms. TITUS, Mr. BEYER, Mr. SIRES, Ms. BASS, Ms. JACOBS of California, Mrs. KIM of California, Mr. JEFFRIES, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. SCHNEIDER, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. BRA, Mr. ISSA, Mrs. OMAr, Mr. KIM of New Jersey, and Ms. WILD.

H.R. 1336: Ms. TITUS, Mr. BEYER, Mr. SIRES, Ms. BASS, Ms. JACOBS of California, Mrs. KIM of California, Mr. JEFFRIES, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. SCHNEIDER, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. BRA, Mr. ISSA, Mrs. OMAr, Mr. KIM of New Jersey, and Ms. WILD.
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:

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, DC, 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.

Patrick J. Leahy, President pro tempore.

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 Mulhern 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 bus duty, your lunchroom duty, and 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

This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.
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, what 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 the number of 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 confidence. I don’t mean 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 started year after year. We look nationally, 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 too?

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. But let’s take them bald open. 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. Still 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 has agreed that our students are held hostage by the number of kids dropped out—not in the 12th grade. They drop out in pre-K and kindergarten and the first, second, third, and the fourth grades. We are going to lose a whole generation of kids here.

I see by Mr. Borrell his additional time while we are waiting on Senator SCHUMER. I think I am going to take my additional time—and I will cut it short if Senator SCHUMER is here—to talk about another issue.

**RUSSIA**

Mr. President, I want to talk about the European Union’s approach to Russia. We know that in February, the Russian Government sentenced Alexei Navalny, a very prominent opposition leader, to about 3.5 years in prison. And shortly afterward, Mr. Putin directed that thousands of Mr. Navalny’s supporters who were protesting be arrested.

What was he—what were his supporters—arrested for? Criticizing Mr. Putin. Navalny’s imprisonment comes in the wake of his near-fatally poisoning, about which we have all read. And what happened to Mr. Navalny should be a wake-up call to our friends in Europe. It is certainly a wake-up call to the American public.

This isn’t the first time that Mr. Putin has tried to get rid of a dissident. Unfortunately, it probably won’t be the last. For years, Russia has been making trouble, both at home and abroad. Mr. Putin has made trouble here in America, about which we all know. Domestically, opponents of Mr. Putin have been arrested. They have died in prison. In some cases, they have been murdered. We all know that. Now, if this is how Mr. Putin is going to treat his own people, imagine how he would and has treated foreign countries, particularly our friends in Europe. Russia has launched an unjustified invasion of Georgia. It still controls large parts of Georgian territory. In 2014, Mr. Putin invaded Ukraine. He illegally annexed the Crimea. He started a war in Eastern Ukraine. It cost about 14,000 lives.

But Russia’s aggression—Mr. Putin’s aggression—and let me say, I am not impugning the people of Russia. They are wonderful people, I admire them deeply. But their leadership, their political leadership, if Mr. Putin’s aggression begs the question: If NATO troops did not stand in the way, what else would Russia do? Who knows what would happen to Poland and the Baltic States and other countries that were once part of the Soviet sphere.

The Economist puts it this way—I am going to quote:

Russia’s gangsterism has become impossible to ignore. Russia’s gangsterism has become impossible to ignore.

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. Josep Borrell visited Russia following Navalny’s imprisonment. Mr. Borrell visited the EU’s top 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 exhaust 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 allowed an unreliable partner while Borrell stood there and said nothing—nothing.

Another example, Germany. Germany is still supporting construction work on 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 EU is one that is less dependent on Russian energy, the more reluctant it will be to defend itself against its neighbor’s bullying.
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 shouldn’t try to do the same thing with respect to Mr. Putin. Mr. Putin’s aggression should teach us something: What you allow is what will continue.

And it has broad support in America. One final note on this topic—the Endless Frontier Act. This is a bipartisan effort that emerged from a number of critical technologies. The Act is a dangerous weak spot in our economy and in our national security. Our auto industry is facing significant challenges in the 21st century.

So at their own political peril. If our Republican colleagues 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 2015 was 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 ultra-rich.

For a while, the pernicious manipulation of cheap goods in our economy, and for while, the pernicious manipulation of its currency. American workers, Americans, 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 relevant Senate committees 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 committees to continue their work in a bipartisan way so we can have strong legislation before us.

It so happens 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. McConnel. 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. McConnel. 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 plans 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 work and worked 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 point of the economic cycle. 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 experts’ predictions. Many manufacturers can’t keep pace with demand.

Remarkably, even as economic output obviously shrank in 2020, overall household personal income and personal savings actually went up. That is because of the relief Congress delivered.

There is no question that some American families are still struggling. Nobody thinks our health or economic fight is finished yet, but on a broad national scale, households are sitting on an historic pile of pent-up cash, waiting for the economy to reopen.

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 another $3.5 trillion bloated and flawed 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 need help; 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 minimum wage was even in the early 1960s. This is just one example of how Democrats started with a policy that would only help a small fraction of Americans and then designed legislation that helps even fewer.

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 policy to pay 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 funding for vaccine 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 out-of-date, ideological wish list instead of the current needs of American families.

Now, Mr. President, on a completely different matter, I have been outspoken and clear about the crimes that were done 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 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 its commissioners 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 give 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 to me is like a good start; it sounds like a partisan beginning.”

That was the Democratic Vice Chairman of the 9/11 Commission.

Tom Kean, the Republican Chairman, pointed out what should be obvious: “Unless you have equal representation . . . the report won’t have as much confidence from 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 “relevant.”

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 narrower that looks into the Capitol riot. We could potentially 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, but I was lucky 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 it 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 America.

I heard that news, and I thought to myself, this is an ongoing battle. We haven’t run up any kind of score on 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 as is the $1.9 trillion rescue plan. It is $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.

He 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 pro-
duce $10 billion for America’s manufac-
turer 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 Ameri-
cans in the time of pandemic by sub-
sidizing COBRA. How does it mean? If you
had health insurance with your job and you
lost your job and you lost your health insurance, we
allow people to buy that health insurance that the employer offered, but they
have to pay the whole thing, both the employer’s and employee’s sides of it,
and it turns out to be prohibitive. It
doesn’t work unless we give a subsidy
for that coverage to be extended into
your unemployment situation.
And then $4 billion, which sounds
small when we are talking trillions,
but $4 billion for community health—
pardon me—behavioral health and ad-
diction services and counseling serv-
ices.
I learned the hard way over that
break as well that we are ignoring the
opiate crisis in America, but it is not
ignoring us. It is dramatically increas-
ing, primarily because we are not de-
voting the resources to it. And the mental health situation of many Amer-
icans is aggravated by isolation and so-
cial distancing, and addiction is even
worse.
So I have just described for you the
health side of President Biden’s Ameri-
can Rescue Plan. I would like to hear any
of my colleagues on the other side of
the aisle argue with me—I am ready
to take them on—that that is not need-
ed. Of course it is needed. It is needed
now, and it needs to be an investment we
make because if we don’t break the
back of this pandemic, we are not
going to get this economy reopen
again, we are not going to get our kids
back in school, we are not going to get
to see our grandkids the way we want to,
or our kids or grandkids, and we
are not going to see America return to
what we all desperately want it to re-
turn to.

The reason I raise that this morning
is when I heard the Senator from Ken-
tucky raising skeptical observations
about this plan, I thought back. It was
a year ago on the floor of the Senate—
nothing short of a political miracle—
that the first CARES Act, under Presi-
dent Donald Trump, the first CARES Act
on which Senate passed with an over-
whelming vote of 96 to nothing. That
doesn’t happen much around here, even
for resolutions on motherhood. But 96
to nothing—bipartisan support for the
relief bill proposed by President Trump
and the Congress in March of last year.
It was a good feeling, and we knew we
had to do it. We were in it together,
and we knew we had a challenge.

Then came last December, just a few
weeks back, and again under the
Trump administration, a proposal for a
$900 billion relief bill for COVID-19. It
passed the Senate with 92 votes, 92 out
of 100 Senators. It just showed the bi-
partisanship that we mustered, thank

goodness, when we needed it because
the Nation needed it, and we did it to-
gether—96 in March, 92 Senators in De-

cember. We stood behind that plan
even though it had the blessing of a
President of a different party at a con-
troversial moment in history. We stood
behind that because the American people
needed it.

Now comes President Joe Biden, 5 or
6 weeks into his Presidency, and says:
Let me take my leadership opportunity
and responsibility seriously, and let me
support the American Rescue Plan. Where is the bipartisanship
that we saw last year?

I do want to dispute the conclusion of
Senator McConnell when it comes to
the state of the economy. I did take a
few economics courses. I don’t profess
to be an expert. Let’s listen to someone
who is: Federal Reserve Chairman Je-
rome Powell, testifying on Capitol Hill.
What did he have to say? Well, he told
us that we are in a situation that is far
from over even if we have an economy that is
still challenging.

Here are some things that were left
out of the rosy analysis by the Senator
from Kentucky:

“There are still 10 million more un-
employed people than before the pan-
demic began.” Ten million unemployed
American workers. “While many parts
of the economy have recovered,” Chair-
man Powell said, “the unemployment
rate for the lowest-paid quarter of the
labor force is probably above 20 per-
cent.” Above 20 percent. “There’s a
long way to go,” Chairman Powell said.

Economic activity rebounded in the
summer after much of the economy re-
opened from spring shutdowns. But
that momentum “slowed substan-
tially,” in the words of Chairman Pow-
ell, with sectors that rely on person-to-
person contact, like hospitality and en-
tertainment, enduring the worst blows.

“That burden has also largely fallen
on low-wage workers, Black and Hispanic
Americans, and other minority
groups,” Powell said.

I don’t believe we are out of the
woods yet. I believe we have got a long
way to go. The American people be-
lieve that too.

President Biden believes it, and when
he starts talking about getting us back
on our feet, he is suggesting extending
unemployment insurance programs
that expire in just 2 weeks. On March
14, states whose emergency Unem-
ployment programs will expire that day,
will start to expire, and he wants us to move
quickly to make sure that doesn’t hap-
pen.

I support that effort for two reasons.
First, it is humane. We are talking
about fellow Americans out of work
through no choice of their own. Sec-
ondly, putting money into unemploy-
ment benefits for unemployed workers
is the single best investment when it
comes to revitalizing the economy.
They do not turn to the Wall Street
Journal and those checks; they turn to the mailbox and try to figure out how they are going to
pay the rent and pay for the food 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 un-
employment 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, they won’t work.
They might just sit at 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
of Americans workers, I believe they
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 abso-
lute 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 Sen-
ate. Now comes President Joe Biden, 5 or
6 weeks into his Presidency, and says:
He has been amazing. His voice could
be heard all over the Senate.

As he took it over, I don’t have that
skill; I wish I did. I am glad to have seen him
name the key equipment we need to
make. He mentioned the critical manufac-
turer of that equipment, and I never heard
his voice could be heard all over the Sen-
ate. He would use that skill so effectively to help
the people who were doing their best
to get by and struggling.

How many times do all of us give
speeches about the dignity of work 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
very well, thank you, but those at the bottom have struggled to get

Try to make it on $7.25 an hour. I was
trying to do a calculation earlier on

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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 not. I don’t know how anyone can manage it. They fall 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 get by week to 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 case. It is for many families. I put it in the same category in order to restore equity and opportunity to a lot of people who otherwise wouldn’t have it. This is the second installment. The first was $600 in the bill we passed last December. The $1,400 payment will help many families.

I want to add one element that was debated a few weeks ago. Senator Todd Young of Indiana, whom I respect and admire, had offered an amendment at what was known as a vote-a-rama as to who would receive this $600 payment. I think the payment amount has been increased in the latest Biden proposal.

But the point I tried to make and I think he and I agree on, although I won’t speak for him, is that if a child legally in America, a citizen of this country, with a Social Security number, lives in a household with parents who are undocumented—they may be working and paying taxes with something called an ITIN—but that child should not be discriminated against or at a disadvantage because of the parents’ immigration status. If the children qualify, the children should be receiving those payments. I believe the House reconciliation bill does that, and I hope that any measure that we consider will do the same.

So going back to the Senate on the floor asking for an opportunity to speak.

Yes, I support the American Rescue Plan. Is it possible that I would have written it differently? Yes. Are there provisions I would change? Yes. But I want to tell you, when we passed the CARES Act measure last December, that was true as well.

We are in a time of a national challenge and a national crisis. We have a President who is facing it squarely, taking it on, accepting responsibility, and asking for our help. Can we do anything less?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican whip.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, earlier this month, 16 Democratic Senators introduced a resolution calling for President Biden to forgive $10,000 of Federal student loan debt per borrower. —$50,000.

There is no question that student loan debt is a problem for many Americans. College costs have risen to unrealistically high levels, and many students are saddled with unrealistic amounts of debt in response. But the answer to this problem is not to have the President or Congress simply step in and forgive a large chunk of student loan debt.

To start with, Democrats’ plan is incredibly, fundamentally unfair. Right now, there are individuals around this country who have just paid off the last of their student loans. They have been working hard, paying on their debt. Sometimes for a couple of years, sometimes for a couple of decades, as was the case with me. What happens to these individuals if the President steps in and forgives $50,000 of their 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, millions of Americans who have made only 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 student loans? If the President and Congress 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,” if the loans of “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 we have seen many taxpayers 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, those who 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 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, apprenticeships, 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.

Similarly, 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 helping to 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 prior to the pandemic, 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 Democrats' calls to put taxpayers on the hook for literally billions and billions of dollars in student loans.

I yield the floor.

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

BOOPENING SCHOOLS

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 87 percent of K-12 students are attending school in-person full time. Nineteen 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 $86 million to Arkansas—to support education through the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in nearly $86 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 20 percent of 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 and 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 states 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.

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 full year ago and 11 months ago. It didn't take long to figure out that kids at home are different than kids at school. And even before that, many parents had to start accommodating their schedule to try to figure out how they were going to deal with this new and unanticipated schedule.

Congress stepped up. On multiple occasions, we passed emergency legislation to get money to schools to clean classrooms, to buy laptops for students, and to do almost anything else that schools thought they might need at the elementary and secondary level. But what started as what I believe everybody thought was a stopgap—certainly no longer than until the weather changed—has dwindled away. Just as we 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 parents and teachers 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 falling 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 it. 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 17 and 24 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
that 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 current guidance was only 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 until every teacher to be vaccinated before schools reopen because, when you think about that, if every teacher had their first vaccine today in the double-vaccine world, it would still be out by the end of March before they had their second 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. David Rosen, 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 Biden White House actually immediately said they just didn’t agree with the experts on this, even the ones in their own administration. The President’s Press Secretary said that Dr. Walensky was speaking in her personal capacity and the White House at this time. Dr. Fauci was speaking in an official White House coronavirus briefing. Now, how the head of the CDC speaks in her personal capacity captures us by the coronavirus briefing on this topic. I don’t know, but that is what happened.

The White House just keeps repeating these points that teachers should be a priority for vaccination. I don’t have a problem with that. I think that would be a great thing. It would make teachers more comfortable and might make parents more comfortable. In fact, when we were debating the budget resolution just a couple of weeks ago, I offered an amendment that would have incentivized school districts to get kids back to school after teachers had been vaccinated. That is more stringent than the President himself has said and more than the CDC has said, but my amendment was blocked on a party-line vote. Every single Member of our friends on the other side voted against an amendment that would say we should incentivize, financially, getting kids back to school when teachers have been vaccinated.

Now, a couple of my friends on the other side walked up and said: Well, we just need to work this language a little bit because all of us have kids who know how important it is that we get our kids back to school. Democrats say we need emergency legislation to help the schools. I have been part of five bills that were provided. But $67.5 billion for K-12 schools to reopen safely. So far, States have spent just under $7 billion of that $67 billion, so clearly money is not the obstacle to getting back to school.

The White House actually could give an additional $128.6 billion for schools, according to the CBO, and, again, only 5 percent of that money would be spent by the end of this fiscal year, only about $6.5 billion. The rest of the money would be available over the next 7 years. Hopefully, that money is not money that is designed to get kids back to school. We don’t need to be waiting 7 years to get kids back to school.

If schools need money right now, they, first of all, should spend the money that the Congress has already provided. There is no reason to have over $50 billion still waiting to be spent if that is what it takes to get kids back to school.

This probably isn’t about funding. It is really a discussion about whether the schools should reopen and what else we need to do with money that might be available now because of this coronavirus legislation.

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 of this extra money 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 and the ways well-meaning policymakers are putting political interests ahead of the livelihoods 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 transmission while keeping schools open for in-person instruction."

So what is the holdup? Despite his CDC’s 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 schoolbus—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 moms. 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—proudly praised 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 leftwing 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 our schoolchildren 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, I have put students first, in 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 r’s of education: first, re-spect 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.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the 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 colleagues from the great State of Florida here today: respect the science, reopen the 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, especially as it 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 with COVID–19 had limited effects and that CDC’s guidance 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 also led our 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 students 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 Board of Education 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 my office expressing 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. To be more directly put, these 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 difficult for those parents with 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, their children’s learning 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
left the workforce, while about 71,000 men left the workforce. Overall, approximately 2.4 million women have left the workforce since last February. This has been a common and unfortunate trend we are seeing as a result of the pandemic, and I know for certain it is directly tied to the fact that schools have not reopened.

West Virginia’s State superintendent said recently:

There is absolutely no substitution for a teacher in the lives of a child.

He continued by saying:

There is no substitution for what that means to the community and the families—not just for the academics but for the social, emotional, [and] physical well-being.

He is absolutely right, and this is just another reason why it is so important for our children to return to school safely.

At the same time, I know there is no one-size-fits-all solution. State leaders, local governments, school administrators, and parents must take this data and these recommendations and apply them to the realities they see in their own communities.

Congress has provided $68 billion in resources for K-12 schools that could use last year, which schools could use to implement these strategies. For these, this may mean continuing some form of remote learning. For others, including my State of West Virginia, it means bringing every K-8 student to the school building.

Before I conclude, I want to take a moment to thank the teachers, the parents, and the students who have adjusted and readjusted over the past years.

Despite the many challenges—whether they are technical, logistical, or emotional challenges—you have tried to make it work the best you can, and for that we are all very grateful. But now we have to do the three r’s. We must look at the data, listen to the stories, and look at the realities in our classrooms and in our communities.

Get our children back to school. Respect the science. Reopen the schools safely, and return students, teachers, and learning to the classroom, where it should be.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DURBIN). The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, I first want to thank my colleague from West Virginia and my colleague from Iowa for their focus on getting our kids back in school.

I agree with the three r’s: respect the science, reopen our schools safely, and return our teachers and our children to our classrooms.

It has been almost a year since schools first shuttered due to COVID-19. In many States across the Nation, unfortunately, schools remain closed. The consequences are devastating.

Being forced to stay at home is taking a significant social and emotional toll, and it also directly impacts our children’s future.

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 adhere to 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 safely 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 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 $4 billion of that money. Schools don’t need more money to reopen 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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. ROSEN). The majority leader.

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. 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.

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 Executive Calendar No. 8, Gina Marie Raimondo, of Rhode Island, to be Secretary of Commerce.

Charles E. Schumer, Sherrod Brown, Sheldon Whitehouse, Benjamin L. Cardin, Robert Menendez, Patrick J. Leahy, Alex Padilla, Jacky Rosen, Richard J. Durbin, Tommy Baldwin, Jack Reed, Chris Van Hollen, Richard Blumenthal, Tim Kaine, Martin Heinrich, Christopher Murphy, Maria Cantwell.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call for the cloture motion be waived.

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 senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Cecilia Elena Rouse, of New Jersey, to be Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Mr. BARRASSO. 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 I be allowed to conclude my remarks before recessing.

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

The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to conclude my remarks before recessing.

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

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

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 through this Executive order, is to “isolate” the Chinese Communist Party.

The administration thinks that by refusing to make these loans to folks around the world, that the Chinese Communist Party will be shamed for using 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 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.

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 not willing 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 those troops in Kosovo are driven by the Government of Kosovo into the clutch-es 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.
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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 reverse course, 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.

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:

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move, relating to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 9, Jennifer Muhlen Granholm, of Michigan, to be Secretary of Energy.


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

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Jennifer Muhlen Granholm, of Michigan, to be Secretary of Energy, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Georgia (Mr. WARNOCK), is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HASSAN). Are there any Senators in the Chamber wishing to vote or change his or her vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 67, nays 32, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 65 Ex.]

YEAS—67

Baldwin
Blumenthal
Booker
Brown
Brown
Curnyn
Cortez Masto
Cramer
Crsp
Daines
Duckworth
Durbin
Feinstein
Gillibrand
Grassley

Hassan
Blumenthal
Hirono
Hoven
Johnson
Kelly
McConnell
Menendez
Merkeley
Mukwogu
Murphy
Murphy
Ossoff
Padilla
Pease

Portman
Risch
Romney
Rosen
Sanders
Schatz
Schumer
Shaheen
Stefanek
Smith
Stabenow
Sullivan
Tester
Van Hollen
Warner
Warren
Whitehouse
Wyden
Young

NAYS—32

Barrasso
Blackburn
Blunt
Boozman
Capito
Casidy
Cotton
Crus
Ernest
Fischer
Graham

Hagerty
Rawley
Ryde-Smith
Isakson
Kennedy
Lankford
Lee
Lummis
Marshall
Morgan

Rubio
Sasse
Scott (FL)
Scott (IA)
Shelby
Thune
 Tillman
Toomey
Tuberville
Wicker

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 67, the nays are 32.

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 hold 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-govern ment, 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 American 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, who is downsizing their friends, 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 homeland and public trust in our American democracy.

Titans 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 models put and profit at risk. Helping 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 enterprises. These companies bear some responsibility to help repair 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, 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.

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 good 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 to come.

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 an opportunity to chart a course for action 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 support the fight for economic, and 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 promise.

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.

Civil rights and Black American achievements and culture contributes to the greatness of our diverse society. Such a celebration is aspirational, highlighting one of the many fundamental components that make this Nation a beacon around the world despite our flaws.

For the past 40 years, House Majority Leader STENY HOYER celebrated Black History Month by hosting a breakfast for political and civic leaders and inviting illustrious keynote speakers. Past speakers included then-Senator Barack Obama and Congressman John Lewis. Congressman ANTHONY BROWN joined the effort to bring so many of us together for this 40th Annual Black History Month Celebration and featured Vice President Harris as the honored guest and keynote speaker.

I would like to acknowledge the planning committee for this year’s event, including Jackie Rhone and the former chair, Betty Richardson. Through their hard work, the celebration is a true success that everyone who participates looks forward to year after year.

This year’s event focused on the identity representative of the majority of the Black family. Maya 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 affected Black 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 even more to celebrate the gifts of life, family, and 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 black history, and democracy. 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.

(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

Ms. 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 more recently. 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 the schools. And when you look at Tennessee and how they have approached this—indeed, the schools reopening and how they proceed—it was done with the children in mind.

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 this agreement between the administrators and the parents and teachers that 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 proceed—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 thoughtful nature 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 go 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 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.

Mr. DAINES. Madam President, outrage—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 header 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. Unfortunately, the treatment of the education and the health of our students.

In States and localities where schools remain closed, America’s youngest and brightest minds are posed with challenges that generations before 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. And this is just the tip of the iceberg.

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 schools. Montana 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 feds’ desire to delay 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 will of our teachers unions to hold 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 this latest effort together, we have passed five bipartisan COVID relief packages. Yes, it is harder to work in a bipartisan fashion, but that is why we were 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 water 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 subfreezing, subzero cold temperatures. So let’s really get the question: “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 a number 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 bill to tax American families that would make absolutely no sense at all, without a single Republican in Congress, either in the House or in the Senate.

We know that there are 10 Republican governors 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.

It is really a budget reconciliation bill, with no reference to the normal process, and even though we might have majority in the Senate, the Republicans have majority in the House, and they would have to bring it over here.

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 subfreezing, subzero cold temperatures. So let’s really get the question: “What happened?” but “How can we prevent it from happening again in the future?”

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It just takes a number 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.

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 sort of money has been provided to the States to re-open schools safely. 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 funding in this new so-called COVID relief bill wouldn't even be touched until 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, really, any reasonable person has, that it is irresponsible for us 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 pre-pandemic 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 pre-pandemic 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 the pain from our friends across the aisle that we need 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.

Larry Summers, who served as the Treasury Secretary during the Clinton administration and who was an economic adviser to President Obama, offered a good observation on the situation in a recent opinion piece. He wrote:

Whereas the Obama stimulus was about half as large as the output shortfall, the proposed Biden stimulus is three times as large as the projected shortfall. Relative to the size of the gap being addressed, it is six times as large.

For this administration to make public comments about following the science—certainly, following the facts, listening to the experts—it is hard to reconcile that with this bill that is so divorced from reality. I don't think you can do it, which brings me to my third big concern with this bill: This is not a COVID-19 relief bill in its entirety. It is for completely unrelated, liberal priorities that should not be included in this emergency spending. Let alone one that is rushed through in a partisan manner through the budget process.

One case here is the proposed increase in the minimum wage to $15. Regardless of the cost of living, businesses in small towns and major cities alike would be required to pay their employees $15 an hour by 2025. Now, for big companies in big cities, that may be doable. That may be the going rate to get the kind of quality workforce you want. As we know, companies like Amazon have already implemented their own $15 an hour minimum wage back in 2018, and they can afford it. But for small businesses that are the backbone of our economy and are key to our economic recovery following this pandemic, this could lead to massive layoffs or permanent closures.

The Congressional Budget Office that I referred to earlier estimates that this provision alone could put 1.4 million Americans out of work. Do we really want to pass a provision that would put 1.4 million Americans out of work? That is 50 percent more than it could potentially do.

As a reminder, our colleagues are trying to rush this massive change through Congress as part of a pandemic relief bill because they know that it is the only shot at passing a bill that would have this sort of dramatic negative effect on jobs—all under the guise of economic relief and stimulus. There is simply no way to justify a one-size-fits-all mandate that treats Silicon Valley the same as it does mom-and-pop businesses in rural America.

And the rapid provisions doesn't stop there. This legislation includes $30 billion for public transit agencies, a blank check to bail out mismanaged union pension funds without any reforms, and funding for a bridge to connect the majority leader's home State of New York to Canada. So we are going to build the majority leader a bridge to Canada as part of an emergency COVID-19 relief bill. It is absolutely outrageous. 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 Senator Booker 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, as approved 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:

UNITED STATES SENATE COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES RULES OF PROCEDURE, 117TH CONGRESS

1. Regular Meeting Day—The Committee shall meet at least once a month when Congress is in session. The regular meetings 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 a subcommittee thereof, on the same subject for a period of 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 (with the Chairman and if possible all 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 confidential conduct of the 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, or otherwise impair the professional standing of an individual, or otherwise injure the personal rights of an individual, or otherwise inhibit the discharge of his duties by an individual, or otherwise impair the personal rights of an individual;

(d) will disclose the identity of any individual;

(e) will disclose the identity of any individual;

(f) may divulge matters required to be kept secret in the interests of the national defense.

5. 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. (See Standing Rules of the Senate XXVI.7(a)(x).)

(b) Except as provided in subsections (a), (c), and (d), and other than for the conduct of hearings, the quorum for the transaction of such business shall be forty percent (40%) of the membership of the Committee, including one member of the minority party; or a majority of the members of the Committee, whichever is greater.

(c) The Chairman or the Minority Member of the Committee, at any meeting of less than fifty (50) percent (50%) of the membership of the Committee, may dispense with the quorum for the transaction of such business.

6. Committee—Any action, decision, or recommendations of the Committee shall be taken by a majority of the Committee.

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 affirmed in writing 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 meeting. Notice, after consultation with the Ranking Minority Member, may be held open a roll call vote on any measure or matter which is before the Committee until the completion of the day on which the Committee votes on such measure or matter.

9. Subpoenas—Subpoenas for attendance of witnesses and for the production of memoranda, documents, records, and the like may be issued, after consultation with the Ranking Minority Member, by the Chairman or by the Minority Member of the Committee, but only when authorized by a majority of the members of the Committee. The subpoena shall briefly state the matter to which the witness is ordered to testify or the documents to be produced.

10. Hearings—(a) Public notice shall be given of the date, place and subject matter of any hearing to be held by the Committee, or any subcommittee thereof, at least 1 week in advance of such hearing; unless the Committee or subcommittee determines good cause exists for beginning such hearing at an earlier time.

(b) Hearings may be initiated only by the Chairman or the Minority Member of the Committee.

(c) Hearings shall be held only in the District of Columbia unless specifically authorized by the Senate or the vote of the Committee or subcommittee conducting such hearings.

(d) The Chairman of the Committee or subcommittee shall consult with the Ranking Minority Member thereof before naming witnesses for a hearing.

(e) Witnesses appearing before the Committee shall file with the clerk of the Committee a written statement of their proposed testimony, not less than 24 hours prior to the time they are to appear unless the Chairman and the Ranking Minority Member determine that there is good cause not to file such a statement. Witnesses testifying before the Committee shall file with the clerk of the Committee a statement of the confidential material presented in a closed hearing.

(f) The Committee may require a witness to file with the Committee a statement of the confidential material presented in a closed hearing.

11. Nominations—Unless otherwise ordered by the Committee, nominations referred to the Committee shall be held for at least seven (7) days before being voted on by the Committee. Any member of the Committee may require a copy of any all nominations referred to the Committee.

12. Real Property Transactions—Each member of the Committee shall be furnished with a copy of the proposals of the Secretaries of the Navy, the Army, and the Air Force, submitted pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 2662 and with a copy of the recommendations of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, submitted pursuant to 50 U.S.C. App. 2285, regarding the proposed acquisition or disposal of real property at a purchase price or rental of more than $50,000. Any member of the Committee objecting to or requesting information on a proposed acquisition or disposal of real property at a purchase price or rental of more than $50,000, shall request to the Chairman of the Committee to hold in abeyance any action on the matter refer to the Committee shall be furnished with such information.

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 status of the current legislation, and new bills introduced and referred to the Committee. A copy of each new revision shall be furnished to each member of the Committee.

(b) Unless otherwise ordered, measures referred to the Committee shall be referred by the clerk of the Committee to the appropriate subcommittee of the Committee. (See Standing Rules of the Senate XXVI.7(a)(1)).

14. Except as otherwise specified herein, the Standing Rules of the Senate shall govern the actions of the Committee. Each subcommittee of the Committee is part of the Committee, and is therefore subject to the Committee's rules so far as applicable.

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 subcommittees, shall set dates for hear-

This past December, the United Na-
tions Security Council made the deci-
sion to dissolve UNAMID. Although it
will retain a presence in the region un-
til it completes its full drawdown at the
end of June 2021, UNAMID’s core civil-
ian security mission has now ceased. UNAMID is to be replaced by the United Nations Integrated Trans-

NOMINATION OF JENNIFER GRANHOLM

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today in support of Governor Jen-

four years of the 2008 financial crisis and the resulting bailout of the auto indu-

The Governor does not have an easy task ahead of her, but I have full con-

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CONFIRMATION OF JENNIFER GRANHOLM

As chair of the Appropriations Sub-

2002 to 2011 and as Michigan’s at-

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not

DARFUR

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I rise
today to express my concern about in-
creasing insecurity in the Darfur re-

can energy policies to spark job creation

senate, and hundreds of thousands killed and

In January 2020, two separate violent incidents in North

With the fall of Bashir, many had

During her tenure as Governor, she

energy moyment to lead and oversee the 13,500 em-

energy. I have no doubt she will bring

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Former GM Chairwoman and CEO, Jennifer Granholm, will be confirmed as the first female attorney general; Michi-
governor’s career. She was Michigan’s

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Finally, I would be remiss if I did not
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 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 proposed new security structure for 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 Chapter VII mandate to adequately 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 deploy that mission 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 ill-timed and ill-conceived decision to end UNAMID’s drawdown and call upon Secretary of State Blinken and United Nations Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield to take urgent steps.

First, I must 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 to be taken in by a sitting President. The UNITAMS therefore lacks UNAMID’s robust mandate to deploy civilian protection forces, and the RSF or any other forces involved in violence in Darfur.

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 the thousands of attacks and how powerful the people implicated.

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 that 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 to try 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 following the House’s recommendation, we should 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.

I voted in favor of the motion in 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 heinous 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 would repeat. 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 free and fair election and the peaceful transfer of power that follows it. It is the reason they invested Congress with the power to impeach the President after an oath to try a President who is no longer 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 following the House’s recommendation, we should 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.

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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 politics or to a better society. Even so, one can envision a world economy 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 predict civil war. Still others claim 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 helped to liberate a beleaguered nation; leaders like Lincoln who mastered 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 or even to foreign adversities, 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 of opinion.

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 human 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 that 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 M 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 community of Allegany County in the western part of my State. Sadly, Sean was taken far too soon from his family and the many neighbors who cared so deeply for him due to complications of COVID-19. He leaves behind his wife, Terri, and three sons, Mike, Cory, and Casey.

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 never one to sit idly by. He volunteered his time as the athletic physician for Allegany High School for several years and later established a community fundraiser known as the Hooley Plunge to support the ice rink at the local YMCA. When the YMCA closed the ice rink, Sean redirected his efforts to another cause close to his heart, people with developmental disabilities. With Sean as its champion for 17 years, the Hooley Plunge has raised more than $1.5 million to support the Special Olympics of Allegany County and other local programs that serve individuals with development disabilities. It has become the largest single-day fundraising event in Allegany County, with hundreds of brave souls running into the freezing waters of Rocky Gap State Park’s Lake Habeeb in return for donations.

A few years ago, Sean received the Community Service Award from the Allegany County Chamber of Commerce, one of numerous entities to recognize his unwavering commitment to the greater good. Sean’s sister, Erin McCagh Morrissey, has fittingly called him Cumberland’s George Bailey, referring to the community-minded banker James Stewart played in the classic movie, “It’s a Wonderful Life.”

Mr. McCagh served as a dermatologist and was passionate about helping others, he also loved being a cattle farmer. When his middle son, Cory, graduated from college, Sean encouraged him to follow his dream to start 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 full-time 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 reshape the region’s economic picture.

Born in West Germany, Ms. Klohs left her home country to attend Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, where she graduated with a bachelor’s of business administration in finance. Going on to school full-time, she joined 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. This 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 1997. At that time, The Right Place had a small staff serving one county; after Ms. Klohs’ dynamic leadership and expertise, it grew into a
team of more than 30 professionals serving a six-county region. Throughout her three decades of leadership, The Right Place has assisted thousands of west Michigan companies to invest more than $5 billion and create 48,500 new jobs in the region.

Ms. Klohs also helped the region, known for its manufacturing heritage, to grow its skill and sophistication in making things, from medical devices to office furniture. In the process, she helped the region grow and increase the job opportunities across many sectors. Those efforts attracted attention worldwide, with “The Economist” last year citing Grand Rapids as “the most successful intensive manufacturing city in the Americas” and FMBusiness magazine’s ranking of one of the Nation’s most successful teams, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in congratulating Mrs. Klohs on her service to the people of west Michigan, the first employer-driven relocation and job information center in the Nation.

Most recently, The Right Place recognized that economic prosperity was not being shared by all citizens. That led to the formation of a New Community Transformation Fund to uplift communities of color through capital investment. As the pandemic reared its ugly head throughout 2020, The Right Place quickly pivoted to assist in delivering aid in emergency in the form of financial aid to 1200 struggling businesses in the Grand Rapids community and harnessed the region’s manufacturing ingenuity and supply chains to create and distribute lifesaving personal protective equipment.

Ms. Klohs’ commitment to the region and State was not limited to The Right Place. Among the boards she chaired or served on are the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, the Gerald R. Ford Airport Authority, the International Crossing Authority, and the Western Michigan University Board of Trustees, her alma mater.

Ms. Birgit Klohs was fond of saying that economic development was “a team sport.” After 33 years as captain of one of the Nation’s most successful teams, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in congratulating her for her well-earned retirement from The Right Place and to wish Birgit and her family health and happiness in the years ahead.

REMEMBERING SHERIFF STEPHEN BATES

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I rise 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 1880 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 the Civil War, 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 1997, Mr. Bates was awarded $100 by the Vermont Assistant Postmaster General 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 man was found guilty of 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, and I am honored to recognize them 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 ask for a great deal of applause.

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 cyto-genetics. He has long advocated for universities to implement recruitment strategies that attract and retain more students and faculty of color. Mr. 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.

To that end, 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 and programming for 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 were 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 Proclamation 7757 on February 26, 1997, Proclamation 5986 on February 24, 2014, 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 would disturb the international relations of the United States with 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 Proclama- tion 7757, Proclamation 5986, 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, 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 United States 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 ‘Smytty’ Harris Post Office”.

H.R. 264. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 101 Charlotte Street in Georgetown, South Carolina, as the “Joseph Hayne Rainey Memorial Post Office Building”.

H.R. 772. 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 ‘Smytty’ 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 101 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. 772. 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.
EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

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

EC–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 Michael J. Durnout, 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 M. West, 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 A. Braddock, 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” (7 CFR Part 990 (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 related to 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.


EXECUTIVE REPORT OF COMMITTEE

The following executive report of a nomination was submitted:

By Mr. CARPER, for himself, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. Kaine, Mr. Hirono, Mr. Barrasso, Mr. Wicker, Mr. Merkley, and Mr. Cortez Masto:

S. 409. A bill to designate the headquarters building of the Department of Transportation located at 1230 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. MURAN, Mr. Daines, Mr. Fischer, Mr. BOOKMAN, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. Cramer, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. Barrasso, Mr. THUNE, Mr. HIRONO, Mr. SASSE, Mr. INHOFE, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. ROUNDS, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. HAWLEY, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mr. Lankford, and Mr. Padilla):

S. 401. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to prohibit governmental discrimination against health care providers that do not participate in the Medicaid program to reduce maternal mortality and severe morbidity with respect to individuals receiving medical assistance under such program; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. THUNE (for himself, Ms. STABE-GREENWALD, and Mr. WARNER):

S. 402. A bill to amend the Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015 to include a trade negotiating object relating to addressing the security of the global communications infrastructure; to the Committee on Finance.

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

S. 403. A bill to preserve open competition and Federal Government neutrality towards the labor relations of Federal government contractors on Federal and federally funded construction projects, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. BROWN, Ms. WARRREN, Ms. SMITH, Mr. RENN, Mr. DURBIN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. SANDERS, Ms. CORTEZ-MASTO, Mr. CARIDN, Mr. BALDWIN, Mr. VAN HOLLLEN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. KLOUCHAR, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. WARNock, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. KAINE, Ms. FEINSTEIN, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BENNET, Mr. TRUER, and Mr. RUBIO (for himself, Mr. WARN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mrs. SHAKEN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. CORNYN, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. KLOUCHAR, Mr. BRAUN, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. CARIDN, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. CASEY, Mr. VAN HOLLLEN, Mr. SCHUMER, Ms. SMITH, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. BURDEN, Mr. BOSTONIA, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. CORTEZ-MASTO, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. TRUER, Mr. COTTON, and Mr. PADILLA):

S. 407. A bill to preserve and protect the free choice of individuals to form, join, or assist labor organizations, or to refrain from such activities; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. RUBIO for himself, Mr. WAR, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mrs. SHAKEN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. CORNYN, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. KLOUCHAR, Mr. BRAUN, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. CARIDN, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. CASEY, Mr. VAN HOLLLEN, Mr. SCHUMER, Ms. SMITH, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. BURDEN, Mr. BOSTONIA, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. CORTEZ-MASTO, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. TRUER, Mr. COTTON, and Mr. PADILLA:

S. 408. A bill to require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to publish guidance for States on strategies for maternal care providers participating in Medicaid program to reduce maternal mortality and severe morbidity with respect to individuals receiving medical assistance under such program; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mr. HASSAN, Ms. ENST, and Ms. BALDWIN):

S. 409. A bill to amend the Commodity Exchange Act to modify the Commodity Futures Trading Commission Customer Protection Fund, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Ms. SMITH (for herself and Mrs. ROSEN):

S. 410. A bill making emergency supplemental appropriations for social isolation
services under the Older Americans Act of 1965; to the Committee on Appropriations.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mrs. SHAREEN, Mr. BENNET, Mrs. BARKOSKI, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. KLOBuchar, Ms. SMITH, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, and Mr. SANDERS):


By Mr. MERKLEY (for himself, Mr. RUHO, Ms. WAREN, and Mr. CORNYN):

S. 431. A bill to establish the China Chemosensor Monitoring and Action Group, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. MORAN:

S. 411. A bill to provide standards relating to compensation for the use of the names, images, and likenesses of amateur intercollegiate athletes and to provide for amendments to the antitrust laws in order to protect intercollegiate athletes and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. CASSIDY (for himself, Ms. SCHUMER, and Mr. MCCONNELL):

S. 415. A bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act with respect to the scope of new chemical exclusivity; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. VAN HOLLEN (for himself and Mr. LUGAN): S. 416. A bill to restore integrity to America's Elections; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Mr. COTTON (for himself, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. CRUZ, and Mr. RUHO):

S. 417. A bill to prohibit the Secretary of State from issuing B1 and B2 visas to nationals of the People's Republic of China for periods of more than one year unless certain conditions are met; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. PORTMAN:

S. 418. A bill to enforce work authorization requirements for immigrants; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. ENHOF (for himself, Mr. MURRAY, Mr. MORAN, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. BROW, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. CARINO, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. COTTON, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. DALLES, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Ms. ERNST, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. GRASSLEY, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. HOBEN, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. KLOBuchar, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. MARKER, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. RISCH, Mr. ROSEN, Mr. RUHO, Ms. SINEVA, Mr. TESTER, Mr. THUNE, Mr. TULLIS, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WAREN, Mr. WICKER, Mr. WYDEN, and Mr. LANKFORD):

S. 8. A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide for a full annuity supplement for certain air traffic controllers; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. BOOKER, Mrs. WARREN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. MURPHY, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. CASEY, Mr. CARINO, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. REED, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. KAIN, Ms. KLOBuchar, Mr. BROWN, Mr. LUGAN, Mr. MERENDEZ, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. SANDERS, and Mr. MASTO):

S. 523. A bill to establish the United Nations International Law Commission to Modernize International Law to Protect Human Rights; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. WYDEN, and Mr. BROWN):

S. 42. A bill to improve Federal efforts with respect to the prevention of maternal mortality, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. WYDEN, and Mr. BROWN):

S. 42. A bill to establish the Commission on the Coronavirus Pandemic in the United States; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. MERKLEY (for himself, Mr. RUHO, Ms. WAREN, and Mr. CORNYN):

S. 413. A bill to establish the China Chemosensor Monitoring and Action Group, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. MORAN:

S. 411. A bill to provide standards relating to compensation for the use of the names, images, and likenesses of amateur intercollegiate athletes and to provide for amendments to the antitrust laws in order to protect intercollegiate athletes and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. CASSIDY (for himself, Ms. SCHUMER, and Mr. MCCONNELL):

S. 415. A bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act with respect to the scope of new chemical exclusivity; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. VAN HOLLEN (for himself and Mr. LUGAN): S. 416. A bill to restore integrity to America's Elections; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Mr. COTTON (for himself, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. CRUZ, and Mr. RUHO):

S. 417. A bill to prohibit the Secretary of State from issuing B1 and B2 visas to nationals of the People's Republic of China for periods of more than one year unless certain conditions are met; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. PORTMAN:

S. 418. A bill to enforce work authorization requirements for immigrants; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. INHOF (for himself, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. MORAN, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. BROW, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. CARINO, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. COTTON, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. DALLES, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Ms. ERNST, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. GRASSLEY, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. HOBEN, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. KLOBuchar, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. MARKER, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. RISCH, Mr. ROSEN, Mr. RUHO, Ms. SINEVA, Mr. TESTER, Mr. THUNE, Mr. TULLIS, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WAREN, Mr. WICKER, Mr. WYDEN, and Mr. LANKFORD):
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. 75. A resolution celebrating Black History Month; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

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.

At the request of Mr. Carper, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. Lujan) 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.

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.

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.

At the request of Mrs. Murray, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. Feinstein) was added as a cosponsor of S. 347, a bill to improve Federal grants for States that cosponsor of S. 25, a bill to restrict certain tax credits related to electric cars, and for other purposes.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 42. A bill to amend the Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015 to include a trade negotiating objective relating to addressing the security of the global communications infrastructure; to the Committee on Finance.

S. 43. A bill to amend the Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015 (19 U.S.C. 4201(a)) is amended—

Section 102(a) of the Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015 (19 U.S.C. 4201(a)) is amended—

Section 102(a) of the Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015 (19 U.S.C. 4201(a)) is amended—

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.

Congress assembled.

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.”;

February 24, 2021

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — SENATE
By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. BROWN, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. SMITH, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, and Mr. SANDERS).

S. 411

A BILL TO IMPROVE FEDERAL EFFORTS WITH RESPECT TO THE PREVENTION OF MATERNAL MORTALITY, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

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 “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 400,000 women 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, parturient-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 ratio (deaths per 100,000 live births) for the 48 continental 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; to the Committee on Finance.

(4) It is estimated that more than 60 percent of maternal deaths in the United States are preventable.

(5) The State 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 in the United States. This disparity impacts Black women, who are at the highest risk of maternal mortality.

(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 counties of the country.

(7) According to the National Center for Health Statistics and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the maternal mortality rate by race is, 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 pre-existing health and racial health disparities. A recent study of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggests that pregnant women are at a significantly higher risk for severe outcomes and death from COVID-19 compared to non-pregnant women. The COVID-19 pandemic has also decreased access to prenatal and postpartum care.

(9) The findings described in paragraphs (1) through (8) are of major concern to researchers, academics, and providers across 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 coro-
nary 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 and supported women are 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 pre-term 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 the risk of preeclampsia 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, putting their oral health at risk for tooth decay, prevention efforts should happen even before children are born, as a matter of pre-pregnancy health and prenatal care prior to pregnancy.

(14) In the United States, death reporting and an analysis is a State function rather than a Federal process. States report all deaths—incurred during childbirth or postpartum in-voluntary basis, without standardization across States. While the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has the system for collecting death-related data based on death certificates, these data are not sufficiently reported by States in an organized standard format and data 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 completely generated by obstetric providers or persons trained to recognize and report maternal mortality. Thus, these vital forms may be missing information or may capture inconsistent data due to varying maternal mortality-related analyses, lack of reliability, and granularity in data, current maternal mortality informatics do not fully encapsulate the full scope of medical and social 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 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 and morbidity and ensure that the timely and standardized collection and analysis is a State function rather than a Federal process.

(17) Leaders in maternal wellness highly recommend that maternal deaths and cases of maternal morbidity, including complications that result in chronic illness and future increased risk of death, be investigated instead of being aggregated analyses, lack of reliability, and granularity in data, current maternal mortality informatics do not fully encapsulate the full scope of medical and social 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 sharing across States and between Federal entities, health networks, and research institutions keep the Nation in the dark about ways to prevent maternal deaths.

(18) In the United States, death reporting and an analysis is a State function rather than a Federal process. States report all deaths—incurred during childbirth or postpartum in-voluntary basis, without standardization across States. While the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has the system for collecting death-related data based on death certificates, these data are not sufficiently reported by States in an organized standard format and data 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.

(19) The United Nations’ Millennium Development Goal 5a aimed to reduce by 75 percent, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality rate, yet that target was not achieved. In fact, the maternal mortality rate in the United States has been estimated to have more than doubled between 2000 and 2017.

(20) Many States have struggled to establish or maintain Maternal Mortality Review
Committees (referred to in this section as “MMRC”). On the State level, MMRCs have lagged because States have not had the resources to mount local reviews. State-level reviews, as only the federal departments of health have the authority to request medical records, autopsy reports, and police reports critical to the function of the MMC.

(20) The United States has no comparable, coordinated Federal process by which to review cases of maternal mortality, systems failures, or both. Many States lack active MMRCs and leverage their work to impact maternal wellness. For example, the State of California worked extensively with their State health departments, health and hospital systems, and research collaborative organizations, including the California Maternal Quality Care Collaborative and the Alliance for Innovation on Maternal Health, to establish MMRCs, wherein such States have determined the most prevalent causes of maternal mortality and recorded and shared data with providers and researchers, who have developed and implemented safety bundles and care protocols related to preterm birth, hemorrhage, and preeclampsia. These perinatal quality collaboratives serve an important role in providing infrastructure, which can have cascading physical and mental health consequences, as documented systems in aligning national, State, and hospital systems, which can have cascading physical and mental health consequences, as documented.

(21) Hospitals and health systems across the United States lack standardization of emergency obstetric protocols before, during, and after delivery. Consequently, many providers are delayed in recognizing critical signs and symptoms of maternal distress that quickly escalate into fatal or near-fatal incidences. Moreover, any attempt to address an obstetric emergency that does not consider both clinical and public health approaches falls woefully under the mark of excellent care delivery. State-based perinatal quality collaboratives, or entities participating in the Alliance for Innovation on Maternal Health (AIM), have formed obstetric protocols, tool kits, and other resources to improve system care and response as they relate to the identifications and warning signs for such conditions as maternal hemorrhage, hypertension, and preeclampsia. These interprofessional collaborative networks play an important role in providing infrastructure that supports quality improvement efforts addressing obstetric care and outcomes. State-level quality collaborative partners with hospitals, physicians, nurses, patients, public health, and other stakeholders to provide opportunities for collaborative learning, rapid response data, and quality improvement science support to achieve systems-level change.

(22) The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes that nearly 50% of all maternal deaths occur in the immediate postpartum period—the 42 days following a pregnancy—whereas more than one-third of maternal deaths occur while a person is still pregnant. Further, 21 percent of maternal deaths occur between 1 and 6 weeks postpartum, and 12 percent of maternal deaths occur during the remaining portion of the postpartum year. Yet, for women eligible for the Medicaid program on the basis of pregnancy, such Medicaid coverage lapse on the 60th day following the 60th postpartum day lands.

(23) The experience of serious traumatic events, such as being exposed to domestic violence, sexual violence, and systemic racism, can over-activate the body’s stress-response system. Known as toxic stress, the repetition of high-doses of cortisol to the brain, can harm healthy neurological development and other body systems, which can have cascading physical and mental health consequences. For the pregnant woman, experiencing the Adverse Childhood Experiences study of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

(24) A growing body of evidence-based research has shown the correlation between the stress associated with systematic racism and one’s birthing outcomes. The undue burden of systemic racism, often paired with institutional racism has been demonstrated to contribute to a higher risk of maternal death, according to the race of the mother, gestational age, maternal age, socioeconomic status, educational level, or individual-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-associated 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 for preeclampsia, compared to other racial and ethnic minorities.

(25) The rising maternal mortality rate in the United States is driven predominantly by the disproportionately high rates of Black maternal mortality.

(26) Compared to women from other racial and ethnic demographics, Black women experience prolonged, unrelenting stress related to systemic racial and gender discrimination, contributing to higher rates of maternal mortality, given birth to low出生 babies, and experiencing pre-term birth. Racism is a risk-factor for these aforementioned experiences. This cumulative stress, called weathering, can have a negative effect on health outcomes. Black women are twice as likely to experience postpartum depression, and disproportionately higher rates of preeclampsia compared to White women.

(27) Black women are twice as likely to experience postpartum depression, and disproportionately higher rates of preeclampsia compared to White women.

(28) Racism is deeply ingrained in United States systems, including in health care delivery systems, patient and provider experiences. These disparities contribute to an increased risk of adverse birth outcomes for Black women. These disparities can also contribute to increased risk of adverse birth outcomes for Black women.

(29) Not all people who have been pregnant or given birth identify as being a woman. The terms “birthing people” or “birthing persons” are also used to describe pregnant and postpartum people.

SEC. 3. IMPROVING FEDERAL EFFORTS WITH RESPECT TO PREVENTION OF MATERNAL MORTALITY.

(a) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR STATES WITH RESPECT TO REPORTING MATERNAL MORTALITY.—Not later than one year after the date of enactment of this Act—

(A) to develop and implement, through a technical assistance program to be known as the Alliance for Innovation on Maternal Health Grant Program, which includes the reduction of maternal mortality, irrespective of one’s individual-level health risk factors, including poverty, limited access to prenatal care, and poor physical and mental health, and utilization of any emergency services; and

(B) the Director, in consultation with relevant patient and provider groups, shall issue best practices to State maternal mortality review committees on how best to identify and review maternal mortality cases, taking into account any data made available by States relating to maternal mortality, including data on oral, mental, and breastfeeding health, and utilization of any emergency services; and

(2) The Director, in consultation with relevant patient and provider groups, shall issue best practices to State maternal mortality review committees on how best to identify and review maternal mortality cases, taking into account any data made available by States relating to maternal mortality, including data on oral, mental, and breastfeeding health, and utilization of any emergency services; and

(3) USE OF FUNDS.—An eligible entity that receives a grant under paragraph (1), an entity shall—

(A) submit to the Secretary an application at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary may require; and

(B) demonstrate in such application that the entity is an interdisciplinary, multi-stakeholder, national organization with a national data-driven maternal safety and quality improvement initiative based on implementation approaches that have been proven to improve maternal safety and outcomes in the United States.

(3) USE OF FUNDS.—An eligible entity that receives a grant under paragraph (1) shall use such grant funds—

(A) to develop and implement, through a robust, multi-stakeholder process, maternal safety bundles and other safety and quality improvement approaches, and health care systems in aligning national, State, and hospital-level quality improvement efforts to improve maternal health outcomes, specifically the reduction of maternal mortality and severe maternal morbidity;
(B) to ensure, in developing and implementing maternal safety bundles under subparagraph (A), that such maternal safety bundles—

(i) satisfy 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 reports submitted 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, birthing, 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, birthing, 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) severe 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 2025.

(6) EXPANSION OF MEDICAID AND CHIP COVERAGE FOR PREGNANT AND POSTPARTUM WOMEN.—

(1) 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 (e)—

(I) by striking "(including oral health services for pregnant and postpartum women (as defined in section 1905(hh)))" after "postpartum medical assistance under the State plan for" and

(II) by striking "60-day" and inserting "1-year"; and

(B) CHIP.—Section 2103(d)(2)(A) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1397cc(c)(5)(A)) is amended by striking "60-day" and inserting "1-year".

(2) CHIP.—Section 2105(d) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1397cc(e)(1)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

(4) IN ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS FOR TARGETED LOW-INCOME PREGNANT WOMEN.—During the period that begins on the date of enactment of this paragraph and ends on the date that is five years after such date of enactment, as a condition for receiving any Federal payments under section 1902(a)(7) for a Federal fiscal quarter in which during such period, a State shall not have in effect, with respect to women who are eligible for medical assistance under the State plan or under a waiver of such plan on the basis of being pregnant or having been pregnant, eligibility standards, methodologies, or procedures under the State plan or waiver that are more restrictive than the eligibility standards, methodologies, or procedures, respectively, under such plan or waiver that are in effect on the date of enactment of this paragraph.

(3) MAINTENANCE OF EFFORT.—

(A) MEDICAID.—Section 1902(a)(7) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396a) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

(i) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of this title, the term "oral health services for pregnant and postpartum women" means dental services necessary to prevent disease and promote oral health, restore oral structures to normal function, and treat emergency conditions that are furnished to a woman during pregnancy (or during the 1-year period beginning on the last day of the pregnancy).

(ii) COVERAGE REQUIREMENTS.—To satisfy the requirement to provide oral health services for pregnant and postpartum women, a State shall, at a minimum, provide coverage for preventive, diagnostic, periodontal, and restorative care consistent with recommendations for perinatal oral health care and dental care during pregnancy from the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

(B) CHIP.—Section 2105(c)(5)(A) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1397cc(c)(5)(A)) is amended by inserting "or a targeted low-income pregnant woman" after "targeted low-income pregnant women".

(4) EXTENDING MEDICAID COVERAGE FOR PREGNANT AND POSTPARTUM WOMEN.—Section 1902 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396a) is amended—

(A) in subsection (e)—

(i) by striking "(including oral health services for pregnant and postpartum women (as defined in section 1905(hh)))" after "postpartum medical assistance under the State plan for" and

(II) by striking "60-day" and inserting "1-year"; and

(B) in subsection (l)(1)(A), by striking "60-day" and inserting "1-year".

(5) MAINTENANCE OF EFFORT.—

(A) MEDICAID.—Section 1902(a)(7) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396a) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

(i) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of this title, the term "oral health services for pregnant and postpartum women" means dental services necessary to prevent disease and promote oral health, restore oral structures to normal function, and treat emergency conditions that are furnished to a woman during pregnancy (or during the 1-year period beginning on the last day of the pregnancy).

(ii) COVERAGE REQUIREMENTS.—To satisfy the requirement to provide oral health services for pregnant and postpartum women, a State shall, at a minimum, provide coverage for preventive, diagnostic, periodontal, and restorative care consistent with recommendations for perinatal oral health care and dental care during pregnancy from the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

(B) CHIP.—Section 2105(d)(2)(A) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1397cc(c)(5)(A)) is amended by striking "60-day" and inserting "1-year".

(6) INFORMATION ON BENEFITS.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services shall make available on the Internet website of the Department of Health and Human Services, information regarding benefits available to pregnant and postpartum women under the Maternal, Infant, and Child Health Services Act and the Children’s Health Insurance Program, including information on—
(A) benefits that States are required to provide to pregnant and postpartum women under such programs;  
(B) optional benefits that States may provide to eligible 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) of subsection (a), is amended by—  
(i) in subsection (b), by striking “and (ff)” and inserting “(aa), and (ii)” and  
(ii) by adding at the end the following:  
‘‘(b) ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible to receive a cooperative agreement under subsection (a), an entity shall—  
(1) be a public or other nonprofit entity specified by the Secretary that provides educational and training opportunities for students and health care professionals, which may include inpatient care, institutional care, community health centers, medical schools, school of public health, school of nursing, dental school, social work school, school of professional nursing or other health professional school or program at an institution of higher education (as defined in section 101 of the Higher Education Act of 1965) that focuses on identifying, diagnosing and treating social determinants or overcoming health disparities, or recovering from health conditions that contribute to maternal mortality and the prevention of maternal morbidity and severe maternal morbidity;  
(2) provide to pregnant and postpartum women, including oral health and mental health care professional training in implicit bias and cultural competency;  
(3) provide to the Secretary such information, at such time and in such manner, as the Secretary may require before the first day of the first regular session of the State legislature following the first regular session of the State legislature that begins after the date of enactment of this Act. For purposes of carrying out this section, there is authorized to be appropriated $5,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2023 through 2025.’’.  
(B) CHIP.—Section 2105(c) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1397e(c)) is amended by adding a heading before the first paragraph of such section—  
‘‘(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 may elect to certify a postpartum woman for a period of 2 years;  
(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.”.  
(8) GUIDANCE ON STATE OPTIONS FOR MEDICAID COVERAGE OF DOULA SERVICES.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, acting through the Administrator of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, shall provide guidance for the States concerning options for Medicaid coverage and payment for support services provided by doulas.  
(9) DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION.—  
(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subparagraph (B), the amendments made by this subsection shall take effect on the first day of the first regular session of the State legislature that begins after or on the date that is one 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 is amended to provide for such coverage, such Federal assistance中国人民共和国国会议事制度和政治实践的文献。
(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) DISCRETE SINGLE-USE UNIT.—The term ‘discrete single-use unit’ means any product containing, made from, or derived from tobacco or nicotine that—

“(A) is in the form of a lozenge, tablet, pill, pouch, dissolvable strip, or other discrete single-use or single-dose unit;

“(B) is in the form of a lozenge, tablet, pill, pouch, dissolvable strip, or other discrete single-use or single-dose unit; and

“(C) is in the form of a lozenge, tablet, pill, pouch, dissolvable strip, or other discrete single-use or single-dose unit.

(3) IN GENERAL.—Section 5701(a)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking “$50.33” and inserting “$100.66”.

(4) TAXES ON CIGARS.—(I) IN GENERAL.—Section 5701(a)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking “52.75 percent” and inserting “10.066 cents per cigar.”

(5) GUIDANCE.—The Secretary of the Treasury shall issue final regulations establishing the level of tax for such product.

(6) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This section shall be effective on the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 2. ALLOWING SENATORS, COMMITTEES, LEADERSHIP OFFICES, 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”;

(2) by striking “position, each of” and all that follows through the period at the end and inserting the following: “qualifying 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 is not more than the maximum rate specified in section 185(d)(2) of the Legislative Branch Appropriation Act, 1968 (2 U.S.C. 4576(d)(2), as amended and modified); and

(2) in a case where 1 or more of the individual’s qualifying positions are positions described in subsection (d)(2)(B), the maximum rate specified in section 185(e)(3) of the Legislative Branch Appropriation Act, 1968 (2 U.S.C. 4576(e)(3), as amended and modified); and

(3) by adding at the end the following: “(b) For an individual serving in more than 1 qualifying position under subsection
(a), the cost of any travel for official business shall be paid by the office authorizing the travel.

"(2) Messages for each electronic mail account held in connection with carrying out the official duties of an individual serving in more than one qualifying position under subsection (a) shall be paid for by the basic pay received by the individual from all such positions."

"(B) For an individual serving in more than one qualifying position under subsection (a) shall be paid for by the basic pay received by the individual from all such positions."

"(C) A position—

"(i) that is in another office (excluding the Office of the Secretary of the Senate or the Office of the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper of the Senate); and

"(ii) the pay of which is disbursed by the Secretary of the Senate out of an appropriation under the heading 'MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS'."

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall take effect beginning 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. SCOTT, Mr. COHAN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Ms. HIRONO): S. 426. A bill to amend the Inspector General Act of 1978 relating to the powers of the Department of Justice Inspector 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 Representatives 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.


"(1) in subsection (b)—

"(A) in paragraph (2), by striking "and paragraph (3)"; (B) by striking paragraph (3); (C) by redesignating paragraphs (4) and (5) as paragraphs (3) and (4), respectively; and (D) in paragraph (4), as redesignated, by striking "paragraph (4)" and inserting "paragraph (3)"; and

"(2) in subsection (d), by striking ", except with respect to allegations described in subsection (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 Transportation.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the American Broadband Buildout Act. This legislation would help ensure that rural Americans have access to broadband services at the speeds they need to participate 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, capable 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, particularly our rural communities, simply do not have the infrastructure to achieve these speeds and fully tap into the opportunities that digital connectivity can deliver. According to a 2019 Pew Research Center survey, nearly 37 percent 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 access to it.

The survey also found that 15 percent of rural Americans don't use the internet 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 workplaces, and their healthcare services online.

Andrea Powers, the town manager of Fort Fairfield in northern Maine, recently described a number of challenges 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 citizen who requires daily contact with distant doctors but does not have the capacity to travel nor access the telehealth options.

Andrea told me the story of one family 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. Andrea summed up the reality facing so many rural communities that lack access in this way. She said, "We will continue to see a loss of business retention and expansion along with job creation. We simply cannot afford to allow this to happen. Online schooling, business growth and development, telehealth care, and economic agriculture all are at stake ... affordable fiber optic broadband."

Telehealth services are an essential piece of the national broadband conversation. Often, rural communities are unable 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 hundreds of miles away in terms of travel. Although the connection was poor, the video enabled nurses to monitor the patient's condition and symptoms and, equally important, to provide emotional support to her and to her family. As one Community Care worker put it, the hospice team could be doing so much more with video and telemonitoring technologies if only Maine had better connectivity."

The American Broadband Buildout Act would help close this "digital divide" between urban and rural America by providing up to $15 billion in matching 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 directly 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 would 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 many cases. I urge all of our colleagues to join in supporting this bill.

Thank you.

S. RES. 71
Whereas Sarah Root of Council Bluffs, Iowa, died at the hands of a drunk driver who was not lawfully present in the United States;
Whereas the mission of the immigration enforcement process is to ensure the safety of our communities; and
Whereas drunk driving and aliens convicted of drunk driving are a threat to public safety of the United States, and to say otherwise is dismissive of the victims of drunk driving offenses and those who seek to enforce criminal statutes related to drunk driving: Now, therefore, be it
RESOLVED. That the Senate approves the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:
S. Res. 71

S. RESOLUTION 72—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

Mr. COTTON (for himself, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. HAWLEY, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mrs. HARRIS, Mr. SASKIA, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. DAVIS, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. BARRASSO, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. TUBERVILLE, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. THUNE, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. HEOVEN, Mr. HAGERTY, Mr. LANKFORD, and Mr. CRAPO) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs:

S. Res. 72
Whereas the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (commonly referred to as the “JCPOA”) is an agreement that was finalized by the administration of President Barack Obama and the governments of the United Kingdom, Germany, France, the People’s Republic of China, and the Russian Federation in July 2015, provided Iran permanent sanctions relief and access to more than $100,000,000,000 in return for temporary restrictive measures on Iran’s nuclear program;
Whereas, under the JCPOA, restrictions on the number and types of centrifuges that Iran may manufacture, retain, test, and use, the number and types of enrichment facilities that Iran may construct, and the amount and level of enriched uranium and heavy water that Iran may stockpile, will expire;
Whereas multiple United Nations Security Council resolutions adopted between 2006 and 2010 required Iran to suspend all enrichment of uranium, but the JCPOA did not require Iran to cease its enrichment of uranium, a failure that is directly attributable for Iran’s expanded enrichment activity today;
Whereas United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231 (in this preamble referred to as “UNSCR 2231”), adopted on July 20, 2015, called on Iran not to undertake any activity related to nuclear-capable ballistic missile activities for 8 years and imposed a 5-year ban on conventional arms transfers to and from Iran;
Whereas neither the JCPOA nor UNSCR 2231 adequately addressed the threat emanating from Iran’s ballistic and cruise missile program or long-standing support for terrorism, and the sunset provisions applied to prohibitions in UNSCR 2231 and the JCPOA severely weakened their restrictions and inadvertently legitimized that program and support;
Whereas, based on the shortcomings of the JCPOA and UNSCR 2231, bipartisan majorities in both the Senate and the House of Representatives opposed the JCPOA and the sanctions relief for Iran contained in the agreement;
Whereas the sanctions relief contained in the JCPOA provided resources necessary for Iran to continue developing ballistic missiles and supporting terrorism;
Whereas the United States Government has designated Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (in this preamble referred to as the “IRGC”) as a foreign terrorist organization under section 219(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1189a(a)) and a specially designated global terrorist entity under Executive Order 13224 of the U.S.C. 1701 note; relating to blocking property and interests in property of Iran to continue developing ballistic missiles and supporting terrorism; and
Whereas, on a vote of 98-2 in the Senate and 419-3 in the House of Representatives, Congress required the imposition of new terrorist-related sanctions against the IRGC as part of the Countering America’s Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (22 U.S.C. 9401 et seq.);
Whereas, on May 21, 2018, the United States Government outlined steps that the Government of Iran must take to normalize relations with the United States, to:
(1) providing the International Atomic Energy Agency a full account of the possible military dimensions of its nuclear program and permanently and verifiably abandoning that program;
(2) ceasing all enrichment and vowing never to pursue plutonium reprocessing;
(3) providing the International Atomic Energy Agency with access to all sites throughout the entire country;
(4) ending its development and proliferation of ballistic missiles;
(5) releasing all United States citizens currently held hostage, as well as citizens of countries that are partners and allies of the United States;
(6) ending support for terrorist groups, including Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad;
whereas the United States Government has sanctioned entities in the government of Iran for perpetrated human rights abuses;  

Resolved, that the Senate—

(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 (Public Law 104–172; 50 U.S.C. 1701 note), in order to terminate sanctions imposed with respect to the Iranian financial sector;  

(3) rejects and opposes the reapplication of sanctions relief, including the use of waivers, de-listing individuals or entities, or the application of licenses, 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 for sanctions under the United Nations 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 5318A 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 countermessages by the Financial Action Task Force of the International Financial sector until Iran fully completes its action plan.

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 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 that minority participation in local media measure a country’s media diversity and that the government, acting through increased voter participation of diverse populations in independent, and diverse media outlets and limited participation of diverse populations in media ownership and decisionmaking 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.
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, 2021, as “Rare Disease Day;” and

(2) encourages 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 HOLLERN, Mr. RUBIO, Ms. MENENDEZ, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. HAGERTY, Mr. COONS, Mr. LANKFORD, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. NEHER, Mr. MURRAY, Ms. 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. KRUGER, Mr. KING, Ms. LEE, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. OSOFF, Mr. HENREICH, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. CARPER, Mr. CASEY, Mr. REED, Mr. CARDIN, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. LJUJAN, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mrs. BLACKBURN, and Mr. HOEVEN) 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 independence and freedom based on the proposition stated in the Declaration of Independence, that all people are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable 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 imperfectly progressed toward those noble goals.

Whereas the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass inspired the creation of Negro History Week, the precursor to Black History Month.

Whereas Black History Month, celebrated during the month of February, originated in 1926 when 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. Muomara.

Whereas Black History Month, celebrated during the month of February, originated in 1926 when 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. Muomara.

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, in the National Mall, Washington, District of Columbia: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—
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 on a nomination.

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 2:30 p.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 on a nomination.

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.

SELECTION 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.

SELECTION 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. 73.

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:

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 OFFICES, 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. 4576(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)(2)(B), the maximum rate specified in section 105(e)(3) of the Legislative Branch Appropriation Act, 1968 (2 U.S.C. 4576(e)(3)), as amended and modified.”;

and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

“(b) 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 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 1 qualifying position under subsection (a) shall be the total basic pay received by the individual from all such positions.

“(c) 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) may be determined and modified to reflect the cost of any official business not otherwise paid by the official authorizing the travel.

“(2) Messages for each electronic mail account used in connection with carrying out the official duties of an individual serving in more than 1 qualifying position under subsection (a) shall be the individual rate of 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 right to receive official business pay described in subsection (d)(2), the individual may serve in more than 1 qualifying position under subsection (a) 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. 4576(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)(2)(B), the maximum rate specified in section 105(e)(3) of the Legislative Branch Appropriation Act, 1968 (2 U.S.C. 4576(e)(3)), as amended and modified.”;

and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

“(c) If the duties of a qualifying position under subsection (a) include information technology services and support, the individual may only serve in the qualifying position and 1 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.

“(2) 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—
Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate adjourns today, it adjourn as the Senate of the United States, pursuant to the order of February 24, 2021.

Mr. President, on the recommendation of chairman Herb Berman, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate receive the report of Select Committee on Aging on decennial census.
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 are 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, under 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. It appears we were 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 was done, and 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 remain 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 abuse, this was 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, so they are looking 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 man who said his son had an overdose. 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 reassurance from their support group.”

She is right. There are a lot of troubling statistics out there that should be a cause of 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 Nation’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 study recently in the JAMA Psychiatry journal found that a 45-percent increase was the overdose death increase in emergency rooms from April to October of 2020 compared to that same time in 2019.

It is not 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 red tape. 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 buprenorphine.

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 engaged with their doctors 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 what I believe is true that this 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 think about making them permanent. I agree with that. I don’t think it makes sense to get away from them as this pandemic goes away, which is why yesterday, along with my colleague, SHELDON WHITEHOUSE, I entered this legislation called the Telehealth Response for E-Prescribing, Addiction Services Treatment Act. The reason that is such a long name is we wanted to make the acronym TREATS, which it is. The TREATS Act makes permanent a number of temporary waivers for telehealth these telehealth options for addiction treatment services.

Let’s turn to a couple of things specifically. First, it allows for a patient to be prescribed lower-scheduled drugs like Suboxone through a 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 had prior audio 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, and are more prone to 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 for these patients are not always possible 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 use 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.

To make 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, by making opioid substitutes so much of the flow of these drugs, among other things, you are reducing the supply, which raises the cost of these 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 a moment ago. They are far deadlier than traditional opioids like heroin but still cause far too many overdoses.

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 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 manufactur- ers can alter its chemical makeup in a way to know as a fentanyl analog or a copypcat. 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 100 times more deadlier than fentanyl and about 10,000 times more deadly than morphine. Just handling carfentanil, if you were to spill some on yourself, you could kill you.

In 2018, the Drug Enforcement Agen- cy, DEA, made the right call by tempo- rarily making these fentanyl-related substances illegal to possess, transport, or manufacture. Thanks to that designa- tion, our law enforcement officials have been better able to protect our communities by seizing and destroying these fentanyl-related substances.

Unfortunately, the temporary exten- sion by DEA ends in only a few months. After May 6, 2021, these incredibly dan- gerous substances will no longer be subject to strict regulation by law en- forcement. 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 intro- duced 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 codi- fies the existing DEA precedent to per- manently schedule fentanyl-related substances, allowing our law enforce- ment 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 bipar- tisan 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 Re- covery Act, the CARA bill we talked about earlier, expires in fiscal year 2023. And Senator WHITEHOUSE and I will soon introduce a CARA 2.0 Act to build on the successes of CARA with an unprecedented investment in expand- ing access to proven treatment and re- covery programs—again, programs that are shown to work by evidence for treatment and recovery over longer term recovery.

CARA 2.0 includes dozens of provi- sions to address addiction from all fronts—research and education, treat- ment and recovery, criminal justice re- form, dealing with prescription drugs—making it the most comprehensive legis- lation in our country’s history. When added with the existing CARA pro- grams 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 con- tinue to invest in the coronavirus vac- cine development and distribution, we are also focusing on this epidemic. As we come out of this coronavirus pan- demic—and I believe we are starting to see some signs of that—that’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 reduce 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 ARJANDAS 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 AQUAVELLA

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 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. JOSEPH B. HORNBUCKLE
CAPT. ANTHONY E. ROSSI

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. RALPH R. 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 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) CHRISTOPHER C. FRENCH

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) WILLIAM C. GREENE
REAR ADM. (LH) SCOTT W. PAPPANO
February 24, 2021

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 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.

EQUALITY ACT

HON. SUSAN WILD
OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 24, 2021

Ms. WILD of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, if the Equality Act is signed into law, millions of our fellow Americans will, for the first time, no longer be subject to discrimination based on their sexual orientation or gender identity. Barriers across our society—in essential areas like housing, employment, credit, and education—will finally come down.

In reflecting on this legislation, I can’t help thinking about my uncle Wes, who grew up during the Depression. As a young man, he was never able to come out to his family because he didn’t think they’d accept him for it. Later in life, he did come out—living as a proud, gay man in Alabama. He passed away last year, and when I cast my vote for this legislation, I’ll be thinking of him.

I’ll also be thinking of the many messages I’ve gotten since I was first sworn in from young LGBTQ people in my community. They’ve shared their stories with me, and I’ve been inspired by their courage. I want them to know that this country belongs every bit as much to them—and that they have the right to a life of dignity and respect. That is what’s at stake in this vote.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF BISHOP CHARLES E. DAVIS

HON. BOBBY L. RUSH
OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 24, 2021

Mr. RUSH of Illinois. 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, Bishop Davis would complete tours of duty in Germany, France, and Holland.

After the war, Bishop Davis would enter the upholstery 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 Odeed 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 devoted wife for 43 years until her passing in 1998. Bishop Davis was also a devoted father to a son, Laney 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 supreme 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 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 Bio-medical 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 his 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.
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 across 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.

Now it is my honor as the Iowan of the Week to recognize 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.

Mr. SWALWELL. Madam Speaker, along with Speaker of the House NANCY PELOSI and Representatives MARK DESAULNIER, ANNA G. ESCHO, JARED HUFFMAN, RO KHANNA, BARBARA LEE, ZOE LOFGREN, JERRY McNERNEY, JACKIE SPEIER, and MIKE THOMPSON, I rise to recognize California journalist Phil Matier on the occasion of his retirement from the San Francisco Chronicle.

Phil for decades has enlightened and entertained Bay Area readers with his well-sourced, trenchant columns. He has helped to clearly explain our region’s ups and downs to generations of residents, often shining light on details that politicians and the well-connected would have preferred to keep hidden.

Phil, a graduate of the University of Arizona, worked at the Tucson (AZ) Citizen before joining the San Francisco Examiner in the 1980s to report on city hall, where he met and soon partnered with Andy Ross. A Matier & Ross column became a fixture first at the Examiner and then at the Chronicle, even as Phil also expanded his media footprint into work with Bay Area television and radio stations.

Through his columns as well as his broadcast presence, Phil has explained the fine details of pressing issues, probed policymakers’ personalities and character, and pushed for accountability and transparency in government.

His uncanny ability to elicit information from political figures, whether or not they wish to share it, is legendary. And his own personality—insightful, sometimes pugnacious, often expressed at high volume, but always fair—has shone through all of his work.

We thank Phil for sharing his talents with generations of newspaper readers, and we are glad we will continue to see and hear his broadcasts.

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise to congratulate the New Oxford High School Marching Colonials on their victory in the V-USBands Pennsylvania State Championship. The New Oxford High School Marching Colonials include 52 students in grades 9–12. A competitive band for many years, the band persevered through the challenges of the COVID–19 pandemic and competed in the virtual V-USBands dévelop from their home stadium in New Oxford. The band designed a new, original field show called “Together,” which is intended to convey a message of unity.
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-USBBands 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. Eshoo, 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. 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 centuries.

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 Markey and Hirono and Representatives Jayapal and Garcia. 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 other things, 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 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 Congress’s 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.

New Deal for New Americans Act
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 bi-cameral 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 today 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 CONTRIBUTIONS AND SERVICE OF CAPT. (RETIRED) 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 solemn remembrance 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 in the U.S. Navy before “retiring” to Cocoa Beach in 2011. I say “retiring” in quotations 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 aero-space.

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 former 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 In- dependently-designed Runway 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 Governor’s Executive Office of the Cabinet for Veterans and Military Affairs.

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 Florida SSN 712 from October 1996 to July 1998 before reporting to Submarine Warfare Division of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (OPNAV) staff 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 2007 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, Navy 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 (K-Garcia), William Jordan (Patricia Kuzma), Lauren Rose (Aaron Possinger) and Candace Marie and five grandchildren, Ariana, Lillian, Camilo, Adelaide, 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 to keep us in the forefront of innovation. Much of this is made possible by Sierra, a new class of supercomputer born into the field in the last few years. Bill's holistic and multi-disciplinary 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, manufacturing 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
Hold hearings to examine global security challenges and strategy.

10 a.m.
Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
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
Hold hearings to examine the nomination of Shalanda D. Young, of Louisiana, to be Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

MARCH 3

10 a.m.
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
Hold hearings to examine the nomination of Polly Ellen Trottenberg, of New York, to be Deputy Secretary of Transportation.

1:30 p.m.
Committee on Environment and Public Works
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.

1:30 p.m.
Committee on Foreign Relations
Hold hearings to examine pending nominations.
D154

Wednesday, February 24, 2021

Daily Digest

Senate

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.

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.

Rare Disease Day: Senate agreed to S. Res. 74, designating February 28, 2021, as “Rare Disease Day”.

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)

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)

Granholm Nomination—Agreement: Senate resumed consideration of the nomination of Jennifer Mulhern Granholm, of Michigan, to be Secretary of Energy.

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.

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.

Prior to the consideration of this nomination, Senate took the following action:

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Legislative Session.

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Executive Session to consider the nomination.

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.

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Executive Session to consider the nomination.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Committee on Armed Services: On Tuesday, February 23, 2021, Committee ordered favorably reported 257 nominations in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Space Force.

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.

Committee on Veterans’ Affairs: Committee concluded an 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: Pages H618–19

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 2⁄3 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).

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”.


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. Page H612

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. Page H612

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, beginning March 1, 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.

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 2⁄3 yea-and-nay vote of 414 yeas to 11 nays, Roll No. 36; and
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 FRACURING 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–G505.

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.

Committee 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 M. 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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