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House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 2, 2022.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JAMES P. MCGOVERN 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 10, 2022, 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.

REMEMBERING RESULTS ADVOCATE LA'SHON MARSHALL

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

Ms. TLAIB. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memories of Michigan's 13th District Strong mother, friend, sister, and community advocate, La'Shon Marshall; her partner, Aaron Benson; and her 5-year-old son, Caleb, all of whom we lost to senseless gun violence this past week.

I knew La'Shon Marshall as a loving mother, a daughter, and a friend, but I knew her also as a constituent and as part of a group called RESULTS. It is an antipoverty advocacy organization, and RESULTS would meet with me every year to talk about adjusting poverty and access to quality housing for our families.

In one of my first meetings, I met La'Shon, and she was passionate. She talked about renters' rights. She talked about access to safe housing. We made an instant connection based on our mutual passions: housing stability, ending childhood poverty, and ensuring a better quality of life for all.

Hearing of her murder was devastating not only to my team and me but to our community. This is a tragedy that no community should endure.

La'Shon was truly a beacon of light. She will be remembered as an incredible mother, and we will always remember Caleb as the light of her life. She truly loved him. And I will always remember knowing her as an exceptional advocate for the 13th District Strong.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in remembering La'Shon Marshall, Caleb Marshall, and Aaron Benson of our community as we mourn their loss.

MOURNING THE LOSS OF TERRANCE ARMOUR AND CARLY TAYLOR

Ms. TLAIB. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my outrage and deep sadness about the deaths of Wayne County teens Terrance Armour and Carly Taylor, whose lives were lost to gun violence last year.

Carlesa and Terrance were accomplished high school students with bright futures ahead of them. Terrance had plans to attend college in Nevada. Carly was a standout on the Ecorse High School basketball team who was being recruited for college athletic scholarships and opportunities.

This past weekend, I hugged both of their mothers, and I remember the tears from Dionne Weathers and Tikia Armour-Brooks. There is a saying that the most painful good-byes are the ones that are never said and never explained.

As we mark this grim anniversary, I offer my deepest sympathies to Terrance and Carlesa's families and loved ones and commit to stopping gun violence in our country. And as they continue to mourn their loss, I want them to know we are working on behalf of them and also in honor of their memories.

SUPPORTING THE HONORING OUR PACT ACT

Ms. TLAIB. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to speak today in support of the Honoring Our PACT Act.

Our soldiers put their lives at risk every day and became severely ill as a result of burn pit exposure. We owe it to them to care for them in their time of need. I am voting ''yes'' on the PACT Act because they deserve nothing less.

I greatly appreciate the work of Chairman TAKANO, the members of the committee, and the staff in getting this task done. It was not easy. However, I must be clear. While this bill is clearly the best attempt yet to pay our Nation's debt to our sick and dying veterans, it is only a first step. It does not cover all the illnesses believed to be caused by burn pit exposure, and it does not fully invest in new, innovative treatments that could drastically improve their quality of life and recovery chances.

To hear some of my colleagues, including many who happily vote for every absurd defense budget without a blink of an eye, complain about the cost of treating our veterans is downright insulting. It is time for Congress to do its job and care for our veterans.

Let's start by passing the Honoring Our PACT Act and then immediately get back to work on new legislation that comprehensively covers any veteran who has become ill as a result of exposure to toxins during their service to our country.

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RUSSIA INVADES UKRAINE

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

Mr. BROOKS. Mr. Speaker, as background, I have served on the House Committee on Armed Services for 11 years and on the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

There is an old saying: Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it.

The lesson from Vietnam is that war is hell. If America is unwilling to do horrible things required to win a war, then America should not fight it. Be all in or all out.

A World War II lesson is that Europe's pre-war appeasement strategy does not work against aggressor nations. In the 1930s, Adolf Hitler and his National Socialist German Workers' Party time and again seized more and more of Europe. Beginning in 1935, Adolf Hitler and dictatorial socialist Germany annexed the Saarland; invaded and seized Austria in the Anschluss; seized the Sudetenland from Czechoslovakia; seized the Slovak state Bohemia and Moravia; and forced Lithuania into ceding the Memel Territory.

In response each time, Europe and the free world tried appeasement and did little to nothing, thereby emboldening Adolf Hitler and dictatorial socialist Germany.

The result? Hitler and Germany invaded Poland, triggering the Holocaust and the deaths of tens of millions of people in World War II.

The question is: Has the world learned from history?

In 2014, Vladimir Putin and Russia invaded Crimea. The free world did little to nothing.

Also in 2014, Vladimir Putin and Russia inspired a rebellion in Donetsk and Lugansk in Ukraine, costing thousands of lives and creating hundreds of thousands of desperate refugees. The free world did little to nothing.

Last month, Russia invaded Ukraine again, apparently seeking the total destruction and conquest of Ukraine. I admire the bravery and kindred spirit of citizens who fight and die for liberty and freedom against overwhelming odds.

They remind me of American Revolutionary War heroes like George Washington and Patrick Henry and places like Valley Forge, Cowpens, Kings Mountain, and Saratoga.

Fortunately, something is different about this Russian attack on Ukraine. This time, the world does not do nothing. This time, the free world is helping Ukraine during their time of peril. This time, time will tell whether the world's help is enough and effective.

First, Europe and America impose economic sanctions on Russia. In that vein, we must learn from Vietnam. Economic sanctions must be all in or all out. There can be no half measures. America must be in this to win or not be in it at all.

Second, Europe and America must be, and are, supplying Ukraine with much-needed tank-killing Javelins, aircraft-destroying Stingers, advanced fighter jets to replace those lost in combat, and other military equipment Ukraine desperately needs.

Third, Europe must decide whether to deploy combat troops. For emphasis, it is my view that America should not even consider providing combat troops in Ukraine unless Europe first does so in significant numbers. Even then, whatever America decides about troop assistance should never go beyond assistance to our European allies.

I, like many Americans, am tired of America spending our Treasury and our lives in so many parts of the globe. It is time for the rest of the free world to step up.

Ukrainians bravely shed themselves of the dictatorial boot in 1991. Russians can, and should, do the same.

My message to the Russian people is this: Your Russian comrades fought side by side with you in World War II against Adolf Hitler and dictatorial socialist Germany. Now, Vladimir Putin forces you to kill each other and die by the thousands in Ukraine. It does not have to be this way. The true way to peace is to do what America regularly does: replace our political leaders.

I urge freedom-loving Russians to bravely stand up and do the same. Do what is necessary to get the leadership Russians want and deserve, and do it before it is too late. That is the lesson of World War II.

USVI HISTORY MONTH: THEME OF FIRSTS

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

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, let me start by saying that I am a proud Virgin Islander. I stand on the shoulders of strong Virgin Islanders who came before me and who are known for their courage, leadership, sacrifice, and, most importantly, their resilience. We are known for so much more than just white sandy beaches and as a popular vacation destination. We are made of culture-rich lands and a diverse history.

March is Virgin Islands History Month. Though not always pretty, there is great beauty in our past that has shaped the Virgin Islands of our present. Like most Caribbean countries, the Virgin Islands' history, too, begins with the story of pre-Columbian inhabitants of the islands and of slavery.

Almost 3,000 years prior to Christopher Columbus landing in 1493, Native American tribes, such as the Ciboney, the Caribs, and the Arawak Indians, have long inhabited the islands.

In 1493, when Columbus attempted to land on the island that I live on, St. Croix, he was repelled at Salt River, where he met the Carib Indians who kept him and his troops from landing and making landfall there.

The period of Columbus' visit ultimately set the course for seven other European flags to claim the Virgin Islands and, unfortunately, brought demise to the indigenous people.

Today, they are found on reserved lands, and only for a few islands, and no longer exist in the Virgin Islands.

Much of our global history was built upon slavery and colonization, especially in the Caribbean islands. By the early 1700s, the Virgin Islands was no stranger to enslavement and European colonization.

On the island of St. John, a Ghanaian by the name of Breffu is credited with leading the first and one of the longest-lasting rebellions in the Americas on the island of St. John. She empowered more than 150 enslaved Africans to fight for their freedom and held that island for over 6 months, where the Danes had to bring in the Spanish Armada and the French fleet to get the slaves back in line.

Several years, almost a century, later, in 1848 on the island of St. Croix, slaves led a rebellion, an armed insurrection, which led to the emancipation—15 years before the United States emancipation. The Virgin Islands and Haiti are the only two places to gain freedom through violent overthrow.

The celebration of V.I. Emancipation Day on July 3 marks this day. Virgin Islands' history does not end with just the bleak stories of European colonialism and forced slavery. We have so many celebrated heroes, from individuals who were the founders of San Francisco; Denmark Vesey, who led the rebellion in South Carolina; Hubert Harrison, the great socialist mind who was the thought leader for Marcus Garvey; Edward Wilmoth Blyden, who was the founder of Pan-Africanism; Nella Larsen, one of the Harlem Renaissance writers; Ruby Rouss, who was an aide-de-camp to Eisenhower; Sam Ebbesen, a general and friend of Colin Powell.

Without that history and those individuals, we would not be the Virgin Islands we are today, which I am proud to represent and call my home and my heritage.

Throughout the month of March, let us celebrate our heritage and our history and look to our future.

Happy Virgin Islands History Month.

□ 1015

HONORING CAROL McBRIDE PIRSCH

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

Mr. BACON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Women's History Month and to honor Carol McBride Pirsch, who served 18 years in the Nebraska State legislature, and 8 years on the Douglas County Board of

Commissioners. Through her various roles in Omaha, she has dedicated her time and service to bettering our community.

As an Omaha native, she attended Beals Grade School, Central High School, and the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

One of only three women in the 49 member Nebraska Unicameral, Carol's most notable accomplishments include protecting and informing victims of crime by providing guidance and support to pass the Crime Victims Bill of Rights and the Truth in Sentencing bills.

In 1984 she was the first president of the Nebraska Coalition for Victims of Crime, an organization that established an ongoing statewide coalition for victims of crime, and a fund to establish victim/witness centers in Nebraska.

She also worked to protect homeowners with legislation that prohibited a lien from being placed on a home if contractors failed to pay sub-contractors for their work.

Carol valued the relationships she made while in office and believed most representatives were accessible, respectful, and willing to discuss issues. In the nonpartisan Nebraska Unicameral, she worked together to find solutions and pass bills that would benefit Nebraska statewide.

Active in her community, she was a member of the Omaha Community Committee, the Juvenile Court Nominating Commission, the Mayor's Commission of the Status of Women, Omaha Jaycees, several parent-teacher associations, many women's civic organizations, and the Centris Federal Credit Union Board. She was also involved in the Order of Women Legislators, the Omaha Area Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, the YWCA, the Omaha Library Board, the Developmental Disabilities Council, the Women in Management Association, and the Nebraska Coalition for Victims of Crime. She did it all.

Although retired, Carol has encouraged many to get involved and feels that even if you have retired or are not in public service there are many roles and ways to serve our community.

But above all else, Carol believes her greatest accomplishment is raising her six children alongside her husband Allen, whom she married in 1954. They all earned bachelor's degrees and have additional education certifications and degrees because of the importance placed on education in their family.

Mr. Speaker, I cherish Carol's friendship and I treasure the wisdom she has shared with me and others. I admire this wonderful lady, this great American patriot.

STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

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

Ms. GARCIA of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate President Biden and the significant accomplishments he shared with us during last night's State of the Union address.

Last year, together with President Biden, we made a promise that Democrats would deliver for the people; and that we have. Thanks to our President's bold leadership and our work in Congress, we have been delivering. Let's look at a few areas.

Jobs, jobs, and more jobs. As was mentioned last night by President Biden, in his first year, 6.7 million jobs were created, marking the strongest year of job growth in history. In my home State of Texas alone more than 37,600 manufacturing jobs were created. These are good, well-paying jobs that are putting Texans back to work. Our economy is on the rise. Wages are strong. The unemployment rate is low.

Another area is our Nation's GDP. While GDP dropped 3.4 percent in 2020, it was able to shoot up to 5.7 percent in 2021—the highest rate since 1984. Simply put, the economy has rebounded during President Biden's first year in office.

Another very important area to all our working families is our public schools. I am proud of the significant progress that has been made in our public schools during the President's first year. We have made huge strides in reopening our schools and keeping them open safely.

One year ago, Mr. Speaker, merely 46 percent of schools were open because it just wasn't safe for teachers, students, and faculty due to COVID. Today, 99.9 percent of schools are safely opened. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act as well as the American Rescue Plan both provided schools the necessary funds they needed to stay open and make up for lost learning time.

Another very crucial area, vaccination rates. One year ago today, only 15 percent of the U.S. population was fully vaccinated against COVID–19, today that number is 65 percent. The massive increase in vaccinations is the direct result of the President and this Congress' leadership to tackle this virus. Even today we do not have to wear our masks this morning.

Let's look ahead. Action from the Biden administration and Congress has already resulted in significant progress on the supply chain challenges. The bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act will improve and protect supply chains and reduce reliance on foreign oil immensely for years to come. It will help lower costs and inflation rates with time. As President Biden said last night, the plan is to lower your costs, not your wages.

There is a lot more President Biden and Democrats are working on in building a better America, like investments in affordable childcare and paid and universal pre-K that would allow more working families to participate in the economy.

It is those very workers and everyday hardworking Americans who deserve the greatest praise of all.

Our hometown heroes have braved through this pandemic and powered through many challenges. They have been the muscle and the backbone of our Nation's record-breaking economic growth and recovery from the pandemic and we thank them.

With President Biden's leadership, Congress' partnership, and the support of the American people, there is truly no limit as to what we can achieve together in building a better America.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would like to tell the people of Ukraine that we stand with them. I stand with them. ''Yes, we can,'' ''si se puede.'' I want the people of Ukraine to know that we see you, we hear you, and we love you. And Russia, who has purposely invaded your homeland has been—well, I should not say the word I really want to say on the floor—but they have been inhumane, cruel, and just beyond the pale. We will not stand for this.

We will stand with Ukraine. Again, ''yes, we can,'' ''si se puede.'' We stand with you.

TRIBUTE TO AL GLICK

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

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to my good friend, Al Glick, who recently passed away at the age of 95. Very few have meant as much to the Jackson, Michigan, community as Al Glick.

Alro Steel, a company founded nearly 75 years ago, embodies the hardworking ethos of his hometown. Over the years, under Al's leadership, the company grew to 3,000 employees in over a dozen States. Al always exhibited a tireless work ethic but spent the time to talk to and to know each of his employees. When asked about his retirement, he said: ''I have slowed down to working part-time, I only work 12 hours a day.'' Even still, he always found time to get involved in just about every effort under the sun.

Al supported skilled education programs, nonprofits, and C.S. Mott Children's Hospital, just to name a few. Name a sport and Al likely sponsored a team or league in the Jackson area. Al's generosity was felt throughout the Jackson community, often taking shape through his unwavering support of Jackson High School.

A Michigan man through and through, Al got to see his beloved Wolverines take down Ohio State on a snowy day this past November and then win the Big Ten Championship.

Al wasn't just a staple of the Jackson community; he was a steel pillar.

While we mourn Al's passing, we celebrate his remarkable life and the legacy that will live on for generations to come. We wish his family great joy in that legacy and thank them for sharing Al with us.

RECOGNIZING SHELTON JOHNSON

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

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an amazing Californian, Mr. Shelton Johnson. I commend his contributions to the National Park Service and his dedication to telling the stories of our history that often go untold.

Mr. JOHNSON has worked as a park ranger for over 35 years. In that time, he has enthusiastically recounted the special contributions of Black Americans to preserving Yosemite's wilderness. The all-Black 9th and 10th Calvary Regiments, known as the Buffalo Soldiers, were among the first park rangers, even before the founding of the National Park system.

I am inspired by Mr. JOHNSON's creativity and commitment to sharing our diverse history. Mr. JOHNSON was recently awarded the American Park Experience Award for his lifelong efforts in helping more families and youth feel welcome as they see their stories told.

As a fellow teacher and mom to three enthusiastic, park-loving kids, I am honored to recognize him today.

COMPETITION IN CAPITALISM

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, a strong capitalist economy requires competition. Weak antitrust enforcement has atrophied the bones of our economy. When our economy lacks competition, we see prices go up, wages drop, and innovation stall.

Last year, my office released a report detailing how Big Pharma's market consolidation creates real harms for families. Too many Americans can't afford lifesaving prescription drugs because Big Pharma buys out its competitors so that it can continue its corporate abuse.

We have also seen how Big Tech's market consolidation reduces consumer choice, stifles competition, and harms small businesses.

Competition is central to healthy capitalism. Reining in corporate greed, holding big businesses accountable, and cracking down on monopolies will strengthen our economy.

Congress must tackle market consolidation to create a level playing field for all businesses and to strengthen our capitalist economy.

STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

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

Mr. CLINE. Mr. Speaker, last night President Biden tried to paint his administration in a positive light during the State of the Union address, but the American people know better.

We are facing an unprecedented number of crises: an economic crisis, a border crisis, a crime crisis, an energy crisis, and an unprecedented national security crisis. Every one of these crises have been either created or made worse by President Biden and congressional Democrats.

Simply put, Democrats own these crises, but I am sure—and we did see—an attempt by President Biden to dress up these disasters and highlight victories that simply don't exist.

While President Biden tries to take credit for accomplishments he had no responsibility in delivering, House Republicans remain committed to showcasing to the American people what we stand for: unleashing American energy independence, peace through strength, respecting the Constitution, putting power back in the hands of parents, lowering taxes, balancing budgets, and securing our southern border.

Mr. Speaker, if given the opportunity, Republicans will lead on these issues, and I look forward to delivering on the day that that happens.

SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE

Mr. CLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer my support to the people of Ukraine. All Americans stand in solidarity against Russian aggression, and we pray for peace.

However, as the conflict escalates and we call for not one more drop of Russian oil to be imported into this Nation, the United States must make energy independence a priority.

Prior to the invasion, gas here at home was already 40 percent higher than it was 12 months ago, marking an 8-year high. Now, as the world sanctions Russia, prices are climbing yet again, and experts predict Americans could soon be paying more than $5 for a gallon of gas.

In response, the President announced that he is releasing 30 million barrels from the U.S. strategic oil reserves. It sounds great, but considering the United States uses more than 20 million barrels a day, this is nothing more than a gimmick. A day-and-a-half worth of oil is not going to reduce costs for American businesses, workers, and families in my district.

There must be a comprehensive plan that leads us back to the energy independence we enjoyed during the Trump administration, and it starts with lifting the President's moratorium on new oil and gas drilling on public lands, exploring in ANWR and off our coasts, and finishing the Keystone XL pipeline.

□ 1030

RECOGNIZING THE CAVE SPRING CHEERLEADING TEAM

Mr. CLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the student athletes on the Cave Spring High School cheerleading team in Roanoke, Virginia, for winning its division's State championship toward the end of last year. The Knights cheerleading squad is often referred to as a dynasty, and this victory marks the team's fourth State title in 9 years—and in those other 5 years they placed second each time.

The team had to overcome several obstacles this season, but through it all they persevered. Cave Spring senior cheerleader, Abby Holbrook, said it best when she said: ''We work so hard during the season, and it feels like all the hard work is paying off.''

Yes, Abby's hard work certainly did pay off. With the graduating class of 2022 having won the title their freshman and senior years, they are proud of the legacy they leave behind, and rightly so.

Congratulations to Cave Spring on this accomplishment, and I wish them the best of luck again next season.

STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

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

Mr. ROY. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to follow my friend from Virginia (Mr. CLINE).

Mr. Speaker, last night when we heard the President of the United States address this Nation and this body in this Chamber as well as our colleagues on the other side of the Capitol in the Senate, you would think there was some sort of magic moment that the virus has suddenly left the Earth and now all of a sudden we are free here on the floor of the House of Representatives to be without masks.

It was just coincidentally timed—just coincidentally timed—when the State of the Union is upon us. A number of States have lifted their mandates—all suddenly coincidentally timed—around the State of the Union. And I was interested in watching the Speaker of the House suddenly saying: Well, it is a new moment in COVID.

I listened to my colleagues from Texas just a moment ago on the other side of the aisle talking about how we have had this great victory through the action of the genius of our Federal Government to free us from the perils of this virus.

Mr. Speaker, tell that to the children who have been sitting in the corners of classrooms wearing masks. Tell that to the members of our military and the members of our Border Patrol who are the so-called heroes. I say so-called because my Democratic colleagues a year ago were calling healthcare workers heroes, and now they are forcing them still to lose their job if they don't take a jab because of the wisdom of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle that they know best. They know best.

The President stood there arrogantly in that posture preaching to the United States public and to this body yesterday and talked about how we are going to beat this virus and oh, by the way, suddenly magically we need to fund the police. Go back and look at every statement that has been made by my colleagues on the other side of the aisle over the last 2 years talking about defunding the police. We know who is defunding the police across the country, and it sure as heck isn't Republicans. It is Democrats across this country.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle know it. The President knows it, and the President is reading polls. The President knows that the approach to the virus has been devastating to the American people. Lockdowns, mask mandates, and vaccine mandates are being rejected by the American people. The polls show it, so the magic moment has then arrived.

The President of the United States knows full well when he says the border should be secured that it is a lie. I just want to be very clear: when the President said last night that the border should be secure, it is a lie. He is lying to the American people.

I was in Del Rio just last week. One thousand people a day are coming across that river, and nobody gives a whit. And they don't give a whit about the 26 migrants who have died in the Rio Grande since October 1, since the cameras have left the Haitians sitting on the Rio Grande. They don't care that there are 26 dead migrants. They don't care about the 119 bodies in Brooks County where the sheriff has to bring a body trailer to Brooks County.

They don't care about the fences getting cut and the livestock getting out. The ranchers I met with last week in south Texas are in tears about their property. No. No. The President gets up, gives a speech, and declares the border secure and all is well.

Then he gets up and talks about the solidarity of the Ukrainian people, yet he refuses to unleash American oil and gas and refuses to unleash natural gas, liquified natural gas, that would change the world. He refuses to stop importing 600,000 barrels of Russian oil every single day because we won't unleash American oil and gas.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we are going to keep telling the truth about the border. We are going to keep telling the truth about vaccine mandates. We are going to keep telling the truth about the need for American energy. We are not going to bow down to the climate hysterics and the false lies about border security that are endangering the American people.

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

THE RETIREMENT OF ROB GREEN

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to salute a dedicated public servant and friend. After working for a series of Members of the House, including Representative Bill Goodling, Rob Green first served the Education and Workforce Committee from 1995 to 2001. Rob rejoined the committee 4 years ago and was an invaluable leader of the GOP workforce team until his recent retirement.

As director of workforce policy, Rob worked tirelessly to protect the rights of workers and employers alike. He has dedicated years of his life to fighting for free market principles and to seeing that our country stays a self-governed republic. Whether we have been in the majority or in the minority, Rob has made addressing Federal overreach a top priority and has never been afraid to hold Federal agencies accountable.

Rob's consummate professionalism when working with Members of Congress as well as Democrat staff allowed us to pass bipartisan bills such as the Retirement Improvement and Savings Enhancement Act, RISE, which will help many Americans prepare for a more secure future.

Rob's work was also pivotal in helping us pass a ban on surprise billing. This fight for transparency in our medical system has been a passion of Rob's and will help millions of struggling Americans.

Rob's influence extended way beyond the committee. GOP leadership also relied on Rob to shape policy in the labor arena, ensuring that the American worker's voice gets heard. His relationship with lawmakers and staff throughout the House allowed the committee to flourish and accomplish a tremendous amount.

Too often populist lobbies have an out-sized influence over politics in Washington. Rob's work on this committee ensured that the voices of job creators and small business owners were heard.

This is a difficult day for me as I relied on Rob's expertise and keen eye for strategy to further this committee's mission. Thankfully, his expertise will live on in the team that he has led and mentored for 4 years.

Mr. Speaker, I commend Rob for his many accomplishments and for his selfless service to this country. It is because of dedicated public servants like Rob standing in the gap and defending our Republic that we have a chance at reclaiming the vision our Founding Fathers had for this Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I truly congratulate Rob on his retirement. He has earned it.

PRESIDENT BIDEN'S NATIONAL SECURITY CRISIS

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

Mr. ROSE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address President Biden's national security crisis and to express my support for the people of Ukraine as they fight for their lives and their sovereignty.

An American ally is under attack, and they need our support. Sanctioning the Russian economy is not enough. The Ukrainian Government has requested more lethal aid for many months, and we must deliver it without further delay. We must also end our purchases of nearly 538,000 barrels of Russian oil each day and return to where we were just a short year ago by making America energy independent again.

After 4 years of peace and prosperity, it only took President Biden 400 days to unravel it all. President Biden's weakness on the world stage has emboldened our enemies and created a vacuum that Vladimir Putin is delighted to fill.

President Biden has demonstrated the inability to lead, whether it be the botched Afghanistan withdrawal or the invasion that is happening at our own Southern border. I can't help but think about what might come next as Iran strives to produce nuclear weapons and China may look toward Taiwan and mimic Russia. The world was a much safer place a little over a year ago.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to stand with President Zelensky and the people of Ukraine who are courageously fighting against power-hungry dictator Vladimir Putin.

So much tragedy and loss could have been avoided in Ukraine if we had any real leadership in the White House. Surely evil triumphs when good men do nothing.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF JIM LANCASTER

Mr. ROSE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to celebrate the life of my friend, cousin, and lifelong Tennessean, Jim Lancaster. He passed away on February 3 after a remarkable 92 years on God's Earth.

Jim loved the Lord and cherished his family with all his heart. He and Vondell, the love of his life, were married for 67 years. Together they had five children, 12 grandchildren, 18 great-grandchildren, and two great-great-grandchildren. Obviously, Jim's and Vondell's loving marriage and devotion to family led to a lot of little Lancasters running around middle Tennessee.

Jim was a joyful role model, and so many people in his community knew Jim in that way. He served as a leader in many local organizations including the chamber of commerce, the Boy Scouts, and too many to name here today. He received loads of awards for his service over the years, but he was a humble man who wasn't in it for recognition. He just loved serving his community and the people in it.

He also dedicated much of his life to agriculture. He graduated from Tennessee Tech, my alma mater, with a degree in agriculture, and then worked for the Wilson County Farm Bureau as its agency manager for over 43 years. In fact, he is now a member of the Wilson County Agricultural Hall of Fame in recognition of his exemplary work for local farmers throughout his distinguished career.

I was blessed to call Jim family. It is bittersweet. It is a bittersweet moment for me now to say he is gone to be with our Lord.

Thank you, Jim Lancaster, for a life well-lived that touched so many in such a positive way.

THON

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 honor, thank, and express my sincerest gratitude for an incredible group of students at the Pennsylvania State University—Penn State.

On February 18 at 4 p.m., Penn State students, staff, family, friends, volunteers, and spectators filled the Bryce Jordan Center for the 50th Penn State IFC/Panhellenic Dance Marathon, more widely known as THON, to raise money for the Four Diamonds Foundation.

Since 1973, student volunteers have come together at Penn State to raise money for the Penn State Health Children's Hospital. In 1977, THON partnered with the Four Diamonds Foundation, and since then not a single Four Diamonds family has received a medical bill thanks to the tireless work and dedication of Penn State students.

The Four Diamonds was founded by Charles and Irma Millard in 1972 after their son, Christopher, lost his battle with cancer at age 11. Before Christopher passed away, he wrote a story about a great knight who sought out the four diamonds of courage, wisdom, honesty, and strength to be saved from an evil sorceress. His parents realized those four qualities were all necessary to overcome cancer, and they created the Four Diamonds Fund in his memory.

Mr. Millard passed away in November of 2021 at the age of 93, but his legacy through THON and his foundation will no doubt live on forever.

Over the past 50 years, THON has grown into the largest student-run philanthropy in the world. In the first year, 78 students danced for 30 hours straight and raised just over $2,000. Today, THON is a 46-hour no sitting, no sleeping dance marathon celebrating nearly 17,000 students' yearlong fundraising efforts to help end childhood cancer.

Thankfully, after a virtual event last year, 667 dancers and tens of thousands of student volunteers and supporters attended the event in-person. Students stood from 6 p.m. on Friday, February 18, until 4 p.m. on Sunday, February 20. While it was an impressive feat to hold, what is even more incredible is the drive, fortitude, and flexibility these students showed in their commitment to this cause.

This past year, the pandemic prohibited students from hosting many of their traditional bake sales, ribbon sales, or other fundraisers that Pennsylvanians have been accustomed to seeing throughout the Commonwealth. Despite this, THON shattered previous fundraising records by bringing in more than $13.7 million for the kids.

□ 1045

Over the last 50 years, THON has now donated more than $200 million to Four Diamonds Fund, undoubtedly saving hundreds of lives.

While it is no easy feat to stand for 46 hours, the real highlight of this event comes on Sunday afternoon, shortly before the event concludes. During what is known as Family Hour, THON invites Four Diamonds families onto the stage to share their experiences with the Children's Hospital, Four Diamonds, and THON.

This year, Jacquie Homan shared the story of how her son was diagnosed with synovial cell sarcoma at age 2. Thanks to Penn State Children's Hospital, Declan is officially 5 years cancer-free, and Jacquie said that the support from the THON community had an immeasurable impact on helping their family cope with and move forward from this diagnosis.

I am inspired by Declan and every other child and family who find themselves battling cancer and am in awe of their strength and their spirit as they keep fighting.

I am also proud of the Penn State students who continue to be so committed to this cause. And I am incredibly proud of the work done by the Four Diamonds Foundation and Penn State Children's Hospital as they conduct lifesaving research and ensure no family ever receives a bill.

Congratulations, once again, to everyone involved in this year's THON.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 46 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

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

PRAYER

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

Holy God, we return to You this day. With our whole hearts, we approach You.

On this day, some fast that they would satisfy their hunger only with Your word. Others weep, ashamed of the choices they have made which have distanced themselves from You. And still more mourn, grieving the loss of Your loving embrace.

Be merciful to us, O God. Be slow to anger. Show us Your grace that we would enjoy again Your steadfast love.

Then spare Your people. Let no one say, ''Where is our God?'' Have pity on those who cry out to You this day.

Remove the enemies from those who call on Your name and walk in Your way. May Your children no longer fear. In Your redemption, may they once again find reason to rejoice.

Praise be to you, O Lord our God. You are in the midst of us. We call upon Your most holy name. Hear our prayer.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to section 11(a) of House Resolution 188, the Journal of the last day's proceedings is approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. ROSS) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. ROSS 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.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

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

TRIPLE-NEGATIVE BREAST CANCER AWARENESS DAY

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

Mr. MORELLE. Madam Speaker, six years ago this month, I heard the phrase triple-negative breast cancer for the first time in my life. I was in the oncologist's office with my newly diagnosed 29-year-old daughter, Lauren, a day forever etched in my memory.

In the weeks that followed, I learned a great deal about this very aggressive, rare form of breast cancer. Roughly 12 percent of breast cancer survivors are designated as triple-negative.

It is the only form of breast cancer that doesn't respond to hormone therapy, often requiring chemotherapy instead. And it claims the lives of thousands of women and men each year. It stole Lauren from our family in August of 2017.

Tomorrow, March 3, is Triple-Negative Breast Cancer Awareness Day. I am humbled to sponsor a resolution to call attention to this awful disease and to let the thousands of victims of triple-negative breast cancer know they are not alone.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Adrian Swann, one of his secretaries.

AN ANXIOUS WORLD

(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, the State of the Union last night was a disconnect from the reality of Biden failures. The Wall Street Journal is correct. He missed the moment.

The paper went further to describe what Biden did not say: More defense spending to meet the threats from autocrats? No. A new appreciation of the contribution of fossil fuels to American and European security? Not a word. A note that government spending contributed to the highest inflation rate in 40 years? Nope.

I personally was disappointed that there was no mention of leaving Americans behind in Afghanistan, 13 patriots murdered in Kabul. And now Afghanistan is a safe haven for terrorists who can come across the open border to attack American families.

An anxious world is looking for American leadership in a dangerous new era. I hope the President will change course for peace through strength.

In conclusion, God bless Ukraine. God save Ukraine. Long live President Volodymyr Zelensky.

AMERICA'S EXCELLENCE IN SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING

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

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, last night we heard the President of the United States speak with great enthusiasm about our friendship with the people of Ukraine and how we have shared values in terms of democracy, in terms of sovereignty, and in terms of not having someone come into their country and usurp their freedom.

President Biden also spoke about America's freedom in the world in terms of our independence in terms of our own investments in our economic future. America's excellence in science and engineering has long been the envy of the world. Along the way other countries have copied our model, investing in education and research and took over some of the manufacturing of our supply.

We have, what was referenced by the President last night, legislation, we call it the America COMPETES Act in the House of Representatives. It is a blueprint for our independence and our self-sufficiency economically in the world.

With the House-passed America COMPETES Act we do three things. First of all, we invest in chips, $52 billion in chips and semiconductors. Do you know how many chips are in a car? There are 1,000; and in an electric car, 2,000. In order for our auto manufacturers to continue to create jobs and create products, we need chips. $52 billion.

Secondly, we reinvigorate our manufacturing base by addressing the supply chain issues. Supply chain increases supply, reducing costs, lowing inflation. This is very important. There is $48 billion invested there.

Third, we invest in research and education into stem cell so we can diversify the workforce to include many more people, everyone in our country, as we advance science and technology and good-paying jobs for the future.

Again, we are prepared to go into conference with the Senate on this legislation. We are always ready to fight for the people. We expect to have this legislation before too long, and when we do so we will be lowering costs, increasing paychecks, and doing so for the people.

RECOGNIZING THE LIFE OF DR. RAY FARLEY

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

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the life of Dr. Ray Farley, the former president of Young Harris College.

Dr. Farley was a long-time supporter of Young Harris College, with 35 years of dedicated service to Young Harris under his belt.

Beginning as a professor of history in 1955, Dr. Farley worked with the college until his retirement in 1991, after serving as the college president for 20 years. For some of those years I was a student at Young Harris College while Dr. Farley was the president. I got to know him well. He was a fine gentleman and did an excellent job.

During his tenure as president, Dr. Farley made it his mission to modernize and expand the services and facilities at Young Harris. He was responsible for taking important steps to strengthen the college endowment, faculty, curriculum, and facilities.

Dr. Farley implemented his plan for helping to beautify the campus as well by renovating dining facilities, resident halls, and administrative buildings. The years with Dr. Farley at the helm were integral to the growth and development of the college itself.

In April of 2021, Dr. Farley was awarded the Outstanding Friend Award by the Young Harris College Alumni Association for his incredible dedication and service to the college. His legacy and impact will be felt for many years to come.

Mr. Speaker, I send my condolences to his family and friends as well as the whole Young Harris community.

RUSSIA'S ASSAULT ON UKRAINE

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

Ms. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, Russia's assault on Ukrainian freedom and democracy is an assault on freedom and democracy everywhere. That is why America and our allies are linking arms and engaging in unprecedented cooperation. President Biden has marshalled the world to impose severe consequences on Putin and the Russian economy.

Because of these crippling sanctions, Russia now stands at the precipice of a punishing financial crisis. American troops, many from Fort Bragg and elsewhere in North Carolina, are already in NATO countries in Eastern Europe, and more are on their way.

The international community is also sending support to countries neighboring Ukraine, including North Carolina's close partner, Moldova. As we continue to work on a robust new aid package, the prayers and admiration of the people of my district are with the brave Ukrainian freedom fighters risking their lives to defend their homeland.

AMERICA FIRST MEANS POWER UNDER CONTROL

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

Mr. CAWTHORN. Mr. Speaker, when the United States military shows up, kings and kingdoms fall to their knees. As the great philosopher Toby Keith once said, ''We put a boot in their ass, it's the American way.'' Our military preeminence is unmatched, our brand is dominance. But our greatness lies in temperance. America first means power under control.

Overzealous executives have wrenched away a precious power bestowed on this body. I am here to remind them: Congress declares war, not Joe Biden, not some woke general. Congress, the people, must debate, decide, and then, if absolutely necessary, declare war.

The Constitution is our compass, not the feelings of some bought-off military-industrial complex war hawk who uses emotion to justify America's entry into every overseas conflict. Congress must reclaim our power to declare war, and if we do declare, we must define what victory looks like. The sons and daughters of America are too precious to waste on the altar of globalism.

America first, always and forever.

SOCIAL SECURITY AND OUR ELDERLY

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

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, more than 900,000 people in the United States have lost their lives due to COVID. Of those more than 900,000, 660,000 people over age 65 have been lost because of COVID. This is the same population that was not only worried and concerned about COVID, but they are the ones on a fixed income. They are the ones that rely on Social Security.

More than 5 million of our fellow Americans get a below-poverty-level check from Social Security after having paid in all their lives to the number one insurance program in the country, the number one anti-poverty program for the elderly, and the number one anti-poverty program for children. Help is on the way.

Social Security 2100, a sacred trust, as the President called it, is a bill that will uplift and raise people out of the depths of poverty and provide them with the sustenance they need in their daily lives, as Roosevelt intended.

RUSSIA'S ASSAULT ON UKRAINE

(Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in strong support of the people of Ukraine and against the thuggish, criminal, and careless actions of the Russian military and President Putin.

Last week's invasion of Ukraine by Russia was planned and premeditated. It was, and still is, a blatant act of war and cannot be tolerated by the international community. Putin's actions have been those of a desperate politician creating chaos in neighboring countries due to low popularity at home.

As we have seen on the news and social media, the Russian military is making no distinction between military and civilian, launching missiles blindly into Ukrainian cities and towns.

With their backs against the wall, the people of Ukraine have shown the world that they will fight to defend their friends, family, homes, and country. We must support them and the democratically-elected Ukrainian Government.

The current sanctions that the administration has levied against Russia, Putin, and his cronies are welcome, but we clearly need to go further. We must aggressively hurt the Russian economy by cutting off their energy exports and halt the purchasing of Russian gas and oil by the United States. We should also unleash American energy, including biofuels, natural gas, and wind, to help our allies move away from Russian energy reliance.

Mr. Speaker, to the people of Ukraine, we are with you today, tomorrow, and always.

□ 1215

INVESTMENTS IN INFRASTRUCTURE

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

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Mr. Speaker, as we heard last night in the President's State of the Union, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act is a once-in-a-lifetime investment in our Nation's economic foundation and our Nation's competitiveness.

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act makes it possible for us to invest in passenger rail expansion and restoration; rebuild our roads, our bridges, our water systems, and our sewer systems; reclaim abandoned mine lands and reduce pollution; and so much more. It is the solution to improving our competitiveness on the world stage and recovering from the devastating COVID–19 pandemic.

After years of talking about passing an infrastructure bill and week after week of infrastructure weeks, we have finally done it. We will begin seeing the benefits quite soon.

Thank God for the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

HONORING HUNTINGTON BEACH POLICE OFFICER NICHOLAS VELLA

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

Mrs. STEEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Huntington Beach Police Officer Nicholas Vella who was tragically killed in a crash while responding to a call in Newport Beach on February 19.

Officer Vella served as a law enforcement officer for 18 years and spent 14 years with the Huntington Beach Police Department. He dedicated his life to protecting our community. My heart goes out to his wife and daughter, the Huntington Beach Police Department, and all who loved and knew Officer Vella.

I am so thankful every day for our brave law enforcement officers. They put their lives on the line for us, and I am so grateful for their service and sacrifice. I want to thank their families, too, because their sacrifice does not go unnoticed.

I will be praying for Officer Vella and his family.

SUPPLY CHAINS

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

Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the bipartisan supply chain subtitle found in the House-passed America COMPETES Act.

We have all heard from our constituents over the last several months about the impact that inflation has had on households and businesses. We also know that a key reason for rising prices on critical goods is our supply chain instability. The supply chain subtitle in the America COMPETES Act will strengthen our supply chains and ultimately tackle a root cause of inflation.

It is vital that this subtitle is preserved through the negotiations of the America COMPETES Act as we build a better America. This is about creating good-paying union jobs, protecting our national security, and, ultimately, protecting the pocketbooks of the American people. Let's get it done.

ACKNOWLEDGING PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT ERIC BARRON

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the distinguished career of Penn State University President Eric Barron.

President Barron assumed office in 2014 after leaving his post as president at the Florida State University. But his service to the university began when Dr. Barron served as dean of the College of Earth and Minerals Sciences and founding director of the Earth System Science Center in Penn State.

In his tenure as president of Penn State University, President Barron elevated Penn State as a leader in higher education. President Barron has also worked to support State funding, increase access and affordability to students through scholarship programs, and prepare students graduating from Penn State for success after college.

In my time working with President Barron, he has always made it a point to meet with the Pennsylvania Congressional Delegation regularly and share Penn State's vision, work, and culture. He took the time to build meaningful relationships which ultimately benefited the university and the Commonwealth as a whole. I am happy to call him my friend and wish him well in his retirement.

Mr. Speaker, Penn State remains one of the top institutions in the country in part because of the work of President Barron. He leaves a great legacy behind.

I thank President Barron for his service, and I wish him joy in his retirement.

WOMEN'S RIGHT TO CHOOSE

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

Mr. RYAN. Mr. Speaker, I am frustrated. We have heard a lot this week about cutting workers in on the deal and how we meet the challenges that this Nation is facing.

Every piece of the game plan—whether it is helping take on China; how do we bring jobs back to places like Ohio; how do we increase union membership by making it easier to join a union; how do we bring down costs; and how do we cut taxes for workers in the midst of all of this inflation—every one of those bills has gone to the Senate and either died or is on life support.

Here is one example of just how broken this is: Last year, we made history

when we passed the Women's Health Protection Act—and not a moment too soon as Roe v. Wade hangs in the balance and States like Ohio race to pass new laws to ban abortion. This is a basic right, a matter of settled law. But this week the Senate blocked the vote—blocked it—and we didn't even get a vote.

It is time to get rid of the filibuster and make sure that the bills we send here from the House actually get passed in the United States Senate.

CARING FOR OUR VETERANS

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

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3967, the Honoring our PACT Act, which will ensure comprehensive benefits and care for our troops who suffer from toxic exposure, especially from burn pits. I want to thank Chairman TAKANO for his leadership on this bill. It is something we should all support. It supports our veterans.

As the daughter of a veteran, the sister of a veteran, and the wife of a veteran, caring for our veterans is extremely important to me, as it should be to every American. I could not help but be struck by the similarities between this bill and the 9/11 health and compensation bill which served and supported our heroes and heroines of 9/11 who likewise were exposed to burning toxins that later gave them cancers and severe illness.

This bill could help over 3 million veterans who are currently suffering from exposure to toxic burn pits.

Whether a veteran has served in Afghanistan, Iraq, or elsewhere, if they were exposed to these toxic hazards, they are entitled to care. They were there for us; we should be there for them. We should all support this important bill.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 2748

Mr. BOWMAN. Mr. Speaker, I seek recognition to remove myself as cosponsor of H.R. 2748.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. YARMUTH). The gentleman's request is approved.

HONORING OUR PROMISE TO ADDRESS COMPREHENSIVE TOXICS ACT OF 2021

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 950, I call up the bill (H.R. 3967) to improve health care and benefits for veterans exposed to toxic substances, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 950, an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 117–33, modified by the amendment printed in part A of House Report 117–253, is adopted and the bill, as amended, is considered read.

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

H.R. 3967

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; REFERENCES TO TITLE 38, UNITED STATES CODE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the ''Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act of 2021'' or the ''Honoring our PACT Act of 2021''.

(b) MATTERS RELATING TO AMENDMENTS TO TITLE 38, UNITED STATES CODE.—

(1) REFERENCES.—Except as otherwise expressly provided, when in this Act an amendment or repeal is expressed in terms of an amendment to, or repeal of, a section or other provision, the reference shall be considered to be made to a section or other provision of title 38, United States Code.

(2) AMENDMENTS TO TABLES OF CONTENTS.—Except as otherwise expressly provided, when an amendment made by this Act to title 38, United States Code, adds a section or larger organizational unit to that title or amends the designation or heading of a section or larger organizational unit in that title, that amendment also shall have the effect of amending any table of sections in that title to alter the table to conform to the changes made by the amendment.

(c) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; references to title 38, United States Code; table of contents.

TITLE I—EXPANSION OF HEALTH CARE ELIGIBILITY

Subtitle A—Toxic-exposed Veterans

Sec. 101. Short title.
Sec. 102. Definitions relating to toxic-exposed veterans.
Sec. 103. Expansion of health care for specific categories of toxic-exposed veterans and veterans supporting certain overseas contingency operations.
Sec. 104. Assessments of implementation and operation.

Subtitle B—Certain Veterans of Combat Service

Sec. 111. Expansion of period of eligibility for health care for certain veterans of combat service.

TITLE II—TOXIC EXPOSURE PRESUMPTION PROCESS

Sec. 201. Short title.
Sec. 202. Improvements to ability of Department of Veterans Affairs to establish presumptions of service connection based on toxic exposure.
Sec. 203. Reevaluation of claims for compensation involving presumptions of service connection.

TITLE III—IMPROVING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SERVICE CONNECTION PROCESS FOR TOXIC-EXPOSED VETERANS

Sec. 301. Short title.
Sec. 302. Presumptions of toxic exposure.
Sec. 303. Medical nexus examinations for toxic exposure risk activities.

TITLE IV—PRESUMPTIONS OF SERVICE CONNECTION

Sec. 401. Treatment of veterans who participated in cleanup of Enewetak Atoll as radiation-exposed veterans for purposes of presumption of service connection of certain disabilities by Department of Veterans Affairs.
Sec. 402. Treatment of veterans who participated in nuclear response near Palomares, Spain, or Thule, Greenland, as radiation-exposed veterans for purposes of presumption of service connection of certain disabilities by Department of Veterans Affairs.
Sec. 403. Presumptions of service connection for diseases associated with exposures to certain herbicide agents for veterans who served in certain locations.
Sec. 404. Addition of additional diseases associated with exposure to certain herbicide agents for which there is a presumption of service connection for veterans who served in certain locations.
Sec. 405. Improving compensation for disabilities occurring in Persian Gulf War veterans.
Sec. 406. Presumption of service connection for certain diseases associated with exposure to burn pits and other toxins.

TITLE V—RESEARCH MATTERS

Sec. 501. Coordination by Department of Veterans Affairs of toxic exposure research.
Sec. 502. Data collection, analysis, and report on treatment of veterans for illnesses related to toxic exposure.
Sec. 503. Studies related to veterans who served in Southwest Asia and certain other locations.
Sec. 504. Study on health trends of post 9/11 veterans.
Sec. 505. Study on cancer rates among veterans.
Sec. 506. Study on feasibility and advisability of furnishing hospital care and medical services to dependents of veterans who participated in toxic exposure risk activities.

TITLE VI—IMPROVEMENT OF RESOURCES AND TRAINING REGARDING TOXIC-EXPOSED VETERANS

Sec. 601. Short title; definitions.
Sec. 602. Publication of list of resources of Department of Veterans Affairs for toxic-exposed veterans and outreach program for such veterans and caregivers and survivors of such veterans.
Sec. 603. Incorporation of toxic exposure questionnaire during primary care appointments.
Sec. 604. Training for personnel of the Department of Veterans Affairs with respect to toxic-exposed veterans.

TITLE VII—REGISTRIES, RECORDS, AND OTHER MATTERS

Sec. 701. Registry of individuals exposed to per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances on military installations.
Sec. 702. Fort McClellan Health Registry.
Sec. 703. Independent study on Individual Longitudinal Exposure Record.
Sec. 704. Biannual report on Individual Longitudinal Exposure Record.
Sec. 705. Correction of exposure records by members of the Armed Forces and veterans.
Sec. 706. Federal cause of action relating to water at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.
Sec. 7____. Veterans toxic exposures fund.

TITLE I—EXPANSION OF HEALTH CARE ELIGIBILITY

Subtitle A—Toxic-exposed Veterans

SEC. 101. SHORT TITLE.

This title may be cited as the ''Conceding Our Veterans' Exposures Now And Necessitating Training Act'' or the ''COVENANT Act''.

SEC. 102. DEFINITIONS RELATING TO TOXIC-EXPOSED VETERANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1710(a)(2)(F) is amended by striking ''who was exposed to a toxic substance, radiation, or other conditions, as provided in subsection (e)'' and inserting ''in accordance with subsection (e), who is a toxic-exposed veteran''.

(b) DEFINITIONS OF TOXIC EXPOSURE AND TOXIC-EXPOSED VETERAN.—Section 101 is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:

''(37) The term 'toxic exposure' includes the following:

''(A) A toxic exposure risk activity, as defined in section 1710(e)(4) of this title.

''(B) An exposure to a substance, chemical, or airborne hazard identified in the list under section 1119(b)(2) of this title.

''(38) The term 'toxic-exposed veteran' means a veteran described in section 1710(e)(1) of this title.''.

(c) DEFINITION OF TOXIC EXPOSURE RISK ACTIVITY.—Section 1710(e)(4) is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(C) The term 'toxic exposure risk activity' means any activity—

''(i) that requires a corresponding entry in an exposure tracking record system (as defined in section 1119(c) of this title) for the veteran who carried out the activity; or

''(ii) that the Secretary determines qualifies for purposes of this subsection when taking into account what is reasonably prudent to protect the health of veterans.''.

SEC. 103. EXPANSION OF HEALTH CARE FOR SPECIFIC CATEGORIES OF TOXIC-EXPOSED VETERANS AND VETERANS SUPPORTING CERTAIN OVERSEAS CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—

(1) EXPANSION.—Subsection (e) of section 1710, as amended by section 102(c), is further amended—

(A) in paragraph (1), by adding at the end the following new subparagraphs:

''(G) Beginning not later than the applicable date specified in paragraph (6), and subject to paragraph (2), a veteran who participated in a toxic exposure risk activity while serving on active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty training is eligible for hospital care, medical services, and nursing home care under subsection (a)(2)(F) for any illness.

''(H) Beginning not later than the applicable date specified in paragraph (6), and subject to paragraph (2), a covered veteran (as defined in section 1119(c) of this title) is eligible for hospital care, medical services, and nursing home care under subsection (a)(2)(F) for any illness.

''(I)(i) Beginning not later than the applicable date specified in paragraph (6), and subject to paragraph (2), a veteran who deployed in support of a contingency operation specified in clause (ii) is eligible for hospital care, medical services, and nursing home care under subsection (a)(2)(F) for any illness.

''(ii) A contingency operation specified in this clause is any of the following:

''(I) Operation Enduring Freedom.

''(II) Operation Freedom's Sentinel.

''(III) Operation Iraqi Freedom.

''(IV) Operation New Dawn.

''(V) Operation Inherent Resolve.

''(VI) Resolute Support Mission.''; and

(B) in paragraph (2)(B)—

(i) by striking ''or (F)'' and inserting ''(F), (G), (H), or (I)''; and

(ii) by striking ''service or testing'' and inserting ''service, testing, or activity''.

(2) PHASE IN.—Such subsection is further amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(6)(A) The Secretary shall determine the dates in subparagraphs (G), (H), and (I) of paragraph (1) as follows:

''(i) October 1, 2024, with respect to a veteran described in such subparagraph (G) or (H) who was discharged or released from the active military, naval, air, or space service during the period beginning on August 2, 1990, and ending on September 11, 2001.

''(ii) October 1, 2026, with respect to a veteran described in such subparagraph (G) or (H) who was discharged or released from the active military, naval, air, or space service during the period beginning on September 12, 2001, and ending on December 31, 2006.

''(iii) October 1, 2028, with respect to a veteran described in such subparagraph (G) or (H) who was discharged or released from the active military, naval, air, or space service during the period beginning on January 1, 2007, and ending on December 31, 2012.

''(iv) October 1, 2030, with respect to a veteran described in such subparagraph (G) or (H) who was discharged or released from the active military, naval, air, or space service during the period beginning on January 1, 2013, and ending on December 31, 2018.

''(v) October 1, 2032, with respect to a veteran described in such subparagraph (I).

''(B) The Secretary may modify a date specified in subparagraph (A) to an earlier date, as the Secretary determines appropriate based on the number of veterans receiving hospital care, medical services, and nursing home care under subparagraphs (G), (H), and (I) of paragraph (1) and the resources available to the Secretary. If the Secretary determines to so modify a date, the Secretary shall—

''(i) notify the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate of the proposed modification; and

''(ii) publish such modified date in the Federal Register.''.

(b) OUTREACH PLANS.—With respect to each of clauses (i) through (v) of section 1710(e)(6)(A) of title 38, United States Code (as added by subsection (a)(2)), not later than 180 days prior to the date specified in the clause (including a date modified pursuant to such section), the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a plan to conduct outreach to the veterans referred to in the clause to notify such veterans of their eligibility for hospital care, medical services, or nursing home care under subparagraph (G), (H), or (I), of section 1710(e)(1) of such title, as the case may be.

SEC. 104. ASSESSMENTS OF IMPLEMENTATION AND OPERATION.

(a) INITIAL RESOURCE ASSESSMENT AND REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall—

(1) complete an assessment to determine—

(A) the personnel and material resources necessary to implement section 103 (including the amendments made by such section); and

(B) the total number of covered veterans, as such term is defined in section 1119(c) of title 38, United States Code (as added by section 302), who receive hospital care or medical services furnished by the Secretary under chapter 17 of such title, disaggregated by priority group specified in section 1705(a) of such title; and

(2) submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report containing the findings of the assessment completed under paragraph (1), including a specific determination as to whether the Department has the personnel and material resources necessary to implement section 103.

(b) INFORMATION SYSTEMS.—Not later than October 1, 2024, the Secretary shall establish information systems to assess the implementation of section 103, including the amendments made by such section, and use the results of assessments under such systems to inform the reports under subsection (c).

(c) ANNUAL REPORTS.—

(1) REPORTS.—Not later than October 1, 2025, and on an annual basis thereafter until October 1, 2033, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report on the following:

(A) The effect of the implementation of, and the provision and management of care under, section 103, (including the amendments made by such section) on the demand by veterans described in subparagraphs (G), (H), and (I) of section 1710(e)(1) of title 38, United States Code (as added by such section 103) for health care services furnished by the Secretary.

(B) Any differing patterns of demand for health care services by such veterans, disaggregated by factors such as the relative distance of the veteran from medical facilities of the Department and whether the veteran had previously received hospital care or medical services furnished by the Secretary under chapter 17 of such title.

(C) The extent to which the Secretary has met such demand.

(D) Any changes, during the year covered by the report, in the delivery patterns of health care furnished by the Secretary under chapter 17 of such title, and the fiscal impact of such changes.

(2) MATTERS.—Each report under paragraph (1) shall include, with respect to the year covered by the report, detailed information on the following:

(A) The total number of veterans enrolled in the patient enrollment system who, during such year, received hospital care or medical services furnished by the Secretary under chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code.

(B) Of the veterans specified in subparagraph (A), the number of such veterans who, during the preceding three fiscal years, had not received such care or services.

(C) With respect to the veterans specified in subparagraph (B), the cost of providing health care to such veterans during the year covered by the report, shown in total and disaggregated by—

(i) the level of care; and

(ii) whether the care was provided through the Veterans Community Care Program.

(D) With respect to the number of veterans described in subparagraphs (G), (H), and (I) of section 1710(e)(1) of title 38, United States Code (as added by section 103), the following (shown in total and disaggregated by medical facility of the Department, as applicable):

(i) The number of such veterans who, during the year covered by the report, enrolled in the patient enrollment system.

(ii) The number of such veterans who applied for, but were denied, such enrollment.

(iii) The number of such veterans who were denied hospital care or a medical service furnished by the Secretary that was considered to be medically necessary but not of an emergency nature.

(E) The numbers and characteristics of, and the type and extent of health care furnished by the Secretary to, veterans enrolled in the patient enrollment system (shown in total and disaggregated by medical facility of the Department).

(F) The numbers and characteristics of, and the type and extent of health care furnished by the Secretary to, veterans not enrolled in the patient enrollment system (disaggregated by each class of eligibility for care under section 1710 of title 38, United States Code, and further shown as a total per class and disaggregated by medical facility of the Department).

(G) The specific fiscal impact (shown in total and disaggregated by geographic health care delivery areas) of changes in the delivery patterns of health care furnished by the Secretary under chapter 17 of such title as a result of the implementation of section 103 (including the amendments made by such section).

(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) The term ''patient enrollment system'' means the patient enrollment system of the Department of Veterans Affairs established and operated under section 1705 of title 38, United States Code.

(2) The term ''Veterans Community Care Program'' means the program established under section 1703 of title 38, United States Code.

Subtitle B—Certain Veterans of Combat Service

SEC. 111. EXPANSION OF PERIOD OF ELIGIBILITY FOR HEALTH CARE FOR CERTAIN VETERANS OF COMBAT SERVICE.

(a) EXPANDED PERIOD.—Section 1710(e)(3) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A)—

(A) by striking ''January 27, 2003'' and inserting ''September 11, 2001''; and

(B) by striking ''five-year period'' and inserting ''10-year period'';

(2) by amending subparagraph (B) to read as follows:

''(B) With respect to a veteran described in paragraph (1)(D) who was discharged or released from the active military, naval, air, or space service after September 11, 2001, and before October 1, 2013, but did not enroll to receive such hospital care, medical services, or nursing home care under such paragraph pursuant to subparagraph (A) before October 1, 2022, the one-year period beginning on October 1, 2022.''; and

(3) by striking subparagraph (C).

(b) CLARIFICATION OF COVERAGE.—Section 1710(e)(1)(D) is amended by inserting after ''Persian Gulf War'' the following: ''(including any veteran who, in connection with service during such period, received the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Service Specific Expeditionary Medal, Combat Era Specific Expeditionary Medal, Campaign Specific Medal, or any other combat theater award established by a Federal statute or an Executive order)''.

(c) OUTREACH PLAN.—Not later than December 1, 2022, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a plan to conduct outreach to veterans described in subparagraph (B) of section 1710(e)(3) of title 38, United States Code, as amended by subsection (a)(2), to notify such veterans of their eligibility for hospital care, medical services, or nursing home care pursuant to such subparagraph.

(d) REPORT ON ENROLLMENTS.—Not later than January 30, 2024, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report identifying, with respect to the one-year period beginning on October 1, 2022, the number of veterans described in section 1710(e)(3)(B) of title 38, United States Code, as amended by subsection (a)(2), who, during such period, enrolled in the patient enrollment system of the Department of Veterans Affairs established and operated under section 1705 of such title.

(e) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This section and the amendments made by this section shall take effect on October 1, 2022.

TITLE II—TOXIC EXPOSURE PRESUMPTION PROCESS

SEC. 201. SHORT TITLE.

This subtitle may be cited as the ''Fairly Assessing Service-related Toxic Exposure Residuals Presumptions Act'' or the ''FASTER Presumptions Act''.

SEC. 202. IMPROVEMENTS TO ABILITY OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO ESTABLISH PRESUMPTIONS OF SERVICE CONNECTION BASED ON TOXIC EXPOSURE.

(a) ADVISORY COMMITTEES, PANELS, AND BOARDS.—Chapter 11 is amended by adding at the end the following new subchapter:

''SUBCHAPTER VII—DETERMINATIONS RELATING TO PRESUMPTIONS OF SERVICE CONNECTION BASED ON TOXIC EXPOSURE

''§ 1171. Procedures to determine presumptions of service connection based on toxic exposure; definitions

''(a) PROCEDURES.—The Secretary shall determine whether to establish, or to remove, presumptions of service connection based on toxic exposure pursuant to this subchapter, whereby—

''(1) the Formal Advisory Committee on Toxic Exposure under section 1172 of this title—

''(A) provides advice to the Secretary on toxic-exposed veterans and cases in which veterans who, during active military, naval, air, or space service, may have experienced a toxic exposure or their dependents may have experienced a toxic exposure while the veterans were serving in the active military, naval, air, or space service;

''(B) provides to the Secretary recommendations on corrections needed in the Individual Longitudinal Exposure Record, or successor system, to better reflect veterans and dependents described in subparagraph (A); and

''(C) provides to the Secretary recommendations regarding which cases of possible toxic exposure should be reviewed; and

''(2) the Secretary provides for formal evaluations of such recommendations under section 1173 of this title; and

''(3) the Secretary issues regulations under section 1174 of this title.

''(b) ILLNESS DEFINED.—In this subchapter, the term 'illness' includes a disease or other condition affecting the health of an individual.

''§ 1172. Formal Advisory Committee on Toxic Exposure

''(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—(1) There is in the Veterans Health Administration of the Department the Formal Advisory Committee on Toxic Exposure (in this section referred to as the 'Committee').

''(2)(A) The Committee shall be composed of nine members appointed as follows:

''(i) Five members shall be appointed by the Secretary.

''(ii) One member shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

''(iii) One member shall be appointed by the minority leader of the House of Representatives.

''(iv) One member shall be appointed by the majority leader of the Senate.

''(v) One member shall be appointed by the minority leader of the Senate.

''(B) The members appointed under subparagraph (A) shall meet the following criteria:

''(i) Not more than three members shall be appointed from among individuals who are officials or employees of the Veterans Benefits Administration or the Veterans Health Administration.

''(ii) At least one member shall be appointed from among individuals who are officials or employees of other departments or agencies of the Federal Government, including the Department of Defense and the Agency of Toxic Substances and Disease Registry of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

''(iii) At least two members shall represent an organization recognized by the Secretary for the representation of veterans under section 5902 of this title.

''(iv) At least one member shall be appointed from among individuals in the private sector, State or local government, or academia, who are experts in toxicology and epidemiology.

''(3) The Secretary shall determine the pay and allowances of the members of the Committee, including with respect to any additional pay and allowances for members who are officials or employees of the Federal Government.

''(4)(A) Except as provided by subparagraph (B), each member of the Committee shall be appointed for a two-year term, and may serve not more than three successive terms.

''(B) With respect to the five members who are initially appointed by the Secretary under subparagraph (A)(i), the Secretary shall determine the length of the term of each such member in a manner that ensures the expiration of the terms on a staggered basis.''.

''(5) A vacancy in the Committee shall be filled in the manner in which the original appointment was made.

''(b) CONSULTATION.—The Secretary may consult with, and seek the advice of, the Committee with respect to cases in which veterans who, during active military, naval, air, or space service, are suspected of having experienced a toxic exposure or dependents of veterans who may have experienced a toxic exposure during such service.

''(c) ASSESSMENTS.—(1) The Committee shall assess cases of the toxic exposure of veterans and their dependents that occurred during active military, naval, air, or space service, including by conducting ongoing surveillance and reviewing such exposure described in scientific literature, media reports, information from veterans, and information from Congress.

''(2) The assessments under paragraph (1) shall cover suspected and known toxic exposures occurring during active military, naval, air, or space service, including by identifying and evaluating new and emerging toxic exposures that are not recognized under existing presumptions of service connection.

''(3) The Committee may conduct an assessment under paragraph (1) in response to comments by a person described in subsection (e)(2), by a majority vote of the members of the Committee.

''(4) The Committee shall on a periodic basis assess the Individual Longitudinal Exposure Record, or successor system, to ensure the accuracy of data collected.

''(d) RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS.—(1) Following an assessment of a case of the toxic exposure of veterans or their dependents that occurred during active military, naval, air, or space service under subsection (c), the Committee may develop a recommendation for formal evaluation under section 1173 of this title to conduct a review of the health effects related to the case of exposure if the Committee determines that the research may change the current understanding of the relationship between an exposure to an environmental hazard and adverse health outcomes in humans.

''(2) Upon receipt of evidence suggesting that previous findings regarding the periods and locations of exposure covered by an existing presumption of service connection are no longer supported, the Committee may nominate such evidence for formal evaluation under section 1173 of this title to modify the periods and locations.

''(e) INPUT.—(1) Not less than quarterly, the Committee shall provide an opportunity for persons described in paragraph (2) to present written or oral comments to the Committee.

''(2) The persons described in this paragraph are persons who may be affected by the actions of the Committee, including—

''(A) veterans, the families of veterans, veterans service organizations and representatives, researchers, and other members of the general public; and

''(B) departments and agencies of the Federal Government.

''(f) REPORTS BY THE COMMITTEE.—Not less frequently than once each year, the Committee shall submit to the Secretary and the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives, and make publicly available, a report on—

''(1) recommendations for research under subsection (d), if any; and

''(2) recommendations for such legislative or administrative action as the Committee considers necessary for the Committee to be more effective in carrying out the requirements of this section.

''(g) RESPONSES BY SECRETARY.—In response to each report submitted under subsection (f), the Secretary shall submit to the Secretary and the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives, and make publicly available, a report on—

''(1) the findings and opinions of the Secretary with respect to the report most recently submitted under subsection (f); and

''(2) whether the Secretary will conduct research recommended under subsection (f) included in the report, and if not, an explanation of why, including citations and sources.

''(h) NONAPPLICATION OF SUNSET REQUIREMENTS.—Section 14 of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.) shall not apply to the Committee.

''§ 1173. Formal evaluation of recommendations

''(a) FORMAL EVALUATION.—The Secretary shall establish a process to conduct a formal evaluation with respect to each recommendation made by the Formal Advisory Committee on Toxic Exposure under section 1172 of this title—

''(1) to conduct research regarding the health effects related to a case of toxic exposure; or

''(2) to evaluate evidence regarding the periods and locations of exposure covered by an existing presumption of service connection.

''(b) EVIDENCE, DATA, AND FACTORS.—The Secretary shall ensure that each formal evaluation under paragraph (1) covers the following:

''(1) Scientific evidence, based on the review of available scientific literature, including human, toxicological, animal, and methodological studies, and other factors.

''(2) Claims data, based on the review of claim rate, grant rate, and service connection prevalence, and other factors.

''(3) Other factors the Secretary determines appropriate, such as—

''(A) the level of disability and mortality caused by the health effects related to the case of toxic exposure being evaluated;

''(B) the level of assistance required to remain in the community because of such health effects;

''(C) the quantity and quality of the information available and reviewed;

''(D) the feasibility of and period for generating relevant information and evidence;

''(E) whether such health effects are combat- or deployment-related; and

''(F) the ubiquity or rarity of the health effects.

''(c) CONDUCT OF EVALUATIONS.—(1) The Secretary shall ensure that each formal evaluation under subsection (a)—

''(A) reviews scientific evidence in a manner that—

''(i) conforms to principles of scientific and data integrity;

''(ii) is free from suppression or distortion of scientific or technological findings, data, information, conclusions, or technical results; and

''(B)(i) evaluates the likelihood that a positive association exists between an illness and a toxic exposure while serving in the active military, naval, air, or space service; and

''(ii) assesses the toxic exposures and illnesses and determines whether the evidence supports a finding of a positive association between the toxic exposure and the illness.

''(2) In carrying out paragraph (1)(B)(ii), a formal evaluation under subsection (a) shall include reviewing all relevant data to determine the strength of evidence for a positive association based on the following four categories:

''(A) The 'sufficient' category, where the evidence is sufficient to conclude that a positive association exists.

''(B) The 'equipoise and above' category, where the evidence is sufficient to conclude that a positive association is at least as likely as not, but not sufficient to conclude that a positive association exists.

''(C) The 'below equipoise' category, where the evidence is not sufficient to conclude that a positive association is at least as likely as not, or is not sufficient to make a scientifically informed judgment.

''(D) The 'against' category, where the evidence suggests the lack of a positive association.

''(d) RECOMMENDATION FOR RULEMAKING.—Not later than 120 days after the date on which a formal evaluation is commenced, the element of the Department that conducts the evaluation shall submit to the Secretary a recommendation with respect to establishing a presumption of service connection for the toxic exposure and illness, or modifying an existing presumption of service connection, covered by the evaluation.

''§ 1174. Regulations regarding presumptions of service connection based on toxic exposure

''(a) ACTION UPON RECOMMENDATION.—Not later than 160 days after the date on which the Secretary receives a recommendation to establish or modify a presumption of service connection under section 1173 of this title—

''(1) if the Secretary determines that the presumption, or modification, is warranted, the Secretary shall commence issuing regulations in accordance with the provisions of subchapter II of chapter 5 of title 5 (commonly referred to as the Administrative Procedures Act) setting forth the presumption or commence revising regulations to carry out such modification; or

''(2) if the Secretary determines that the presumption, or modification, is not warranted, the Secretary shall publish in the Federal Register a notice of the determination, including the reasons supporting the determination.

''(b) REMOVAL OF PRESUMPTION.—(1) The Secretary may issue regulations to remove an illness from a presumption of service connection previously established pursuant to a regulation issued under subsection (a).

''(2) Whenever an illness is removed from regulations pursuant to paragraph (1), or the periods and locations of exposure covered by a presumption of service connection are modified under subsection (a)—

''(A) a veteran who was awarded compensation for such illness on the basis of the presumption provided under such regulations before the effective date of the removal or modification shall continue to be entitled to receive compensation on that basis; and

''(B) a survivor of a veteran who was awarded dependency and indemnity compensation for the death of a veteran resulting from such illness on the basis of such presumption shall continue to be entitled to receive dependency and indemnity compensation on such basis.

''§ 1175. Authority to modify process; congressional oversight

''(a) AUTHORITY.—(1) The Secretary may modify the process under which the Secretary conducts formal evaluations under section 1173 of this title and issues regulations under section 1174 if—

''(A) such evaluations cover the evidence, data, and factors required by subsection (b) of such section 1173; and

''(B) a period of 180 days has elapsed following the date on which the Secretary submits the notice under paragraph (2) regarding the modification.

''(2) If the Secretary proposes to modify the process under which the Secretary conducts formal evaluations under section 1173 of this title or issues regulations under section 1174, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a notice of the proposed modifications containing the following:

''(A) A description of the proposed modifications.

''(B) A description of any exceptions to the requirements of such sections that are proposed because of limited available scientific evidence, and a description of how such evaluations will be conducted.

''(b) REPORTS AND BRIEFINGS.—(1)(A) Not later than two years after the date of the enactment of the Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act of 2021, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report on the implementation of, and recommendations for, this subchapter.

''(B) The Secretary shall develop the report under subparagraph (A) in consultation with organizations recognized by the Secretary for the representation of veterans under section 5902 of this title and any other entity the Secretary determines appropriate.

''(2) On a quarterly basis during the two-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of the Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act of 2021, the Secretary shall provide to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a briefing on the implementation of this subchapter.

''(c) INDEPENDENT REVIEW.—The Secretary shall seek to enter into an agreement with a nongovernmental entity or a federally funded research and development center to conduct a review of the implementation of this subchapter. Not later than 540 days after the date of the enactment of the Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act of 2021, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report containing such review.''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Chapter 11 is amended—

(1) in section 1116—

(A) by striking subsections (b), (c), (d), and (e);

(B) by inserting after subsection (a) the following new subsection (b):

''(b) The Secretary shall ensure that any determination made on or after the date of the enactment of the Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act of 2021 regarding a presumption of service connection based on exposure to an herbicide agent under this section is made pursuant to subchapter VII of this chapter, including with respect to assessing reports received by the Secretary from the National Academy of Sciences under section 3 of the Agent Orange Act of 1991 (Public Law 102–4).''; and

(C) by redesignating subsection (f) as subsection (c);

(2) in section 1116B(b)(2)(A), by inserting ''pursuant to subchapter VII of this chapter,'' before ''the Secretary determines''; and

(3) in section 1118—

(A) by striking subsections (b) through (e); and

(B) by inserting after subsection (a) the following new subsection (b):

''(b) The Secretary shall ensure that any determination made on or after the date of the enactment of the Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act of 2021 regarding a presumption of service connection based on a toxic exposure under this section is made pursuant to subchapter VII of this chapter.''.

(c) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in section 1172(a)(2)(A) of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), shall be construed so as to require the advice and consent of the Senate in the appointment of members of the Formal Advisory Committee on Toxic Exposure.

SEC. 203. REEVALUATION OF CLAIMS FOR COMPENSATION INVOLVING PRESUMPTIONS OF SERVICE CONNECTION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter VI of chapter 11 is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''§ 1167. Reevaluation of compensation determinations pursuant to changes in presumptions of service connection

''(a) REEVALUATION.—Whenever a law, including through a regulation or Federal court decision, establishes or modifies a presumption of service connection, the Secretary shall—

''(1) identify all claims for compensation under this chapter that—

''(A) were submitted to the Secretary;

''(B) were evaluated and denied by the Secretary before the date on which such provision of law went into effect; and

''(C) might have been evaluated differently had the establishment or modification been applicable to the claim;

''(2) allow for the reevaluation of such claims at the election of the veteran; and

''(3) notwithstanding section 5110 of this title, with respect to claims approved pursuant to such reevaluation, provide compensation under this chapter effective as if the establishment or modification of the presumption of service connection had been in effect on the date of the submission of the original claim described in paragraph (1).

''(b) OUTREACH.—The Secretary shall conduct outreach to inform relevant veterans that they may elect to have a claim be reevaluated in light of the establishment or modification of a presumption of service connection described in subsection (a). Such outreach shall include the following:

''(1) The Secretary shall publish on the internet website of the Department a notice that such veterans may elect to have a claim so reevaluated.

''(2) The Secretary shall notify, in writing or by electronic means, veterans service organizations of the ability of such veterans to elect to have a claim so reevaluated.''.

(b) APPLICATION.—Section 1167 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), shall apply with respect to presumptions of service connection established or modified on or after the date of the enactment of this Act, including pursuant to amendments made by this Act.

TITLE III—IMPROVING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SERVICE CONNECTION PROCESS FOR TOXIC-EXPOSED VETERANS

SEC. 301. SHORT TITLE.

This title may be cited as the ''Veterans Burn Pits Exposure Recognition Act''.

SEC. 302. PRESUMPTIONS OF TOXIC EXPOSURE.

Subchapter II of chapter 11 is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''§ 1119. Presumptions of toxic exposure

''(a) CONSIDERATION OF RECORDS.—If a veteran submits to the Secretary a claim for compensation for a service-connected disability under section 1110 of this title with evidence of a disability and a toxic exposure that occurred during active military, naval, air, or space service, the Secretary may, in adjudicating such claim, consider—

''(1) any record of the veteran in an exposure tracking record system; and

''(2) if no record of the veteran in an exposure tracking record system indicates that the veteran was subject to a toxic exposure during active military, naval, air, or space service, the totality of the circumstances of the service of the veteran.

''(b) PRESUMPTION OF SPECIFIC TOXIC EXPOSURE FOR MEMBERS WHO SERVED IN CERTAIN LOCATIONS.—(1) The Secretary shall, for purposes of section 1110 and chapter 17 of this title, presume that any covered veteran was exposed to the substances, chemicals, and airborne hazards identified in the list under paragraph (2) during the service of the covered veteran specified in subsection (c)(1), unless there is affirmative evidence to establish that the covered veteran was not exposed to any such substances, chemicals, or hazards in connection with such service.

''(2) The Secretary shall establish and maintain a list that contains an identification of one or more such substances, chemicals, and airborne hazards as the Secretary, in collaboration with the Secretary of Defense, may determine appropriate for purposes of this section.

''(3) Beginning not later than two years after the date of the enactment of the Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act of 2021, and not less frequently than once every two years thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report identifying any additions or removals to the list under paragraph (2) during the period covered by the report.

''(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

''(1) The term 'covered veteran' means any veteran who—

''(A) on or after August 2, 1990, performed active military, naval, air, or space service while assigned to a duty station in—

''(i) Bahrain;

''(ii) Iraq;

''(iii) Kuwait;

''(iv) Oman;

''(v) Qatar;

''(vi) Saudi Arabia;

''(vii) Somalia; or

''(viii) United Arab Emirates; or

''(B) on or after September 11, 2001, performed active military, naval, air, or space service while assigned to a duty station in—

''(i) Afghanistan;

''(ii) Djibouti;

''(iii) Egypt;

''(iv) Jordan;

''(v) Lebanon;

''(vi) Syria;

''(vii) Yemen;

''(viii) Uzbekistan;

''(ix) the Philippines; or

''(x) any other country determined relevant by the Secretary.

''(2) The term 'exposure tracking record system'—

''(A) means any system, program, or pilot program used by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs or the Secretary of Defense to track how veterans or members of the Armed Forces have been exposed to various occupational or environmental hazards; and

''(B) includes the Individual Longitudinal Exposure Record, or successor system.

''(3) The term 'toxic exposure risk activity' has the meaning given such term in section 1710(e)(4) of this title.''.

SEC. 303. MEDICAL NEXUS EXAMINATIONS FOR TOXIC EXPOSURE RISK ACTIVITIES.

Subchapter VI of chapter 11, as amended by section 203, is further amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''§ 1168. Medical nexus examinations for toxic exposure risk activities

''(a) MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS AND MEDICAL OPINIONS.—(1) Except as provided in subsection (b), if a veteran submits to the Secretary a claim for compensation for a service-connected disability under section 1110 of this title with evidence of a disability and evidence of participation in a toxic exposure risk activity during active military, naval, air, or space service, and such evidence is not sufficient to establish a service connection for the disability, the Secretary shall—

''(A) provide the veteran with a medical examination under section 5103A(d) of this title; and

''(B) obtain a medical opinion (to be requested by the Secretary in connection with the medical examination under subparagraph (A)) as to whether it is at least as likely as not that there is a nexus between the disability and the toxic exposure risk activity.

''(2) When providing the Secretary with a medical opinion under paragraph (1)(B) for a veteran, the health care provider shall consider—

''(A) the total potential exposure through all applicable military deployments of the veteran; and

''(B) the synergistic, combined effect of all toxic exposure risk activities of the veteran.

''(3) The requirement under paragraph (2)(B) shall not be construed as requiring a health care provider to consider the synergistic, combined effect of each of the substances, chemicals, and airborne hazards identified in the list under section 1119(b)(2) of this title.

''(b) EXCEPTION.—Subsection (a) shall not apply if the Secretary determines there is no indication of an association between the disability claimed by the veteran and the toxic exposure risk activity for which the veteran submitted evidence.

''(c) TOXIC EXPOSURE RISK ACTIVITY DEFINED.—In this section, the term 'toxic exposure risk activity' has the meaning given that term in section 1710(e)(4) of this title.''.

TITLE IV—PRESUMPTIONS OF SERVICE CONNECTION

SEC. 401. TREATMENT OF VETERANS WHO PARTICIPATED IN CLEANUP OF ENEWETAK ATOLL AS RADIATION-EXPOSED VETERANS FOR PURPOSES OF PRESUMPTION OF SERVICE CONNECTION OF CERTAIN DISABILITIES BY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This section may be cited as the ''Mark Takai Atomic Veterans Healthcare Parity Act''.

(b) ENEWETAK ATOLL.—Section 1112(c)(3)(B) is amended by adding at the end the following new clause:

''(v) Cleanup of Enewetak Atoll during the period beginning on January 1, 1977, and ending on December 31, 1980.''.

SEC. 402. TREATMENT OF VETERANS WHO PARTICIPATED IN NUCLEAR RESPONSE NEAR PALOMARES, SPAIN, OR THULE, GREENLAND, AS RADIATION-EXPOSED VETERANS FOR PURPOSES OF PRESUMPTION OF SERVICE CONNECTION OF CERTAIN DISABILITIES BY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This section may be cited as the ''Palomares or Thule Veterans Act''.

(b) PALOMARES OR THULE.—Section 1112(c)(3)(B), as amended by section 401, is further amended by adding at the end the following new clauses:

''(vi) Onsite participation in the response effort following the collision of a United States Air Force B–52 bomber and refueling plane that caused the release of four thermonuclear weapons in the vicinity of Palomares, Spain, during the period beginning January 17, 1966, and ending March 31, 1967.''.

''(vii) Onsite participation in the response effort following the on-board fire and crash of a United States Air Force B–52 bomber that caused the release of four thermonuclear weapons in the vicinity of Thule Air Force Base, Greenland, during the period beginning January 21, 1968, and ending September 25, 1968.''.

SEC. 403. PRESUMPTIONS OF SERVICE CONNECTION FOR DISEASES ASSOCIATED WITH EXPOSURES TO CERTAIN HERBICIDE AGENTS FOR VETERANS WHO SERVED IN CERTAIN LOCATIONS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This section may be cited as the ''Veterans Agent Orange Exposure Equity Act''.

(b) IN GENERAL.—Section 1116, as amended by section 202, is further amended—

(1) by striking '', during active military, naval, air, or space service, served in the Republic of Vietnam during the period beginning on January 9, 1962, and ending on May 7, 1975'' each place it appears and inserting ''performed covered service'';

(2) by striking ''performed active military, naval, air, or space service in the Republic of Vietnam during the period beginning on January 9, 1962, and ending on May 7, 1975'' each place it appears and inserting ''performed covered service''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(d) In this section, the term 'covered service' means active military, naval, air, or space service—

''(1) performed in the Republic of Vietnam during the period beginning on January 9, 1962, and ending on May 7, 1975;

''(2) performed in Thailand at any United States or Royal Thai base during the period beginning on January 9, 1962, and ending on June 30, 1976, without regard to where on the base the veteran was located or what military job specialty the veteran performed;

''(3) performed in Laos during the period beginning on December 1, 1965, and ending on September 30, 1969;

''(4) performed in Cambodia at Mimot or Krek, Kampong Cham Province during the period beginning on April 16, 1969, and ending on April 30, 1969; or

''(5) performed on Guam or American Samoa, or in the territorial waters thereof, during the period beginning on January 9, 1962, and ending on July 31, 1980, or served on Johnston Atoll or on a ship that called at Johnston Atoll during the period beginning on January 1, 1972, and ending on September 30, 1977.''.

(c) ELIGIBILITY FOR HOSPITAL CARE AND MEDICAL SERVICES.—Section 1710(e)(4), as amended by section 102(c), is further amended by striking subparagraph (A) and inserting the following new subparagraph:

''(A) The term 'Vietnam-era herbicide-exposed veteran' means a veteran who—

''(i) performed covered service, as defined in section 1116(d) of this title; or

''(ii) the Secretary finds may have been exposed during such service to dioxin or was exposed during such service to a toxic substance found in a herbicide or defoliant used for military purposes during such period.''.

(d) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The heading for section 1116 is amended by striking ''**the Republic of Vietnam**'' and inserting ''**certain locations**''.

SEC. 404. ADDITION OF ADDITIONAL DISEASES ASSOCIATED WITH EXPOSURE TO CERTAIN HERBICIDE AGENTS FOR WHICH THERE IS A PRESUMPTION OF SERVICE CONNECTION FOR VETERANS WHO SERVED IN CERTAIN LOCATIONS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This section may be cited as the ''Fair Care for Vietnam Veterans Act''.

(b) ADDITIONAL DISEASES.—Section 1116(a)(2), as amended by section 9109 of the William M. (Mac) Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021 (Public Law 116–283), is further amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraphs:

''(L) Hypertension.

''(M) Monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance.''.

SEC. 405. IMPROVING COMPENSATION FOR DISABILITIES OCCURRING IN PERSIAN GULF WAR VETERANS.

(a) REDUCTION IN THRESHOLD OF ELIGIBILITY.—Subsection (a)(1) of section 1117 is amended by striking ''became manifest—'' and all that follows through the period at the end and inserting ''became manifest to any degree at any time.''.

(b) PERMANENT EXTENSION OF PERIOD OF ELIGIBILITY.—Such section is further amended—

(1) by striking subsection (b);

(2) by redesignating subsections (c) and (d) as subsections (b) and (c), respectively; and

(3) in subsection (a)(2)(C), by striking ''under subsection (d)'' and inserting ''under subsection (c)''.

(c) ESTABLISHING SINGULAR DISABILITY-BASED QUESTIONNAIRE.—Such section is further amended by inserting after subsection (c) (as redesignated by subsection (b)) the following new subsection (d):

''(d) If a Persian Gulf veteran at a medical facility of the Department presents with any one symptom associated with Gulf War Illness, the Secretary shall ensure that health care personnel of the Department use a disability benefits questionnaire, or successor questionnaire, designed to identify Gulf War Illness, in addition to any other diagnostic actions the personnel determine appropriate.''.

(d) EXPANSION OF DEFINITION OF PERSIAN GULF VETERAN.—Subsection (f) of such section is amended by inserting '', Afghanistan, Israel, Egypt, Turkey, Syria, or Jordan,'' after ''operations''.

(e) TRAINING.—Such section is further amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(i)(1) The Secretary shall take such actions as may be necessary to ensure that health care personnel of the Department are appropriately trained to effectively carry out this section.

''(2) Not less frequently than once each year, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the actions taken by the Secretary to carry out paragraph (1).''.

SEC. 406. PRESUMPTION OF SERVICE CONNECTION FOR CERTAIN DISEASES ASSOCIATED WITH EXPOSURE TO BURN PITS AND OTHER TOXINS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This section may be cited as the ''Presumptive Benefits for War Fighters Exposed to Burn Pits and Other Toxins Act''.

(b) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter II of chapter 11, as amended by section 302, is further amended by inserting after section 1119 the following new section:

''§ 1120. Presumption of service connection for certain diseases associated with exposure to burn pits and other toxins

''(a) PRESUMPTION OF SERVICE CONNECTION.—For the purposes of section 1110 of this title, and subject to section 1113 of this title, a disease specified in subsection (b) becoming manifest in a covered veteran shall be considered to have been incurred in or aggravated during active military, naval, air, or space service, notwithstanding that there is no record of evidence of such disease during the period of such service.

''(b) DISEASES SPECIFIED.—The diseases specified in this subsection are the following:

''(1) Asthma that was diagnosed after service of the covered veteran as specified in subsection (c).

''(2) The following types of cancer:

''(A) Head cancer of any type.

''(B) Neck cancer of any type.

''(C) Respiratory cancer of any type.

''(D) Gastrointestinal cancer of any type.

''(E) Reproductive cancer of any type.

''(F) Lymphoma cancer of any type.

''(G) Lymphomatic cancer of any type.

''(H) Kidney cancer.

''(I) Brain cancer.

''(J) Melanoma.

''(K) Pancreatic cancer.

''(3) Chronic bronchitis.

''(4) Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

''(5) Constrictive bronchiolitis or obliterative bronchiolitis.

''(6) Emphysema.

''(7) Granulomatous disease.

''(8) Interstitial lung disease.

''(9) Pleuritis.

''(10) Pulmonary fibrosis.

''(11) Sarcoidosis.

''(12) Chronic sinusitis.

''(13) Chronic rhinitis.

''(14) Glioblastoma.

''(15) Any other disease for which the Secretary determines, pursuant to regulations prescribed under subchapter VII that a presumption of service connection is warranted based on a positive association with a substance, chemical, or airborne hazard identified in the list under section 1119(b)(2) of this title.

''(c) COVERED VETERAN DEFINED.—In this section, the term 'covered veteran' has the meaning given that term in section 1119(c) of this title.''.

(c) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 1113 is amended by striking ''or 1118'' each place it appears and inserting ''1118, or 1120''.

TITLE V—RESEARCH MATTERS

SEC. 501. COORDINATION BY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS OF TOXIC EXPOSURE RESEARCH.

Subchapter II of chapter 73 is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''§ 7330D. Coordination of toxic exposure research

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall coordinate all research activities carried out or funded by the executive branch of the Federal Government on the health consequences of toxic exposures experienced during service in the Armed Forces.

''(b) STRATEGIC PLAN.—In carrying out subsection (a), the Secretary shall establish a strategic plan, to be known as the Toxic Exposure Research Strategic Plan, to ensure that the research activities specified in such subsection are collaborative, transparent, and highly coordinated.

''(c) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of the Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act of 2021, and annually thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report on any research activities specified in subsection (a) carried out during the year covered by the report.''.

SEC. 502. DATA COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND REPORT ON TREATMENT OF VETERANS FOR ILLNESSES RELATED TO TOXIC EXPOSURE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall compile and analyze, on a continuous basis, all clinical data that—

(1) is obtained by the Secretary in connection with hospital care, medical services, or nursing home care furnished to a veteran for an illness under section 1710(a)(2)(F) of title 38, United States Code, as amended by section 102; and

(2) is likely to be scientifically useful, as determined by the Secretary, in determining whether a positive association exists between the illness of the veteran and a toxic exposure.

(b) CONSENT OF PATIENTS.—The Secretary shall ensure that the compilation and analysis of the clinical data of a veteran under subsection (a) shall be conducted, and such data shall be used, in a manner that is consistent with the informed consent of the veteran and in compliance with all applicable Federal law.

(c) ANNUAL REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report containing—

(1) any data compiled under subsection (a);

(2) an analysis of any such data;

(3) a description of the types and incidences of illnesses identified by the Secretary pursuant to such subsection;

(4) an explanation by the Secretary for the incidence of such illnesses and such alternate explanations for the incidence of such illnesses as the Secretary may consider reasonable; and

(5) a description of the views of the Secretary regarding the scientific validity of drawing conclusions from the incidence of such illnesses, as evidenced by the data compiled under subsection (a), regarding the existence of a positive association between such illness and a toxic exposure.

(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) The term ''toxic exposure'' has the meaning given that term in section 101 of title 38, United States Code.

(2) The term ''illness'' has the meaning given that term in section 1171 of such title, as added by section 202.

SEC. 503. STUDIES RELATED TO VETERANS WHO SERVED IN SOUTHWEST ASIA AND CERTAIN OTHER LOCATIONS.

(a) ANALYSIS ON MORTALITY IN COVERED VETERANS.—

(1) ANALYSIS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall conduct an updated analysis of total and respiratory disease mortality in covered veterans.

(2) ELEMENTS.—The analysis under paragraph (1) shall include, to the extent practicable, the following:

(A) Metrics of airborne exposures.

(B) The location and timing of any deployments of the veteran.

(C) The military occupational specialty of the veteran.

(D) The Armed Force in which the veteran served.

(E) The preexisting health status of the veteran, including with respect to asthma.

(F) Such personal information of the veteran as the Secretary may consider relevant, including cigarette and e-cigarette smoking history, diet, sex, gender, age, race, and ethnicity.

(b) EPIDEMIOLOGICAL STUDY.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall conduct an epidemiological study of covered veterans that involves—

(1) the use of improved spatio-temporal estimates of ambient air pollution exposures that leverage advances in retrospective exposure assessment; and

(2) the collection of detailed information on the covered veterans studied through medical records, administrative data, and other existing sources, including, with respect to the covered veterans—

(A) personal information, including cigarette and e-cigarette smoking history, diet, sex, gender, age, race, and ethnicity;

(B) deployment history, including locations, periods, and number of deployments;

(C) biospecimen data; and

(D) supplementary health status and outcomes data, including imaging and physiological parameters.

(c) TOXICOLOGY STUDY.—

(1) STUDY.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall conduct a toxicology study, to include variability, to replicate toxic exposures of healthy, young members of the Armed Forces, as well as potentially susceptible members, with preexisting health conditions.

(2) ELEMENTS.—The study under paragraph (1) shall include—

(A) an analysis of results for mechanistic markers and clinically relevant outcomes; and

(B) a validation of any serum, tissue, or other biomarkers of toxic exposure, susceptibility, or effect with respect to the subjects of the study.

(d) COVERED VETERAN DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''covered veteran'' has the meaning given that term in section 1119(c) of title 38, United States Code, as added by section 302.

SEC. 504. STUDY ON HEALTH TRENDS OF POST 9/11 VETERANS.

(a) STUDY.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall conduct an epidemiological study on the health trends of veterans who served in the Armed Forces after September 11, 2001.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than two years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report on the study under subsection (a).

SEC. 505. STUDY ON CANCER RATES AMONG VETERANS.

(a) STUDY.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall conduct a study on the incidence of cancer in veterans to determine trends in the rates of the incidence of cancer in veterans.

(b) ELEMENTS.—The study under subsection (a) shall assess, with respect to each veteran included in the study, the following:

(1) The age of the veteran.

(2) The period of service and length of service of the veteran in the Armed Forces.

(3) Any military occupational speciality of the veteran.

(4) The gender of the veteran.

(5) Any type of cancer that the veteran has.

(c) REPORT.—Not later than two years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report on the study under subsection (a).

SEC. 506. STUDY ON FEASIBILITY AND ADVISABILITY OF FURNISHING HOSPITAL CARE AND MEDICAL SERVICES TO DEPENDENTS OF VETERANS WHO PARTICIPATED IN TOXIC EXPOSURE RISK ACTIVITIES.

(a) STUDY.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall conduct a study on the feasibility and advisability of furnishing hospital care and medical services to qualifying dependents of veterans described in section 1710(e)(1)(G) of title 38, United States Code, as added by section 103(a)(1), for any illness determined by the Secretary to be connected to a toxic exposure risk activity carried out by the veteran, as determined by the Secretary, notwithstanding that there is insufficient medical evidence to conclude that such illness is attributable to such activity.

(b) ELEMENTS.—The study under subsection (a) shall include—

(1) an assessment of the impact of furnishing hospital care and medical services to qualifying dependents as described in such subsection on the ability of the Department of Veterans Affairs to furnish hospital care and medical services to veterans;

(2) an assessment of the potential cost of furnishing hospital care and medical services to qualifying dependents as described in such subsection;

(3) an estimate of the resources required to furnish such care and services;

(4) an assessment of any stress or other effect furnishing such care and services would have on the claims and appeals system of the Department;

(5) an estimate of the number of qualifying dependents who would be eligible for such care and services; and

(6) an assessment of the feasibility of adjudicating claims for such care and services.

(c) PHASED-IN APPLICATION.—In conducting the study under subsection (a), the Secretary shall assess the feasibility and advisability of phasing in the furnishing of hospital care and medical services to qualifying dependents described in such subsection by the decade in which such toxic exposure risk activity occurred, starting with the most recent decade.

(d) REVIEW OF TOXIC EXPOSURE CASES REGARDING LIABILITY OF DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE.—In conducting the study under subsection (a), the Secretary shall—

(1) review known cases of toxic exposure on military installations of the Department of Defense located in the United States;

(2) analyze the liability of the Department of Defense in each such case; and

(3) assess whether the Secretary of Defense should provide care and services relating to such toxic exposures under the TRICARE program.

(e) REPORT.—Not later than two years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the study conducted under subsection (a).

(f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) The terms ''hospital care'' and ''medical services'' have the meanings given those terms in section 1701 of title 38, United States Code.

(2) The term ''illness'' has the meaning given that term in section 1171 of such title, as added by section 202.

(3) The term ''qualifying dependent'' means—

(A) a dependent of a veteran described in section 1710(e)(1)(G) of title 38, United States Code, as added by section 104(a)(1), who resided with the veteran during the period in which, and on the installation at which, the veteran participated in a toxic exposure risk activity;

(B) an individual who was in utero of such a veteran or other qualifying dependent when the veteran participated in a toxic exposure risk activity; or

(C) a dependent of such a veteran who is not described in subparagraph (A) or (B) but who may have an illness that is connected to the toxic exposure risk activity of the veteran, as determined by the Secretary.

(4) The term ''toxic exposure'' has the meaning given that term in section 101 of such title, as added by section 102(b).

(5) The term ''toxic exposure risk activity'' has the meaning given that term in section 1710(e)(4) of such title, as added by section 102(c).

(6) The term ''TRICARE program'' has the meaning given that term in section 1072 of such title.

TITLE VI—IMPROVEMENT OF RESOURCES AND TRAINING REGARDING TOXIC-EXPOSED VETERANS

SEC. 601. SHORT TITLE; DEFINITIONS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This title may be cited as the ''Toxic Exposure in the American Military Act'' or the ''TEAM Act''.

(b) DEFINITIONS.—In this title, the terms ''active military, naval, air, or space service'', ''toxic exposure'', and ''toxic-exposed veteran'' have the meanings given those terms in section 101 of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 602. PUBLICATION OF LIST OF RESOURCES OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS FOR TOXIC-EXPOSED VETERANS AND OUTREACH PROGRAM FOR SUCH VETERANS AND CAREGIVERS AND SURVIVORS OF SUCH VETERANS.

(a) PUBLICATION OF LIST OF RESOURCES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall publish a list of resources of the Department of Veterans Affairs for—

(A) toxic-exposed veterans, including with respect to—

(i) disability compensation under chapter 11 of title 38, United States Code; and

(ii) hospital care, medical services, and nursing home care under section 1710(a)(2)(F) of such title;

(B) caregivers of toxic-exposed veterans who are participating in the program of comprehensive assistance for family caregivers under section 1720G(a) of such title; and

(C) survivors of toxic-exposed veterans who are receiving death benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary.

(2) UPDATE.—The Secretary shall periodically update the list published under paragraph (1).

(b) OUTREACH.—The Secretary shall develop, with input from the community, an informative outreach program for veterans on illnesses that may be related to toxic exposure, including outreach with respect to benefits and support programs.

SEC. 603. INCORPORATION OF TOXIC EXPOSURE QUESTIONNAIRE DURING PRIMARY CARE APPOINTMENTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall incorporate a clinical questionnaire to help determine potential toxic exposures during active military, naval, air, or space service as part of the initial screening conducted for an appointment of a veteran with a primary care provider of the Department of Veterans Affairs to improve understanding by the Department of toxic exposures of veterans while serving in the Armed Forces.

(b) DETERMINATION OF QUESTIONS.—The questions included in the questionnaire required under subsection (a) shall be determined by the Secretary with input from medical professionals.

SEC. 604. TRAINING FOR PERSONNEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS WITH RESPECT TO TOXIC-EXPOSED VETERANS.

(a) HEALTH CARE PERSONNEL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall provide to health care personnel of the Department of Veterans Affairs education and training to identify, treat, and assess the impact on toxic-exposed veterans of illnesses related to toxic exposure and inform such personnel of how to ask for additional information from veterans regarding different toxic exposures.

(b) BENEFITS PERSONNEL.—

(1) STANDARD CLAIMS PROCESSOR TRAINING CURRICULUM.—

(A) CURRICULUM.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall ensure that a standard training curriculum exists for processors of claims under the laws administered by the Secretary who review claims for disability benefits relating to

service-connected disabilities based on toxic exposure, including employees who adjudicate such claims.

(B) MATTERS INCLUDED.—The Secretary shall ensure that the training under subparagraph (A) includes the following explanations with respect to claims relating to toxic exposure:

(i) A lack of a presumption of service connection is not by itself sufficient to determine that service connection does not exist.

(ii) The claims adjudicator shall always consider whether direct service connection is applicable and request, as needed, an advisory medical opinion pursuant to section 1168 of title 38, United States Code, as added by section 303.

(iii) The claims adjudicator may review and consider any record of the claimant in an exposure tracking record system pursuant to section 1119 of such title, as added by section 302, but a lack of such information is not by itself sufficient to determine that such exposure did not occur or sufficient to deny the claim.

(C) PROVISION OF TRAINING.—The Secretary shall—

(i) provide training under subparagraph (A) to each employee described in such subparagraph not less frequently than annually; and

(ii) using the Systematic Technical Accuracy Review program, or such successor program, conduct a nationwide, quarterly, randomized review of the quality of adjudication of claims relating to toxic exposure.

(2) STANDARD MEDICAL EXAMINER TRAINING CURRICULUM.—

(A) CURRICULUM.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall ensure that a standard medical training curriculum exists for medical providers who conduct examinations and provide opinions pursuant to section 1168 of title 38, United States Code, as added by section 303, regardless of whether the provider is an employee of the Department or a contractor.

(B) STANDARDIZED APPROACH.—The Secretary shall ensure that the curriculum established under subparagraph (A)—

(i) provides a standardized approach to conducting and providing examinations and opinions in accordance with such section 1168; and

(ii) instructs medical providers to consider, when conducting an examination or providing an opinion—

(I) relevant medical and scientific literature;

(II) the proximity, intensity, and frequency of exposure of the individual to the identified toxic exposure;

(III) medically unexplained chronic multisymptom illnesses; and

(IV) all competent and credible evidence of record.

TITLE VII—REGISTRIES, RECORDS, AND OTHER MATTERS

SEC. 701. REGISTRY OF INDIVIDUALS EXPOSED TO PER- AND POLYFLUOROALKYL SUBSTANCES ON MILITARY INSTALLATIONS.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT OF REGISTRY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall—

(A) establish and maintain a registry for eligible individuals who may have been exposed to per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (in this section referred to as ''PFAS'') due to the environmental release of aqueous film-forming foam (in this section referred to as ''AFFF'') on military installations to meet the requirements of military specification MIL–F–24385F;

(B) include any information in such registry that the Secretary determines necessary to ascertain and monitor the health effects of the exposure of members of the Armed Forces to PFAS associated with AFFF;

(C) develop a public information campaign to inform eligible individuals about the registry, including how to register and the benefits of registering; and

(D) periodically notify eligible individuals of significant developments in the study and treatment of conditions associated with exposure to PFAS.

(2) COORDINATION.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall coordinate with the Secretary of Defense in carrying out paragraph (1).

(b) REPORTS.—

(1) INITIAL REPORT.—Not later than two years after the date on which the registry under subsection (a) is established, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to Congress an initial report containing the following:

(A) An assessment of the effectiveness of actions taken by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of Defense to collect and maintain information on the health effects of exposure to PFAS.

(B) Recommendations to improve the collection and maintenance of such information.

(C) Using established and previously published epidemiological studies, recommendations regarding the most effective and prudent means of addressing the medical needs of eligible individuals with respect to exposure to PFAS.

(2) FOLLOWUP REPORT.—Not later than five years after submitting the initial report under paragraph (1), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to Congress a followup report containing the following:

(A) An update to the initial report submitted under paragraph (1).

(B) An assessment of whether and to what degree the content of the registry established under subsection (a) is current and scientifically up to date.

(3) INDEPENDENT SCIENTIFIC ORGANIZATION.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall enter into an agreement with an independent scientific organization to prepare the reports under paragraphs (1) and (2).

(c) RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADDITIONAL EXPOSURES TO BE INCLUDED.—Not later than five years after the date of the enactment of this Act, and every five years thereafter, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, shall submit to Congress recommendations for additional chemicals with respect to which individuals exposed to such chemicals should be included in the registry established under subsection (a).

(d) ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUAL DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''eligible individual'' means any individual who, on or after a date specified by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs through regulations, served or is serving in the Armed Forces at a military installation where AFFF was used or at another location of the Department of Defense where AFFF was used.

SEC. 702. FORT MCCLELLAN HEALTH REGISTRY.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish and maintain a special record to be known as the Fort McClellan Health Registry (in this section referred to as the ''Registry'').

(b) CONTENTS.—Except as provided in subsection (c), the Registry shall include the following information:

(1) A list containing the name of each individual who, while serving as a member of the Armed Forces, was stationed at Fort McClellan, Alabama, at any time during the period beginning January 1, 1935, and ending on May 20, 1999, and who—

(A) applies for care or services from the Department of Veterans Affairs under chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code;

(B) files a claim for compensation under chapter 11 of such title on the basis of any disability which may be associated with such service;

(C) dies and is survived by a spouse, child, or parent who files a claim for dependency and indemnity compensation under chapter 13 of such title on the basis of such service;

(D) requests from the Secretary a health examination under subsection (d); or

(E) receives from the Secretary a health examination similar to the health examination referred to in subparagraph (D) and requests inclusion in the Registry.

(2) Relevant medical data relating to the health status of, and other information that the Secretary considers relevant and appropriate with respect to, each individual described in paragraph (1) who—

(A) grants to the Secretary permission to include such information in the Registry; or

(B) at the time the individual is listed in the Registry, is deceased.

(c) INDIVIDUALS SUBMITTING CLAIMS OR MAKING REQUESTS BEFORE DATE OF ENACTMENT.—If in the case of an individual described in subsection (b)(1) the application, claim, or request referred to in such subsection was submitted, filed, or made before the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall, to the extent feasible, include in the Registry such individual's name and the data and information, if any, described in subsection (b)(2) relating to the individual.

(d) EXAMINATIONS.—Upon the request of a veteran who was stationed at Fort McClellan, Alabama, at any time during the period beginning January 1, 1935, and ending on May 20, 1999, the Secretary shall provide the veteran with a health examination (including any appropriate diagnostic tests) and consultation and counseling with respect to the results of the examination and the tests.

(e) OUTREACH.—

(1) ONGOING OUTREACH TO INDIVIDUALS LISTED IN REGISTRY.—The Secretary shall, from time to time, notify individuals listed in the Registry of significant developments in research on the health consequences of potential exposure to a toxic substance or environmental hazard related to service at Fort McClellan.

(2) EXAMINATION OUTREACH.—The Secretary shall carry out appropriate outreach activities with respect to the provision of any health examinations (including any diagnostic tests) and consultation and counseling services under subsection (d).

(f) CONSULTATION.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall consult with the Secretary of Defense to acquire information maintained by the Secretary of Defense that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs considers necessary to establish and maintain the Registry.

SEC. 703. INDEPENDENT STUDY ON INDIVIDUAL LONGITUDINAL EXPOSURE RECORD.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall enter into a contract with an independent research entity described in subsection (b) to carry out a comprehensive study of the development of the Individual Longitudinal Exposure Record, or successor system, to determine—

(1) the quality of the location data, occupational and environmental exposure data, and health surveillance data; and

(2) whether a member of the Armed Forces can be reasonably assured that any toxic exposure they experience during service in the Armed Forces will be accurately reflected in the record of the member in such Individual Longitudinal Exposure Record.

(b) INDEPENDENT RESEARCH ENTITY.—The entity described in this subsection is an independent research entity that is a not-for-profit entity or a federally funded research and development center with appropriate expertise and analytical capability to carry out the study required under subsection (a).

(c) TOXIC EXPOSURE DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''toxic exposure'' has the meaning given that term in section 101(37) of title 38, United States Code, as added by section 102(b).

SEC. 704. BIANNUAL REPORT ON INDIVIDUAL LONGITUDINAL EXPOSURE RECORD.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date on which the Individual Longitudinal Exposure Record, or successor system,

achieves full operation capability, as determined by the Secretary of Defense, and every 180 days thereafter, the Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report on—

(1) the data quality of the databases of the Department of Defense that provide the information presented in such Individual Longitudinal Exposure Record; and

(2) the usefulness of such Individual Longitudinal Exposure Record in supporting members of the Armed Forces and veterans in receiving health care and benefits from the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(b) ELEMENTS.—Each report required by subsection (a) shall include, for the period covered by the report, the following:

(1) An identification of toxic exposure events that may not be fully captured by the current systems of the Department of Defense for environmental, occupational, and health monitoring, and recommendations for how to improve those systems.

(2) An analysis of the quality of the location data used by the Department of Defense in determining toxic exposures of members of the Armed Forces and veterans, and recommendations for how to improve the quality of that location data if necessary.

(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS.—The term ''appropriate committees of Congress'' means—

(A) the Committee on Armed Services and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate; and

(B) the Committee on Armed Services and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives.

(2) TOXIC EXPOSURE.—The term ''toxic exposure'' has the meaning given that term in section 101(37) of title 38, United States Code, as added by section 102(b).

SEC. 705. CORRECTION OF EXPOSURE RECORDS BY MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES AND VETERANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Defense shall provide a means for members of the Armed Forces and veterans to update their records as necessary to reflect a toxic exposure by such member or veteran in the Individual Longitudinal Exposure Record, or successor system.

(b) EVIDENCE.—

(1) PROVISION OF EVIDENCE.—To update a record under subsection (a), a member of the Armed Forces or veteran, as the case may be, shall provide such evidence as the Secretary of Defense considers necessary.

(2) BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT.—In reviewing evidence provided under paragraph (1), the Secretary of Defense shall give the benefit of the doubt to the member of the Armed Forces or veteran who provided the evidence, as the case may be, in a manner that is equivalent to the benefit of the doubt required under section 5107(b) of title 38, United States Code.

(3) REGULATIONS.—The Secretary of Defense shall prescribe by regulation the evidence considered necessary under paragraph (1).

(c) TOXIC EXPOSURE DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''toxic exposure'' has the meaning given that term in section 101(37) of title 38, United States Code, as added by section 102(b).

SEC. 706. FEDERAL CAUSE OF ACTION RELATING TO WATER AT CAMP LEJEUNE, NORTH CAROLINA.

(a) IN GENERAL.—An individual, including a veteran (as defined in section 101 of title 38, United States Code), or the legal representative of such an individual, who resided, worked, or was otherwise exposed (including in utero exposure) for not less than 30 days during the period beginning on August 1, 1953, and ending on December 31, 1987, to water at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, that was supplied by, or on behalf of, the United States may bring an action in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of North Carolina to obtain appropriate relief for harm that was caused by exposure to the water at Camp Lejeune.

(b) BURDENS AND STANDARD OF PROOF.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The burden of proof shall be on the party filing the action to show one or more relationships between the water at Camp Lejeune and the harm.

(2) STANDARDS.—To meet the burden of proof described in paragraph (1), a party shall produce evidence showing that the relationship between exposure to the water at Camp Lejeune and the harm is—

(A) sufficient to conclude that a causal relationship exists; or

(B) sufficient to conclude that a causal relationship is at least as likely as not.

(c) EXCLUSIVE JURISDICTION AND VENUE.—The United States District Court for the Eastern District of North Carolina shall have exclusive jurisdiction over any action filed under subsection (a), and shall be the exclusive venue for such an action. Nothing in this subsection shall impair the right of any party to a trial by jury.

(d) EXCLUSIVE REMEDY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—An individual, or legal representative of an individual, who brings an action under this section for a harm described in subsection (a), including a latent disease, may not thereafter bring a tort action against the United States for such harm pursuant to any other law.

(2) HEALTH AND DISABILITY BENEFITS RELATING TO WATER EXPOSURE.—Any award made to an individual, or legal representative of an individual, under this section shall be offset by the amount of any disability award, payment, or benefit provided to the individual, or legal representative—

(A) under—

(i) any program under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs;

(ii) the Medicare program under title XVIII of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395 et seq.); or

(iii) the Medicaid program under title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.); and

(B) in connection with health care or a disability relating to exposure to the water at Camp Lejeune.

(e) IMMUNITY LIMITATION.—The United States may not assert any claim to immunity in an action under this section that would otherwise be available under section 2680(a) of title 28, United States Code.

(f) NO PUNITIVE DAMAGES.—Punitive damages may not be awarded in any action under this section.

(g) DISPOSITION BY FEDERAL AGENCY REQUIRED.—An individual may not bring an action under this section before complying with section 2675 of title 28, United States Code.

(h) EXCEPTION FOR COMBATANT ACTIVITIES.—This section does not apply to any claim or action arising out of the combatant activities of the Armed Forces.

(i) APPLICABILITY; PERIOD FOR FILING.—

(1) APPLICABILITY.—This section shall apply only to a claim accruing before the date of enactment of this Act.

(2) STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS.—A claim in an action under this section may not be commenced after the later of—

(A) the date that is two years after the date of enactment of this Act; or

(B) the date that is 180 days after the date on which the claim is denied under section 2675 of title 28, United States Code.

(3) INAPPLICABILITY OF OTHER LIMITATIONS.—Any applicable statute of repose or statute of limitations, other than under paragraph (2), shall not apply to a claim under this section.

SEC. 7___. VETERANS TOXIC EXPOSURES FUND.

Chapter 3 is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''§ 324. Veterans Toxic Exposures Fund

''(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is hereby established in the Treasury of the United States an account to be known as the ''Veterans Toxic Exposures Fund'' (the ''Fund''), to be administered through the Department of Veterans Affairs, to provide for investment in the delivery of veterans' health care, research, and benefits associated with hazardous exposure in service.

''(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Fund for fiscal year 2023 and each subsequent fiscal year such sums as are necessary to increase funding, over the fiscal year 2021 level for the Veterans Health Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs, for any expenses incident to the delivery of veterans' health care and benefits associated with exposure to environmental hazards in service, including administrative expenses, such as claims processing and appeals, and for medical research related to hazardous exposures. Amounts appropriated to the Fund pursuant to this subsection shall be counted as direct spending under the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 and any other Act.

''(c) ESTIMATES FOR CONGRESSIONAL CONSIDERATION.—The Secretary shall include in documents submitted to Congress in support of the President's budget submitted pursuant to section 1105 of title 31, United States Code, detailed estimates of the sums described in subsection (b) for the applicable fiscal year.

''(d) PROCEDURES FOR ESTIMATES.—The Secretary, after consultation with the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate, may establish policies and procedures for developing the annual detailed estimates required in subsection (c).''.

SEC. 7___. AUTHORIZATION OF ELECTRONIC NOTICE IN CLAIMS UNDER LAWS ADMINISTERED BY THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

Title 38, United States Code, is amended as follows:

(1) By striking section 5100 and inserting the following:

''§ 5100. Definitions

''In this chapter:

''(1) The term 'claimant' means any individual applying for, or submitting a claim for, any benefit under the laws administered by the Secretary.

''(2) The term 'notice' means a communication issued through means (including electronic means) prescribed by the Secretary.''.

(2) In section 5104, by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(c) The Secretary may provide notice under subsection (a) electronically if a claimant (or the claimant's representative) elects to receive such notice electronically. A claimant (or the claimant's representative) may revoke such an election at any time, by means prescribed by the Secretary.

''(d) The Secretary shall annually—

''(1) solicit recommendations from stakeholders on how to improve notice under this section; and

''(2) publish such recommendations on a publicly available website of the Department.''.

(3) In section 5104B(c), in the matter preceding paragraph (1) by striking ''in writing'' and inserting ''to the claimant (and any representative of such claimant)''.

(4) In section 7104—

*(A) in the heading, by adding ''**; decisions; notice**'' at the end; and*

(B) by striking subsection (e) and inserting the following:

''(e) After reaching a decision on an appeal, the Board shall promptly issue notice (as that term is defined in section 5100 of this title) of such decision to the following:

''(1) The appellant.

''(2) Any other party with a right to notice of such decision.

''(3) Any authorized representative of the appellant or party described in paragraph (2).

''(f) The Secretary may provide notice under subsection (e) electronically if a claimant (or the claimant's representative) elects to receive such notice electronically. A claimant (or the claimant's representative) may revoke such an election at any time, by means prescribed by the Secretary.''.

(5) In section 7105(b)(1)(A), by striking ''mailing'' and inserting ''issuance''.

(6) In section 7105A(a), by striking ''mailed'' and inserting ''issued''.

(7) In section 7266(a), by striking ''mailed'' and inserting ''issued''.

SEC. 7____. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR EXPANSION OF CLAIMS AUTOMATION.

There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs $30,000,000 for fiscal year 2023 to support expected increased claims processing for newly eligible veterans pursuant to this Act and the amendments made by this Act by—

(1) supporting the automation of processing claims by the Veterans Benefits Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs;

(2) adding self-service features to the system by which individuals file claims;

(3) removing duplicative efforts regarding the processing of claims; and

(4) reducing the dependency of the Department on the legacy claim system.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The bill, as amended, is debatable for 1 hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs or their respective designees.

The gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) and the gentlewoman from Iowa (Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to insert extraneous material on H.R. 3967, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3967, as amended, the Honoring our PACT Act of 2021.

When we sent our servicemembers into harm's way, we made a pact to care for them when they came home. But for too long, Congress and the Department of Veterans Affairs have been slow to accept responsibility and cost of that care, citing high costs or lack of absolute, scientific proof of illness connections to service. The result is a disability claims process that is cumbersome and places the burden of proof for toxic exposure on veterans themselves.

Every day more and more veterans speak out about exposure to environmental hazards and other toxic substances during their military service.

Recently, I put out a call encouraging toxic exposed veterans to share their experiences with the House Veterans' Affairs Committee. We heard from thousands of veterans in 49 States. These reflections are very powerful, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to share some of them with you now.

Navy veteran Ed described how toxic exposures overwhelmed his senses. He wrote: ''You could not escape the jet fuel. You could see it, smell it, and taste it.''

I heard from Marine veteran Mike who said: ''Even when we weren't actively engaged in dumping items into the burn pit, we were still exposed.''

Air Force veteran Christopher R. described his dealings with VA stating: ''I continue to be rejected because they say that it is impossible to prove that it is service related. I never worked with chemicals before my service or since. I feel like a nuisance to the VA health system.''

I heard from a widow of Army veteran Austin Monk who said: ''No wife should have to bury her 22-year-old husband because of his exposure to unsafe conditions while in service to his country.''

□ 1230

These stories are heart-wrenching and frustrating. Our veterans are fighting their own government to grant them the care and benefits they have earned.

We should be outraged listening to these stories, and it should be clear how urgent passing the Honoring our PACT Act is for our veterans. Veterans and veterans service organizations agree.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD letters of support from more than 42 veterans service organizations.

FEBRUARY 24, 2022.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker,
House of Representatives.
Hon. KEVIN MCCARTHY,
Minority Leader,
House of Representatives.

DEAR SPEAKER PELOSI AND MINORITY LEADER MCCARTHY: On behalf of the American service members and veterans we represent, the undersigned representatives of our respective Veterans and Military Service Organizations call on the House to expeditiously consider and pass into law the Honoring Our PACT Act (H.R. 3967).

Throughout our history, and most recently over the course of more than 20 years of war in the post-9/11 era, service members and veterans suffered prolonged exposure to dangerous toxic substances, such as burn pits that destroyed trash, medical and human waste, chemicals, and fuel, in and around the battlefields of Iraq, Afghanistan and other places. Of the hundreds of thousands of our members who have suffered these exposures, many have returned home sick (or would become ill), and many have also died of their injuries.

Collectively, we have spent years educating Congress, national leaders, and the public on the enormous scope of the injuries faced by our community. There have been small-scale measures to boost education, training, research, and outreach to begin to address the problem. Over the last several years, many of our organizations have worked together to assemble the components of comprehensive toxic exposure legislation that provides VA health care, a new process to determine future presumptive conditions, and provide overdue disability benefits to thousands of veterans from all wars and eras suffering from toxic exposures.

There have been a number of bills introduced in the House that address different aspects of the toxic exposures puzzle, however the Honoring Our PACT Act is the only bill that provides a truly comprehensive solution. Although many of us have supported some of these other burn pits and toxic exposure bills, none of them provides a complete and lasting solution for veterans who are or may become ill as a result of toxic exposures. Consequently, when the Honoring Our PACT Act is brought to the floor for consideration, if any such legislation is offered as an amendment or motion to restrict or substitute, rather than supplement, the underlying bill, we would urge all members to oppose such amendments or motions.

Our organizations call on the House to pass the Honoring Our PACT Act without further delay, to finally provide those who have laid their lives on the line for all Americans with the health care and benefits they need and deserve.

Sincerely,

Air Force Sergeants Association (AFSA), Association of Military Surgeons of the United States (AMSUS), Army Aviation Association of America, Burn Pits 360, California Communities Against Toxics, Cease Fire Campaign, Commissioned Officers Association of the USPHS, Disabled American Veterans (DAV), Dixon Center for Military and Veterans Services, Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States (EANGUS), Environmental Working Group (EWG), Fleet Reserve Association (FRA), Gold Star Wives of America, GO2 Foundation for Lung Cancer.

Green Beret Foundation, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA), Jewish War Veterans of the USA, Service Women's Action Network (SWAN), Military Chaplains Association, Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH), Military-Veterans Advocacy, Minority Veterans of America, National Association of County Veterans Service Officers, National Military Family Association (NMFA), National Veterans Legal Services Program (NVLSP), Naval Enlisted Reserve Association (NERA), Non Commissioned Officers Association (NCOA).

Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA), Reserve Organization of America (ROA), Student Veterans of America (SVA), Task Force Dagger Foundation, The American Legion, The Enlisted Association (TREA), Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS), United Soldiers and Sailors of America, United States Army Warrant Officers Association, Veteran Warriors, Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), Veterans Prostate Cancer Awareness, Vietnam Veterans of America VVA), Wounded Warrior Project (WWP).

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank NANCY PELOSI, our Speaker, for her commitment to bring this bill to the floor. After years of diligent input from my colleagues, our staff, VA, VSOs, and toxic-exposed veterans themselves, I am confident that we are bringing the best possible version of this bill up for a vote.

The administration agrees and has stated that it ''strongly supports'' this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD the Statement of Administrative Policy for H.R. 3967.

STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY

H.R. 3967—HONORING OUR PROMISE TO ADDRESS COMPREHENSIVE TOXICS (PACT) ACT—REP. TAKANO, D–CALIFORNIA AND 100 COSPONSORS

The Administration strongly supports H.R. 3967, which would expand veterans' access to health care and benefits to address the health effects of harmful environmental exposures that occurred during military service.

The President believes that our Nation has only one truly sacred obligation: to properly prepare and equip our service members when we send them into harm's way and to care for them and their families when they return home. Far too often, military service comes with a cost, and we owe it to our veterans and their families to address these consequences comprehensively. Unfortunately, it has taken decades to understand the deleterious effects of environmental exposures—leaving too many without access to the benefits and services they need.

H.R. 3967 would make changes to the definitions for who is eligible for VA health care based on presumed toxic exposure during military service, including from burn pits, radiation, or other environmental conditions. H.R. 3967 would also make changes to the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA's) process for determining presumptive service connection and mandate several research studies related to military related environmental exposures. It would also establish new registries related to exposures, which would provide new data on the long-term impacts from environmental exposures. H.R. 3697 also would allow a Federal cause of action related to contaminated water at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina and establish training requirements for health providers, and require an outreach plan to educate veterans about their eligibility for benefits and services related to toxic exposure.

The Administration looks forward to working with the Congress to enact this legislation and ensuring it is effectively implemented. We must address the toxic legacy of environmental exposures sustained by veterans during their military service and fulfill our sacred obligation to our veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors. We must also ensure that VA has the resources it needs to implement this legislation.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a letter of support from The Independence Fund.

THE INDEPENDENCE FUND,
February 23, 2022.

Hon. MARK TAKANO,
Chair, House Committee on Veterans Affairs, Washington, DC.

Hon. MIKE BOST,
Ranking Member, House Committee on Veterans Affairs, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN TAKANO AND RANKING MEMBER BOST: The Independence Fund endorses the Honoring Our PACT Act (H.R. 3976) and urges its quickest adoption by the full House of Representatives. We further urge the House to engage the Senate with an appropriate legislative vehicle to get a House–Senate conference started as soon as possible to work out a final legislative solution this spring.

The Independence Fund's been proud to join with Wounded Warrior Project, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, and numerous other veteran organizations through the Toxic Exposure in the American Military (TEAM) Coalition since August of 2020 and the initial introduction and Senate passage of the Toxic Exposure in the American Military (TEAM) Act of 2020 (S. 4393) and has applauded the serious and intensive work the House Committee on Veterans Affairs undertook over the last 16 months.

Now, with the potential House passage of H.R. 3967, we commit to engaging the Senate to pass this bill as soon as possible, and if necessary, proceed to a Conference Committee as soon as possible to ensure this bill can be enacted in this Session of Congress. We will also urge the other veteran and military serving organizations with which we work to join us in such an effort collectively.

A veteran The Independence Fund serves, Nick Ooley, joined the Army in 2007 and deployed to Iraq the following year. Today, he is unable to run, jog, or even play basketball with his 11-year-old son. As he details, ''Burn pits were all over the place. We did convoy security, so we would travel to Al Taqaddum, Ramadi, Fallujah, Baghdad, all over the place. When we would drive through or get stationed in those areas, we would be breathing this smoke all the time. The smoke would be so thick during the day that the lights would come on like it was dark.'' But with 78% of all disability claims related to toxic exposure denied by the VA, disabled veterans are denied the help they desperately need and deserve.

While The Independence Fund will always support disabled veterans like Nick through our disabled veteran assistance programs, the presumptive condition relief and mandated health care provided in The Honoring Our PACT Act will be a crucially needed lifeline for these veterans who have given so much in the defense of our country. We salute your leadership on this issue and stand ready to assist however we can in making this the law of the land.

Very Respectfully,

BOB CAREY,
Executive Vice President, Advocacy & Strategy.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, it is now time for the Members of this body to answer a simple question: Am I willing to support our troops and honor our Nation's promise to them?

This bill addresses the true cost of war, and opposing it would be a vote against our servicemembers and veterans. Such a vote would be inconsistent with the thank-yous and patriotic displays so many of my colleagues offer on Veterans Day. Veterans want action, and they deserve our action.

We made a promise to deliver comprehensive toxic exposure legislation, and I intend to keep that promise.

The Honoring our PACT Act will address the full scope of issues affecting toxic-exposed veterans' access to VA care and benefits while reforming VA's presumptive decisionmaking process. It will expand VA healthcare eligibility for over 3.5 million veterans exposed to burn pits and establish a presumption of service connection for over 23 respiratory illnesses and cancers. There is no other toxic exposure legislation in Congress like this one in scope or in soundness.

Before I close, I must emphasize something essential. We cannot renege on our responsibility to toxic-exposed veterans because of any perceived sticker shock.

Cries for offsets and pay-fors did not stop Congress from passing a $1.9 trillion tax cut for corporations and the wealthy in 2017. Over the past 20 years, Congress and our country made the choice to spend trillions on other priorities while sending servicemembers into harm's way at the cost of $6.4 trillion.

We know that this Congress is willing to find money when it wants to, as it recently demonstrated by adding $25 billion to the last National Defense Authorization Act. When our country goes to war, we don't nickel and dime the Department of Defense, and we shouldn't try to pinch pennies when it comes to covering the care for toxic-exposed veterans.

We will not stand by and be lectured about fiscal responsibility when we have a moral obligation to America's veterans. And the time to meet that obligation is now.

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

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 3967, the PACT Act. I wish that this were not the case. I would love to be here today standing proud alongside the chairman in support of this bill. I know Ranking Member BOST would as well.

I am new to Congress, but I understand that, historically, the Veterans' Affairs Committee would work on a bipartisan basis to advance legislation of this magnitude. The MISSION Act and the Forever GI Bill are wonderful examples of the majority and minority in the House and Senate working together in prior Congresses on a compromise that both sides could support and send to the President's desk. That is how Congress should work.

That is why they used to say that those of us on the Veterans' Affairs Committee would leave our party affiliations at the door, and that the Veterans' Affairs Committee was the most bipartisan committee in Congress. That is no longer the case under this Democrat majority. The PACT Act is a sad example of that.

My fellow Republicans and I want to work with the majority to create a fair and consistent pathway for healthcare benefits for toxic-exposed veterans. This is an issue we care deeply about, for which I have a personal association, and have made our top priority in the 117th Congress.

But the majority has consistently refused to meaningfully communicate with us on this bill. In fact, the majority significantly rewrote major portions and components of the PACT Act less than 2 weeks ago and refused to even discuss those changes with those of us in the minority.

Because we did not work together to resolve our differences, the bill has serious flaws that we were unable to resolve. Already, the manager's amendment would extend benefits to more veterans without scientific justification, showing just how slippery a slope this bill would set.

As an alternative, I support creating a fair and consistent process for the VA to decide whether benefits are warranted for certain military toxic exposure events.

VA should base this decision on criteria that weighs the strength of scientific evidence supporting a link between the development of a condition and toxic exposure. In fact, for the past 2 years during the pandemic, we have heard repeatedly from the opposite side about following the science.

If the VA determines that there is at least a 50 percent chance that these veterans' disabilities are linked to toxic exposure, then VA should grant benefits on a presumptive basis.

The PACT Act attempts to create such a framework, but I believe more discussion is needed to determine if it is the best path forward. That is especially important since the VA began piloting its own program for deciding whether there is a scientific link between a disability and toxic exposure last year.

Under VA's model, certain Gulf war and post-9/11 veterans who were exposed to airborne hazards and develop asthma, sinusitis, and rhinitis became eligible for benefits last September. And just this past week, VA announced it will provide compensation to certain veterans who are diagnosed with nine rare respiratory cancers.

VA's decisions were based on science. However, it is unclear if all the conditions under Chairman TAKANO's bill would meet the scientific threshold under his framework or under the VA's.

Furthermore, the PACT Act could also flood VA with so many new mandates that veterans already receiving care and benefits wait longer. Veterans wait too long for VA services right now. I hear frequently from veterans in Iowa who can't get the care they need, are waiting months and, in some States, even years for the benefits they have earned. I don't know of a Member in this body who can't say the same thing.

Making those veterans wait even longer is unacceptable, and it could be unprecedented where the claims process is concerned.

In 2013, the disability claims backlog peaked at 600,000 pending claims. Veterans were waiting years to receive an initial decision of their claim, and then, if it was denied, they were waiting even longer while the VA processed their appeal.

VA has made some improvements to how disability claims are processed since 2013, but the Department is still years away from developing the information technology needed to truly expedite claims processing.

If the PACT Act were enacted, VA estimates the disability claims backlog could reach over 1.5 million claims by the end of fiscal year 2023. That is more than double the height of the backlog in 2013.

If veterans were waiting years for their benefits 9 years ago, imagine how long they would have to wait today for a backlog that is more than two times the size it was then. That is completely unreasonable.

The PACT Act is also unacceptable for taxpayers. CBO estimates the PACT Act would require over $300 million in new government spending. Not a penny of those costs are offset.

Additionally, some of the amendments we will be voting on would increase the costs by millions of dollars in new mandatory spending on top of that.

You will hear some say that this is just the cost of war. Anyone who has served, or has a loved one who serves, like I have, and do, know what war costs. They also know that veterans pay taxes, too. They also know that veterans have children and grandchildren whose futures they don't want to be anymore burdened with debt than they already are.

The PACT Act costs more than the combined discretionary budgets of nine Cabinet-level departments. Think about that. And then think about inflation and our national debt, which is already skyrocketing and is causing American taxpayers to pinch pennies.

We are not doing right by our veterans by being fiscally irresponsible in their name, and I say that as a veteran myself.

Finally, there is no clear or quick path forward in the Senate for the PACT Act. In comparison, we could send legislation to the President's desk today that would help sick veterans get the care they need.

The Health Care for Burn Pit Veterans Act would let toxic-exposed post-9/11 combat veterans enroll in the VA healthcare system. It is bipartisan, and it has already passed the Senate last month.

I understand the majority would like to go to conference over the Health Care for Burn Pit Veterans Act and the PACT Act, but I also understand that the majority supports the Health Care for Burn Pit Veterans Act because they included it as a provision in the Rules Committee print of the PACT Act.

If we all agree that the Health Care for Burn Pit Veterans Act is a good policy, why would we delay its enactment?

Every day that the House fails to send it to the President is another day that veterans are deprived of lifesaving care. Nothing could be more wrongheaded than that.

The Health Care for Burn Pit Veterans Act is the correct first step toward this process. It will deliver needed healthcare to toxic-exposed veterans and buy us the time to work on a bipartisan, bicameral basis to deliver other benefits and services to them down the line. They would at least have healthcare now.

We should have done this throughout this congressional session, but we haven't even started yet. Sick veterans should not pay the price for our inaction.

Rather than pass the PACT Act in the House, with its many flaws and an extremely high likelihood of dying in the Senate, we must pass the Health Care for Burn Pit Veterans Act today.

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

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor and privilege to yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI), a person who has done more for veterans in modern times than any other leader of this body.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding and for his kind words, which I accept on behalf of our working in a bipartisan way for our veterans over the years, Democrats and Republicans. And I thank the chairman for his extraordinary leadership, both in this case and earlier for our veterans, completing our Agent Orange responsibilities to our veterans.

As well, I thank Congressman RUIZ, a doctor and a Member of Congress who has been a champion on this issue, and ELAINE LURIA, a veteran and a Member of Congress who has been so instrumental in bringing this legislation to the floor.

When the President spoke last night about meeting the needs of our veterans when it came to the burn pits, he received almost a unanimous standing ovation for that. It was very encouraging to see the Congress of the United States, House and Senate, Democrats and Republicans, recognize their obligation to our men and women in uniform.

It is important to note that over the past generation, over 3 million of our courageous Americans have answered the call to serve and have donned the uniform to protect our freedoms as heroic Americans, just as people have done since our founding.

From the deserts of Iraq to the mountains of Afghanistan—I was hearing this morning about Kandahar—and on bases and in military theaters around the world, these heroes have risked their lives to fight the enemy and yet, tragically, have had to face another deadly threat due to exposure to burn pits and other toxic substances.

We always say about our military on the battlefield that we leave no soldier behind, and when they come home, we leave no veteran behind. Instead of receiving comprehensive, timely care and benefits, sometimes they are forced to confront a disability claims process that is nearly impossible to navigate. That is why the Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act, the PACT Act, finally, faithfully fulfills that pledge now and into the future, that we will leave no veteran behind.

□ 1245

The budget costs of it are a cost of war. When we decide that we need to engage and initiate military action, we should understand that the cost is not just in our defense budget but also in our veterans' budget when they come home.

Frankly, the cost of this bill is a fraction, if we are talking budget, of the cost of the Republican tax bill that they passed in 2017, which added $2 trillion to the national debt. I don't hear

anybody complaining on the other side of the aisle about what impact that had on veterans and their concerns about the fiscal soundness of the United States.

So let's just put it to rest: If it is a cost that we must have for our veterans—and this has been thoroughly researched, and others will speak to that—then we cannot say we can't afford it. It isn't about the price. It is about the value of what we get for this.

In the last 20 years, the VA has seen over a 60 percent increase in rates of cancer due to toxic exposure. Eighty-six percent of veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan report being exposed to the toxic fumes of burn pits, and 88 percent of those exposed said they were experiencing symptoms that could be related to that.

Potentially up to 3.5 million veterans deployed post-9/11 may have been exposed to toxic fumes and substances. Despite this reality, nearly 75 percent of burn-pit-related disability claims were denied, Mr. Speaker.

Too often, the VA and Congress have said it is just too expensive to care for, and there just isn't enough proof. The result of this negligence has been tragic. Thousands of veterans and families have been forced to suffer, including heroes like one I will quote, Staff Sergeant Wesley Black.

Staff Sergeant Black was a Purple Heart hero who survived two tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. In November, he died at the age of 36 from colon cancer tied to toxic exposure from burn pits, leaving behind his wife and new baby.

After serving his country with distinction, Sergeant Black should have been able to retire happily, with pride. Instead, he spent his final days fighting for the reforms contained in this legislation so that no current or future veteran would be forced to endure the same horror that he and his family did.

Staff Sergeant Wesley Black, before his passing, said: It is too late for me, but it is not too late for the next veteran who walks down the halls of the VA and goes in and complains about the signs and symptoms.

We must make sure it is not too late for other veterans, I say, and when we send our servicemen and servicewomen into harm's way, we care for them when they come home.

This is particularly important to me, because a long time ago, long before I was in Congress, in 1981, I went and sat with veterans in California, with Dick Gregory, who was making a big association with the cause for Agent Orange, in 1981, California, veterans having a hunger strike. Dick Gregory knew about hunger strikes from the civil rights movement, and he was associating himself with them and instructing them on how to survive a hunger strike, and I had the privilege of being with them.

Little did I know at that time, it would take decades to address their Agent Orange concerns. And it wasn't even complete until Chairman TAKANO did so with the Navy legislation that he passed.

We cannot let that much time go by. That would be shameful to our country.

Let us also thank Mr. CARTWRIGHT, who also included in his package the Camp Lejeune Justice Act. Anyone who has heard from those families coming from Camp Lejeune, not just the servicemembers but their family members, who have been damaged related to injuries incurred while serving at Camp Lejeune. The list goes on.

Again, thanks to Chairman TAKANO, Congressman RAUL RUIZ, Congresswoman ELAINE LURIA, and Congressman MATT CARTWRIGHT. I thank everyone who has worked so hard to bring this to the floor. I want to also thank Senator TESTER, with whom Chairman TAKANO and our committee have worked closely.

We share a goal. We have to find the complete package so that it is comprehensive and fulfills our responsibilities.

Others will go into the particulars of it. I want to also salute the distinguished Secretary of the VA, Denis McDonough, for the attention that he has paid to making sure what we do honors the promise of the PACT Act, so that the bill is written in a way that delivers in a timely fashion to our veterans.

I could not have been more excited when the President of the United States included this important initiative in his remarks, not only as legislation but in the larger issue of what it means to our country, how we value our veterans and how we want to pass this legislation and get it to his desk soon so it will be a comfort to our veterans and their families.

On the battlefield, we leave no soldier behind. When they come home, we leave no veterans behind.

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I could not agree more that we can act today, and we can forward legislation to the desk of the President for his signature by passing the Health Care for Burn Pit Veterans Act today, so that there is not another Sergeant Wesley Black who is denied healthcare while the VA processes his claims.

We would be more than delighted to help the President in honoring his initiative, as he stated last night in the State of the Union, by today passing the Health Care for Burn Pit Veterans Act.

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

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. LEVIN), my good friend, who serves as the chair of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity.

Mr. LEVIN of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman TAKANO for his leadership.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the Honoring our PACT Act.

All too often, many veterans hear the words ''thank you for your service'' but don't see enough action behind those words.

Sadly, that has been true for millions of veterans who were exposed to toxic substances during their service and are now suffering from related health conditions.

While they defended our country, they were exposed to burn pits, PFAS chemicals, and more, but we failed to hold up our end of the bargain to care for them when they returned home.

In the case of Vietnam veterans, many who were exposed to Agent Orange, were forced to wait more than 40 years before they saw proper benefits.

For too long, the burden of proof has been on the veteran to show that their illness is a result of toxic exposure they experienced during their service. For too long, veterans have been told that it is too expensive to cover the range of health issues that they have as a result of their toxic exposure. That is wrong, and we must do better for our veterans.

With the Honoring our PACT Act, we can do right by our veterans. This includes finally presuming that if they were exposed to toxic substances during their service and are now experiencing one of 23 respiratory illnesses and cancers, then that illness is as a result of their exposure, and they are owed proper access to benefits and care through the VA.

I also want to highlight what I hope will become a key piece of this bill, an amendment I offered to authorize Federal grants for county veterans service officers who help veterans and their families understand resources at their disposal, file benefit claims, and represent veterans in VA hearings.

County veterans service officers are often veterans' best allies in navigating red tape within the VA and securing the benefits that veterans have earned, which will be particularly important for the 3.5 million veterans who may be eligible for new benefits and care as a result of this legislation.

The amendment is similar to my Commitment to Veteran Support and Outreach Act, which I introduced with a bipartisan group last year. I hope to see it move forward as part of our Honoring our PACT Act today.

As I said, this legislation is our opportunity to put real action behind our words. Saying ''thank you for your service'' has never been enough. It is time to fulfill the promises we made to our troops and invest in the care and benefits they deserve.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to vote ''yes.''

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), the esteemed majority leader of this House.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman TAKANO not only for yielding

time, but much more importantly, I thank him for the extraordinary work he does on behalf of the Armed Forces and for its veterans. He is tireless in his advocacy of veterans' interest.

I meet with him every Wednesday in the chairman's meeting. He is always speaking up about how we need to continue our focus on the needs of our veterans who served our country so heroically, whether they went overseas or not.

Some of the veterans that we are talking about today were not overseas when they contracted a disease or an illness as a result of toxic substances. They were here in America. There is a poet who says: They also serve who stand and wait ready to serve, ready to be deployed to the point of the spear.

Mr. Speaker, you and I are old enough—I don't want to be too harsh on the Speaker—but to remember the song: When Johnny comes marching home again, hurray, hurray, the boys will shout, the girls will cheer, and the women, they will all turn out.

One of the problems we have seen, though, after that cheering, that after that parade, after that exultation, is that memories are short. As time goes by, some of our veterans, sadly, tragically, and wrongfully, have been forgotten.

This bill says we do not forget. This bill says we will be there for you, and, yes, we will be there even if there is a substantial cost to it.

This is a defense cost. In my view, the veterans cost ought to be in the defense budget, and it ought to be there because that is what we are all enthusiastic about spending money on. Veterans need to be and are our first priority.

I thank the chairman for his focus and for his action. He has long been a champion of our veterans and their well-being.

I also thank Representative RUIZ and Representative LURIA, who is sitting here with us, who have worked very hard on this legislation. Mrs. LURIA, from Virginia, is a retired commander from the United States Navy. She and her husband commanded a ship. Dr. RUIZ has been on the front line of illness, the front line as an emergency physician, and knows full well the psychological and physical effects of toxic material to the well-being of individuals. I thank Dr. RUIZ and Commander LURIA for their work on this bill.

Our veterans served with honor and routinely went above and beyond the call of duty in their defense of our Nation. Many of them risked their lives; not everybody, there were some that were support, and without their support those at the point of the spear could not have been successful.

We have a responsibility, Mr. Speaker, a moral responsibility, to care for our veterans when they return home and ensure that they receive the treatment they deserve.

When we send our servicemembers to war, when we recruit them, when we put them in a position by order and they become ill because of where they are, because of either negligent or unknowing actions, unknowing to the extent we don't know the adverse effects that they caused, whatever the situation, a soldier's exposure is our responsibility.

A soldier's exposure to burn pits and other toxic substances during their service has been shown to be connected to a greatly increased risk of cancer and respiratory diseases. There is no doubt about that.

The legislation before us would expand veterans' healthcare access and benefits to address the effects of those toxic exposures that occurred during their military service.

Mr. Speaker, you and I both know we asked our veterans to go to battle for America, and they answered the call. When they return home, veterans should not have to go to battle against red tape to receive the medical treatment and benefits they have earned through their service.

□ 1300

They ought to be able to access care for the physical and mental wounds they carry without impediment or delay. All of us have gotten cases where there have been weeks, months, years that veterans have waited for benefits that they deserve under law, and as a moral responsibility of our government.

We thank our veterans for their service. As I said, we cheer and shout and turn out. But this is our responsibility. This is not about cheering or shouting. This is about doing what we ought to do for those who were injured in the defense of our Nation and our freedom. This is our opportunity to keep our promise to put our veterans first and truly give them our highest respect.

Again, I thank my friend, Chairman TAKANO. I thank all the members of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and all those veterans who don't forget those who come after them. I thank Mr. TAKANO for his leadership, and I urge my colleagues from both sides of the aisle to join in passing this bill with a strong bipartisan support.

Our President talked about bipartisanship. I talked to Mr. SCALISE about being the loyal opposition. Not loyal to Democrats or Democrat leaders, but loyal to our country. Being loyal to our country means being loyal to those who served and preserved the freedoms that we enjoy, this home of the free and land of the brave. I think it is the opposite way around, but we get the point. Brave and free go together. Let us not forget. Let's pass this bill.

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, anyone who has served or has a loved one who serves, like I have and do, knows the cost of war good and well.

Veterans pay taxes, too. Veterans also have children and grandchildren that they don't want to burden with debt. The Honoring our PACT Act costs more than the combined discretionary budgets of nine Cabinet-level departments: Transportation, Commerce, Homeland Security, State, HUD, Interior, Justice, Energy, and Labor.

We shouldn't dismiss those massive costs so easily. Just as we have a moral responsibility to care for our veterans, we have a moral responsibility to understand the real-world consequences that we can already see in skyrocketing inflation and national debt. Congress should have to pay our bills just like our constituents do.

I am not downplaying the importance of benefits. Getting the Health Care for Burn Pit Veterans Act signed into law may be the first step in this fight, but it would be a lifesaving one. It does no good to have benefits if you are not alive to have them. Republicans invited Jim Price, a toxic-exposed veteran and widower of one, to testify, and he says it better than I could. In Jim's words, ''Benefits mean nothing if you are no longer alive.''

Chairman TAKANO acknowledged last week that he has not even started talking to the Senate about a compromise on this bill. That means we are months away from a deal, if we can even find one. Meanwhile, veterans could receive lifesaving healthcare now. Some veterans don't have that long to wait. They need that healthcare now.

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

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Hampshire (Mr. PAPPAS), my good friend who serves as chair of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations for the Veterans' Affairs Committee.

Mr. PAPPAS. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman TAKANO for yielding and for his leadership on this issue, which answers the call of our Nation's veterans, their advocates, and our veterans service organizations.

I rise in support of the Honoring our PACT Act, which makes good on this Nation's promise to veterans. It is well past the time that we address the impacts of toxic exposure that have been endured by members of our military. I am glad that we are taking meaningful, comprehensive action today.

I am also pleased that this legislation includes a bill that I introduced, the PFAS Registry Act. PFAS chemicals have contaminated the environment and drinking water sources of hundreds of military bases across the country, including Pease Air Force Base in my district. These forever chemicals persist in the environment and the body and are linked to serious health conditions, including cancer.

This provision will give military servicemembers and veterans access to health information, research updates, and other resources to help protect public health and provide relief to those who have been exposed to PFAS.

The Honoring our PACT Act will help veterans already suffering from the impacts of toxic exposure. We also must do more to reduce the risk that more servicemembers will be exposed. That is why I have also submitted an amendment that will require our government to proactively raise awareness of the dangers of toxic exposure to Active Duty personnel.

These provisions will require DOD and VA to create a strategy for awareness and prevention that will protect Active Duty servicemembers from harm and save lives.

Our men and women in uniform already face numerous threats to life and limb for their service. We must minimize risks that environmental and toxic hazards pose and provide the care, benefits, and support that these veterans have earned. It is our solemn responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, I urge swift passage of my amendment as well as the underlying legislation.

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, section 706 comes from H.R. 6482, which was referred to the Judiciary Committee, not the Veterans' Affairs Committee. H.R. 6482 has not gone through the regular order of this Congress. This is another blatant example of the Democrat majority pushing through legislation without careful consideration of the impact it may have on the Federal Government. Moreover, this provision is a departure from past precedent because it would allow veterans to sue the United States for a disability incurred in military service. This type of change would not simply be air dropped into a bill without careful consideration within this committee.

The VA estimates that the PACT Act will cause an unprecedented backlog of over 1.5 million disability claims. This will lead to longer wait times for veterans and put a strain on DVA resources and personnel. An increase in claims decisions is likely to result in an increase in appeals, which will add to the appeals backlog.

All veterans, not just toxic-exposed veterans, will be forced to wait months or years for a final decision on their disability claim or appeal. This is a big risk to take when there is little to no science backing the benefits expansion under this bill.

And our moral responsibilities? What will I say to the veterans in my district who could get healthcare now if we refuse to consider a bill that will pass?

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

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. LURIA), my good friend and cosponsor of H.R. 3967. She is the chair of the Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs Subcommittee and also a veteran herself and former commander of a naval surface ship.

Mrs. LURIA. Mr. Speaker, as a 20-year veteran myself, it is an honor to stand before you today. I would say that the urgency of what our veterans are facing should not be lost on this body: Autoimmune disorders, cancer, chronic disease, respiratory issues, infertility, and organ failure are just a few in a lengthy list of conditions associated with toxins during military service.

Why should our veterans, who risked their lives on the battlefield, now have to battle for their healthcare when they return home?

There should be no question of our commitment to the veterans who voluntarily served our Nation without hesitation. This body should not hesitate to pass this legislation, the Honoring our PACT Act. I am proud to serve a district that has such a strong military and veteran presence.

Nearly one out of every six people in Virginia's Second Congressional District is a veteran and even more of their family members. Many of those veterans come from the Gulf war era, with 42 percent of them having served in the post-9/11 era. My presence at this podium today reconfirms my unwavering commitment to all of our constituents who depend on the passage of this legislation to get the healthcare that they deserve from toxic exposure.

Let me be clear. Veterans have earned the right to accessible VA healthcare. As such, the choice is clear that we need to pass the Honoring our PACT Act. Our work on this vital legislation has been bipartisan, and it incorporates two bills that I have introduced: The COVENANT Act, which recognized the toxic exposure of so many of our veterans and established their eligibility for healthcare. Furthermore, we have introduced in this legislation a provision that brings the VA healthcare notifications into the 21st century, allowing the Secretary of the VA to notify our veterans of their disability determinations electronically, something that is long overdue and has been coordinated with and requested by the Secretary of the VA.

Let me say again that as a 20-year veteran myself, I support this legislation, and I want to get this healthcare to all those veterans who served and those who desperately need it.

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, how much time do I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from Iowa has 18 minutes remaining.

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the benefits provided under this bill have little to no scientific basis. For example, in 2020, the National Academies reviewed 11 of the 24 burn pit-related conditions in the bill but could not establish a link between exposure to burn pits and those 11 conditions. The other 13 conditions were not reviewed, which further proves the point that more research is needed.

It is not fair to provide benefits to select veterans under this bill while telling other veterans to wait for the science. Instead, there needs to be a fair and consistent process to decide if there is enough evidence supporting the extension of benefits to a condition that may be linked to toxic exposure.

This bill sets a dangerous precedent that we cannot afford to maintain for the next group of toxic-exposure veterans wanting benefits with no scientific support. May I also add that veterans need not be in a battle for healthcare if we pass today the Health Care for Burn Pit Veterans Act, which has already passed in the Senate.

We have received zero assurance from the VA that the PACT Act can be implemented without disrupting services to veterans. I hear every day from veterans who cannot get care in a timely manner through the VA right now. The PACT Act would make millions more veterans eligible for care through the same system, much more than the Health Care for Burn Pit Veterans Act would, and of course that will have implications for access. Even VA's own providers have expressed concern about the impact an influx of new patients without accommodations and resources will have, clogging up an already overburdened system.

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

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to how much time I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California has 15½ minutes remaining.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. MRVAN), my good friend who serves as chair of the Subcommittee on Technology Modernization on the Veterans' Affairs Committee.

Mr. MRVAN. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise today in support of Honoring our PACT Act.

Respectfully, the impact of this piece of legislation will be veterans receive world-class healthcare.

As I meet with veterans and veteran groups from northwest Indiana, I continue to be grateful every day for the selfless service and sacrifice by our veterans and their families.

Just yesterday, less than 24 hours ago, a veteran representing the DAV, came to me who had two forms of cancer, who was advocating not only for himself but other veterans to make sure they received the care and the necessity of care that they deserve, as we have a responsibility to ensure that all veterans receive world-class healthcare when they return home from protecting our freedoms and defending our democracy.

I commend Chairman TAKANO for his consistent advocacy and leadership to bring this measure to the floor today.

I appreciate the announcement yesterday that the VA will process claims for toxic-exposed veterans with certain rare respiratory cancers. More must be done. I encourage all my colleagues to vote for the Honoring our PACT Act so

that a regular and transparent process is established to ensure that all issues facing toxic-exposed veterans are comprehensively addressed.

As I stated when I opened, the impact of this legislation is that veterans receive the world-class healthcare they deserve.

□ 1315

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I applaud the VA for initiating a review of these nine rare cancers to determine if they are linked to airborne hazard exposure while deployed. I am looking forward to hearing about the VHA's research, which supported the expansion of benefits to these Gulf war and post-9/11 veterans.

Likewise, I am interested in learning more about the number of veterans who would be impacted by this decision and the effect it will have on the VA.

However, these nine cancers are only a subset of the conditions included in Chairman TAKANO's bill. I believe more scientific research is needed to determine if additional disabilities are linked to airborne hazard exposure.

Both the majority and the minority want world-class healthcare for our veterans, and thus, it underscores our concern with this bill.

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

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. RUIZ), my good friend and neighbor in California, someone who has authored a great big section of this bill on our presumptives, a member of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee and an active member on the Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs Subcommittee.

Mr. RUIZ. Mr. Speaker, as we stand here right now, our servicemembers have returned home from the battlefield only to become delayed casualties of war due to their battlefield exposure to toxic burn pits.

My constituents, Jennifer Kepner and Alejandro Camacho, both developed cancers from the burn pits' toxic smoke containing carcinogens they breathed day in and day out while serving our country. Jen Kepner died from pancreatic cancer, and Alejandro Camacho suffers from testicular cancer.

Let me repeat that. They got sick because they were exposed to burn pits' toxic smoke while doing their duty for our country.

To make matters worse, both Jennifer and Alejandro were turned down when applying for benefits because the VA said that there wasn't enough evidence to link their illness to their service.

To not give our veterans the proper care and benefits they earned and rightly deserve is a dereliction of our Nation's duty.

That is why I introduced the Presumptive Benefits for War Fighters Exposed to Burn Pits and Other Toxins Act.

It would create a presumption of service connection for 23 illnesses, including cancers related to service near burn pits, and it has been included in the Honoring our PACT Act.

My bill is the very soul of the Honoring our PACT Act. It would take the burden off of our veterans to prove that they are sick as a result of their service by presuming the reason they were diagnosed with this illness is because of their service near burn pits.

Now is the time to fix this, and anything short of including all 23 of these illnesses is not good enough. The Health Care for Burn Pit Veterans Act is not good enough. It will shortchange our veterans. It is like telling a pneumonia patient who needs antibiotics for the cure that, hey, listen, let's just give you Tylenol, call it a day, and we have taken care of the patient. That is medical negligence, and that is not what we are going to do to our veterans.

We cannot have another Agent Orange in our generation and ''delay until dead'' as our Vietnam veterans have said.

So I urge my colleagues to support passage of this lifesaving bipartisan bill. I urge them to stop the medical negligence and the dereliction of duty to come together as a country and do what is right because the science is there. It is not a secret. Carcinogens cause cancer. Burn pits' smoke have carcinogens. Our burn pits veterans are delayed casualties from cancers.

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the veterans who are sick may not be able to get benefits immediately under this bill since they will be waiting for the VA to process their claims during a 1.5 million-claim backlog.

There is also no guarantee VA will get it right the first time. The VA does not have a great track record of accurately processing claims while working to address a massive backlog.

For example, during the Obama administration, VA took shortcuts to artificially reduce the backlog, such as the provisional denial program. We should be focused on getting veterans the care they need now to recover while continuing to work on the best path forward to other benefits.

Additionally, without a clear path forward in the Senate on the PACT Act, veterans will continue to wait while Congress works to get it right.

The revisions to the presumptive framework in Title 2 were unveiled less than 2 weeks ago. We have not had a chance to discuss these changes publicly with stakeholders and VA. As such, it is unclear if the changes made by the Rules Committee Print version would improve or hinder VA's efforts to establish a consistent scientific process for deciding when to extend benefits based on toxic exposure. And by doing so, as my colleague suggests, we may, in fact, not go down a pathway determining why a veteran is ill and what other exposures may have caused their illness.

I believe more time is needed to refine the presumptive framework in this bill to ensure that veterans will receive a fair look at which conditions are linked to toxic exposure. We can pass the Health Care for Burn Pit Veterans Act now as the first step to get these veterans the healthcare that they need as we continue to develop a bipartisan, bicameral way forward on the presumptive framework.

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

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BISHOP), my very good friend who serves as a subcommittee chair on the Appropriations Committee and also a former member of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the Honoring our PACT Act, which will ensure that veterans who have been exposed to toxic substances, materials, or environments during their military service, particularly toxic burn pits and Agent Orange, will receive the care and benefits they deserve.

Exposure to these toxins has led to devastating health conditions suffered by veterans, including neurological disorders, pulmonary diseases, rare forms of cancer, and many other conditions.

In the past, the government has been too slow to recognize the link between exposure to toxic substances and the medical problems that veterans have dealt with when they returned home.

As a result, veterans and their families have been denied benefits and much-needed disability compensation to deal with the health effects of these toxins.

The Honoring our PACT Act would correct these errors and renew our solemn commitment to our Nation's veterans.

I urge my colleagues to support the Honoring our PACT Act to ensure that our country fulfills Abraham Lincoln's promise to care for him and her who shall have borne the battle.

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, the concerns the minority had with this bill were laid out during the markup of the PACT Act, as well as the roundtable last month. We did not see the revised text until it was published by the Rules Committee.

At the ranking member's direction, the minority staff were willing to work through these concerns with your staff line-by-line, but this was rebuffed.

The minority staff was also told that any proposed changes to the scope of the bill would not be accepted.

It is clear that the majority was not willing to address our concerns with this bill.

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

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Texas

(Mr. CASTRO), my good friend who serves on the Education and Labor Committee and is a member of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence and is a subcommittee chair on the Foreign Affairs Committee.

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I proudly represent what is known as ''Military City U.S.A.,'' San Antonio, Texas, the home to hundreds, if not thousands, of veterans who, like others across the country, were exposed to open-air burn pits whose lives have been ruined, and for some, it has cost them their life.

We have to stand up for our veterans the way they stood up for our country when they were on Active Duty. Yet, what I keep hearing from Republicans is that there is not enough information. There is not enough money.

Mr. Speaker, how often do you hear people around here ask whether it is too expensive to buy a tank, whether it is too expensive to buy a jet or an aircraft carrier. Yet, when it comes to our men and women in uniform, who go risk their lives on behalf of our country and our allies, the question coming from Republicans is whether it is too expensive.

Why don't you just tell them that it is too goddamned expensive to save their lives? Why don't you tell them that they are not worth the money? Because what you are saying is that you want tax cuts for billionaires and cancer for veterans.

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, the question from Republicans is why not pass a bill that has already passed the Senate that would give access to lifesaving healthcare to our veterans now?

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

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Mrs. HAYES), my very good friend who serves on the Education and Labor Committee with me and as is the subcommittee chair on the Agriculture Committee.

Mrs. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to urge my colleagues to support the Honoring our PACT Act, which upholds the promise we made to servicemembers that we would care for them if they became sick or wounded while fighting to protect this country.

This legislation recognizes the full range of military toxic exposure that servicemembers have faced.

This monumental package also includes my bill, the Palomares Veterans Act, which would remove barriers to benefits and compensation for those veterans who responded to one of the largest nuclear disasters in history.

Over 55 years ago, a B–52 bomber collided with aircraft over the Spanish village of Palomares, causing radiation exposure to more than 1,600 U.S. airmen who had no protection when they responded to the crash.

Decades later, many of these airmen are suffering and dying from health conditions that likely came from radioactive material. But the VA still does not count Palomares as a radiation risk event or provide these veterans with benefits or disability.

My bill, the Honoring our PACT Act, would address this, ensuring these veterans get the healthcare and benefits they deserve and ensuring their surviving spouses and children are eligible for benefits.

The job of Congress is to appropriate funds, yet whenever we want to help people, my Republican colleagues say no. If we are not willing to support our veterans, what are we willing to support?

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, at this time I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. LOIS FRANKEL), my good friend who is a valued member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, serving on the Subcommittee on Health.

Ms. LOIS FRANKEL of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding and for his leadership.

Mr. Speaker, I am blessed that my son, Ben, a Marine war veteran, returned safely from tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. Ben is now a small business owner, and he has even given me two beautiful grandsons. And listen, not every family is as lucky.

Our servicemen and -women put their lives on the line for our Nation, and yet for too long, countless veterans have unknowingly been exposed to environmental hazards and toxic waste, like burn pits, during their duty. And then they come back home with long-term health impacts like cancer, infertility, and breathing issues.

Mr. Speaker, they deserve better. We owe them better. And here is the thing: If we are willing to send our troops to war, we must also be willing to care for their health upon return, and this includes the 80,000 veterans in my home area of Palm Beach County.

It is time for Congress to honor this commitment and pass the Honoring our PACT Act to provide access to VA healthcare to millions of veterans exposed to toxic substances.

The best way to thank our veterans for their service is with action. I urge my colleagues to pass this important bill.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I would like to inquire as to how much time I have remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman has 7½ minutes remaining.

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, Republicans agree with Democrats about how important it is to help veterans suffering from toxic exposure. However, there is nothing bipartisan about how the majority has gone about this.

The majority has consistently refused to meaningfully communicate with us on this bill. We are seeing similar refusal to work together in good faith on other fronts, as well.

This is the third controversial veterans bill that has gone before the Rules Committee this year alone.

In 2017, when this committee had a Republican chairman, The New York Times called the Veterans' Affairs Committee ''the most bipartisan in Congress.'' That is not the case in the House anymore, not since the Democrat majority took charge.

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

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. MENG), my very good friend who serves on the House Appropriations Committee.

□ 1330

Ms. MENG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in favor of H.R. 3967, Honoring our PACT Act, authored by my friend and esteemed colleague, Chairman TAKANO.

This important bill includes the text of my bill, the Mark Takai Atomic Veterans Healthcare Parity Act, named after our dear, late friend and colleague, Representative Mark Takai.

H.R. 3967 would permit veterans who participated in the nuclear cleanup of Enewetak Atoll in the Western Pacific to be treated as radiation-exposed veterans and receive service-connected compensation benefits.

Current law only covers servicemembers who participated in active nuclear tests and not those who participated in the cleanup. With the passage of this bill, Congress will finally right this wrong.

Mr. Speaker, once again, I thank Chairman MARK TAKANO for his tremendous leadership on this legislation, and I urge my colleagues to vote for the passage of H.R. 3967.

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Guam (Mr. SAN NICOLAS), my good friend who serves on the Committee on Financial Services and the Committee on Natural Resources.

Mr. SAN NICOLAS. Mr. Speaker, imagine a system that frustrates you being weaponized in order to deny you the care that you are entitled to and that you should be entitled to in this country. That is what we do when we say that the inefficiencies of the VA system is reason for us not to pass this bill.

This bill is going to do so much good for veterans who deserve it, and it is going to do so much good for particular veterans who served in Guam and were exposed to Agent Orange. It is the only bill right now that is going to get that done.

Mr. Speaker, the late Lonnie Kilpatrick died from his exposure to Agent Orange. My bipartisan colleague, GUS BILIRAKIS, and I introduced a bill to address that exposure. This legislation that we are talking about today, the Honoring our PACT Act, will get that done.

Let's not weaponize the frustrations of the VA to prevent those kinds of solutions. Let's get this done for our veterans. It is about time.

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from the State of California (Mr. RUIZ), my good friend and colleague, the author of the provisions on the 23 presumptions.

Mr. RUIZ. Mr. Speaker, I have been hearing these arguments or these pleas that our colleagues on the other side agree with the sentiment, that they agree that they want to take care of this. Well, those are just words. Whether they agree will be demonstrated by their votes. Those are actions.

I am hearing the same excuses that our Vietnam veterans heard when they were dying from Agent Orange and pleading for help, the excuse that the science is not there; we need more time; oh, it costs too much.

Well, listen here, the science is there. As a medical professional, I reviewed the science. The scientific studies were flawed. They did not ask the right questions. And there is enough evidence from other extrapolated data that shows that carcinogens can cause cancer, that heavy toxic metals in your lungs can cause pulmonary fibrosis. We have to make sure that if the burn pits are illegal in the United States, they should be illegal everywhere else because of this science.

Then we hear, ''We need more time.'' Well, look, it has taken us years to get to this point. I want them to ask the widows of General Kepner and all the veterans, the thousands of widows and sons and daughters who lost their parents, if they need more time. To them, it is too late, and we need to act now.

Mr. Speaker, this is reminiscent of the notion that our Vietnam veterans say, that what they want to do is delay till dead. Delay, delay, delay until they are dead. We cannot allow that to happen.

Then the next is, ''It costs too much.'' Well, that is a value statement. That is a value statement. To us, valuing the lives of our veterans and their family members is more important than giving billions of dollars to billionaires in a tax law that shortchanged the middle class. Their Health Care for Burn Pit Veterans Act will shortchange our veterans and their widows who need the care right now because they are dying from burn pits.

That is our value, and that is the value I am pleading to the folks on the other side to join us in, in a bipartisan way with unity to support our veterans.

Mr. Speaker, veterans are watching. They are listening. They care. Some are even listening to this with oxygen in nasal cannula taking their medications. Some could possibly be in their hospital bed taking chemotherapy. Some are in tears because a widow's and their father or mother's experiences are finally being recognized, and finally, we are able to do something. They are watching, and your sympathies will be reflected in your vote.

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the blue water Navy and Agent Orange were different. In 2011, the Institute of Medicine concluded that, given the passage of time and lack of sampling data, there was not enough information to conclusively determine whether blue water Navy veterans were exposed to Agent Orange. However, we already knew what conditions were linked to Agent Orange.

On the other hand, VA already presumes that certain veterans were exposed to burn pits, but it is unclear what conditions are linked to that exposure. The use of burn pits was more recent, and much of the data needed to determine whether benefits are warranted for certain conditions is still available.

That is why I support and why I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 6659, which has already passed the Senate, which would advance research into health benefits for toxic exposures and get needed healthcare for those veterans now.

Mr. Speaker, I was pleased during last night's State of the Union that President Biden highlighted the need to address the needs of toxic-exposed veterans.

As I stated earlier in debate just yesterday, VA announced it is initiating the rulemaking process to extend benefits to certain Gulf war and post-9/11 veterans who developed nine respiratory cancers.

Clearly, Secretary McDonough has the authority to provide benefits for veterans on a presumptive basis. I applaud the Secretary for exercising his authority to provide toxic-exposed veterans with the earned benefits based on science, and I urge him to continue to do so.

We should pass the Health Care for Burn Pit Veterans Act now so we can send it straight to the President's desk immediately while we continue to work with our Senate colleagues and VA on the right solution for additional benefits. However, toxic-exposed veterans will not receive healthcare or benefits simply by virtue of passing the PACT Act in the House today.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, to give the final words on the underlying bill, the PACT Act, on my mind is a constituent, a Vietnam veteran named Zack Earp, a distant relative of the great Wyatt Earp.

Zack sacrificed mightily on behalf of our country, and his body trembles today from Parkinsonism, one of the presumptives that got added during the blue water Navy debate. And I was happy to lead the final charge on getting the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act across the finish line.

But do you know what? Passage of that bill and its signage into law finally brought justice to our Vietnam veterans who served on naval surface ships on the territorial waters of Vietnam. It was 40 years late, justice 40 years late.

Mr. Speaker, I vowed that this would not happen again. To pass half measures, one-tenth measures, or one-half of 1 percent measures, which is what the minority proposes to do today, as a substitute for a comprehensive bill is simply repeating the history of what we did to our Vietnam veterans. Burn pits are this generation of veterans' Agent Orange.

Mr. Speaker, I say to my friends that we cannot repeat that history. We owe our Vietnam veterans that implicit promise that we would not repeat the history that was done to them.

As for the cost, I hear the other side competing with the President. Let us send more billions of dollars to Ukraine. And I, myself, would support a robust response to Ukraine in terms of money, but where is that same sense of one-upmanship when it comes to taking care of the veterans here in America?

People are falling over each other in this Chamber to get more money to Ukraine. That is the right thing to do, but it is also the right thing to do to take care of our veterans and to finish the unfinished business.

Finally, the science, I am glad to see science is being taken so seriously by the minority after we have seen skepticism about vaccines, skepticism about climate change. Suddenly, we are looking for scientific absolutism about our veterans.

Mr. Speaker, I say to my friends, the science is there. Let's get this done. Let's pass the PACT Act today with a big bipartisan vote.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Each further amendment printed in part B of House Report 117–253 not earlier considered as part of amendments en bloc pursuant to section 3 of House Resolution 950, shall be considered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, may be withdrawn by the proponent at any time before the question is put thereon, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question.

It shall be in order at any time after debate for the chair of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs or his designee to offer amendments en bloc consisting of further amendments printed in part B of House Report 117–253, not earlier disposed of. Amendments en bloc shall be considered as read, shall be debatable

for 20 minutes equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs or their respective designees, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question.

AMENDMENTS EN BLOC OFFERED BY MR. TAKANO OF CALIFORNIA

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to section 3 of House Resolution 950, I rise to offer 23 amendments en bloc to H.R. 3967.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will designate the amendments en bloc.

Amendments en bloc consisting of amendment Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 24, 25, 26, 27, and 28, printed in part B of House Report 117–253, offered by Mr. TAKANO of California:

AMENDMENT NO. 1 OFFERED BY MS. BUSH OF MISSOURI

Page 55, line 20, strike ''age'' and insert ''race and ethnicity''.

Page 55, after line 20, insert the following new paragraph (and redesignate the subsequent paragraphs accordingly):

(2) The age of the veteran.

AMENDMENT NO. 2 OFFERED BY MS. BUSH OF MISSOURI

Page 55, after line 6, insert the following new subsection (and redesignate the subsequent subsection accordingly):

(b) ELEMENTS.—The study under subsection (a) shall assess, with respect to each veteran included in the study, the following:

(1) The race and ethnicity of the veteran.

(2) The age of the veteran.

(3) The period of service and length of service of the veteran in the Armed Forces.

(4) Any military occupational speciality of the veteran.

(5) The gender of the veteran.

(6) The disability status of the veteran.

AMENDMENT NO. 3 OFFERED BY MS. BUSH OF MISSOURI

Page 58, line 5, strike ''located in the United States''.

AMENDMENT NO. 4 OFFERED BY MS. BUSH OF MISSOURI

At the end of title V, add the following:

SEC. 507. STUDY ON HEALTH EFFECTS OF WASTE RELATED TO MANHATTAN PROJECT ON CERTAIN VETERANS.

(a) STUDY.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall conduct a study on the health trends of veterans who, while serving in the active military, naval, air, or space service—

(1) participated in activities relating to the Manhattan Project (including activities relating to covered waste) in connection with such service; or

(2) resided at or near, as determined by the Secretary, the locations described in subsection (b).

(b) COVERED LOCATIONS.—The locations described in this subsection are the following locations in the county of St. Louis, Missouri:

(1) Coldwater Creek.

(2) The St. Louis Airport Site.

(3) The West Lake Landfill.

(4) Any other location in the county of St. Louis, Missouri that is proximate to covered waste, as determined by the Secretary.

(c) ELEMENTS.—The study under subsection (a) shall assess, with respect to each veteran included in the study, the following:

(1) The age, gender, and race of the veteran.

(2) The period and location of exposure to covered waste.

(3) Any type of cancer, or other illness associated with toxic exposure, that the veteran has.

(4) A comparison of the overall health condition of the veteran, including any illness of the veteran identified pursuant to paragraph (3), with the overall health condition of past and present civilian populations residing at the same location of exposure.

(d) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report on the study under subsection (a).

(e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) The term ''covered waste'' means any waste arising from activities carried out in connection with the Manhattan Project.

(2) The term ''illness'' has the meaning given that term in section 1171 of title 38, United States Code, as added by section 202.

(3) The term ''toxic exposure'' has the meaning given that term in section 101 of such title, as added by section 102(b).

AMENDMENT NO. 7 OFFERED BY MR. CARTWRIGHT OF PENNSYLVANIA

Page 61, after line 20, insert the following:

(c) VETERANS ORGANIZATIONS.—To the extent practicable, the Secretary shall share with national veterans service organizations and other veterans groups, including such organizations and groups that improve access by veterans to health care and benefits, the list of resources under subsection (a) and the outreach program under subsection (b).

AMENDMENT NO. 8 OFFERED BY MR. GIBBS OF OHIO

Page 15, line 2, insert ''**and Other Matters**'' after ''**Service**''.

Page 17, after line 6, insert the following new section:

SEC. 112. AUTHORIZATION PERIOD FOR EMERGENCY TREATMENT IN NON-DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL FACILITIES.

Section 1703(a)(3) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking ''A covered veteran'' and inserting ''(A) Except as provided by subparagraph (B), a covered veteran''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(B) In the case of an emergency which existed at the time of admission of a covered veteran to a health care provider, the Secretary shall deem the care or services received by the veteran during such admission to be authorized under subparagraph (A) if the covered veteran (or an individual acting on behalf of the covered veteran) makes an application for such authorization during the period following such admission that the Secretary determines appropriate for purposes of this paragraph, except such period may not be less than 96 hours.''.

AMENDMENT NO. 9 OFFERED BY MR. GOLDEN OF MAINE

Page 6, line 5, insert ''(including mental health services and counseling)'' after ''hospital care''.

Page 6, line 11, insert ''(including mental health services and counseling)'' after ''hospital care''.

Page 6, line 17, insert ''(including mental health services and counseling)'' after ''hospital care''.

Page 50, line 14, insert ''(including mental health services and counseling)'' after ''hospital care''.

AMENDMENT NO. 10 OFFERED BY MR. GOTTHEIMER OF NEW JERSEY

At the end of title V, insert the following:

SEC. 507. STUDY ON TOXIC EXPOSURE AND MENTAL HEALTH OUTCOMES.

(a) STUDY REQUIRED.—The Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs shall enter into an agreement with the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine for the conduct of a study of veterans to assess possible relationships between toxic exposures experienced during service in the Armed Forces and mental health outcomes, including chronic multisymptom illness, traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, psychosis, suicide attempts, and suicide deaths.

(b) ELEMENTS.—For each veteran included in the study under subsection (a), the following information shall be collected and assessed:

(1) Age.

(2) Gender.

(3) Race and ethnicity.

(4) Period and length of service in the Armed Forces.

(5) History of toxic exposure during service in the Armed Forces.

(6) Any diagnosis of chronic multisymptom illness.

(7) Any diagnosis of a mental health or cognitive disorder.

(8) Any history of suicide attempt or suidcidality.

(9) If the veteran died by suicide.

(c) REPORT.—Not later than two years after the date after the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a report containing the findings of the study conducted under subsection (a).

AMENDMENT NO. 11 OFFERED BY MR. GOTTHEIMER OF NEW JERSEY

Page 61, line 20, insert after the period the following: ''Information distributed under the outreach program shall be treated as a fact sheet of the Department of Veterans Affairs for purposes of making the information available in multiple languages pursuant to section 2 of the Veterans and Family Information Act (Public Law 117–62; 38 U.S.C. 6303 note).''.

AMENDMENT NO. 12 OFFERED BY MRS. HARTZLER OF MISSOURI

Add at the end of title VII the following new sections:

SEC. 7____. NON-APPLICABILITY OF NON-DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS COVENANTS NOT TO COMPETE TO APPOINTMENT OF VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION PERSONNEL.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter I of chapter 74 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''§ 7414. Effect of non-Department covenants not to compete

''(a) NON-APPLICABILITY.—Except as provided in subsection (b), in the case of an individual who is an applicant for appointment to a position in the Veterans Health Administration described in section 7401 of this title, any covenant not to compete into which the individual has entered with a non-Department facility or party shall have no force or effect with respect to the appointment of the individual to such a position.

''(b) SERVICE OBLIGATION.—(1) Any individual who is appointed to such a position in the Veterans Health Administration shall, as a condition of such appointment, agree to provide clinical services at a Department medical facility for the duration of the period described in paragraph (2).

''(2) The period described in this paragraph is the period that begins on the date on which an individual is appointed to such a position and ends on the latter of the following dates:

''(A) The date that is one year after such date of appointment.

''(B) The date of the termination of any covenant not to compete entered into between the individual and a non-Department facility or party.

''(3) The Secretary may waive the requirement under paragraph (1) with respect to an individual at the discretion of the Secretary.

''(c) TERMINATION OF DEPARTMENT EMPLOYMENT.—In the case of an individual who is appointed to such a position in the Veterans Health Administration who has entered into a covenant not to compete that is rendered non-applicable pursuant to subsection (a), if the individual's employment at the Veterans Health Administration is terminated for any reason before the specified termination date of such covenant, subsection (a) shall not apply with respect to such covenant after the date of the termination of the individual's employment at the Veterans Health Administration.

''(d) COVENANT NOT TO COMPETE.—In this section, the term 'covenant not to compete' means an agreement—

''(1) between an employee and employer or a contractor and principal that restricts such employee or contractor from performing—

''(A) any work for another employer for a specified period of time;

''(B) any work in a specified geographical area; or

''(C) work for another employer performing work that is similar to the work such employee or contractor performed for the employer or principal, included as a party to the agreement; and

''(2) that is entered into after the date of enactment of this Act.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 7413 the following new item:

''7414. Effect of non-Department covenants not to compete.''.

SEC. 7___. RECRUITMENT OF PHYSICIANS ON A CONTINGENT BASIS PRIOR TO COMPLETION OF TRAINING REQUIREMENTS.

Section 7402 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)(1)—

(A) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A) by inserting ''or to be offered an appointment to such position on a contingent basis under subsection (h)'' after ''position''; and

(B) by striking subparagraph (B) and inserting the following:

''(B)(i) have completed a residency leading to board eligibility in a specialty, satisfactory to the Secretary; or

''(ii) with respect to an offer for an appointment on a contingent basis under subsection (h), complete such a residency by not later than two years after the date of such offer; and''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(h)(1) The Secretary may appoint an individual under subsection (b)(1) on a contingent basis in accordance with this subsection if the Secretary reasonably anticipated that the individual will have completed the requirements for appointment under such subsection (b)(1) by not later than two years after the date on which the individual is so appointed.

''(2) An individual who is appointed to a position on a contingent basis under paragraph (1) shall be appointed to such position on a permanent basis if, by not later than two years after the date of the contingent appointment, the individual completes all the requirements for appointment under subsection (b)(1).

''(3) An individual who is appointed on a contingent basis under paragraph (1) who fails to complete the requirements for appointment under subsection (b)(1) by not later than two years after the date on which the individual is so appointed may not be appointed to such position on a permanent basis.''.

AMENDMENT NO. 13 OFFERED BY MS. JACKSON LEE OF TEXAS

Page 74, after line 19, insert the following new subsection:

(c) REPORT ON NATIONAL GUARD USE OF ILER.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report on the feasibility of modifying the Individual Longitudinal Exposure Record to ensure that a member of the National Guard who is deployed in the United States in connection with a natural disaster, without regard to duty status (including any duty under title 10 or title 32, United States Code, or State active duty), may record information regarding a suspected exposure by the member to toxic substances during such deployment.

AMENDMENT NO. 14 OFFERED BY MR. LEVIN OF MICHIGAN

Page 19, line 11, insert '', including mental and physical health'' after ''individual''.

AMENDMENT NO. 15 OFFERED BY MR. LEVIN OF CALIFORNIA

Add at the end of title VII the following new section:

SEC. 7___. AUTHORITY FOR SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO AWARD GRANTS TO STATES TO IMPROVE OUTREACH TO VETERANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 63 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating sections 6307 and 6308 and sections 6308 and 6309, respectively; and

(2) by inserting after section 6306 the following new section 6307:

''§ 6307. Grants to States to improve outreach to veterans

''(a) PURPOSE.—It is the purpose of this section to provide for assistance by the Secretary to States to carry out programs that—

''(1) improve outreach and assistance to veterans and the spouses, children, and parents of veterans, to ensure that such individuals are fully informed about any veterans and veterans-related benefits and programs (including State veterans programs) for which they may be eligible; and

''(2) facilitate opportunities for such individuals to receive competent, qualified services in the preparation, presentation, and prosecution of veterans benefits claims.

''(b) AUTHORITY.—The Secretary may award grants to States—

''(1) to carry out, coordinate, improve, or otherwise enhance outreach activities;

''(2) to increase the number of county or tribal veterans service officers serving in the State by hiring new, additional such officers; or

''(3) to expand, carry out, coordinate, improve, or otherwise enhance existing programs, activities, and services of the State's existing organization that has been recognized by the Department of Veterans Affairs pursuant to section 5902, in the preparation, presentation, and prosecution of claims for veterans benefits through representatives who hold positions as county or Tribal veterans service officers.

''(c) APPLICATION.—(1) To be eligible for a grant under this section, a State shall submit to the Secretary an application therefor at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary may require.

''(2) Each application submitted under paragraph (1) shall include the following:

''(A) A detailed plan for the use of the grant.

''(B) A description of the programs through which the State will meet the outcome measures developed by the Secretary under subsection (i).

''(C) A description of how the State will distribute grant amounts equitably among counties (or Tribal lands, as the case may be) with varying levels of urbanization.

''(D) A plan for how the grant will be used to meet the unique needs of American Indian or Alaska Native veterans, elderly veterans, women veterans, and veterans from other underserved communities.

''(d) DISTRIBUTION.—The Secretary shall seek to ensure that grants awarded under this section are equitably distributed among States with varying levels of urbanization.

''(e) PRIORITY.—The Secretary shall prioritize awarding grants under this section that will serve the following areas:

''(1) Areas with a critical shortage of county or tribal veterans service officers.

''(2) Areas with high rates of—

''(A) suicide among veterans; or

''(B) referrals to the Veterans Crisis Line.

''(f) USE OF COUNTY OR TRIBAL VETERANS SERVICE OFFICERS.—A State that receives a grant under this section to carry out an activity described in subsection (b)(1) shall carry out the activity through—

''(1) a county or Tribal veterans service officer of the State; or

''(2) if the State does not have a county or tribal veterans service officer, or if the county or Tribal veterans service officers of the State cover only a portion of that State, an appropriate entity of a State, local, or Tribal government, or another publicly funded entity, as determined by the Secretary.

''(g) REQUIRED ACTIVITIES.—Any grant awarded under this section shall be used—

''(1) to expand existing programs, activities, and services;

''(2) to hire and maintain new, additional county or Tribal veterans service officers; or

''(3) for travel and transportation to facilitate carrying out paragraph (1) or (2).

''(h) OTHER PERMISSIBLE ACTIVITIES.—A grant under this section may be used to provide education and training, including on-the-job training, for State, county, local, and tribal government employees who provide (or when trained will provide) veterans outreach services in order for those employees to obtain and maintain accreditation in accordance with procedures approved by the Secretary.

''(i) OUTCOME MEASURES.—(1) The Secretary shall develop and provide to each State that receives a grant under this section written guidance on the following:

''(A) Outcome measures.

''(B) Policies of the Department.

''(2) In developing outcome measures under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall consider the following goals:

''(A) Increasing the use of veterans and veterans-related benefits, particularly among vulnerable populations.

''(B) Increasing the number of county and tribal veterans service officers recognized by the Secretary for the representation of veterans under chapter 59 of this title.

''(j) TRACKING REQUIREMENTS.—(1) With respect to each grant awarded under this section, the Secretary shall track the use of veterans benefits among the population served by the grant, including the average period of time between the date on which a veteran or other eligible claimant applies for such a benefit and the date on which the veteran or other eligible claimant receives the benefit, disaggregated by type of benefit.

''(2) Not less frequently than annually during the life of the grant program established under this section, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on—

''(A) the information tracked under paragraph (1);

''(B) how the grants awarded under this section serve the unique needs of American Indian or Alaska Native veterans, elderly veterans, women veterans, and veterans from other underserved communities; and

''(C) other information provided by States pursuant to the grant reporting requirements.

''(k) PERFORMANCE REVIEW.—(1) The Secretary shall—

''(A) review the performance of each State that receives a grant under this section; and

''(B) make information regarding such performance publicly available.

''(l) REMEDIATION PLAN.—(1) In the case of a State that receives a grant under this section and does not meet the outcome measures developed by the Secretary under subsection (i), the Secretary shall require the State to submit a remediation plan under which the State shall describe how and when it plans to meet such outcome measures.

''(2) The Secretary may not award a subsequent grant under this section to a State described in paragraph (1) unless the Secretary approves the remediation plan submitted by the State.

''(m) MAXIMUM AMOUNT.—The amount of a grant awarded under this section may not exceed 10 percent of amounts made available for grants under this section for the fiscal year in which the grant is awarded.

''(n) SUPPLEMENT, NOT SUPPLANT.—Any grant awarded under this section shall be used to supplement and not supplant State and local funding that is otherwise available.

''(o) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary for each of fiscal years 2023 through 2027, $50,000,000 to carry out this section.

''(p) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

''(1) The term 'county or tribal veterans service officer' includes a local equivalent veterans service officer.

''(2) The term 'State' includes each Indian Tribe, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and any territory or possession of the United States.

''(3) The term 'Veterans Crisis Line' means the toll-free hotline for veterans established under section 1720F(h) of this title.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 63 of such title is amended by striking the items relating to sections 6307 and 6308 and inserting the following new items:

''6307. Grants to States to improve outreach to veterans.
''6308. Outreach for eligible dependents.
''6309. Biennial report to Congress.''.

(c) AUTHORIZATION OF ADDITIONAL FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT EMPLOYEE.—During fiscal years 2023 through 2027, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may hire an additional full-time equivalent employee in the Office of the General Counsel of the Department of Veterans Affairs, as compared to the number of full-time equivalent employees that would otherwise be authorized for such office, to carry out duties under the accreditation, discipline, and fees program.

AMENDMENT NO. 16 OFFERED BY MS. NEWMAN OF ILLINOIS

Add at the end of title VII the following new section:

SEC. 7___. STUDY AND REPORT ON HERBICIDE AGENT EXPOSURE IN PANAMA CANAL ZONE.

(a) STUDY.—The Secretary of Defense shall conduct a study on the exposure of members of the Armed Forces to herbicide agents, including Agent Orange and Agent Purple, in the Panama Canal Zone during the period beginning on January 1, 1958, and ending on December 31, 1999.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the study conducted under subsection (a).

AMENDMENT NO. 17 OFFERED BY MR. PAPPAS OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

Page 65, after line 22, insert the following:

SEC. 605. GUIDELINES FOR ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY ON POTENTIAL RISKS AND PREVENTION OF TOXIC EXPOSURES.

Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall jointly coordinate and establish guidelines to be used during training of members of the Armed Forces serving on active duty to provide the members awareness of the potential risks of toxic exposures and ways to prevent being exposed during combat.

AMENDMENT NO. 18 OFFERED BY MS. PLASKETT OF VIRGIN ISLANDS

At the end of title V, add the following:

SEC. 506. STUDY ON VETERANS IN TERRITORIES OF THE UNITED STATES.

(a) GAO STUDY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a study on the state of access and barriers to benefits and services furnished under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to veterans in Territories of the United States, including deficits in the availability and accessibility of such benefits and services compared to veterans elsewhere in the United States.

(2) ELEMENTS.—The study under paragraph (1) shall include—

(A) the number of veterans in each Territory of the United States;

(B) the number of veterans in each Territory who are enrolled in the system of annual patient enrollment of the Department of Veterans Affairs under section 1705(a) of title 38, United States Code;

(C) the number of veterans in each Territory who are eligible for services under section 1710 of such title but who are not enrolled as described in subparagraph (B);

(D) a detailed description of obstacles facing veterans in each Territory in accessing health care services, including those involving the availability of such services to veterans in the Territory in which the veterans reside, and the distance required of veterans to journey to receive services at a regional medical center of the Veterans Health Administration, a community-based outpatient clinic, or other full-service medical facility of the Department, or death center, respectively;

(E) a detailed description of obstacles facing veterans in each Territory in accessing readjustment counseling services, including those involving the availability of such services to veterans in the Territory in which the veterans reside, and the distance required of veterans to journey to receive services at a readjustment counseling services center of the Department;

(F) a detailed description of obstacles facing veterans in each Territory in accessing other veterans benefits, including those involving the availability of benefits and services to veterans in the Territory in which the veterans reside, and the distance required of the veterans to journey to the nearest office of the Veterans Benefits Administration;

(G) an analysis of the staffing and recordkeeping levels and quality of the offices of the Department charged with serving veterans in the Territories, including the availability of the full- and part-time staff of each office to the veterans they are charged with serving, and the continuity of care provided by such staff to such veterans;

(H) an analysis of the availability of the Veterans Community Care Program established under section 1703 of title 38, United States Code, to veterans in each Territory;

(I) an analysis of the economic and health consequences for veterans in each Territory resulting from obstacles to accessing adequate assistance and health care at facilities of the Department;

(J) an analysis of the access to assistance and health care provided to veterans in the aftermath of major disasters declared in each of the Territories since September 4, 2017; and

(K) recommendations for improving access of veterans in the Territories to benefits and services furnished by the Secretary, and reducing barriers and deficits in the availability and accessibility of such benefits and services compared to veterans elsewhere in the United States.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to Congress a final report setting forth the results of the study conducted under subsection (a), including the recommendations developed under paragraph (2)(K) of such subsection.

(c) TERRITORY DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''Territory'' includes American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.

AMENDMENT NO. 19 OFFERED BY MS. PORTER OF CALIFORNIA

Add at the end of title V the following new section:

SEC. 507. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PUBLIC WEBSITE FOR TOXIC EXPOSURE RESEARCH.

(a) WEBSITE.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish, and maintain thereafter, a publically accessible internet website of the Department of Veterans Affairs that serves as a clearinghouse for the publication of all toxic exposure research carried out or funded by the executive branch of the Federal Government.

(b) RELATION TO WAR RELATED ILLNESS AND INJURY STUDY CENTER.—The website developed and maintained under subsection (a) shall be housed under the website of the War Related Illness and Injury Study Center of the Department of Veterans Affairs, or successor center.

(c) COORDINATION.—In carrying out subsection (a), the Secretary shall coordinate with—

(1) the heads of each Federal department or agency carrying out or funding toxic exposure research;

(2) the War Related Illness and Injury Study Center of the Department of Veterans Affairs, or successor center; and

(3) any working group of the Department of Veterans Affairs or other similar entity responsible for coordinating toxic exposure research.

(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) The term ''toxic exposure'' has the meaning given that term in section 101 of title 38, United States Code, as added by section 102(b).

(2) The term ''toxic exposure research'' means research on the health consequences of toxic exposures experienced during service in the Armed Forces.

AMENDMENT NO. 21 OFFERED BY MR. RUIZ OF CALIFORNIA

At the end of title VII, insert the following:

SEC. 707. BUDGET INFORMATION FOR ALTERNATIVES TO BURN PITS.

The Secretary of Defense shall include in the budget submission of the President under section 1105(a) of title 31, United States Code, for each of fiscal years 2023 through

2027, a dedicated budget line item for incinerators and waste-to-energy waste disposal alternatives to burn pits.

AMENDMENT NO. 24 OFFERED BY MS. SCANLON OF PENNSYLVANIA

Add at the end of title VII the following new section:

SEC. 7___. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR EXPANSION OF CLAIMS AUTOMATION.

There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs $150,000,000 for fiscal year 2023 to continue the modernization and expansion of capabilities and capacity of the Veterans Benefits Management System of the Department of Veterans Affairs to support expected increased claims processing for newly eligible veterans pursuant to this Act and the amendments made by this Act.

AMENDMENT NO. 25 OFFERED BY MS. SLOTKIN OF MICHIGAN

Strike section 501 and insert the following:

SEC. 501. INTERAGENCY WORKING GROUP ON TOXIC EXPOSURE RESEARCH.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter II of chapter 73 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

"§ 7330D. Interagency working group on toxic exposure research

''(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—(1) The Secretary shall establish the Toxic Exposure Research Working Group (in this section referred to as the 'Working Group').

''(2) The Working Group shall consist of employees, selected by the Secretary, of the following:

''(A) The Department.

''(B) The Department of Defense.

''(C) The Department of Health and Human Services.

''(D) The Environmental Protection Agency.

''(E) Other Federal entities involved in research activities regarding the health consequences of toxic exposures experienced during active military, naval, air, or space service.

''(b) FUNCTIONS.—The Working Group shall perform the following functions:

''(1) Identify collaborative research activities and resources available among entities represented by members of the Working Group to conduct such collaborative research activities.

''(2) Develop a 5-year strategic plan for Federal entities represented in the Working Group to carry out collaborative research activities.

''(c) REPORTING.—The Secretary shall submit, to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives, the following:

''(1) Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of the Act, a report on the establishment of the Working Group under subsection (a).

''(2) Not later than two years after the date of enactment of the Act, a report containing the collaborative research activities identified, and the Strategic Plan developed, by the Working Group, under subsection (b).

''(3) Annually during the 5-year period covered by the strategic plan under subsection (b), a progress reports on implementation of the Strategic Plan under subsection (b).

''(d) TERMINATION.—The Working Group shall terminate after submitting the final report under subsection (c).

''(e) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this section—

''(1) The term 'Act' means the Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act of 2021.

''(2) The term 'collaborative research activity' means a research activity—

''(A) conducted by an entity represented by a member of the Working Group;

''(B) funded by the Federal Government; and

''(C) regarding the health consequences of toxic exposures experienced during active military, naval, air, or space service.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such subchapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 7330C the following new item:

''7330D. Interagency working group on toxic exposure research.''.

(c) IMPLEMENTATION.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish the Working Group under section 7330D of such title, as added by subsection (a), not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act

AMENDMENT NO. 26 OFFERED BY MS. SPANBERGER OF VIRGINIA

Add at the end of title V the following new section:

SEC. 5___. BIENNIAL REPORT ON HEALTH EFFECTS OF JET FUELS USED BY ARMED FORCES.

Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, and biennially thereafter during the subsequent eight-year period, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate, and make publicly available, a report that includes—

(1) a discussion of the effect of various different types of jet fuels used by the Armed Forces on the health of individuals by length of exposure;

(2) an identification of the immediate symptoms of jet fuel exposure that may indicate future health risks;

(3) a chronology of health safeguards implemented by the Armed Forces intended to reduce the exposure of members of the Armed Foces to jet fuel; and

(4) an identification of any areas relating to jet fuel exposure about which new research needs to be conducted.

AMENDMENT NO. 27 OFFERED BY MRS. TORRES OF CALIFORNIA

Page 61, after line 15, insert the following:

''(3) LANGUAGES.—The Secretary shall publish the list under paragraph (1) in languages including the following:

''(A) English.

''(B) Spanish.

''(C) Chinese.

''(D) The seven other most commonly spoken languages in the United States.''.

AMENDMENT NO. 28 OFFERED BY MRS. TORRES OF CALIFORNIA

Page 55, line 14, strike ''veterans to'' and insert ''veterans, to''.

Page 55, line 16, strike ''veterans.'' and insert ''veterans, and on available early detection diagnostics, to determine the feasibility and advisability of including such diagnostics as part of the health care furnished to veterans by the Secretary.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 950, the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) and the gentlewoman from Iowa (Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan en bloc of amendments, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the en bloc package. Many of these amendments strengthen the underlying bill. However, I wish we could have more time in committee to fully examine the impact these amendments would have on this legislation.

While I will not oppose the en bloc package, some of the included amendments are well outside the Committee on Veterans' Affairs' jurisdiction or may require additional work, and I must highlight these concerns.

Three of the amendments clearly impact the operations of the Department of Defense and are well outside the Department of Veterans Affairs' expertise or mission.

Representative BUSH's amendment No. 3 would necessitate that the VA review known cases of toxic exposure on military installations both in the United States and abroad. Bush amendment No. 4 requires a study of health outcomes related to waste from the Manhattan Project.

If anyone is going to conduct such reviews, it should be the Department of Defense, not the Department of Veterans Affairs. VA's time and resources need to be focused on meeting the needs of veterans, not on investigating activities on military bases or as part of military programs.

Yet another amendment, Representative PAPPAS' amendment No. 17, would require VA to conduct a study outside of VA's expertise and purview.

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This amendment would require Virginia to coordinate with the Department of Defense to provide training to Active Duty servicemembers on toxic exposure. It is inappropriate for the VA to be involved in training Active Duty servicemembers, that is entirely the DOD's purview.

Finally, Representative SCANLON's amendment 24 would authorize an additional $150 million in discretionary funding for VA's Veterans Benefits Management System, ahead of an expected drastic increase in disability claims should the Honoring our PACT Act be enacted. I agree with the intent. We need to make additional investments in benefits IT, but this is not the right way to do it.

According to the CBO, the bill already includes funding for IT improvements. We have no plan from the VA about how various systems should be modernized and how much it will ultimately cost. The worst thing we could do is throw money at individual systems with no coordination.

Moreover, this amendment improperly earmarks $150 million for VBMS, which is a dysfunctional and flawed system. VBMS has cost over $1 billion and has been struggling since its inception 10 years ago. I am not comfortable with spending another $150 million on it unless the VA gives us a plan explaining how it can be modernized.

Moving forward, we need to work on allocating funding where it can have

the most impact. Again, I support the intent and look forward to ensuring that any IT funding supports veterans in the manner intended.

As I stated earlier, while I do have concerns about these four amendments, I will support the en bloc package and urge my colleagues to do the same.

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

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, at this time I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Missouri (Ms. BUSH), my good friend who serves on the Judiciary Committee and the House Oversight and Reform Committee.

Ms. BUSH. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. TAKANO for his leadership on this historic legislation.

Mr. Speaker, St. Louis and I rise today in support of H.R. 3967, the Honoring our PACT Act, to expand healthcare, research, and resources for our veterans who are far too often exposed to toxic substances, both around the world and at home in St. Louis. This means so much to me as a nurse, I see it all the time.

I am proud to put forward four critical amendments to this legislation to help expand racial equity and study the military's environmental impact through rigorous Department of Veterans Affairs initiatives. My first two amendments ensure that VA research studies include a broader array of demographic information, including race, ethnicity, and disability status in gathering information on the impacts of toxic exposure.

Our third vital amendment ensures the VA will extend reviews of known cases of toxic exposure to military sites abroad. The Department of Defense needs to provide concrete data about the waste and pollution we are leaving in the nearly 750 military bases in over 80 countries around the world.

Finally, our last amendment adds a new study to this bill to measure the harmful health consequences of Manhattan Project waste on our veterans and their families in St. Louis.

If you are from North St. Louis there is a good chance that at some point in your life you have been exposed to toxic military waste like I have. From West Lake Landfill to Coldwater Creek, toxic military nuclear waste has been dumped in our communities, leading to rare cancers and birth defects.

Our veterans worked with this waste and are still living with it. The study is just one step we are taking to care for their health and safety. I look forward to voting in support of the Honoring our PACT Act and advancing these critical amendments that will help us to save lives.

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. GIBBS).

Mr. GIBBS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of amendment No. 8 in the en bloc. This amendment helps veterans and their families navigate a bureaucratic maze at VA. It is very frustrating a lot of times when they receive medical treatment at a non-VA facility.

When a veteran is admitted to a hospital or emergency department they currently only have 3 days to notify the VA. If they fail to notify the VA in that 3-day window, any claim associated with that visit will be automatically denied.

There are circumstances when getting immediate medical care outside of the VA system is the veteran's only option, especially during a medical emergency. They and their family should not have to worry about paperwork and the bureaucracy if the veteran is facing a life-threatening condition or is unable to make his or her own healthcare decisions.

My amendment simply just lengthens that window and adds another day onto that window to report the claim. When you think about this, if you are going in on an emergency basis and after you get stabilized—it might take a couple days in the hospital to get stabilized—that extra day doesn't seem like much, but it is really important because they get stabilized and they get time to sort through where they are at. That is so important. We have helped hundreds and maybe thousands of veterans back in Ohio, and this comes up all the time, and they have to fight to get their claim.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is really important, just a little bit of extra time. It is a no-brainer issue. I appreciate the chair putting it in the en bloc because it is really important because veterans, especially when they are in a non-veteran facility and have emergency care, they shouldn't have to worry about that deadline, and it just gives them a little extra time.

Mr. Speaker, I support amendment No. 8.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Virginia (Ms. SPANBERGER), my good friend who serves as a subcommittee chair on the Agriculture Committee and as a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee.

Ms. SPANBERGER. Mr. Speaker, my commitment to supporting veterans suffering from toxic exposures has been ironclad since I first met the late Michael Lecik, a father, a husband, a firefighter, and a veteran who died of cancer related to his exposures.

It continued when I met Gillie Jenkins, an atomic war veteran from Chesterfield, Virginia, who in his 90s is still fighting for the recognition of his brothers in arms and the sacrifices that they made.

Today, when I rise in support of my amendment to H.R. 3967, I am doing so inspired by William G. Collins, a veteran from Louisa County, Virginia. My amendment would require the VA to investigate the long-term health impacts of jet fuel exposures on our country's servicemembers.

Mr. Collins, a veteran from Louisa County, Virginia, is living with Parkinson's. As a former Air Force crew fire chief, his years of constant exposure to jet fuel put him at risk, but now the VA does not recognize Mr. Collins' condition as having a service connection. Mr. Collins served honorably, and he should know that his country has his back.

Mr. Speaker, this amendment would bring us one step closer to ensure that veterans like William have the healthcare benefits they deserve and the acknowledgment of their sacrifice.

Mr. Collins says, ''This disease has impacted my health, my economic security, and potentially my wife and I's dream of spending our last years on our beloved farm where we raised our family.''

Mr. Speaker, today I urge my colleagues to support this long overdue amendment as we support all of our Nation's veterans.

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. CARTWRIGHT), the distinguished subcommittee chair of the Appropriations Committee.

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Mr. Speaker, here is the deal. When we send our servicemembers into harm's way the deal is that we are going to take care of them when they get back home. It is more than a deal; it is a pact. It is something sacred. But for far too long Congress and the Department of Veterans Affairs have been slow in acting on that pact citing the high cost or the lack of science. The result is a disability claims benefit process that is cumbersome and places the burden on the veteran himself or herself to prove toxic exposure.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of my amendment which streamlines this process. It helps ease the burden of the disability benefit claims process on servicemembers and their families by, number one, requiring the Secretary of the VA to share a list of resources for toxic-exposed veterans, caregivers of toxic-exposed veterans, and survivors of toxic-exposed vets, national veterans service organizations, and other veterans' groups.

Number two, it requires the VA Secretary to share an outreach program with those VSOs. I believe we have to take every step possible to ensure that we offer the best care to those who have served our Nation. My amendment is a step forward in reaching the goal that servicemembers and their families should be made aware of every resource, and that includes the resources included in the Honoring our PACT Act.

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I ask all my colleagues to join me in supporting these 23 amendments en bloc, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 950, the previous question is ordered on the amendments en bloc offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO).

The question is on the amendments en bloc.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. BIGGS. 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.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question are postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 5 OFFERED BY MRS. MILLER-MEEKS.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 5 printed in part B of House Report 117–253.

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise as the designee of the gentleman from Illinois, and I have an amendment at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Strike page 1, line 1, and all that follows through page 80, line 7, and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Health Care for Burn Pit Veterans Act''.

SEC. 2. EXPANSION OF ELIGIBILITY FOR HEALTH CARE FROM DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS FOR CERTAIN VETERANS EXPOSED TO TOXIC SUBSTANCES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1710(e)(3) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A)—

(A) by striking ''January 27, 2003'' and inserting ''September 11, 2001''; and

(B) by striking ''five-year period'' and inserting ''ten-year period'';

(2) by amending subparagraph (B) to read as follows:

''(B) With respect to a veteran described in paragraph (1)(D) who was discharged or released from the active military, naval, air, or space service after September 11, 2001, and before October 1, 2013, but did not enroll to receive such hospital care, medical services, or nursing home care under such paragraph pursuant to subparagraph (A) before October 1, 2022, the one-year period beginning on October 1, 2022.''; and

(3) by striking subparagraph (C).

(b) CLARIFICATION OF COVERAGE.—Section 1710(e)(1)(D) of such title is amended by inserting after ''Persian Gulf War'' the following: ''(including any veteran who, in connection with service during such period, received the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Service Specific Expeditionary Medal, Combat Era Specific Expeditionary Medal, Campaign Specific Medal, or any other combat theater award established by a Federal statute or an Executive Order)''.

(c) REPORT.—Not later than October 1, 2024, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report on—

(1) the number of veterans who enrolled in the system of annual patient enrollment of the Department of Veterans Affairs established and operated under section 1705(a) of title 38, United States Code, to receive care pursuant to eligibility under subparagraph (B) of section 1710(e)(3) of such title, as amended by subsection (a)(2); and

(2) of the veterans described in paragraph (1), the number of such veterans who reported a health concern related to exposure to a toxic substance or radiation.

(d) OUTREACH PLAN.—Not later than December 1, 2022, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a plan to conduct outreach to veterans described in subparagraph (B) of section 1710(e)(3) of title 38, United States Code, as amended by subsection (a)(2), to notify such veterans of their eligibility for hospital care, medical services, or nursing home care under such subparagraph.

(e) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This section and the amendments made by this section shall take effect on October 1, 2022.

SEC. 3. INCORPORATION OF TOXIC EXPOSURE SCREENING FOR VETERANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Beginning not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall incorporate a screening to help determine potential exposures to toxic substances during active military, naval, air, or space service as part of a health care screening furnished by the Secretary to veterans enrolled in the system of annual patient enrollment of the Department of Veterans Affairs established and operated under section 1705 of title 38, United States Code, to improve understanding by the Department of exposures of veterans to toxic substances while serving in the Armed Forces.

(b) TIMING.—The Secretary shall ensure that a veteran described in subsection (a) completes the screening required under such subsection not less frequently than once every five years.

(c) DETERMINATION OF QUESTIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The questions included in the screening required under subsection (a) shall be determined by the Secretary with input from medical professionals.

(2) SPECIFIC QUESTIONS.—At a minimum, the screening required under subsection (a) shall, with respect to a veteran, include—

(A) a question about the potential exposure of the veteran to an open burn pit; and

(B) a question regarding exposures that are commonly associated with service in the Armed Forces.

(3) OPEN BURN PIT DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term ''open burn pit'' means an area of land that—

(A) is designated by the Secretary of Defense to be used for disposing solid waste by burning in the outdoor air; and

(B) does not contain a commercially manufactured incinerator or other equipment specifically designed and manufactured for the burning of solid waste.

(d) PRINT MATERIAL.—In developing the screening established under subsection (a), the Secretary shall ensure that print materials complementary to such screening that outline related resources for veterans are available at each medical center of the Department to veterans who may not have access to the internet.

(e) SCREENING UPDATES.—The Secretary shall consider updates to the content of the screening required under subsection (a) not less frequently than biennially to ensure the screening contains the most current information.

(f) ACTIVE MILITARY, NAVAL, AIR, OR SPACE SERVICE DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''active military, naval, air, or space service'' has the meaning given that term in section 101(24) of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 4. TRAINING FOR PERSONNEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS WITH RESPECT TO VETERANS EXPOSED TO TOXIC SUBSTANCES.

(a) HEALTH CARE PERSONNEL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall provide to health care personnel of the Department of Veterans Affairs education and training to identify, treat, and assess the impact on veterans of illnesses related to exposure to toxic substances and inform such personnel of how to ask for additional information from veterans regarding different exposures.

(b) BENEFITS PERSONNEL.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall incorporate a training program for processors of claims under the laws administered by the Secretary who review claims for disability benefits relating to service-connected disabilities based on exposure to toxic substances.

(2) ANNUAL TRAINING.—Training provided to processors under paragraph (1) shall be provided not less frequently than annually.

SEC. 5. ANALYSIS AND REPORT ON TREATMENT OF VETERANS FOR MEDICAL CONDITIONS RELATED TO TOXIC EXPOSURE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall analyze, on a continuous basis, all clinical data that—

(1) is obtained by the Department of Veterans Affairs in connection with hospital care, medical services, and nursing home care furnished under section 1710(a)(2)(F) of title 38, United States Code; and

(2) is likely to be scientifically useful in determining the association, if any, between the medical condition of a veteran and the exposure of the veteran to a toxic substance.

(b) ANNUAL REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report containing—

(1) the aggregate data compiled under subsection (a);

(2) an analysis of such data;

(3) a description of the types and incidences of medical conditions identified by the Department under such subsection;

(4) the explanation of the Secretary for the incidence of such medical conditions and other explanations for the incidence of such conditions as the Secretary considers reasonable; and

(5) the views of the Secretary on the scientific validity of drawing conclusions from the incidence of such medical conditions, as evidenced by the data compiled under subsection (a), regarding any association between such conditions and exposure to a toxic substance.

SEC. 6. ANALYSIS RELATING TO MORTALITY OF VETERANS WHO SERVED IN SOUTHWEST ASIA.

(a) ANALYSIS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 270 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in coordination with the Secretary of Defense, shall conduct an updated analysis of total and respiratory disease mortality in covered veterans.

(2) ELEMENTS.—The analysis required by paragraph (1) shall include, to the extent practicable, the following with respect to each covered veteran:

(A) Metrics of airborne exposures.

(B) The location and timing of deployments of the veteran.

(C) The military occupational specialty of the veteran.

(D) The Armed Force in which the veteran served.

(E) Pre-existing health status of the veteran, including with respect to asthma.

(F) Relevant personal information of the veteran, including cigarette and e-cigarette smoking history, diet, sex, gender, age, race, and ethnicity.

(b) COVERED VETERAN DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''covered veteran'' means any veteran who—

(1) on or after August 2, 1990, served on active duty in—

(A) Bahrain;

(B) Iraq;

(C) Kuwait;

(D) Oman;

(E) Qatar;

(F) Saudi Arabia;

(G) Somalia; or

(H) the United Arab Emirates; or

(2) on or after September 11, 2001, served on active duty in—

(A) Afghanistan;

(B) Djibouti;

(C) Egypt;

(D) Jordan;

(E) Lebanon;

(F) Syria; or

(G) Yemen.

SEC. 7. STUDY ON HEALTH TRENDS OF POST 9/11 VETERANS.

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall conduct an epidemiological study on the health trends of veterans who served in the Armed Forces after September 11, 2001.

SEC. 8. STUDY ON CANCER RATES AMONG VETERANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall conduct a study on the incidence of cancer in veterans to determine trends in the rates of the incidence of cancer in veterans.

(b) ELEMENTS.—The study required by subsection (a) shall assess, with respect to each veteran included in the study, the following:

(1) The age of the veteran.

(2) The period of service and length of service of the veteran in the Armed Forces.

(3) The military occupational specialty or specialties of the veteran.

(4) The gender of the veteran.

(5) The type or types of cancer that the veteran has.

SEC. 9. PUBLICATION OF LIST OF RESOURCES OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS FOR VETERANS EXPOSED TO TOXIC SUBSTANCES AND OUTREACH PROGRAM FOR SUCH VETERANS AND CAREGIVERS AND SURVIVORS OF SUCH VETERANS.

(a) PUBLICATION OF LIST OF RESOURCES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall publish a list of resources of the Department of Veterans Affairs for—

(A) veterans who were exposed to toxic substances;

(B) families and caregivers of such veterans; and

(C) survivors of such veterans who are receiving death benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary.

(2) UPDATE.—The Secretary shall periodically update the list published under paragraph (1).

(b) OUTREACH.—The Secretary shall develop, with input from the community, an informative outreach program for veterans on illnesses that may be related to exposure to toxic substances, including outreach with respect to benefits and support programs.

SEC. 10. REPORT ON INDIVIDUAL LONGITUDINAL EXPOSURE RECORD.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date on which the Individual Longitudinal Exposure Record achieves full operational capability, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on the data quality of the Individual Longitudinal Exposure Record and the usefulness of the Individual Longitudinal Exposure Record in supporting veterans in receiving health care and benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(b) ELEMENTS.—The report required by subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) An identification of exposures to toxic substances that may not be fully captured by the current systems for environmental and occupational health monitoring and recommendations for how to improve those systems.

(2) An analysis of the quality of the location data in determining exposures of veterans to toxic substances and recommendations for how to improve the quality of that location data.

(3) Recommendations on how to improve the usefulness of the Individual Longitudinal Exposure Record.

(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) The term ''appropriate congressional committees'' means—

(A) the Committee on Armed Services and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives; and

(B) the Committee on Armed Services and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate.

(2) The term ''Individual Longitudinal Exposure Record'' includes any pilot program or other program used by the Department of Veterans Affairs or the Department of Defense to track how members of the Armed Forces or veterans have been exposed to various occupational or environmental hazards.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 950, the gentlewoman from Iowa (Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Iowa.

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss Ranking Member BOST's amendment to replace the Honoring our PACT Act with the Health Care for Burn Pit Veterans Act.

The Health Care for Burn Pit Veterans Act is a bipartisan legislation that has already passed in the Senate. It would expand healthcare for toxic-exposed veterans by extending VA's enhanced combat eligibility period from 5 to 10 years. That would give post-9/11 combat veterans a decade after leaving the military to enroll in VA care without having a service-connected disability rating or a low income.

Those who have been out of the military for more than a decade would be able to enroll during a 1-year open enrollment period. The bill would also improve training for VA staff on how to recognize and treat toxic exposure; research on the impact of toxic exposure; and outreach about the resources available to veterans regarding toxic exposure. CBO has estimated that the bill would cost $1 billion in discretionary funding over 10 years.

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This is in stark contrast to the over $300 billion discretionary and mandatory costs of the PACT Act.

The Healthcare for Burn Pit Veterans Act would not expand compensation benefits for toxic-exposed veterans.

I appreciate the importance of benefits. That is why Ranking Member BOST and I remain committed to working across the aisle and Capitol to improve benefits for toxic-exposed veterans.

The framework that the PACT Act establishes to do that, however, is unworkable, and I am afraid the PACT Act will stall without a clear path forward in the Senate.

I don't want to let the perfect be the enemy of the good on an issue as important as this one. I also don't want to let this Congress go by without helping veterans who are sick and dying from toxic exposure. As a veteran and as a doctor who has cared for sick and dying patients, that would be an unacceptable outcome for me.

Passage of the Healthcare for Burn Pit Veterans Act is a critical first step in saving the lives of veterans suffering from toxic exposure. The House should not let another day go by without sending it to the President. The stakes are too high.

Behind me is a picture of Lauren Price. She passed away from conditions she and her husband Jim believe were related to toxic exposure. Ranking Member BOST invited Jim to testify last year about Lauren's legacy. During his testimony, Jim stressed the need to provide veterans like her with VA healthcare. As he said, benefits don't mean much if a veteran isn't alive to get them because they didn't get the healthcare they need and earned.

Jim's message is an important one. Some veterans cannot afford to keep waiting for Congress to agree on a comprehensive way forward. That would be a monumental task, and we have not even started it yet. That is why the House must pass the Healthcare for Burn Pit Veterans Act today. I hope we will.

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

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia). The gentleman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to Ranking Member BOST's substitute offered in his absence by Representative MILLER-MEEKS.

I want to be clear about what this substitute is and what it is not. The ranking member has offered this amendment as the solution to addressing toxic exposure. But it is not that. The substitute amendment is the exact text of a Senator TESTER bill which is meant to be the first part of a three-part effort in the Senate.

What Senator TESTER has proposed, is doing in three phases what we have done in the PACT Act together. Yet my colleague from Illinois and my colleague from Iowa have taken the work of the Senate without intending to do

any more. This is it. They are representing this as the complete solution which amounts to really a bait and switch.

This substitute amendment would strike the entire PACT Act and replace it with an expansion of existing healthcare eligibility for combat veterans from 5 to 10 years. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that this provision will impact roughly 16,000 veterans over the next 10 years. This is laudable, but let's talk about the math.

Over the past 20 years, 3.5 million servicemembers deployed to areas where they may have been exposed to toxic substances. So the ranking member's amendment would leave behind over 3.4 million veterans.

This is not even a half measure, this substitute, this replacement, that they offer. It is not even one-tenth. It is one-half of 1 percent, a one-half of 1 percent solution compared to the comprehensive bill that we need.

The policy of this amendment is something we agree on. We should enhance eligibility for combat veterans which is why we included the language in the bill before you today, Mr. Speaker. However, it only covers less than half a percentage point of the number of veterans who would be covered under PACT.

My colleague is asserting that less than one-half of a percentage point is enough to be done and then walk away?

The math does not add up, and veterans know it. That is why over 42 veterans service organizations are supporting the PACT Act. Again, I reference the letters previously inserted into the RECORD.

During the President's State of the Union Address last night, he highlighted the importance of this topic citing his own family tragedy and the loss of his son, Beau, to brain cancer after his military service. He called on Congress to ''pass a law to make sure veterans devastated by toxic exposures in Iraq and Afghanistan finally get the benefits and comprehensive healthcare they deserve.''

Let me repeat that: pass a law to make sure veterans devastated by toxic exposures in Iraq and Afghanistan finally get the benefits and comprehensive healthcare they deserve.

The Bost substitute is far from comprehensive. In fact, it is a fraction of what our veterans have earned and deserve.

It is time we honored our pact to our veterans. That is why I implore my colleagues to reject this incremental measure and join me in supporting the only comprehensive toxic-exposure legislation that delivers on our sacred promise, the PACT Act.

Mr. Speaker, how much time do I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman has 1¼ minutes remaining.

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

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, with all due deference to my colleague, Ranking Member BOST has made it abundantly clear that this is a first step—not a last step—but an initial first step in getting veterans the healthcare that they need and deserve.

Mr. Speaker, I urge and implore my colleagues to pass Mr. BOST's amendment No. 5.

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

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE), who is my good friend and who serves on the Budget Committee, the Homeland Security Committee, and as the chair of the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security on the Judiciary Committee.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank my distinguished friend for yielding.

I rise enthusiastically joining the President and joining our chairman in pushing the Honoring our PACT Act and just remind the underlying amendment by Mr. BOST, one-half of 1 percent, do we in this time, do our veterans, do our soldiers deserve half treatment?

I don't think so.

The Jackson Lee amendment adds to this legislation. It would add a report on the feasibility of modifying the individual longitudinal exposure record system used to register toxic exposure of military personnel to include members of the National Guard who are deployed in the United States in connection with a natural disaster without regard to duty status and may record information regarding a suspected exposure by the National Guard to toxic substances while they are in the midst of their rescues.

We know and we thank the House Veterans' Affairs Committee for recognizing and working with my staff that the National Guard is involved in toxic matters on home side. They collaborate with and support civilian authorities and traditional first responders, they are called in as a helpmate. They serve to strengthen and expand local disaster response while the emergency services of a State or locale may have robust plans to deal with unexpected, sometimes disasters strike that overwhelm their resources.

Let me just show you, Mr. Speaker, they are involved in the work. This is an important amendment, and I ask my colleagues to support it.

Mr. Speaker, Chairman MCGOVERN, thank you for this opportunity to discuss briefly three Jackson Lee Amendment #13, to H.R. 3967, the Honoring our PACT Act.

The PACT Act provides much needed attention to the issue of toxic exposure of military service personnel when it occurs during deployment.

Jackson Lee Amendment #13 would add a report on the feasibility of modifying the Individual Longitudinal Exposure Record System used to register toxic exposure of military personnel, to include members of the National Guard who are deployed in the United States in connection with a natural disaster, without regard to duty status may record information regarding a suspected exposure by the National Guard to toxic substances during such deployment.

I thank the House Committee on Veterans Affairs for working with my staff on this Jackson Lee Amendment to H.R. 3967.

The National Guard collaborates with and supports civilian authorities and traditional first responders in their efforts to respond to emergencies and disasters.

They serve to strengthen and expand the local disaster response capacity.

While the emergency services of a state or locale may have robust plans to deal with the unexpected, sometimes disasters strike that overwhelm their resources and manpower.

During these times the National Guard can play a vital role in saving lives, stemming suffering and protecting property.

This amendment is important because of the conditions that can exist during manmade or natural disasters that may expose National Guard members to toxic substances.

National Guard service personnel provide vital services before, during and following disasters that require that they come into contact with flood waters, wildfires and other disasters that by their nature would breach containment, manufacturing, and storage facilities for toxic substances that would pose a risk to people.

I recall the flood waters of Hurricane Harvey and the hundreds of refineries, small and large chemical processing facilities, and storage facilities that were impacted by flood waters.

Some of these impacts included the risk of explosions due to the loss of containment caused by a loss of electricity or the encroachment of flood waters.

As was the case when two explosions shook the Arkema chemical facility that resulted in a fire because the temperature required to safely store chemicals was lost due to a power outage caused by Hurricane Harvey flooding.

Many chemical facilities are located in low-lying coastal areas and vulnerable to damage from hurricanes, flooding, and erosion, which are increasing with climate change.

Extreme weather can trigger industrial disasters, including explosions, fires, and major chemical releases, as well as chronic chemical leakage into air, water, and soil.

Researchers identified 872 highly hazardous chemical facilities within 50 miles of the hurricane-prone U.S. Gulf Coast.

Coastal areas are also densely populated and would be where National Guard would be deployed to evacuate and assist residents in advance of, during and following the landfall of a Hurricane.

There are approximately 4,374,000 people, 1,717 schools, and 98 medical facilities within 1.5 miles of the facilities according to the Milken Institute School of Public Health, George Washington University, which collected survey data.

The Jackson Lee amendment would provide a report to inform the Committee on Veterans Affairs of the importance of including toxic exposure data on National Guard personnel who are exposed to toxic substances when deployed in response to disasters.

In 2021, following Hurricane Ida's landfall in an analysis by the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) of the New Orleans area revealed that 138 industrial facilities in and around the city—some of which use electricity

to contain hazardous chemicals—were potentially without power, putting facility workers and nearby civilians at enormous risk.

Flood waters, smoke from wildfires, and earthquakes have impacts on facilities, businesses, and research facilities that are safe until they are compromised by the impact of a natural or manmade disaster.

I urge the Committee to make in order the Jackson Lee Amendment to H.R. 3967.

Thank you.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 950, the previous question is ordered on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Iowa (Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS).

The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Iowa (Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS).

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

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. 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.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question are postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 6 OFFERED BY MS. BROWNLEY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 6 printed in part B of House Report 117–253.

Ms. BROWNLEY. Mr. Speaker, I have an amendment at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 14, after line 19, insert the following:

SEC. 105. REVISION OF BREAST CANCER MAMMOGRAPHY POLICY OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO PROVIDE MAMMOGRAPHY SCREENING FOR VETERANS WHO SERVED IN LOCATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH TOXIC EXPOSURE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 7322 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by striking ''The'' and inserting ''IN GENERAL.—The'';

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) by striking ''The'' and inserting ''STANDARDS FOR SCREENING.—The''; and

(B) in paragraph (2)(B), by inserting ''a record of service in a location and during a period specified in subsection (d),'' after ''risk factors,''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new subsections:

''(c) ELIGIBILITY FOR SCREENING FOR VETERANS EXPOSED TO TOXIC SUBSTANCES.—The Under Secretary for Health shall ensure that, under the policy developed under subsection (a), any veteran who, during active military, naval, or air service, was deployed in support of a contingency operation in a location and during a period specified in subsection (d), is eligible for a mammography screening by a health care provider of the Department.

''(d) LOCATIONS AND PERIODS SPECIFIED.—(1) The locations and periods specified in this subsection are the following:

''(A) Iraq during following periods:

''(i) The period beginning on August 2, 1990, and ending on February 28, 1991.

''(ii) The period beginning on March 19, 2003, and ending on such date as the Secretary determines burn pits are no longer used in Iraq.

''(B) The Southwest Asia theater of operations, other than Iraq, during the period beginning on August 2, 1990, and ending on such date as the Secretary determines burn pits are no longer used in such location, including the following locations:

''(i) Kuwait.

''(ii) Saudi Arabia.

''(iii) Oman.

''(iv) Qatar.

''(C) Afghanistan during the period beginning on September 11, 2001, and ending on such date as the Secretary determines burn pits are no longer used in Afghanistan.

''(D) Djibouti during the period beginning on September 11, 2001, and ending on such date as the Secretary determines burn pits are no longer used in Djibouti.

''(E) Syria during the period beginning on September 11, 2001, and ending on such date as the Secretary determines burn pits are no longer used in Syria.

''(F) Jordan during the period beginning on September 11, 2001, and ending on such date as the Secretary determines burn pits are no longer used in Jordan.

''(G) Egypt during the period beginning on September 11, 2001, and ending on such date as the Secretary determines burn pits are no longer used in Egypt.

''(H) Lebanon during the period beginning on September 11, 2001, and ending on such date as the Secretary determines burn pits are no longer used in Lebanon.

''(I) Yemen during the period beginning on September 11, 2001, and ending on such date as the Secretary determines burn pits are no longer used in Yemen.

''(J) Such other locations and corresponding periods as set forth by the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry established under section 201 of the Dignified Burial and Other Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–260; 38 U.S.C. 527 note).

''(K) Such other locations and corresponding periods as the Secretary, in collaboration with the Secretary of Defense, may determine appropriate in a report submitted under paragraph (2).

''(2) Not later than two years after the date of the enactment of the Supporting Expanded Review for Veterans In Combat Environments Act of 2021, and not less frequently than once every two years thereafter, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in collaboration with the Secretary of Defense, shall submit to Congress a report specifying other locations and corresponding periods for purposes of paragraph (1)(K).

''(3) A location under this subsection shall not include any body of water around or any airspace above such location.

''(4) In this subsection, the term 'burn pit' means an area of land that is used for disposal of solid waste by burning in the outdoor air.''.

(b) REPORT ON BREAST CANCER RATES FOR VETERANS DEPLOYED TO CERTAIN AREAS.—Not later than two years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report that compares the rates of breast cancer among members of the Armed Forces deployed to the locations and during the periods specified in section 7322(d) of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), as compared to members of the Armed Forces who were not deployed to those locations during those periods and to the civilian population.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 950, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BROWNLEY) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California.

Ms. BROWNLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to offer a straightforward amendment to H.R. 3967, the Honoring our PACT Act, which would simply ensure toxic–exposed veterans have access to mammography screenings.

I would like to begin by thanking my colleague from Iowa, Congresswoman MILLER-MEEKS, for coauthoring this amendment which is based on her outstanding bill.

As chair of the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Health, I very much want to see the gentlewoman's good bill advance, which is why I am offering this amendment today.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, the conditions related to toxic exposure manifest themselves in many ways and on many different timelines. The incidence rate of breast cancer in women veterans is 20 to 40 percent higher than the incidence rate of breast cancer among nonveteran women. From 2000 to 2015, the VA saw the number of women diagnosed with breast cancer increase by five times for women ages 45 to 65. This is partly due to better screening, but still more can be done, particularly related to those who have been exposed to toxic substances.

Ensuring that veterans have access to lifesaving screening for breast cancer cannot depend on the time after separation from the military and must simply depend on whether a veteran served in a place where they were exposed to toxins.

This amendment, based on the SERVICE Act, directs the director of the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide mammogram screening for female veterans who served in areas associated with burn pits and other toxic exposure. It also directs the VA to submit a report to both the Senate and House Veterans' Affairs Committees 2 years after enactment that compares the instances of breast cancer among members of the Armed Forces.

Women veterans who served in areas with high toxic exposures should not have to wait until they start showing symptoms or reach a certain age to access preventative mammography screenings.

This is why I am proud to join Congresswoman MILLER-MEEKS in offering this lifesaving amendment.

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

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I claim the time in opposition, although I am not opposed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentlewoman from Iowa is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to introduce this amendment alongside my colleague, Congresswoman JULIA BROWNLEY, from California.

This amendment is based on our bill, H.R. 4794, the Making Advances in Mammography and Medical Options for Veterans Act. It would ensure that toxic-exposed veterans can access mammography screens through the VA healthcare system. As a doctor I know how very important preventive care is. Early detection of cancer or other serious conditions can be lifesaving for patients.

Veterans deserve the very highest quality care that we can offer them, and that certainly includes timely access to mammograms, particularly for the growing number of women who are volunteering to serve in our Armed Forces.

I thank Congresswoman BROWNLEY for working with me on this amendment, and I am glad that it was made in order.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support that, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. BROWNLEY. Mr. Speaker, how much time is remaining on each side?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from California has 2½ minutes remaining.

Ms. BROWNLEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO), who is the great chair of the Veterans' Affairs Committee and who has worked diligently on this very, very important bill.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, the chair of the Subcommittee on Health.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Brownley-Miller-Meeks amendment. Women who have served in the military are 20 to 40 percent more likely to develop breast cancer than women who have never served. It is believed that it is due to exposure to radiation and other carcinogens while serving. It is therefore critical that VA ensure all veterans who have served in locations associated with toxic exposure have access to prompt, high-quality breast imaging services to detect breast cancer early.

This amendment would ensure just that. Any eligible veteran who was deployed and exposed to burn pits and airborne hazards would be eligible for mammography screens by the VA. These screenings will save lives.

Furthermore, it requires VA to submit a report to Congress on the rates of breast cancer among those veterans deployed to such toxic environments and compare those rates against their veteran peers who were not exposed, as well as the civilian population.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to support this commonsense amendment.

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Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. BROWNLEY. Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to support mammography screenings for toxic-exposed veterans and vote ''yes'' on this amendment.

I would also like to say that we must pass this bill today, a bill that will finally, finally, bring justice to our veterans and provide our commitment and promise that we made to our veterans who served our country, both men and women. So this bill is long, long overdue.

Men and women sign up for the Armed Forces. They know they may have to put their lives on the line. They did not know that they may die of toxic exposures.

This bill is long overdue. We need a ''yes'' vote on the amendment and a ''yes'' vote on the underlying bill.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 950, the previous question is ordered on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BROWNLEY).

The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BROWNLEY).

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. WEBER of Texas. 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.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question are postponed.

Pursuant to clause 1(c) of rule XIX, further consideration of H.R. 3697 is postponed.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Byrd, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed a bill of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 3600. An act to improve the cybersecurity of the Federal Government, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that pursuant to Public Law 117–81, the Chair, on behalf of the Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, appoints the following individual to serve as a member of the Afghanistan War Commission:

Daniel P. Fata of Massachusetts.

The message also announced that pursuant to Public Law 106–398, as amended by Public Law 108–7, the Chair, on behalf of the Majority Leader, and in consultation with the Chairmen of the Senate Committee on Armed Services and the Senate Committee on Finance, announces the appointment of the following individuals to serve as members of the United States-China Economic and Security Review Commission:

Carte P. Goodwin, of West Virginia for a term beginning January 1, 2022 and expiring December 31, 2023 (reappointment).

James Mann of New York for a term beginning January 1, 2022 and expiring December 31, 2023.

CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY WITH RESPECT TO UKRAINE—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 117–96)

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 declared in Executive Order 13660 of March 6, 2014, which was expanded in scope in Executive Order 13661 of March 16, 2014, Executive Order 13662 of March 20, 2014, and Executive Order 14065 of February 21, 2022, and under which additional steps were taken in Executive Order 13685 of December 19, 2014 and Executive Order 13849 of September 20, 2018, is to continue in effect beyond March 6, 2022.

The actions and policies of persons that undermine democratic processes and institutions in Ukraine; threaten its peace, security, stability, sovereignty, and territorial integrity; and contribute to the misappropriation of its assets, as well as the actions and policies of the Government of the Russian Federation, including its purported annexation of Crimea, its use of force in Ukraine, and its purported recognition of the so-called Donetsk People's Republic or Luhansk People's Republic regions of Ukraine, continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. Therefore, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13660 with respect to Ukraine.

JOSEPH R. BIDEN, Jr.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *March 2, 2022.*

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which the yeas and nays are ordered.

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

SUPPORTING THE PEOPLE OF UKRAINE

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 956) to support the People of Ukraine.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 956

Whereas, on January 21, 1990, more than 300,000 Ukrainians called for unity and independence from the Soviet Union by forming a human chain between the cities of Kyiv and Ivano-Frankivsk;

Whereas, on December 1, 1991, more than 90 percent of Ukrainian citizens voted in a national referendum in support of independence, with majorities in every region;

Whereas, on November 21, 2013, the Euromaidan protests began in favor of signing the European Union-Ukraine Association Agreement, resulting in the Revolution of Dignity and the removal of President Viktor Yanukovych by the Verkhovna Rada;

Whereas, in February and March of 2014, the Russian Federation invaded the peninsula of Crimea, illegally annexed the region, held a sham referendum, and claimed the territory to be a part of Russia;

Whereas, beginning in April 2014, the Russian Federation invaded the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Eastern Ukraine instigating violence, stoking conflict, arming separatists, and spreading disinformation on Ukrainian soil;

Whereas, on July 17, 2014, Russian soldiers or Russian separatist fighters shot down the passenger flight MH17 flying over the Donbas with a Buk surface-to-air missile provided by the Russian Federation, killing all 298 innocent passengers on board;

Whereas, since February 2015, Russia has continued to fail to live up to its agreements under the Minsk agreements and the Russian-backed war in the Donbas has claimed approximately 14,000 lives;

Whereas the Russian military conducted a large-scale buildup in and around Ukraine in March and April 2021 under the guise of military exercises, leaving significant military equipment behind;

Whereas the Russian military initiated its most recent much larger military buildup in October 2021 that culminated in approximately 190,000 forces by the time of Russia's renewed full-scale incursion on February 24, 2022;

Whereas, on February 21, 2022, the State Duma of Russia passed a bill, approved by President Vladimir Putin, to officially recognize the self-proclaimed Luhansk People's Republic and Donetsk People's Republic as independent;

Whereas, on February 21, 2022, Vladimir Putin ordered Russian troops into the self-proclaimed Luhansk People's Republic and Donetsk People's Republic after recognizing their independence;

Whereas the decision to recognize the self-proclaimed Luhansk People's Republic and Donetsk People's Republic as independent and order Russian troops into that territory was not only in violation of international law, Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and the Minsk agreements, but also tantamount to a declaration of war;

Whereas, on February 24, 2022, Russian forces, enabled by Belarus, launched its unprovoked full-scale renewed invasion of a peaceful, independent country, Ukraine;

Whereas, since 2014, the United States has provided $3,100,000,000 in security assistance to Ukraine, including over $1,000,000,000 over the course of the last year, $200,000,000 of which was approved on December 27, 2021, and $350,000,000 of which was approved on February 26, 2022;

Whereas it is the right of all countries to decide their own future, foreign policy, and security arrangements free from outside interference or coercion;

Whereas the Russian Federation repeatedly lied about their massive buildup of military forces around Ukraine and claimed that reports Russia would invade Ukraine were hysteria;

Whereas, on February 24, 2022, the G7 issued a statement condemning the ''large-scale military aggression by the Russian Federation against the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine'';

Whereas, on February 25, 2022, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization condemned ''in the strongest possible terms Russia's horrifying attack on Ukraine'', called on Russia ''to turn back from the path of violence and aggression'', and reaffirmed an ''iron-clad'' commitment to Article 5;

Whereas the European Commission, France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, and Canada joined with the United States, committed to coordinated economic sanctions, including severe restrictions, against Russia's Central Bank and full blocking sanctions against Vladimir Putin;

Whereas United States leadership is integral to nations around the world in condemning and imposing costs on the Russian Federation for its illegal, full-scale, renewed invasion;

Whereas Russian forces have targeted civilians and have committed war crimes and crimes against humanity;

Whereas, in the days since the renewed full-scale invasion began, Russian citizens have taken to the streets in cities and towns across Russia to protest Putin's illegitimate and destructive war waged against a peaceful and sovereign Ukraine; and

Whereas the United States, along with allies in Europe, the Indo-Pacific, and others around the world, has been actively responding to Russia's unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine with critical military, humanitarian, and financial support for Ukraine and the Ukrainian people: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) demands an immediate cease-fire and the full withdrawal of Russian forces from Ukrainian territory;

(2) supports, unequivocally, Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity;

(3) backs the continued use of sanctions, in coordination with United States allies and partners, to fully isolate the Putin regime economically for its unprovoked aggression against Ukraine;

(4) urges the United States and its allies and partners to deliver additional and immediate defensive security assistance to help Ukraine address the armored, airborne, and other threats Ukraine is currently facing from Russian forces;

(5) commits to continuing to support resistance by the Ukrainian people as long as the Russian Federation continues to violate Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity;

(6) promises to continue to provide significant additional aid and humanitarian relief to Ukrainian refugees fleeing Russia's aggression, commends European partners for their efforts to relieve suffering on the ground, and urges the Russian Federation alongside United States allies and partners to guarantee safe passage out of the country;

(7) reaffirms its strong support for the security of United States allies and ironclad commitment to Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO);

(8) emphasizes that NATO's relationship with Ukraine is a matter only for Ukraine and the 30 NATO allies;

(9) pledges to support working with Europe and international partners to bolster Europe's energy security and reduce its dependence on Russian energy imports;

(10) underscores the importance of maintaining United States energy independence for the benefit of the American people and United States allies;

(11) reiterates that Crimea and the territories illegally controlled by the illegitimate Russian-controlled governments in Donetsk and Luhansk are sovereign Ukrainian territory;

(12) declares that the war in Ukraine, a democratic country, is the frontline of democracy and freedom versus authoritarianism represented by Putin's Russia;

(13) supports the right of the Russian people to protest, including the current protests against Putin's unprovoked war against Ukraine, and demands the immediate release of all those who have been unjustly detained in Russia for expressing their desire for peace;

(14) comprehends that strongmen, dictators, and authoritarians are watching the world's response to Putin's war against Ukraine and learning lessons for their own aggressive actions domestically and abroad, thereby making a strong and united response important to deter the expansion of territory by the use of military force beyond this crisis;

(15) states unambiguously that it will never recognize or support any illegitimate Russian-controlled leader or government installed through the use of force, and that only the people of Ukraine can choose their leadership through free and fair democratic elections without foreign interference, intervention, or coercion;

(16) commits to ensuring the illegitimate dictator of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, is held accountable for permitting the use of Belarusian territory for, and committing Belarusian forces to, Putin's unprovoked renewed full-scale invasion against Ukraine; and

(17) stands steadfastly, staunchly, proudly, and fervently behind the Ukrainian people in their fight against the authoritarian Putin regime.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. MEEKS) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. MCCAUL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on H. Res. 956.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my resolution, which I introduced with Representative SPARTZ, to demonstrate bipartisan congressional support for the Ukrainian people.

Today, we are witnessing the most devastating escalation of violence on the European Continent in decades.

Vladimir Putin has launched an unjustifiable, senseless war on a peaceful, sovereign nation, Ukraine. We are already seeing thousands of casualties, both Ukrainians and Russians, and hundreds of thousands of refugees fleeing to the European Union.

As we speak, Putin's army is encircling Ukrainian cities, including the capital of Kyiv. His forces are bombing indiscriminately, ruthlessly killing civilians, and destroying critical infrastructure.

In his despicable and utterly false claims to denazify Ukraine, he has bombed the memorial at Babyn Yar, where, just weeks ago, Representative SPARTZ and I stood with other Members of Congress at the site where tens of thousands were killed in massacres during the Holocaust. The streets we walked just a few weeks ago are now a battlefield, its citizens now soldiers.

Let us be clear. This is but one person's war. This is caused by one individual by the name of Vladimir Putin. It is his war.

Ukraine, the United States, and our allies have all actively engaged in a historic diplomatic push since before Russia marched their troops into the sovereign territory of Ukraine. Nevertheless, Putin chose the path of an unprovoked war instead.

It is a peaceful Ukraine that is pleading for a cease-fire so that diplomacy and sanity can triumph over bloodshed and madness.

Just this morning, the U.N. General Assembly held an emergency session that voted overwhelmingly against Russia's aggression. This vote reaffirms the values that we stand for and unequivocally demonstrates that the world stands with Ukraine.

In this dark time, the United States has helped usher unprecedented amounts of assistance from the United States, Europe, and our allies and partners from all around the world, from North Africa to North America to the Indo-Pacific, to aid Ukraine in defense of its nation. I believe we must sustain that assistance as long as Ukrainians fight for a democratic future free from Russian oppression.

The defensive security assistance we have provided and continue to provide Ukraine to help fend off its autocratic invader is absolutely critical.

Also, it is of utmost importance that we continue to surge humanitarian aid to Ukraine and the countries in the region accepting the growing influx of refugees. As of yesterday, nearly 700,000 had left their homes, left their country to seek safety, unsure of whether they will ever again see their homes. Estimates project that that number will quickly reach into the millions, as well as those who are displaced but remain in Ukraine.

Our allies in Europe have acted admirably, so they have been accepting those fleeing the destruction. We must do our part to help them as well.

Amidst all the bloodshed, we are seeing astounding courage displayed by President Zelensky, the Ukrainian Government, and, above all, the Ukrainian people. We are also seeing the unity of the transatlantic alliance, more unified than ever in the face of Vladimir Putin's war.

The people of Ukraine must continue to hear a message of loud and clear support from us, the United States Congress. They must see that we see their suffering, that we stand with them in their fight against an authoritarian invader, and that we will continue to usher as much support to their cause as the United States can muster.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution outlines the plan and sheds an indisputable light on the atrocities the Putin regime and the Russian military are committing. It demands an immediate cease-fire and full withdrawal of Russian forces from Ukraine. It backs additional coordinated economic measures to hold Putin accountable.

It reaffirms our NATO Article 5 commitments, reaffirms Ukrainian sovereignty over Crimea and Donbas. It highlights the unprecedented global multilateral efforts the Biden administration has helped usher.

It states our commitment in the United States Congress to support the Ukrainian people throughout this terrifying ordeal and delivers perhaps the most important message a resolution can deliver right now, that the House of Representatives will never ever recognize any illegitimate government that Putin hopes to install in Ukraine. It is up to the Ukrainian people and the Ukrainian people alone to choose their political leadership and their future.

I support this resolution, and I want to offer my sincerest thanks to Representative SPARTZ, but also to my ranking member. We worked diligently on this resolution, to make sure that this was a bipartisan resolution. I appreciate Ranking Member MCCAUL for his friendship and the way that we work together now, especially on this resolution.

Democrat and Republican leadership worked collectively also. For working with me, I want to thank them. They have worked with me for what I believe is a very strong message, a unified message, to support the people of Ukraine.

It is also a unified message to Vladimir Putin, whose objective was to divide us. He would have loved to have divided us from our European allies, loved to divide us from NATO, loved to divide us from within.

But with this resolution, it becomes crystal clear: Mr. Putin, you can't win this. We are going to stand against you, and we are going to preserve democracy because that is what is at stake here.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, let me just thank Chairman MEEKS for his leadership. This is really a historic time, not for only this Nation, but the world, for Ukraine. It is a time when we come together, not as Republicans or Democrats, but as Americans in strong support of the people of Ukraine.

I also want to thank Congresswoman VICTORIA SPARTZ, who is from Ukraine, who knows this story firsthand, and who very passionately has told her story about what it means, a country that has endured Hitler, a country that has endured Stalin, and now a country that is enduring Mr. Putin and Russian aggression.

As we stand here, Ukrainians are fighting for their country and for their very lives. Vladimir Putin has launched the largest attack in Europe since World War II.

□ 1430

His war machine has unleashed a brutal barrage of missiles and rockets on innocent Ukrainian civilians. In fact, there are 40 miles just north of Kyiv of tanks and military weaponry that is getting ready to go in and encircle the capital city.

But the people of Ukraine are inspiring the world with their bravery in the face of this, of Putin's evil and unprovoked attack. Fathers and mothers, teachers and shop owners, taxi drivers and students are all taking up arms, making Molotov cocktails, joining Ukrainian soldiers to defend their country.

They are standing in front of the tanks, standing in front of the tanks. I have seen a child standing in front of a tank just like Tiananmen Square and the images coming out that are sent around the world so we can all witness this, this war against humanity and human rights, war crimes.

They are risking their lives to fight for freedom, and that is what this Nation stands for, freedom and democracy.

Despite the terror inflicted upon them by Putin's bombs and rockets, the Ukrainian people have courageously refused to relent. Vladimir Putin has underestimated them. He has underestimated their strength and their bravery. The resiliency of the Ukrainian people has been an inspiration, really, for the world.

We were told in our briefings, well, this will last 2 or 3 days, but they have stood up. Putin needs to understand that he has miscalculated, and this will cost him a very, very high price. He has underestimated the strength and bravery to his own peril.

So I am pleased that we are able to come together, not as Republicans or Democrats, as I said, but really, as Americans, as we should, to express and send a strong message in support of the people of Ukraine and against this tyrant and this monster who is savagely killing civilians, as I speak.

We have all seen the images of the women and the children and the refugees as they leave their fathers and husbands behind who are left to fight this war.

This resolution really does one thing: to tell the world in one united voice that the United States of America stands opposed to oppression, that we stand with the people of Ukraine, and we stand against Mr. Putin's aggression. We must ensure that Putin fails, and I believe long term, he will.

I am hopeful that today's resolution will also lead to additional constructive bipartisan steps to properly arm the Ukrainians in any way possible, as they have told us, we don't need your troops, but we need your weapons to fight against the Russians.

You know, there was a tweet that came out from a dead Russian soldier who sent a text to his mother, saying, I thought they were going to welcome us, that we were liberating them. And yet I am seeing Ukrainians and children being run over by our tanks. And he says to his mother, this is the worst thing I have ever seen.

He lies. He is deceptive. He lied to his own people that he is liberating these Ukrainians who are oppressed by the Russians. This is no liberation. This is not a liberation ceremony.

This is tyranny at its worst, and oppression. We need to continue to support them as long as even one Ukrainian citizen continues to stand up to Russia's tyranny.

As in February 1941, facing a devastating bombing campaign by the Nazis—we can see the parallels here—this is similar to Hitler invading Poland.

When they talked about the blitz, Winston Churchill made a direct plea to the United States for assistance, and it is timeless. It actually resonates today. He said, ''Put your confidence in us. . . . We shall not fail or falter; we shall not weaken or tire. Neither the sudden shock of battle, nor the long-drawn trials of vigilance and exertion will wear us down. Give us the tools, and we will finish the job.''

Mr. Speaker, this is what the Ukrainian people want. It is what they are asking for. It is what they need. It is what the United States of America and our NATO allies will deliver.

Today, facing the onslaught of Putin's missiles and tanks, the Ukrainian President, Zelensky, a most courageous leader, as we have seen, who didn't run away from his country like President Ghani. He is in the bunker right now, knowing that his very life and his survival is on the line.

He made the same plea to us, and today, we have the opportunity to tell Ukraine that we have confidence in them by supporting this measure, that we will give them the tools they need to finish the job.

So let me, once again, thank the chairman. This is when the Foreign Affairs Committee is at its best, when we come together as Americans. As ELIOT ENGEL always said, partisanship stops at the water's edge, and I firmly believe that commitment as well.

I urge my Members to support this. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MEEKS: Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. CICILLINE), who just recently was walking the streets of Kyiv, talking to the people, listening to them, and their determination to preserve their democracy. Mr. DAVID CICILLINE.

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman MEEKS for his extraordinary leadership in this very important moment.

I rise in strong support of H. Res. 956 and in solidarity with the people of Ukraine.

On February 24, Vladimir Putin thought he was making another step toward realizing his delusional pursuit of reconstituting the U.S.S.R. when he ordered the brutal invasion of the sovereign and peaceful nation of Ukraine.

Vladimir Putin thought the Ukrainian people would give in quickly to the violence and abandon their freedoms.

Vladimir Putin thought President Zelensky would flee and capitulate to Russian demands.

Vladimir Putin thought the world would turn a blind eye toward Russian aggression.

Vladimir Putin thought wrong.

In fact, as Chairman MEEKS said, we saw firsthand the determination and the will of the Ukrainian people to fight to preserve their own country and their own freedoms. They are doing that today, fighting day by day, hour by hour, to protect their country and secure a free and democratic future for themselves and their families.

The free world has rallied together to impose devastating sanctions against Russia, against the Russian economy, and to hold the Putin regime and his enablers to account for their crimes.

I strongly support this resolution, and I know the United States and its allies are united behind the people of Ukraine, behind the values of freedom and democracy and against the tyranny of a thuggish dictator, Vladimir Putin.

I thank Chairman MEEKS for his extraordinary leadership and thank Ranking Member MCCAUL as well.

Mr. MCCAUL. Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. SPARTZ), the lead Republican on this resolution, who was born and raised in Ukraine. Her grandmother is still there and has told her the stories of Hitler and Stalin and how bad this situation is on the ground.

Mrs. SPARTZ. Mr. Speaker, I am very humbled to stand on the floor of this great institution with my colleagues from both sides of the aisle to co-lead this important resolution and to show that this greatest country, the leaders of the free world, are going to stand up to the atrocities and tyrannies that are happening right now.

I am very proud to have a strong, freedom-fighting Ukrainian heritage. I actually was born in the Soviet Union, when Ukraine was under that evil country.

I am so proud that strong, brave Ukrainians are willing to fight again and again to be free. It should inspire all of us. Their bravery and actions are unbelievable. It should teach us, and maybe remind us, what it means to be a free country and how hard it is to get your rights and freedoms back when you lose them. We had so many people die for our freedoms, so let's value and cherish them.

I am very happy to see that this institution, when times are tough, when we have to get together, we can get together and show our allies we will stand together and show our adversaries and enemies we will stand together. Not just stand together, but we will also lead the world.

I also want to tell the Ukrainian people that the American people are inspired and humbled. They see your struggles and pray with you and stand with you. This resolution from we, the people, from this United States Congress, is evidence of it.

I also want to tell the Russian people—I actually have some Don Cossack heritage—I know it is tough for you. I know what President Putin has done to you. It is awful. But you need to have the backbone to stand up, or we will find you in history worse than you could imagine. So you stand up and stop this atrocity before it causes more damage. What is happening there on the ground, it is not a war. It is slaughtering, killing of the Ukrainian people. You are killing your fellow Orthodox Christians and East Slavs, and they went through history with oppression and suppression. How can you stand with that? I know that your propaganda is strong. I know they tell you things that are awful. But open your eyes. Don't be part of it. Tell your government that they have to stop this elimination and extinction of people.

I also want to thank everyone here in this country for loving freedoms, for supporting freedoms, and being willing to be part of this challenge on the right side. Our actions should be decisive. In times like this, they require strong leadership and strong actions.

We, as an independent branch of our Government—I always say we are coequal, but first among equals because we do have the power of the purse and the power of war. So we have a lot of powers for a reason, and that is why our Founding Fathers gave us this power, because we are the people who should put pressure on our President to be more decisive and strong and have some stronger actions.

On sanctions, we have to be tougher. We need to go after the energy sector. We need to make sure that a lot of oligarchs that are not on the list are there, they should be on the list, the key oligarchs. They understand that it is not just the Russian people that will be feeling the pain, that already they suppressed and stole money from them, but they will start feeling the pain.

We also need to make sure that we will have a way to affect the financial system much more decisively.

We also need to make sure that these war crimes are going to go to international courts, and these people that make decisions on killing, on genocide, and using illegal weapons will also bear some responsibility.

□ 1445

I also think we have a responsibility to provide safe passage in the humanitarian corridor, and I hope we will have other allies working with us and help us on that.

But most important, we need to make sure that we will provide proper defensive legal aid to the Ukrainians that they can defend themselves from this extermination before it is too late. We must act, and I am very honored to be part of this effort to show that we are willing to lead as this institution.

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ALLRED), who was walking the streets of Ukraine with us just a few weeks ago.

Mr. ALLRED. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support this bipartisan resolution supporting the people of Ukraine.

As the chairman said, I was in Ukraine just a few weeks ago, in the beautiful city of Kyiv. I met the very people who today, despite facing a ruthless enemy, are waging an inspiring campaign to save their democracy, including a young woman who told me she was going to get her white wine and Kalashnikov and defend her country. And she is.

This resolution tells the world, and most importantly the Ukrainian people, that the United States Congress stands with you. President Biden has used every tool at his disposal to unite the world in punishing Vladimir Putin for his unprovoked and unjustified war, and Congress will act to provide more resources to that effort.

Because our work continues to further help Ukraine defend itself and further isolate Russia. Putin has a choice: To pursue his long-term strategic goals or to continue this unnecessary and illegal war on Ukraine. He cannot do both.

We are united as a country and as a Congress in standing with the people of Ukraine in their fight for their democracy. I urge all of my colleagues to vote ''yes.''

Mr. MCCAUL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee and one of the longest serving Members of Congress as well.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, over the weekend I met with over 100 Ukrainian Americans in my district office in Freehold, New Jersey. They told me how their families and friends in Ukraine are coping with Putin's barbaric invasion, the loss of life, the many who are wounded, and their escalating concern as the bombs and missiles rain down on civilian targets.

According to UNHCR, about 876,000 Ukrainian refugees have left, that is as of March 1st, and about half have found safety in Poland. Most are women, children, and the elderly.

Despite facing an existential threat, the free world continues to be astonished by the Ukrainian people's strength, courage, resiliency, and desire to fight. Interviews coming out of Ukraine, especially in the bunkers, underscores the Ukrainian people's resolve.

Let me just say how great it is to see Zelensky, who has stood up. He is a true hero and a tenacious leader, the President of Ukraine. This is Putin's war, and he is a war criminal, Mr. Speaker. Putin's puppet in Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, is also a war criminal, and like Serbian Slobodan Milosevic and President Charles Taylor of Liberia, they need to be prosecuted and held to account for their war crimes.

I would remind my colleagues that in a 2014 speech, right here, to a joint session of the Congress, Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko did ask the Obama administration for military assistance, which he did not get, to defend against Putin's invasion of Crimea. He said, ''One cannot win the war with blankets.''

He got several standing ovations, all of us were on our feet. But he got only more blankets. Let's learn from that.

Last June, as Russia deployed more combat forces on the border, Politico and others reported that there were delays in providing the kind of military aid that Zelensky really wanted. I did ask Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman today for a timeline, on how did this all come about. Did he ask for more and did not get it? We need to know this to learn from it, so we get it right the next time.

Mr. Speaker, over the weekend I met with over one hundred Ukrainian Americans at my district office in Freehold.

They told me how their families and friends in Ukraine are coping with Putin's barbaric invasion—the loss of life, the wounded and escalating concern as bombs & missiles rain down on civilian targets.

They appealed for help.

The humanitarian crisis is exploding—both inside the country and for those seeking refuge.

As of March 1st, according to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)—there are more than 876,000 Ukrainian refugees—with about half finding safety in Poland.

Most are women, children, and the elderly.

Despite facing an existential threat, however, the free world continues to be astonished by the Ukrainian people's strength, courage, resiliency and desire to fight.

Interviews coming out of Ukraine—including in bunkers—underscore the Ukrainian people's resolve.

Under their extraordinarily heroic and tenacious leader—President Volodymyr Zelensky—the people of Ukraine are rallying to defend their beloved homeland.

This is Putin's war—and he is a war criminal.

Putin's puppet in Belarus—Alexander Lukashenko—is also a war criminal.

And like Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic and President Charles Taylor of Liberia, they need to be prosecuted and held to account for war crimes.

Now more than ever, the United States and our allies must provide much-needed military equipment and humanitarian aid to the people of Ukraine as they fight to defend their freedom from a brutal dictatorship.

I would remind my colleagues that in a 2014 speech to a joint session of the U.S. Congress, Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko asked the Obama Administration for military assistance—which he didn't get—to defend against Putin's invasion of Crimea and said ''One cannot win the war with blankets''.

He got several standing ovations—and more blankets.

Last June, as Russia deployed more combat forces on Ukraine's border, Politico and others reported that a modest military aid package had been put on hold. Key items under consideration for the package included short-range air defense systems, small arms and more anti-tank weapons . . .''

Robust stockpiles of weapons could have bought deterrence—and if necessary, a means for the Ukrainians to defend themselves from Putin's violence.

At a Foreign Affairs hearing earlier today, I asked Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman what Ukrainian President Zelensky asked for over the past year—including air defense systems—and what he did or didn't get from the Biden Administration?

Her response may come in a closed door hearing next week.

Comprehensive economic sanctions must degrade Putin's capacity to wage war.

Some highly efficacious sanctions have not yet been imposed, however.

Russian oil revenues help fuel Putin's aggression in Ukraine. Not a drop of Russian oil exports should reach our shores.

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CASTRO), the chair of the Subcommittee on International Development, International Organizations, and Global Corporate Social Impact.

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of House Resolution 956 to condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Earlier today, the United Nations General Assembly voted overwhelmingly to condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine and demand an immediate withdrawal of their forces from Ukraine.

Only four nations out of 193 stood with Russia. 140 stood with Ukraine. The world is united in condemning this invasion, and the House of Representatives must speak as one and lead the way.

As we debate, Russian attacks on Ukrainian civilians continue. Hundreds of thousands huddle in bomb shelters. Over 600,000 Ukrainians have already fled the country. Vladimir Putin is on a disastrous quest to rebuild the Russian empire at the expense of Ukrainian sovereignty.

This should be a simple vote.

Now is our chance to show that Congress stands with the people of Ukraine. Now is our time to do what is

right. That is why I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. MCCAUL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT), the ranking member on the Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific, Central Asia, and Nonproliferation.

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. I also want to thank Chairman MEEKS and Representative SPARTZ for their leadership on this very important measure.

Last week, the world watched in horror as Vladimir Putin shattered the peace in Europe and began an unprovoked assault on Ukraine and its innocent people. Put simply, this is the largest land war in Europe since World War II, a war that we hoped would never come again. We cannot condemn this senseless, brutal, and illegal invasion in strong enough terms.

In the face of this onslaught, the Ukrainian people are demonstrating incredible bravery as Russia brings to bear its overwhelming military firepower, at least in terms of soldiers and weaponry and equipment. But in terms of the combatants on the ground, one side is fighting for conquest. The other side is fighting for their homes and their families, and most importantly, their freedom.

Thus far, at least, freedom is prevailing. The Ukrainians, and President Zelensky especially, are rallying the free world and demonstrating once again that free men and women would rather die than submit to the forces of tyranny.

As we stand here today to support the people of Ukraine, let us remember that their fight for freedom is far from over. We must ensure that they get the support that they need, that Putin is held accountable for his war crimes—and they are war crimes—and that he does not snuff out forever the light of democracy in Ukraine because that is what he wants to do. Freedom must prevail.

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY), the president of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, who has seen with his own eyes the unity that we now have with our NATO allies.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, the distinguished chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and my friend, the distinguished ranking member.

Today is a test for liberal democracy all over the world, and particularly for us as Americans because today we witness the cost in blood, sweat, and tears in the fight for freedom that liberal democracy represents and provides: The simple desire of another people to have what we have and that all too often we take for granted, the desire to be a free people, under no one's shadow, under no one's yoke, and they are willing to put their bodies on the line to fight for that simple principle.

Weak punditry all too often has cast the opinion that liberal democracy is on the decline. Well, not in Ukraine and not here. And not with our allies and not at the United Nations. Because the scales have fallen from eyes. The threat is real, and so are the stakes.

All of us today must be Ukrainian. All of us must join that fight. All of us must understand that freedom, liberal democracy are resilient but also fragile. They must always be perfected but also defended.

This resolution today is not just about an expression of congressional solidarity. It is a recommitment by this body in the principles that founded this Nation that another people are fighting for to gain today.

I urge passage and proudly support this effort.

Mr. MCCAUL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from the great State of Texas (Mr. PFLUGER), a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee.

Mr. PFLUGER. Mr. Speaker, today is a sad day, a tragic day, as we witness the horrific images that are coming out of Ukraine.

I was there just 4½ short weeks ago. I met with President Zelensky. I listened to the people on the streets of Kyiv. President Zelensky is a lion of a leader. He has displayed courage to the West. When he said, ''I don't need a ride, I need ammunition,'' I think that all of us should look at that, we should listen to that. The time to act is now. We don't have time to wait. Now is the time to act to help our Ukrainian partners. He didn't ask for troops inside Ukraine. He is asking for help.

I hope that we will put Midland over Moscow, as the President last night in this Chamber said that it is time to buy American product. Energy security is national security, and that is absolutely what this body should be doing is putting our own energy security into the hands of our partners and allies so that they can defend and deter against the malign influence of Vladimir Putin.

Our heart and our prayers go out to the people of Ukraine, and our thanks to President Zelensky for his leadership.

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR), the cofounder and cochair of the Ukraine Caucus, who has worked on this her entire congressional career.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman MEEKS for his unyielding leadership on this important bill and Ranking Member MCCAUL for setting a tone for this entire Congress that we succeed when we work together, particularly in a cause as great as this, liberty for a country that voted for independence. Thirty years ago, 90 percent of the people voted to be independent of tyrannical Russia, and today now they are fighting again.

The bipartisan nature of this bill today would warm the hearts of great American leaders, like President and General Dwight D. Eisenhower or General George Marshall or President John Kennedy or President Ronald Reagan, because across Europe they fully understood how many American lives were given to the cause of liberty so that we, their descendants, would pass it on to our descendants.

We are here today in that fight because Ukraine is the scrimmage line for liberty in Europe today. The valor of the people of Ukraine against the Russian state is extraordinary. Our young people are learning what the price of liberty is, sadly, and the people of Ukraine are inspiring the world. We think so much of their valor, their fight, and their desire to join the world of free nations. May God bless them and may God bless America, and thank you for understanding a united America always wins for liberty.

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

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE), a dynamic Representative from the great State of Texas.

□ 1500

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding, and I rise enthusiastically to support H. Res. 956 and as well to make mention of H. Res. 943 that was introduced by myself and STEVE COHEN on February 25.

Let me salute this resolution that is bipartisan that immediately calls on a ceasefire by Putin. This is Putin's war. H. Res. 943 has been affirmed by its call for the shutting down of our airways to Russian carriers, and that has been done.

But the real point is that we are now standing firmly for democracy and the fight of individual grandmothers and young people and individual Ukrainians with their bare hands and with their weapons that have been given to fight for democracy. But the real question that we are also standing for, and thank you for the United Nations vote, is that Vladimir Putin is a war criminal who is killing children.

Mitka, a parliamentarian that I met at the OSCE of which we were a part of meeting in Lithuania and Vienna, talking to the soldiers that were on the border of Belarus and Lithuania—thank you to those soldiers that are now placed, almost 100,000 U.S. soldiers—is that Putin is killing without cause. He is killing grandmothers. He is killing children. Can we tolerate this bloodshed? No, we will not. And we will stand with this resolution to demand that democracy stands in the region and that we denounce his actions.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 956, a resolution condemning the unprovoked aggression and invasion ordered by Vladimir Putin, the authoritarian head of the Russian Federation against the sovereign nation of Ukraine and supporting the right of the people of Ukraine to freely determine their future, including their country's relationship with other nations and international organizations, without interference, intimidation, or coercion by other countries.

I thank the Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Congressman MEEKS of New York, for introducing this bipartisan resolution and urge all Members to support it to show the solidarity of the people of the United States with the people of Ukraine.

Mr. Speaker, I support this resolution because it calls upon and commends the Biden Administration to honor and abide by the commitments undertaken by the United States pursuant to Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, signed at Washington, District of Columbia, on April 4, 1949, and entered into force on August 24, 1949.

The resolution also commits this body to the promotion and protection of democratic values, transparent and accountable government institutions, and support for needed economic structural reforms in Ukraine, including in the fiscal, energy, pension, and banking sectors, among others.

The resolution also calls upon and commends the Biden Administration for assembling and working with an international coalition of the world's leading nations to ensure that all nations refuse to recognize the illegal invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation and to ensure that the Russian Federation is held accountable and sustain maximum economic damage from the imposition of sanctions as a consequence of its utter disregard for international law and norms.

I am particularly pleased that the Biden Administration has adopted the recommendation advanced in H. Res. 943, a resolution I introduced on February 25, 2002 condemning this unprovoked attack by the Russian Federation, to ban all Russian airlines, including Aeroflot, from entering the airspace of the United States or landing on its soil.

The United States is strongly committed to the sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

The United States strongly supports efforts to assist Ukraine to defend its territory against military aggression by the Russian Federation and by separatist and paramilitary forces.

Ukraine was the second-most populous and powerful of the fifteen republics of the former and disintegrated Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the hub of the union's agricultural production, defense industries, and military arsenal.

In the three decades since gaining its independence, Ukraine has sought to forge its own path as a sovereign state and sought closer economic, social, and political ties with the free market and democratic nations of the West.

Since 2013, the Russian Federation has undertaken a campaign of political, economic, and military aggression against Ukraine, including the shooting down of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17, a civilian airliner, by Russian-backed Ukrainian separatists using a Russian-made missile taking the lives of all 298 innocent persons on board.

In February 2014, the military of the Russia Federation, without merit or cause, invaded the eastern part of the free and independent country of Ukraine, including the Crimean Peninsula, and backed a separatist insurgency in the Donbass region in eastern Ukraine, where fighting has killed over 14,000 people.

The United States, a strategic ally of Ukraine, reacted swiftly to the Russian invasion, condemning the military action in strong and bipartisan fashion, and providing military, humanitarian, and non-military financial assistance to the determined but beleaguered nation of Ukraine, which since 2014 has totaled approximately $1.5 billion.

On September 14, 2014, the House of Representatives adopted H. Res. 726, a resolution supporting the right of the people of Ukraine to freely determine their future, including their country's relationship with other nations and international organizations, without interference, intimidation, or coercion by other countries, and committed itself to solidarity with the people of Ukraine.

Interference and unprovoked aggressions by the Russia Federation ordered and led by Vladimir Putin continued unabated, including the mobilization and stationing of 150,000 Russian troops surrounding Ukraine and armed forces positioned in Belarus to attack Ukraine from the north, including war planes and offensive missile systems, and the movement of Russian naval vessels in the Black Sea to Ukraine's south, including amphibious assault ships, missile cruisers, and submarines, and the positioning of blood and medical equipment into position on their border.

Vladimir Putin sought authorization from the Russian parliament to use military force outside of Russian territory by staging a fraudulent on-camera meeting of his Security Council to grandstand for the Russian public and by recognizing sovereign Ukrainian territory as so-called independent republics in clear violation, again, of international law, all of which was intended to set the stage for further pretexts and further provocations by Russia Federation to make further aggressions against Ukraine by military action.

Vladimir Putin rejected every good-faith effort the United States and its allies and partners made to address mutual security concerns through dialogue to avoid needless conflict and avert human suffering.

On February 23, 2022, the Russia Federation military, at the direction of Vladimir Putin, began a premeditated brutal assault on the people of Ukraine without provocation, without justification, without necessity, making outlandish, false, and baseless claims that Ukraine was about to invade and launch a war against Russia and that Ukraine was prepared to use chemical weapons, and that Ukraine had committed a genocide.

These actions were taken by Vladimir Putin at the very moment that the United Nations Security Council was meeting to stand up for Ukraine's sovereignty to stave off invasion, culminating in missile strikes on historic cities across Ukraine, followed by air raids and the invasion of Russian tanks and troops.

Mr. Speaker, through this resolution the United States strongly condemns and opposes the unprovoked invasion and egregious act of aggression against sovereign state of Ukraine by the Russian Federation, the most provocative and destabilizing act of foreign aggression since the 1938 invasion of the Sudetenland by the Third Reich led by Adolph Hitler.

I ask all members to join me in voting for H. Res. 956 to support the right of the people of Ukraine to freely determine their future, including their country's relationship with other nations and international organizations, without interference, intimidation, or coercion by other countries.

Mr. MCCAUL. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN), a dynamic Representative.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. And still I rise, Mr. Speaker. And I rise on this historic occasion to compliment the chairperson and the ranking member of the Foreign Affairs Committee. What they are doing today will be hailed in the annals of history as that which was necessary to help our friends in a time of need.

Mr. Speaker, those who say that if we leave the world alone, the world will leave us alone are wrong. The world will find its way to our door just as it is now because Dr. King's words are so right. Life is an inescapable network of mutuality tied to a single garment of destiny. What impacts one directly impacts all indirectly. What is happening to Ukraine directly impacts us indirectly.

We have a duty, a responsibility, and an obligation to help them and to make sure that when the final word is written, it will be said that we did all that we could to protect democracy.

Mr. MCCAUL. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, it is now my honor to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), the distinguished majority leader of the United States House of Representatives.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, the chairman of this committee, for yielding. We have traveled in various parts of the world together. We have seen pain, and we have seen progress. We are seeing pain now, and all I can say with respect to the remarks that were just made by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN), amen.

I thank Mr. MCCAUL for his working not as a Republican, and I thank Mr. MEEKS not as a Democrat, but as Americans, Americans confronted with a crisis, a crisis for democracy, a crisis for the global community. I thank them both because they have, in the best traditions of this House and of this country, worked together to bring to the floor a resolution, which, indeed, speaks to the pain and to the moral responsibility of all those who love freedom and democracy.

Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, as Russian missiles rained down on the cities of his country, Ukraine's heroic President, President Zelensky, virtually addressed the European Parliament in Brussels.

Mr. Speaker, President Zelensky spoke of a horrendous missile attack that had just struck the main square of the besieged city of Kharkiv. ''This,'' he said, is ''the largest square in Europe . . . it is called 'freedom square.' '' He went on to say: ''And believe you me, in every square today, no matter what it is called, it is going to be called 'freedom square.' In every city of our country. Nobody is going to break us. We are strong.''

Frankly, Mr. Speaker, he didn't have to tell us that. We have seen that strength. We have seen that courage. We have seen that determination in the face of overwhelming force confronting them.

These past 7 days, the people of Ukraine have indeed shown the world they are strong, they are courageous, they are united, and they are resolved to defend their freedom and their democracy.

Mr. Speaker, I served as co-chairman of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, otherwise known as the Helsinki Commission, for 10 years from 1985 to 1995. It was a historic time where democracy won the Cold War. It was in the final years of that Cold War that Ukraine in the nineties emerged and was guaranteed essentially by the international community, but certainly by Russia and the United States, that they would be a sovereign nation not just in the east but in the west as well.

I had the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to travel to Kyiv, to Riga, to Vilnius, to Tallinn, to Sofia, to other cities behind the Iron Curtain on a relatively regular basis during those 10 years, certainly in the 6 years from 1985 to 1991. In each place I saw a ''freedom square'' where either before or shortly after my visit people would gather to demand the right to choose their own future, their own leaders, and their own laws.

I saw in many others who traveled to those cities and to those countries a yearning, I saw the commitment to democracy, their courage and determination.

President Zelensky is correct: ''Wherever democracy thrives, every public square is a 'freedom square.' '' It may have another name, but it is a ''freedom square.''

Americans have sacrificed much over the generations to secure our freedoms and to our great credit the freedom of others around the world.

I tell people, Mr. Speaker, that America is the nation that had the most hegemony of power and used it so without acquiring the nations that it protected or imposing its will on the nations that it protected which is the least acquisitive superpower in the history of the world.

Americans have sacrificed much over the generations to secure our freedoms and the freedoms of others. The land of the free and the home of the brave.

Now, the tyranny and autocracy of Vladimir Putin tests us again.

Though American forces will not be engaged directly in this war, that does not mean that America is sitting on the sidelines. Far from it. And we must be engaged. This resolution speaks to engagement.

President Biden has unified not only NATO but a broad coalition of the world's democratic nations and those committed to the post-war order of respecting peace, borders, and, yes, diplomacy.

Dozens of nations have partnered to stand up to Putin and to support the freedom fighters in Ukraine. Together, we have imposed punishing sanctions that are already hurting Putin's regime.

We are already seeing thousands of Russians taking to the streets in their country to demand that Putin end this unjust war, this unprovoked war, this criminal war, and stop the unnecessary death and destruction on both sides for which Vladimir Putin alone bears responsibility.

Today, this House, the people's House representing the greatest democracy in history, the leading democratic nation in the world, is expressing our support for the Ukrainian people in their struggle for freedom and self-government.

I hope and I urge that this resolution pass with not a single negative vote. Let there be no mistake throughout the globe that, yes, we have differences between Republicans and Democrats, but we in this House are all Americans committed to freedom, committed to democracy, committed to the peaceful relations between nations.

It recognizes the egregious and inhumane actions undertaken by the Russian military at Putin's command, including the shelling of civilian targets and the killing of innocents in order to instill fear and weaken Ukrainian resolve.

We know that resolve, however, Mr. Speaker, will not be broken. We have seen it in the eyes of the President, and we have seen it in the eyes of the citizens in those freedom squares.

This resolution further recognizes importantly that Russian aggression against Ukraine did not begin last week. It began as soon as the Ukrainian people rejected a Putin-backed autocrat, established a true democracy, and sought the security and protection of stronger bonds with its fellow democracies in Europe and NATO, which, of course, it had every right as a sovereign nation to do.

Putin sent his forces to occupy Crimea. Mr. Speaker, in my view we were not as determined that that should not happen at that time. We must not repeat that mistake. Putin instigated a violent, separatist uprising in the Donbas region that has festered for 8 long years.

His unprovoked and unjustifiable invasion of Ukraine comes after it became increasingly clear that the separatists could not achieve Putin's expansionist aims on their own. He tried to do it surreptitiously through agents. It did not succeed, so he took the next step, a tragic, criminal step.

This resolution also makes clear that the United States will continue to support Ukraine by providing both military and humanitarian assistance while maintaining painful sanctions against Putin for as long as he pursues this war of choice.

In no small part, this resolution puts into action the promise that President Kennedy made when he took office at the height of the Cold War.

This will not be a free war for any of us in the free world. It is going to cost us something. Gas prices may go up. But we want to stand on freedom's side.

I am in politics largely because John Kennedy ran for President as I was at the University of Maryland, and I was inspired by his call to service.

I would urge all of you to read one more time John Kennedy's inaugural address. It is an extraordinarily inspiring address, an address not only to the American people, but to the entire world. And in it he said this: ''Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and success of liberty,'' and of those freedom squares to which President Zelensky referred.

□ 1515

Mr. Speaker, Americans and our allies are being asked to pay a price, to bear a burden, to meet some hardship in the days and weeks and months ahead, not to sustain fire, not to live in buildings being bombed, not to have to move from their home to a refuge or another country, but some hardship.

I know that our fellow Americans are up to the task. They have always been up to the task because those who say we take freedom for granted, who say the cost is too high, the burden too great, have always underestimated the American people.

When we see Putin's corrupt, evil, and menacing grab for power and tyrannical control, we are reminded of the tyrants and evil ideologies that Americans have fought and vanquished through our collective commitment and shared sacrifices.

Mr. Speaker, today, let us make this House Freedom Square. Let us stand with those who are assaulted by a tyrant.

The generation before mine, John Kennedy referred to England as ''Why England Slept.'' If we do not meet this tyrant now, we will pay greatly later.

I urge my colleagues to stand with these brave Ukrainians who stand for freedom and liberty and international law. Let us all overwhelmingly, unanimously vote for this resolution and send a message, not just to Putin but to all the tyrants of the world who would test us once again, that we will not blink.

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

Mr. Speaker, I thank the leader for his remarks. I think it is very important this Chamber passes this resolution unanimously to send one voice to Putin that the American people stand for the Ukrainian people and against Mr. Putin.

I think it is no coincidence—to me, it is fitting—that today is Texas Independence Day. My forefathers fought for freedom and liberty for the same purpose, from tyranny.

Since 2014, the world has watched the Ukrainian people fight to forge their own destiny in the face of violent attacks by Russia. They are facing down

Putin's missiles and tanks, risking life and limb for their freedom today.

As President Zelensky warned the Russian troops invading his country just a few days ago, as he sits in the bunker, putting his life on the line, he said: ''If they try to take our country, our freedom, our lives, the lives of our children, we will be defending ourselves. . . . As you attack, it will be our faces you see, not our backs.''

Today, we have the opportunity to honor his leadership and the bravery of the Ukrainian people, to send a strong message to these brave men and women that they are not alone, that the United States stands with them and will continue to stand with them for as long as it takes.

Mr. Speaker, again, I urge my colleagues to vote in support, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, the camera of history is rolling on all of us today. What is happening today children yet unborn will be studying and looking at what we did, what we stood for, or did not. They will be studying in their history books whether or not when democracy was at stake, when sovereign nations were in peril, whether or not we stood up and stood out to protect freedom, sovereignty of states, independence, or not.

The fact of the matter is, if we don't stand up now, those same children that I am talking about may not be able to live in a democratic society. That is why this is so important.

Putin may think that he is encircling Kyiv now, but this United Nations vote, where 141 nations said they are not going to allow that to happen, is encircling Putin and his thugs. And we will stay there for as long as it takes until freedom rings because that is what this is all about.

I think of today those that I met when I was in Kyiv, those that I had dinner with, those that worked in our U.S. Embassy, those that were driving taxis. As I see the pictures of them walking these streets today in front of Russian tanks, unafraid—I saw a picture of a woman standing and pointing at a Russian soldier, saying they would die there before she gives up. That is what this is all about.

The words that the activist told me while I was in Kyiv, that we are ready to fight, just provide us the support that we need to protect our country and freedom.

Slava Ukraini. Glory to Ukraine and its people.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. MCCAUL and Congresswoman SPARTZ for working with me so that we can make a bipartisan message right here on the people's floor.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. MEEKS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 956.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. MEEKS. 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 426, nays 3, not voting 4, as follows:

[Roll No. 51]

YEAS—426

Adams
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
Allred
Amodei
Armstrong
Arrington
Auchincloss
Axne
Babin
Bacon
Baird
Balderson
Banks
Barr
Barragán
Bass
Beatty
Bentz
Bera
Bergman
Beyer
Bice (OK)
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NC)
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Boebert
Bonamici
Bourdeaux
Bowman
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady
Brooks
Brown (MD)
Brown (OH)
Brownley
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burchett
Burgess
Bush
Bustos
Calvert
Cammack
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carey
Carl
Carson
Carter (GA)
Carter (LA)
Carter (TX)
Cartwright
Case
Casten
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Cawthorn
Chabot
Cheney
Cherfilus-McCormick
Chu
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Cleaver
Cline
Cloud
Clyburn
Clyde
Cohen
Cole
Comer
Connolly
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Courtney
Craig
Crawford
Crenshaw
Crist
Crow
Cuellar
Curtis
Davids (KS)
Davidson
Davis, Danny K.
Davis, Rodney
Dean
DeFazio
DeGette
DeLauro
DelBene
Delgado
Demings
DeSaulnier
DesJarlais
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Donalds
Doyle, Michael F.
Duncan
Dunn
Ellzey
Emmer
Escobar
Eshoo
Espaillat
Estes
Evans
Fallon
Feenstra
Ferguson
Fischbach
Fitzgerald
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fletcher
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frankel, Lois
Franklin, C. Scott
Fulcher
Gaetz
Gallagher
Gallego
Garamendi
Garbarino
García (CA)
García (IL)
García (TX)
Gibbs
Gimenez
Gohmert
Golden
Gomez
Gonzales, Tony
González (OH)
González, Vicente
Good (VA)
Gooden (TX)
Gottheimer
Granger
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Green (TN)
Green, Al (TX)
Greene (GA)
Griffith
Grijalva
Grothman
Guest
Guthrie
Harder (CA)
Harris
Harshbarger
Hartzler
Hayes
Hern
Herrell
Herrera Beutler
Hice (GA)
Higgins (LA)
Higgins (NY)
Hill
Himes
Hinson
Hollingsworth
Horsford
Houlahan
Hoyer
Hudson
Huffman
Huizenga
Issa
Jackson
Jackson Lee
Jacobs (CA)
Jacobs (NY)
Jayapal
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson (SD)
Johnson (TX)
Jones
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Joyce (PA)
Kahele
Kaptur
Katko
Keating
Keller
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
Khanna
Kildee
Kilmer
Kim (CA)
Kim (NJ)
Kind
Kinzinger
Kirkpatrick
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster
Kustoff
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamb
Lamborn
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latta
LaTurner
Lawrence
Lawson (FL)
Lee (CA)
Lee (NV)
Leger Fernandez
Lesko
Letlow
Levin (CA)
Levin (MI)
Lieu
Lofgren
Long
Loudermilk
Lowenthal
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Luria
Lynch
Mace
Malinowski
Malliotakis
Maloney, Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Mann
Manning
Mast
Matsui
McBath
McCarthy
McCaul
McClain
McClintock
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McHenry
McKinley
McNerney
Meeks
Meijer
Meng
Meuser
Mfume
Miller (IL)
Miller (WV)
Miller-Meeks
Moolenaar
Mooney
Moore (AL)
Moore (UT)
Moore (WI)
Morelle
Moulton
Mrvan
Mullin
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (NC)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Neguse
Nehls
Newhouse
Newman
Norcross
Norman
O'Halleran
Obernolte
Ocasio-Cortez
Omar
Owens
Palazzo
Pallone
Palmer
Panetta
Pappas
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Pence
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters
Pfluger
Phillips
Pingree
Pocan
Porter
Posey
Pressley
Quigley
Raskin
Reed
Reschenthaler
Rice (NY)
Rice (SC)
Rodgers (WA)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rose
Ross
Rouzer
Roy
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Rutherford
Ryan
Salazar
Sánchez
Sarbanes
Scalise
Scanlon
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Schrier
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sessions
Sewell
Sherman
Sherrill
Simpson
Sires
Slotkin
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (WA)
Smucker
Soto
Spanberger
Spartz
Speier
Stansbury
Stanton
Stauber
Steel
Stefanik
Steil
Steube
Stevens
Stewart
Strickland
Suozzi
Swalwell
Takano
Tenney
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Tiffany
Timmons
Titus
Tlaib
Tonko
Torres (CA)
Torres (NY)
Trahan
Trone
Turner
Underwood
Upton
Valadao
Van Drew
Van Duyne
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Wagner
Walberg
Walorski
Waltz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson Coleman
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Welch
Wenstrup
Westerman
Wexton
Wild
Williams (GA)
Williams (TX)
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Yarmuth
Young
Zeldin

NAYS—3

Gosar
Massie
Rosendale

NOT VOTING—4

Bost
Butterfield
Price (NC)
Taylor

□ 1602

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MEMBERS RECORDED PURSUANT TO HOUSE RESOLUTION 8, 117TH CONGRESS

Aguilar (Correa)
Amodei (Balderson)
Babin (Norman)
Barragán (Correa)
Bass (Kelly (IL))
Blumenauer (Beyer)
Brown (MD) (Connolly)
Cárdenas (Gomez)
Cherfilus-McCormick (Beatty)
Cuellar (Correa)
DelBene (Kuster)
Deutch (Rice (NY))
Doggett (Beyer)
Doyle, Michael F. (Connolly)
Evans (Mfume)
Fallon (Jackson)
Gohmert (Boebert)

Gonzalez, Vicente (Correa)
Gosar (Greene (GA))
Granger (Van Duyne)
Green (TN) (Timmons)
Grijalva (García (IL))
Johnson (SD) (Armstrong)
Johnson (TX) (Jeffries)
Kahele (Correa)
Kelly (PA) (Keller)
Kind (Connolly)
Kirkpatrick (Pallone)
Lawson (FL) (Soto)
Lofgren (Jeffries)
Manning (Beyer)
Payne (Pallone)
Pocan (García (IL))
Raskin (Cicilline)
Roybal-Allard (Takano)
Rush (Jeffries)
Sewell (Kelly (IL))
Sires (Pallone)
Strickland (Jeffries)
Suozzi (Beyer)
Tiffany (Fitzgerald)
Trone (Connolly)
Underwood (Jeffries)
Van Drew (Reschenthaler)
Veasey (Beyer)
Wilson (FL) (Cicilline)

HONORING OUR PROMISE TO ADDRESS COMPREHENSIVE TOXICS ACT OF 2021

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. QUIGLEY). Pursuant to clause 1(c) of rule XIX, further consideration of the bill (H.R. 3967) to improve health care and benefits for veterans exposed to toxic substances, and for other purposes, will now resume.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

AMENDMENTS EN BLOC OFFERED BY MR. TAKANO OF CALIFORNIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the unfinished business is the question on the adoption of amendments en bloc, printed in part B of House Report 117–253, on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendments en bloc.

The Clerk redesignated the amendments en bloc.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the amendments en bloc offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO).

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 331, nays 96, not voting 5, as follows:

[Roll No. 52]

YEAS—331

Adams
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allred
Amodei
Auchincloss
Axne
Bacon
Balderson
Banks
Barr
Barragán
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Bergman
Beyer
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Bourdeaux
Bowman
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady
Brown (MD)
Brown (OH)
Brownley
Buchanan
Bucshon
Bush
Bustos
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carey
Carl
Carson
Carter (LA)
Cartwright
Case
Casten
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Cherfilus-McCormick
Chu
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Cole
Connolly
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Courtney
Craig
Crawford
Crist
Crow
Cuellar
Curtis
Davids (KS)
Davis, Danny K.
Davis, Rodney
Dean
DeFazio
DeGette
DeLauro
DelBene
Delgado
Demings
DeSaulnier
DesJarlais
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Dunn
Emmer
Escobar
Eshoo
Espaillat
Evans
Fallon
Feenstra
Fischbach
Fitzpatrick
Fletcher
Fortenberry
Foster
Frankel, Lois
Fulcher
Gallego
Garamendi
García (CA)
García (IL)
García (TX)
Gibbs
Gimenez
Gohmert
Golden
Gomez
Gonzalez (OH)
Gonzalez, Vicente
Gottheimer
Granger
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Green (TN)
Green, Al (TX)
Grijalva
Guthrie
Harder (CA)
Hartzler
Hayes
Herrera Beutler
Higgins (NY)
Hill
Himes
Hinson
Hollingsworth
Horsford
Houlahan
Hoyer
Hudson
Huffman
Huizenga
Jackson Lee
Jacobs (CA)
Jayapal
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson (SD)
Johnson (TX)
Jones
Joyce (OH)
Joyce (PA)
Kahele
Kaptur
Katko
Keating
Keller
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (PA)
Khanna
Kildee
Kilmer
Kim (CA)
Kim (NJ)
Kind
Kinzinger
Kirkpatrick
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamb
Lamborn
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latta
Lawrence
Lawson (FL)
Lee (CA)
Lee (NV)
Leger Fernandez
Letlow
Levin (CA)
Levin (MI)
Lieu
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Luetkemeyer
Luria
Lynch
Mace
Malinowski
Malliotakis
Maloney, Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Manning
Matsui
McBath
McCarthy
McCaul
McClain
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McHenry
McKinley
McNerney
Meeks
Meijer
Meng
Meuser
Mfume
Miller (WV)
Miller-Meeks
Moolenaar
Mooney
Moore (UT)
Moore (WI)
Morelle
Moulton
Mrvan
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (NC)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Neguse
Nehls
Newhouse
Newman
Norcross
O'Halleran
Obernolte
Ocasio-Cortez
Omar
Pallone
Panetta
Pappas
Pascrell
Payne
Perlmutter
Peters
Phillips
Pingree
Pocan
Porter
Posey
Pressley
Quigley
Raskin
Reed
Reschenthaler
Rice (NY)
Rice (SC)
Rodgers (WA)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Ross
Rouzer
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Rutherford
Ryan
Salazar
Sánchez
Sarbanes
Scalise
Scanlon
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Schrier
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sewell
Sherman
Sherrill
Simpson
Sires
Slotkin
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (WA)
Smucker
Soto
Spanberger
Speier
Stansbury
Stanton
Stauber
Steel
Stefanik
Steil
Stevens
Stewart
Strickland
Suozzi
Swalwell
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Titus
Tlaib
Tonko
Torres (CA)
Torres (NY)
Trahan
Trone
Turner
Underwood
Upton
Valadao
Van Drew
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Wagner
Walberg
Waltz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wexton
Wild
Williams (GA)
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Yarmuth
Young

NAYS—96

Allen
Armstrong
Arrington
Babin
Baird
Bentz
Bice (OK)
Biggs
Bishop (NC)
Boebert
Brooks
Buck
Budd
Burchett
Burgess
Calvert
Cammack
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Cawthorn
Cheney
Cline
Cloud
Clyde
Comer
Crenshaw
Davidson
Donalds
Duncan
Ellzey
Estes
Ferguson
Fitzgerald
Fleischmann
Foxx
Franklin, C. Scott
Gaetz
Gallagher
Garbarino
Gonzales, Tony
Good (VA)
Gooden (TX)
Gosar
Greene (GA)
Griffith
Grothman
Guest
Harris
Harshbarger
Hern
Herrell
Hice (GA)
Higgins (LA)
Issa
Jackson
Jacobs (NY)
Jordan
Kelly (MS)
Kustoff
LaTurner
Lesko
Long
Loudermilk
Lucas
Mann
Massie
Mast
McClintock
Miller (IL)
Moore (AL)
Mullin
Norman
Owens
Palazzo
Palmer
Pence
Perry
Pfluger
Rose
Rosendale
Roy
Schweikert
Sessions
Smith (MO)
Steube
Tenney
Tiffany
Timmons
Van Duyne
Walorski
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams (TX)
Zeldin

NOT VOTING—5

Bost
Butterfield
Price (NC)
Spartz
Taylor

□ 1623

Messrs. PALAZZO, TIMMONS, CAWTHORN, GARBARINO, JACOBS of New York, ELLZEY, and OWENS changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

So the en bloc amendments were agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

MEMBERS RECORDED PURSUANT TO HOUSE RESOLUTION 8, 117TH CONGRESS

Aguilar (Correa)
Amodei (Balderson)
Babin (Norman)
Barragán (Correa)
Bass (Kelly (IL))
Blumenauer (Beyer)
Brown (MD) (Connolly)
Cárdenas (Gomez)
Cherfilus-McCormick (Beatty)
Cuellar (Correa)
DelBene (Kuster)
Deutch (Rice (NY))
Doggett (Beyer)
Doyle, Michael F. (Connolly)
Evans (Mfume)
Fallon (Jackson)
Gohmert (Boebert)
Gonzalez, Vicente (Correa)
Gosar (Greene (GA))
Granger (Van Duyne)
Green (TN) (Timmons)
Grijalva (García (IL))
Johnson (SD) (Armstrong)
Johnson (TX) (Jeffries)
Kahele (Correa)
Kelly (PA) (Keller)
Kind (Connolly)
Lawson (FL) (Soto)
Lofgren (Jeffries)
Manning (Beyer)
Payne (Pallone)
Pocan (García (IL))
Raskin (Cicilline)
Roybal-Allard (Takano)
Rush (Jeffries)
Sewell (Kelly (IL))
Sires (Pallone)
Strickland (Jeffries)
Suozzi (Beyer)
Tiffany (Fitzgerald)
Trone (Connolly)
Underwood (Jeffries)
Van Drew (Reschenthaler)
Veasey (Beyer)
Wilson (FL) (Cicilline)

AMENDMENT NO. 5 OFFERED BY MRS. MILLER-MEEKS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the unfinished business is the question on amendment No. 5, printed in part B of House Report 117–253, on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Iowa (Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS).

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 203, nays 223, not voting 6, as follows:

[Roll No. 53]

YEAS—203

Aderholt
Allen
Amodei
Armstrong
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Baird
Balderson
Banks
Barr
Bentz
Bergman
Bice (OK)
Bilirakis
Bishop (NC)
Brooks
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burchett
Burgess
Calvert
Cammack
Carey
Carl
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Cawthorn

Chabot
Cheney
Cline
Cloud
Clyde
Cole
Comer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Curtis
Davidson
Davis, Rodney
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Donalds
Duncan
Dunn
Ellzey
Emmer
Estes
Fallon
Feenstra
Ferguson
Fischbach
Fitzgerald
Fleischmann
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franklin, C. Scott
Fulcher
Gallagher
Garbarino
Garcia (CA)
Gibbs
Gimenez
Gohmert
Gonzales, Tony
Gonzalez (OH)
Good (VA)
Gooden (TX)
Gosar
Granger
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Green (TN)
Greene (GA)
Griffith
Grothman
Guest
Guthrie
Harris
Harshbarger
Hartzler
Hern
Herrell
Herrera Beutler
Hice (GA)
Higgins (LA)
Hill
Hinson
Hollingsworth
Hudson
Huizenga
Issa
Jackson
Jacobs (NY)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson (SD)
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Joyce (PA)
Katko
Keller
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
Kim (CA)
Kinzinger
Kustoff
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Latta
LaTurner
Lesko
Letlow
Long
Loudermilk
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Mace
Malliotakis
Mann
Massie
Mast
McCarthy
McCaul
McClain
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
Meijer
Meuser
Miller (IL)
Miller (WV)
Miller-Meeks
Moolenaar
Mooney
Moore (AL)
Moore (UT)
Mullin
Murphy (NC)
Nehls
Newhouse
Norman
Obernolte
Owens
Palazzo
Palmer
Pence
Perry
Pfluger
Posey
Reed
Reschenthaler
Rice (SC)
Rodgers (WA)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rose
Rosendale
Rouzer
Roy
Rutherford
Salazar
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sessions
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smucker
Stauber
Steel
Stefanik
Steil
Steube
Stewart
Tenney
Thompson (PA)
Tiffany
Timmons
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Van Drew
Van Duyne
Wagner
Walberg
Walorski
Waltz
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams (TX)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Young
Zeldin

NAYS—223

Adams
Aguilar
Allred
Auchincloss
Axne
Barragán
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Beyer
Biggs
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Boebert
Bonamici
Bourdeaux
Bowman
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brown (MD)
Brown (OH)
Brownley
Bush
Bustos
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson
Carter (LA)
Cartwright
Case
Casten
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Cherfilus-McCormick
Chu
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Courtney
Craig
Crist
Crow
Cuellar
Davids (KS)
Davis, Danny K.
Dean
DeFazio
DeGette
DeLauro
DelBene
Delgado
Demings
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Escobar
Eshoo
Espaillat
Evans
Fitzpatrick
Fletcher
Foster
Frankel, Lois
Gaetz
Gallego
Garamendi
García (IL)
Garcia (TX)
Golden
Gomez
Gonzalez, Vicente
Gottheimer
Green, Al (TX)
Grijalva
Harder (CA)
Hayes
Higgins (NY)
Himes
Horsford
Houlahan
Hoyer
Huffman
Jackson Lee
Jacobs (CA)
Jayapal
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (TX)
Jones
Kahele
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Khanna
Kildee
Kilmer
Kim (NJ)
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster
Lamb
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lawson (FL)
Lee (CA)
Lee (NV)
Leger Fernandez
Levin (CA)
Levin (MI)
Lieu
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Luria
Lynch
Malinowski
Maloney, Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Manning
Matsui
McBath
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Mfume
Moore (WI)
Morelle
Moulton
Mrvan
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Neguse
Newman
Norcross
O'Halleran
Ocasio-Cortez
Omar
Pallone
Panetta
Pappas
Pascrell
Payne
Perlmutter
Peters
Phillips
Pingree
Pocan
Porter
Pressley
Quigley
Raskin
Rice (NY)
Ross
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan
Sánchez
Sarbanes
Scanlon
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Schrier
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Sewell
Sherman
Sherrill
Sires
Slotkin
Smith (WA)
Soto
Spanberger
Speier
Stansbury
Stanton
Stevens
Strickland
Suozzi
Swalwell
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tlaib
Tonko
Torres (CA)
Torres (NY)
Trahan
Trone
Underwood
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wexton
Wild
Williams (GA)
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—6

Bost
Brady
Butterfield
Price (NC)
Spartz
Taylor

□ 1643

Mr. VELA, Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ, and Mr. LARSON of Connecticut changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

Messrs. COMER and CARTER of Texas changed their vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So the amendment was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

MEMBERS RECORDED PURSUANT TO HOUSE RESOLUTION 8, 117TH CONGRESS

Aguilar (Correa)
Amodei (Balderson)
Babin (Norman)
Barragán (Correa)
Bass (Kelly (IL))
Blumenauer (Beyer)
Brown (MD) (Connolly)
Cárdenas (Gomez)
Cherfilus-McCormick (Beatty)
Cuellar (Correa)
DelBene (Kuster)
Deutch (Rice (NY))
Doggett (Beyer)
Doyle, Michael F. (Connolly)
Evans (Mfume)
Fallon (Jackson)
Gohmert (Boebert)
Gonzalez, Vicente (Correa)
Gosar (Greene (GA))
Granger (Van Duyne)
Green (TN) (Timmons)
Grijalva (García (IL))
Johnson (SD) (Armstrong)
Johnson (TX) (Jeffries)
Kahele (Correa)
Kelly (PA) (Keller)
Kind (Connolly)
Lawson (FL) (Soto)
Lofgren (Jeffries)
Manning (Beyer)
Payne (Pallone)
Pocan (García (IL))
Raskin (Cicilline)
Roybal-Allard (Takano)
Rush (Jeffries)
Sewell (Kelly (IL))
Sires (Pallone)
Strickland (Jeffries)
Suozzi (Beyer)
Tiffany (Fitzgerald)
Trone (Connolly)
Underwood (Jeffries)
Van Drew (Reschenthaler)
Veasey (Beyer)
Wilson (FL) (Cicilline)

AMENDMENT NO. 6 OFFERED BY MS. BROWNLEY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the unfinished business is the question on amendment No. 6, printed in part B of House Report 117–253, on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BROWNLEY).

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 425, nays 0, not voting 7, as follows:

[Roll No. 54]

YEAS—425

Adams
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
Allred
Amodei
Armstrong
Arrington
Auchincloss
Axne
Babin
Bacon
Baird
Balderson
Banks
Barr
Barragán
Bass
Beatty
Bentz
Bera
Bergman
Beyer
Bice (OK)
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NC)
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Boebert
Bonamici
Bourdeaux
Bowman
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady
Brooks
Brown (MD)
Brown (OH)
Brownley
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burchett
Burgess
Bush
Bustos
Calvert
Cammack
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carey
Carl
Carson
Carter (GA)
Carter (LA)
Carter (TX)
Cartwright
Case
Casten
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Cawthorn
Chabot
Cheney
Cherfilus-McCormick
Chu
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Cleaver
Cline
Cloud
Clyburn
Clyde
Cohen
Cole
Comer
Connolly
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Courtney
Craig
Crawford
Crenshaw
Crist
Crow
Cuellar
Davids (KS)
Davis, Danny K.
Davis, Rodney
Dean
DeFazio
DeGette
DeLauro
DelBene
Delgado
Demings
DeSaulnier
DesJarlais
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Donalds
Doyle, Michael F.
Duncan
Dunn
Ellzey
Emmer
Escobar
Eshoo
Espaillat
Estes
Evans
Fallon
Feenstra
Ferguson
Fischbach
Fitzgerald
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fletcher
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frankel, Lois
Franklin, C. Scott
Fulcher
Gaetz
Gallagher
Gallego
Garamendi
Garbarino
García (CA)
García (IL)
Garcia (TX)
Gibbs
Gimenez
Gohmert
Golden
Gomez
Gonzales, Tony
Gonzalez (OH)
Gonzalez, Vicente
Good (VA)
Gooden (TX)
Gosar
Gottheimer
Granger
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Green (TN)
Green, Al (TX)
Greene (GA)
Griffith
Grijalva
Grothman
Guest
Guthrie
Harder (CA)
Harris
Harshbarger
Hartzler
Hayes
Hern
Herrell
Herrera Beutler
Hice (GA)
Higgins (LA)
Higgins (NY)
Hill
Himes
Hinson
Hollingsworth
Horsford
Houlahan
Hoyer
Hudson
Huffman
Huizenga
Issa
Jackson
Jackson Lee
Jacobs (CA)
Jacobs (NY)
Jayapal
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson (SD)
Johnson (TX)
Jones
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Joyce (PA)
Kahele
Kaptur
Katko
Keating
Keller
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
Khanna
Kildee
Kilmer
Kim (CA)
Kim (NJ)
Kind
Kinzinger
Kirkpatrick
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster
Kustoff
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamb
Lamborn
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latta
LaTurner
Lawrence
Lawson (FL)
Lee (CA)
Lee (NV)
Leger Fernandez
Lesko
Letlow
Levin (CA)
Levin (MI)
Lieu
Lofgren
Long
Loudermilk
Lowenthal
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Luria
Lynch
Mace
Malinowski
Malliotakis
Maloney, Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Mann
Manning
Massie
Mast
Matsui

McBath
McCarthy
McCaul
McClain
McClintock
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McHenry
McKinley
McNerney
Meeks
Meijer
Meng
Meuser
Mfume
Miller (IL)
Miller (WV)
Miller-Meeks
Moolenaar
Mooney
Moore (AL)
Moore (UT)
Moore (WI)
Morelle
Moulton
Mrvan
Mullin
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (NC)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Neguse
Nehls
Newhouse
Newman
Norcross
Norman
O'Halleran
Obernolte
Ocasio-Cortez
Omar
Owens
Palazzo
Pallone
Palmer
Panetta
Pappas
Pascrell
Payne
Pence
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters
Pfluger
Phillips
Pingree
Pocan
Porter
Posey
Pressley
Quigley
Raskin
Reed
Reschenthaler
Rice (NY)
Rice (SC)
Rodgers (WA)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rose
Rosendale
Ross
Rouzer
Roy
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Rutherford
Ryan
Salazar
Sánchez
Sarbanes
Scalise
Scanlon
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Schrier
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sessions
Sewell
Sherman
Sherrill
Simpson
Sires
Slotkin
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (WA)
Smucker
Soto
Spanberger
Spartz
Speier
Stansbury
Stanton
Stauber
Steel
Stefanik
Steil
Steube
Stevens
Stewart
Strickland
Suozzi
Swalwell
Takano
Tenney
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Tiffany
Timmons
Titus
Tlaib
Tonko
Torres (CA)
Torres (NY)
Trahan
Trone
Turner
Underwood
Upton
Valadao
Van Drew
Van Duyne
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Wagner
Walberg
Walorski
Waltz
Wasserman Schultz
Watson Coleman
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Welch
Wenstrup
Westerman
Wexton
Wild
Williams (GA)
Williams (TX)
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Yarmuth
Young
Zeldin

NOT VOTING—7

Bost
Butterfield
Curtis
Davidson
Price (NC)
Taylor
Waters

□ 1700

So the amendment was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I was unavailable to vote in the House. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall No. 51, "yea" on rollcall No. 52, "yea" on rollcall No. 53, and "yea" on rollcall No. 54.

MEMBERS RECORDED PURSUANT TO HOUSE RESOLUTION 8, 117TH CONGRESS

Aguilar (Correa)
Amodei (Balderson)
Babin (Norman)
Barragán (Correa)
Bass (Kelly (IL))
Blumenauer (Beyer)
Brown (MD) (Connolly)
Cárdenas (Gomez)
Cherfilus-McCormick (Beatty)
Cuellar (Correa)
DelBene (Kuster)
Deutch (Rice (NY))
Doggett (Beyer)
Doyle, Michael F. (Connolly)
Evans (Mfume)
Fallon (Jackson)
Gohmert (Boebert)
Gonzalez, Vicente (Correa)
Gosar (Greene (GA))
Granger (Van Duyne)
Green (TN) (Timmons)
Grijalva (García (IL))
Johnson (SD) (Armstrong)
Johnson (TX) (Jeffries)
Kahele (Correa)
Kelly (PA) (Keller)
Kind (Connolly)
Lawson (FL) (Soto)
Lofgren (Jeffries)
Manning (Beyer)
Payne (Pallone)
Pocan (García (IL))
Raskin (Cicilline)
Roybal-Allard (Takano)
Rush (Jeffries)
Sewell (Kelly (IL))
Sires (Pallone)
Strickland (Jeffries)
Suozzi (Beyer)
Tiffany (Fitzgerald)
Trone (Connolly)
Underwood (Jeffries)
Van Drew (Reschenthaler)
Veasey (Beyer)
Wilson (FL) (Cicilline)

HONORING OUR PROMISE TO ADDRESS COMPREHENSIVE TOXICS ACT OF 2021

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 1(c) of rule XIX, further consideration of the bill (H.R. 3967) to improve health care and benefits for veterans exposed to toxic substances, and for other purposes, is postponed.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 6886

Mr. LATTA. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to remove the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. WENSTRUP) as a cosponsor of H.R. 6886.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. BOURDEAUX). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

TIME TO SERVE OUR VETERANS

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

Ms. NEWMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to bring attention to our veterans who served in or near the Panama Canal Zone during the Vietnam war.

Hundreds of these veterans came home with major health issues after being exposed to deadly herbicides like Agent Orange and Agent Purple. Yet, to this day, they are not eligible to receive Federal benefits and disability compensation.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to say that we are one step closer to changing that. Today, I was proud to pass my amendment requiring the Department of Defense to study this issue, which is the first step to ensuring that these veterans finally will receive the care and benefits they deserve.

Madam Speaker, these veterans honorably served our Nation. Now, it is our turn to serve them and get this done.

HARRIET TUBMAN 200TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

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

Mr. HARRIS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the bicentennial birthday of a true American hero, Harriet Tubman.

Born in Dorchester County, in Maryland's First Congressional District, Harriet Tubman is best known as the conductor of the Underground Railroad. Born a slave, Tubman escaped and risked her own freedom to guide countless other slaves to freedom at great personal risk.

In honor of her life achievement, in the next few weeks, numerous events will be held in and around Dorchester County to celebrate her 200th birthday. The Harriet Tubman State Park and Visitor Center will be hosting discussions with archaeologists and historians, as well as conducting walking tours, live music events, artifact displays, and a film premiere.

As we close out Black History Month and begin Women's History Month, I urge my colleagues and all Americans to join me in honoring the memory of Harriet Tubman. She truly embodied the American spirit. From her thirst for freedom to her courage under fire and her passion for helping her fellow man, she is an example to us all.

Madam Speaker, I am grateful for the opportunity to celebrate her here today on the floor of the people's House.

HONORING BARBARA CURRAN

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

Ms. SHERRILL. I rise to recognize the Honorable Barbara Curran, a lifelong public servant from New Jersey who broke many glass ceilings.

Barbara was an accomplished scholar, even earning her law degree in the evenings as a single mom. Entering the world of politics as a woman in the 1970s, she was a force. Barbara was the first woman to serve in all three branches of the New Jersey government—as assemblywoman, as a member of the Governor's cabinet, and as a superior court judge. She was referred to as the ''blue elephant'' for her commitment to bipartisanship.

Barbara cherished time with family and never missed an opportunity to send encouraging handwritten notes. At times, she was even called off the bench to take a call from her daughter.

I am grateful for the role model Barbara was to me and to so many who saw a path forward in politics through her example, and a glimpse at how to balance being a parent with the demands of public service.

In January, Barbara Curran passed away peacefully. My heart is with her daughter, Katie; her son-in-law, Patrick; and her grandchildren, Duke, Marrin, Lilah, and Moira.

I was honored to know Barbara, and she will be dearly missed.

STATE OF THE UNION LACKED TANGIBLE PLANS

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

Mrs. BICE of Oklahoma. Madam Speaker, I rise today in response to President Biden's State of the Union address.

While I appreciated that Biden emphasized the importance of continuing to support Ukraine, overall, his speech was a lot of talk without tangible plans

to solve the numerous issues that are devastating the Nation.

The President's speech didn't address the root causes of inflation, a crisis that is crushing many American families.

I found it ironic that Biden talked about securing the border when, throughout his entire time in office, he has actively ignored the unprecedented number of illegal crossings, which are due to his open border policies currently in place.

Finally, I am incredibly disappointed that he made no plan to restore American energy independence. We can produce affordable, reliable, and sustainable energy right here at home in States like my home State of Oklahoma.

Frankly, his address focused a lot on rehashing and disguising Build Back Better while lacking concrete solutions to the pressing issues negatively impacting the lives of American people.

ECONOMIC PROGRESS

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

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, at last night's State of the Union, President Biden had every reason to cite his extraordinary job creation record, the fastest job growth in U.S. history. After only one year in office, the President's American Rescue Plan was at the center of this achievement. Our economic growth was the fastest in nearly 40 years. As a result, the United States had a faster recovery than every other advanced economy in the G7.

This progress has been made even while the United States is trying to defeat COVID–19. As chair of the Subcommittee on Highways and Transit, I was particularly pleased to hear the President emphasize infrastructure, making goods move faster and cheaper, because this can only add to the historic job creation record he has achieved.

CALIFORNIA'S DEVASTATING 2021 FIRE SEASON

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Madam Speaker, I would like to point out to the Members here tonight once again that California had a very devastating fire season last year. The whole Western States of America have.

The Dixie fire alone was nearly 1 million acres in my district. Several other fires add up into the six-digit figures.

What we really need to do is have the United States Forest Service identify a fire within the first 24 hours of when a fire occurs and then pounce on it and put the fire out—no more monitoring fire.

Some other colleagues and I will be looking at legislation to put that in place. We were promised by the Forest Service that would be their policy. We need to enforce that. We need to have that be the dedication they have toward taking care of these Federal lands.

Indeed, there are multi-uses for people, for timber, for preservation. But when they go up in smoke, it just becomes a horrific environmental problem: first, air quality, and then the ash, the silt that is going to wash into our streams and oceans and water storage.

The Forest Service needs to get on the job.

SUPPORTING THE PACT ACT

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of the PACT Act that Chairman TAKANO and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs brought before us today. I was very pleased to vote for it.

When those who go to serve our country abroad or even here at home come back to civilian life, they often carry with them the injuries of toxic exposure, such as burn pits, and we have a moral obligation for their care.

Madam Speaker, to shift to a different subject, as we watch the slaughter in Ukraine, I would urge the Government of the United States and the President of the United States to mobilize our National Guard Partnership for Peace programs across the various States. Ohio is linked to Serbia and Hungary, and Illinois to Poland.

There are ways for us as a country to use idle aircraft, like C–130 sitting on the ground in this country, where the American people want to donate blankets and bandages in ways of caring for those who are being killed and injured, who are hungry in the Nation of Ukraine. That is an unrealized asset we have.

We could do that overnight if we had the will to do it, the Partnership for Peace, the State Partnership for Peace, which is part of the U.S. Department of Defense under the National Guard Bureau.

Madam Speaker, I ask the President to help us help Ukraine.

□ 1715

SECURE THE BORDER

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

Mr. ROSE. Madam Speaker, I was shocked when President Biden said ''we need to secure the border'' during his State of the Union address. In his first year in office, over 2 million illegal immigrants were apprehended at the southern border, deportations decreased by 70 percent, and 11,000 migrants were arrested who had previous criminal convictions.

Actions speak louder than words, and when Mr. Biden halted construction of President Trump's border wall and attempted to reverse the remain in Mexico policy, we knew that he didn't want to secure the border. The Biden administration's open border policies put immense strain on law enforcement as they work to combat the fentanyl crisis wreaking havoc on our communities.

In fact, Cumberland County, Tennessee, Sheriff Casey Cox recently took a trip to the southern border to gain a better understanding of the issue after a local 18-year-old woman died of a fentanyl overdose. Much like on my own trips to the border, Sheriff Cox observed how understaffed and ill-prepared we are to face the crisis under the Biden administration.

Madam Speaker, I urge the President to back up his words with action and do what he said: secure the border.

AMERICANS CANNOT MAKE ENDS MEET

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

Ms. BROWN of Ohio. Madam Speaker, last night President Biden delivered a powerful speech on the state of our Union in this very Chamber. He outlined the historic achievements of the past year and spoke directly to the American people about his vision to continue building a better America.

Despite the progress we have seen, too many of our fellow Americans still cannot make ends meet. Too many families are struggling to afford rising food, childcare, housing, and gas prices. And too many of our neighbors remain locked out of the promise of America.

I stand with President Biden in his call to continue building our economy from the bottom up and the middle out. It is time to lower costs for families by reducing prescription drug prices, expanding access to affordable healthcare, and investing in pre-kindergarten education.

It is time to increase pay by raising the minimum wage and protecting the right to organize. And, yes, it is time to extend the child tax credit.

Last night, I was honored to host Shaneice Ball of Cleveland as my guest for the State of the Union. As a State-tested nursing assistant and a mom of three with one on the way, Shaneice is the epitome of resilience, tenacity, and the American people's ability to persevere through tough times.

WE CANNOT FORGET ABOUT OUR SOUTHERN BORDER

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

Mr. GROTHMAN. Madam Speaker, with regard to what is going on in Ukraine, I stand with everybody in saying it is an absolutely horrific

thing. If the United States can keep Ukraine and free Ukraine, that is what we should all be hoping and praying for.

We heard a speech last night, in addition to the very relevant numbers, and in addition to the numbers of people dying in Ukraine and the people being injured, we cannot forget that every month in America another 90,000 people cross our southern border. We cannot forget that every month in America 8,000 more people die of drug overdoses. We cannot forget in America, compared to 3 years ago, we deport, every month, approximately 6,000 less people from this country for committing crimes.

Madam Speaker, I realize a lot is going on around the world and it is easy to forget about it, but America should not allow its politicians to forget about this huge sea of people crossing the border and the huge number of people dying of drug overdoses and the broken hearts of their parents, their siblings, and their children.

PRESIDENT BIDEN'S ADDRESS TO THE NATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2021, the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ. Madam Speaker, yesterday President Biden stood in this very room and addressed a Nation during the State of the Union that was looking to the kind of unity, strength, and commitment that we heard last night. We saw a President who is concerned as our leader for the people. We saw a President who has the empathy for the families and what they have gone through because he, himself, has lived that experience. We saw a leader who is not afraid to stand up to those that threaten all we love.

America sent a clear message to the world that the United States stands steady and steadfast with the people and government of Ukraine. We are united against the unforgivable, unjust, and unprovoked Russian invasion. America is united against Putin, his actions, and what he represents.

The difference is striking. The difference is striking as to what Putin represents with his strong-man mentality, with his autocracy, with his hatred of those he does not know versus what America stands for.

America stands for the embrace of democracy because it is democracy that looks to maintain that when a people elect their government, that when a people vote for a President, such as we have seen in Ukraine, that that democracy must be honored, and nobody should be allowed to take it away. President Putin is not allowed to take it away.

We saw a President who is building bridges. He is building bridges across our country and the world. He is building actual bridges, the kind of bridges that will connect a school bus to the student who needs to get to school in my district. He is building the kind of bridges that needed to be fixed decades ago that are falling down right before our eyes when he goes to dedicate them.

Those are real bridges that we need in America, that so many Presidents—the President before talked about bridges and infrastructure, but who delivered? President Biden delivered together with this Congress. He delivered together with a bipartisan House vote where we actually thought it was bipartisan because we got 10 Republicans in this House to vote for that Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

But the other kind of bridges he is building are equally important to talk about because those are the bridges of unity. Our former President, he cared about walls. He cared about walls that divide us. He cared about walls that did not do anything that we need. Instead, we now have a President who builds the bridges of unity.

Imagine the kind of work and diplomacy that this President had to do to overcome the threats that the United States would leave NATO, which is what our former President tried to do. Imagine the unity that had to be called out and that had to be cajoled, given that this President was faced with overcoming from our former President's admiration for Putin. Everyone might remember, he has even recently called him a genius. Right?

Instead, we had a President that said no, and that called Putin what he really is, a man who is delusional about what you can accomplish with force. This President, President Biden, has united a world together to repel and to impose sanctions that you wouldn't have imagined.

The idea that we now have Switzerland saying: No, it is not right, we shall not stay neutral because this is so wrong. We must stand up against the darkness. We must stand with the American people who seek light. We will stand against those who seek darkness. We stand against those who want to govern from a place of hatred and fear because we will govern from a place of love for our communities, of love for our families, of love for democracy, and of love for the idea that we must be a world united in the pursuit of peace.

Madam Speaker, I loved the fact that I was able to invite a virtual guest to the State of the Union. I was able to invite Victoria Dominguez as my hometown hero. My hometown hero comes from Cuba, New Mexico. I had the great fortune of visiting with Victoria Dominguez and the Cuba School District just the Friday before we flew out here.

I can tell you, the love that Victoria Dominguez has for her community and for the children who attend her school is visible in that smile that she shares with you when she talks about them. Cuba is quite special because Cuba is nestled close to the mountains. The people of Cuba cut firewood to warm their home. The people of Cuba are connected with each other.

The people of Cuba don't necessarily have other resources. So when the pandemic hit, the children of Cuba did not have internet, they did not have the ability to remotely learn. The children of Cuba School Districts did not necessarily have the nutrition they needed, the supplies they needed to make it through that dark winter.

But what did Cuba do? Cuba rallied. I love the fact that not only is Victoria Dominguez a hero, but the bus drivers of Cuba, New Mexico, are heroes. They have appeared on the cover of Time magazine because of the work they did. You see them standing in front of their buses because those school buses—working together with Cuba CARES—which our beautiful Victoria Dominguez organized—those school buses took to the students and their families the work that they needed for their schools. They took them the food that they needed to nourish their bodies so that they could also nourish their brains. They took them what they needed.

The thing is that as we are coming out of COVID—thank you, thank you—as we are coming out of COVID and we are learning to handle and to respond to it, as we are able to remove our masks, Cuba CARES isn't going away because we know that caring for your community is not something you do once and walk away from.

I know that Victoria Dominguez is going to continue caring for those beautiful children who attend the Cuba schools. I am so pleased to talk about the work that Victoria Dominguez does because it is the epitome of what we want to support within the Congressional Progressive Caucus because this is the Congressional Progressive Caucus' Special House.

This is when we want to talk about the way in which we can promote and move agendas that focus on our communities. That we can promote and pursue policy that comes from a place of love, that is about creating opportunities, that is about imagining the possibilities, as President Biden said last night. That is what we need to do as a government.

The last thing I want to say about our wonderful hometown hero is that Victoria Dominguez received both her undergraduate and graduate social work degrees from New Mexico Highlands University.

I need to give a shout-out to New Mexico Highlands University because my father received his degrees from New Mexico Highlands University. My mother went to school when she had seven kids and she worked so hard on that typewriter, and it would imprint those letters on her head. We would tease my mother, but she got that degree from New Mexico Highlands University.

New Mexico Highlands University is rated as one of the top—number 19—of those minority-serving institutions that help elevate their students from one socioeconomic ring to another. It is a minority-serving institution that is key in the upward ladder of social mobility.

□ 1730

Now, the Congressional Progressive Caucus had some very key priorities, and I am so pleased to talk about the manner in which we have addressed those priorities.

We believe that it is very important that we strengthen the care economy and that we invest in Medicaid home- and community-based services. We are going to make sure that we do not give up on the image of making sure that childcare is a universal benefit; that we cap out-of-pocket childcare costs so no family pays more than 7 percent of their household income; and that we provide the kind of training and support so that those children are cared for often and most often by women and often and most often by women of color and often by immigrant women; and that these caretakers of our most precious gifts—our children—will receive the pay that they deserve.

We are not giving up on our importance of making investments—bold investments—in housing because we need that housing.

When I was in Cuba, guess what they asked about?

They asked about the importance of getting housing for their teachers at Cuba School. They want teacherages. I went and visited the Presbyterian Medical Services where those doctors, nurses, and clinical workers serving their community were, and I said: What do you need?

They said: We need housing for those so that they can come and work here because we are not close to a city center. When we go and we visit Santa Fe, Taos, Las Vegas, all the different communities in my large district and all of the communities in the districts of our hundred strong Congressional Progressive Caucus members, housing comes up over and over and over again.

So we are going to continue to fight so that we have housing choice vouchers. We are going to continue to fight so that we address the backlog of public housing. We want to make sure that we create affordable housing and that it is available so that we can begin creating the kind of wealth that families need when they are able to acquire a home of their own, because a home is one of the best ways of both providing that warmth and that care for your family and building wealth for not only yourself but future generations.

I loved it last night when that President of ours focused on what do we need; and, yes, we need to focus on lowering drug prices. We need to use those savings to expand the availability of health to all because who, who should pay the outrageous sums that too many pay, including his special guest last night, for diabetes?

We have said we need to cap it. I am proud that New Mexico has already capped it at $25. But not all States are as forward thinking as New Mexico, and so I applaud the President for his initiative that we cap it at $30 a month for insulin because it must not be something that we read in the papers where too many people ration their insulin. And if you ration your insulin, you can die.

If you ration your insulin, your health condition will worsen. You may lose your limbs, you may lose your life. And I have seen those who have lost their limbs, and I have seen those who for the rest of their lives are attached to dialysis because they could not afford to pay for the insulin that they needed to treat their diabetes.

Madam Speaker, we want to make sure that we make bold investments in climate jobs and that those investments go to the most impacted communities. It is not and never has been a choice of jobs or environment. We can have both.

I am very proud of the orphaned well bill that I introduced. It is called the Orphaned Well Cleanup and Jobs Act. In the Senate, Senator LUJÁN has been carrying this mantle, and he introduced the REGROW Act. Out of these two bills we saw $4.7 billion invested into cleaning up orphaned wells because orphaned wells don't do anything for anybody. What they represent is that companies walked away from their obligation, from their legal obligation, from their obligation to the communities where they dug those wells, where they drilled those wells, and where they pumped oil and gas from those wells. They walked away from their obligation to plug that well and to remediate the land around it once they were done.

Those wells threaten our water table. They threaten our ability to have clean water when we turn on that tap. And very, very sadly, they worsen the climate crisis. What comes out of those wells when they are doing nothing for nobody—nothing for anybody—what comes out of them is the venting of methane, the leakage of methane. You can smell it when you go near those wells, Madam Speaker. I have visited those wells, and they are in places where they should not be. They are next to schools, and that methane is simply leaking and leaking and leaking. It is 28 times or more—more potent—more potent than CO_2.

So we need to make those kinds of investments where we are both creating jobs and addressing the climate crisis.

I was so pleased when we heard the President speak last night about immigration reform, because let me tell you, Madam Speaker, there isn't anybody in this Chamber who hasn't benefited from the work of immigrants. There isn't anybody in this Chamber, except SHARICE DAVIDS and we had our wonderful Deb Haaland, who can't say they are not descendants and daughters and granddaughters of immigrants at one time. I am a descendant and a granddaughter of immigrants even though I can trace my lineage back 17 generations. But still they were immigrants then.

They caused good things and bad things which we must recognize. That is our history. There was tension in our history. We have done both good and bad over the years, and we must recognize it.

But in terms of today, looking at what immigrants provide us, those Dreamers that we have are studying to be nurses, they are studying to be doctors, they are studying to be teachers, and they are studying to be physicists, perhaps the engineers that will help us invent what we need to move on to the 22nd century on a planet that still exists and a place we still love. We must provide for those Dreamers. We must make sure that DACA does not expire.

This House did its job. This House passed the DREAM Act and sent it over to the Senate. But immigrants are not just students who will become our next teachers and nurses that we are sorely in need of right now. Immigrants are also those who care for our elderly, who care for our very young, who pick our fruits and vegetables, who clean the chickens and pork and prepare them to come to our supermarkets, and who stock those shelves. So we must also recognize that they are the essential workers who kept our regular lives going.

When we were able to still get food from that supermarket, who was putting their life on the line to provide it to us?

It was immigrants. We must treat them with the respect that they deserve because they have fed all of us. So I was very pleased to listen to the President speak that we must do that.

We are going to be calling upon the President because for some reason we could not get Republicans in the Senate—even though many of them supported these same immigration procedures before—to vote to move those immigration bills forward. So we are faced with this Republican wall that divides.

Why do we have these walls that divide?

Why do we have these walls that stunt progress?

We will continue to meet, ask, and implore the President to lean into those words that he shared with us last night so that we can achieve through executive orders so much.

I look forward to extending the temporary protected status so that it applies not just to the countries from our American continents but also to those who are coming from Ukraine, because we cannot just condemn what Putin has done; we cannot just send the billion dollars that we have already sent to Ukraine for munitions and for assistance; we cannot just do the more work that we have authorized today in this Chamber, but we must also recognize that wars like this, that those who flee dangerous situations, those who flee their country, the place they love, with so little with them, that we have an obligation under international law and under our own law to welcome those who seek asylum in our country. A temporary protected status for the Ukrainians is the right thing to do, and we support that as well.

So I am very pleased that we did, indeed, listen to the President talk about that importance last night because we know—that is the other thing we know—is Americans support—in overwhelming numbers—a majority of Americans support fixing our broken immigration system. They know because they live it daily that immigrants provide for our country and that without immigrants the issues around the supply chains would have been so much worse.

I am also really pleased about the way the President talked about delivering for Tribal communities and about delivering for rural communities. What this President and this Congress have done with regards to investments in rural America, in the small towns and villages that I find throughout my district, in the small towns, villages, and hamlets that we find throughout America where people are working to provide us with the food we eat, with everything we need, with the pasture lands and the grass that our cattle need, with all of the bounty that we receive here in America, that we must also invest in those places.

I was very happy to see that we had the CEO of Intel because in my district we have an Intel plant, and that plant is going to be benefiting from the investment that we have announced and that we passed out of this House with the COMPETES Act, because we are going to make it in America, we are going to invent it in America, and we are going to make sure that it is made and it is made everywhere in America because the priorities that we have in that COMPETES Act are things that are going to be done everywhere in America.

I am so proud of the fact that we do have those huge gains in manufacturing jobs. Other Presidents keep talking about having gains in manufacturing jobs, but it is under this President—and that in 1 year—we had more than half a million jobs created, 600,000-plus jobs. In New Mexico, we had 3,600 manufacturing jobs created.

Now, our problem is we need to make sure everybody knows about that. We need to make sure that these voices about the possibilities and how we are creating opportunity and how we are delivering for those communities where we serve gets out there because sometimes all we listen to is those who vilify, is those who complain, and those who just want to tear everything down and don't really have any good solutions.

What we are doing in this House and what we are passing out of this House are solutions. We know, and we heard the President speak eloquently last night, about the difficulties of inflation. But we also heard the President speak about how we address inflation; how we address inflation without penalizing workers; how we pay workers more and make sure that costs come down. That is what the infrastructure bill will do. That is what the COMPETES bill will do. And that is what we do when we operate and we pass policies that focus on lifting up our communities, not dividing our communities.

Madam Speaker, I am also so pleased at the President's words that he said last night when he said: When we invest in our workers, when we build the economy from the bottom up and the middle out, we can build a better America.

Madam Speaker, unions are critical to establishing the good jobs with a fair pay and safe working conditions that make that possibility of building a better America from the bottom up and the middle out.

That is a key distinction of what we have done in this Congress in the 14 months that I have been so lucky to serve. In those 14 months, we have focused and we have invested in us. We have been with the people because the people have moved us along, and they have told us what we need because we have gone and visited and we have listened.

□ 1745

I was trained as a rebellious lawyer. Why do I say that? People say, what does a rebellious lawyer do? I was very lucky. I got trained as a rebellious lawyer at Stanford Law School. What the most important and powerful thing a rebellious lawyer can do is listen.

What you saw last night was a President responding to what America has shared with us about what they need, about what our families need, what our communities need. That is what we have done in these last 14 months.

We did not give away a whole bunch of money to the rich and the big corporations because they don't need it. They are recognizing incredible profits in the last 14 months, and they are passing on higher costs. So, the people who are carrying the burden of those profits are our families, our working families.

But what we have done is, instead of giving away money to those who didn't need it, we have invested in our communities. We have invested in our communities, in the American Rescue Plan, by giving people the money they needed to make it through those harsh, dark days.

Do we remember what it was like in 2020? It was dark. It was ugly. It was scary. We didn't know if we were going to come out of it. People thought they were going to be losing their homes.

How were they going to pay their rent? We helped them out.

The number of small businesses that we have saved is amazing.

Then not only did we save those businesses, but the other thing that we have done in the last 14 months is we have had record growth of new businesses starting.

Those are the kinds of things that we need to celebrate even as we put our task to the metal, even as we work really hard to make sure that we address the new issues that we face because our work is never done. Our work is never done.

I have studied liberation theology in college and in graduate school. We talked about what it means to try to honor the creator, to honor what we are to do. It was about the fact that we need to try to create here on Earth the kingdom of God because it is not enough to say that you need to wait for it.

Those of us who believe in whatever our beliefs are, we each need to move to say how we work today and every day to make the lives of those in our community better, to make sure that we welcome the stranger, because as the Scripture says, we were once strangers, too.

To me, that is what we should do when we talk about immigration. We need to honor the words of love that are in those Scriptures.

Today, as we celebrate Ash Wednesday, we must remember that we have a job to do here while we are on this Earth, and that is to make this place better for those who are less fortunate, for those who are on the bottom up and the middle out, for all of those.

That is our job. We have a job for this beautiful place we call home, this beautiful planet we call home.

As the Pope has pointed out, we have an obligation to protect this beautiful creation we have against climate change, which is part and parcel of, as the Pope has noted, greed.

We must move away from being greedy and being mean and move to a place where our policies are made from a place of love, where we are waking up and fighting for our workers. We are allowing them to unionize because it is through unionization that this country has always improved the conditions of our communities.

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

REAL STATE OF THE UNION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2021, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. JOHNSON) is recognized for

60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Madam Speaker, President Biden's address to the Nation last night was a missed opportunity. Our country is mired in a historic number of crises of the President and his party's own making at home, at our border, and abroad.

The rhetoric in the President's speech simply did not match his failing record. No amount of spin can change what every single American can see plainly and feel so personally.

Madam Speaker, in simple summary, our Union is in a state of crisis. Hardworking American families are being threatened by skyrocketing prices and empty store shelves; by alarming increases in crime; by our wide-open borders and illegal immigration; by record overdose deaths; by delayed tax returns and government services; and, of course, not the least of which is the projection of weakness on America's part on the world stage.

Since the magnitude of these problems obviously has not convinced the President and his Democrat allies in Congress to reverse course, I am not sure anything will.

But the State of the Union address is supposed to be an annual opportunity for the American President to take stock, to level with the American people, to acknowledge what has worked and what has not.

Republicans urged President Biden to take advantage of that opportunity last night to chart a new direction, to speak honestly, to accept responsibility for the declining state of our country and pledge to do better.

President Biden certainly would not have been the first American President to seek a reset—far from it. Presidential resets are common, and they are necessary. But this President didn't do that.

What did we get instead? Another typical Biden speech. We got another series of warmed-over Democrat talking points taped together and presented to the American people as if it weren't those same policies that got us into the messes that we are in.

Madam Speaker, this evening, my Republican colleagues and I will provide a further response to the State of the Union that was delivered here just last night.

But first, Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Washington (Mrs. RODGERS), my friend and colleague, for her remarks and for a prayer that is being shared tonight around the world.

Mrs. RODGERS of Washington. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

We are all inspired by the people of Ukraine and the leadership of President Zelensky and Mayor Klitschko.

Today, Christian Ukrainians asked for Christians around the world to join in praying, specifically, Psalm 31. So please join me.

O Lord, we come to You for protection. Don't let us be disgraced. Save us, for You do what is right.

Turn Your ear to listen to us. Rescue us. Be our rock, our protection, our fortress, where we will be safe.

For the honor of Your name, lead us out of this danger. Pull us from the traps of our enemies, for we find protection in You alone.

We entrust our spirit into Your hand. Rescue us, Lord, for You are a faithful God.

We will be glad and rejoice in Your unfailing love. You have seen our troubles and You care about the anguish of our souls.

Have mercy on us, Lord, for we are in distress. Tears blur our eyes. Our body and soul are withering away. We are dying from grief.

We are scorned by our enemies, despised by their neighbors. Even our friends are afraid to come near. When they see us in the streets, they will run the other way.

We are being ignored as if we were dead, as if we were a broken pot.

We have heard the many rumors, and they are surrounded by terror. Their enemies conspire, plotting to take our lives.

But we are trusting You, O Lord, saying You are our God. Our future is in Your hands. Rescue us from those who hunt us down relentlessly.

Let Your favor shine on Your servants. In Your unfailing love, rescue. Don't let us be disgraced, O Lord, for we call out to You for help. Let the wicked be disgraced. Let them lie in silence in the grave.

Silence their lying lips, those proud and arrogant lips that accuse the godly.

How great is the goodness You have stored up for those who fear You. You lavish it on those who come to You for protection, blessing them before the watching world.

You hide us in the shelter of Your presence, safe from those who conspire against them. You shelter us in Your presence, far from accusing tongues.

Praise the Lord, for He has shown us the wonders of His unfailing love. He has kept us safe when my city was under attack. In panic, we cried out, ''We are cut off from the Lord,'' but You heard our cry for mercy and answered our call for help.

Love the Lord, all you godly ones, for the Lord protects those who are loyal to Him, but He harshly punishes the arrogant.

So be strong and courageous, all you who put your hope in the Lord.

The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Amen.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. The words of the psalmist resonate today as much as they did when they were written so many years ago, and our God is faithful. I thank the gentlewoman for putting that in perspective tonight.

Madam Speaker, I am happy to yield next to the gentleman from California (Mr. LAMALFA).

Mr. LAMALFA. Madam Speaker, I rise during this Special Order to offer thoughts on the real State of the Union.

Last night, the President addressed the Nation and attempted to rewrite the history of his first 14 months in office. The speech was short on solutions to our everyday challenges: record inflation, skyrocketing price of gas, and supply chain disruptions that are affecting everything from food to consumer goods.

This administration owns this energy crisis, which is a direct result of its crippling domestic production. When we don't produce our own energy, it makes us more vulnerable to global market fluctuations such as those caused by the Russian aggressions at Ukraine.

The Biden administration continues to ignore the national emergency at our southern border with unprecedented illegal immigration, millions of apprehensions, and limited deportations. It is a serious situation that continues to threaten our national security.

Let's focus for a moment here on U.S. energy. America's been feeling the ripple of skyrocketing energy prices. The average gallon of gas in my home State of California is up 70 percent from this time last year, and heating our homes is over 30 percent more expensive than winter last year.

Economic sanctions on Russia and the halting of the Nord Stream pipeline are sure to help increase the costs of energy, but they are necessary in order for to us to have independence. This reality will be a wake-up call for the Biden administration to reverse their current course and understand that American-produced energy is the best path forward.

After the President announced further sanctions on Russia due to the unprovoked attack on Ukraine, he promised to supply energy to our European allies that depend on Russian natural gas.

Since his first day in office, he has repeatedly stifled U.S. gas and oil production, increasing our dependence on all things Russian oil.

I am an adamant supporter of domestic oil and gas production, including building new pipelines. Right under our feet lies the largest untapped oil supply in the world, more than enough to drive down costs for American consumers and export liquefied natural gas to our European allies, removing our adversaries like Russia from their supply chain.

In last night's State of the Union, the President called to make Russia suffer

economic consequences for their unprovoked attack. He glossed over that he has repeatedly stifled U.S. energy production, halting the Keystone pipeline and suffocating domestic oil and gas leases.

Unfortunately, he did the opposite. Just this week, he announced he is once again halting all new leases for drilling on our vast Federal lands, which we know how to do well and ecologically soundly. His solution? Import more gas from other adversaries such as China and the Middle East.

Our Nation imports 7 percent of our oil from Russia. Although that may seem like not much, if they shut it off when we are not ready for it, that will cause a big ripple.

We can't just flip a switch and turn on our domestic energy supply. It will take time to do it. We know what we need to do. We need to get at it, to start now.

The American people are being crushed under the weight of these economic consequences from failed policies. We know what we need to do. Let's get after it.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Madam Speaker, energy policy is national security policy. Energy security is national security. We know that acutely now.

Madam Speaker, I am delighted to yield next to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. MCCLAIN).

Mrs. MCCLAIN. Madam Speaker, the state of our Union is atrocious. There are crises everywhere we look: record-high inflation; record-high illegal border crossings; a supply chain crisis that has stalled our economy; soaring energy prices; a devastating and deadly withdrawal from Afghanistan; an emboldened Russia trying to overthrow a sovereign country and a democratic ally, Ukraine. This is what a full year of complete Democratic control and failure has brought the American people.

The President is completely backward. The policies he and his congressional Democrat allies have pushed us into haven't gotten us out of these crises. They have actually pushed us into these crises under his first, short 1-year term in office.

The speech we saw last night was completely detached from reality.

□ 1800

What the American people are hearing from the Democrats is not what they are seeing, and it is not what they are experiencing. They can no longer afford to suffer these crises brought on by incompetent, arrogant, and out-of-touch leaders.

Sadly, the speech last night indicates that this administration plans to double down on their nonsense and spread lies and misinformation to the American people. All the American people want is truth, transparency, and consistency instead of manufacturing accomplishments to talk about at the State of the Union, like the convenient overnight change in the science, or shall I say, political science as a wind must have blown in from the Senate and, miraculously, COVID doesn't exist anymore.

President Biden needs to own up to all of the problems he has created and actually come up with some real solutions to get our country back on track. There is still time to do that.

If he is unable to do that, I implore him, please. Pick up the phone. Call me. I am happy to help.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Madam Speaker, I thank my friend. Very well said.

Madam Speaker, I am happy now to yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KELLER), who announced this week that he will not be seeking reelection, and he will be sorely missed because he is a gentleman and a great legislator.

Mr. KELLER. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Louisiana.

Madam Speaker, President Biden had an opportunity during the State of the Union address to communicate to the American people what his administration has learned from its policy failures of the past year and lay out a plan to correct course. Unfortunately, that didn't happen.

I was not surprised that the President used this address as a political tool to double down on his assault on American energy, mandates, and Big Government spending. These policy decisions have emboldened our adversaries and led to record high inflation, business losing workers, rising crime across the country, and a wide open southern border.

If President Biden really believed that doing the same thing will solve any of the crises his administration created, he is either totally out of touch or ignoring the facts. Either way, the President took the easy way out. What is easy is not always right.

Be assured, Republicans will not shy away from our duty to always put America first, to rebuild our economic engine, restore individual liberty, and renew the American Dream.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Madam Speaker, I thank my friend. I appreciate him very much.

Madam Speaker, I am happy to yield to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON), who has been a mentor to me and so many others in Congress.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, I thank Mr. MIKE JOHNSON for his leadership and courage to present the truth tonight.

Madam Speaker, last Friday, I was grateful as the ranking member of the U.S. delegation to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe to address the Parliamentary Assembly in Vienna, Austria. Our delegation was ably led by co-chair STEVE COHEN.

The bipartisan United States delegation of Democrats and Republicans, being transatlantic with our valued European and Indo-Pacific allies have been unintentionally united about Putin's war of mass murder in Ukraine, violating the principles of the Helsinki Final Act.

This emphasizes the devastating human cost of Putin's war against the families of Ukraine, isolating Russia and Belarus from the modern world.

This is Putin's war, as correctly identified by Der Spiegel, the German news magazine. It is not a war in Ukraine. It is not Russia's war. This is clearly to be forever condemned as Putin's war. The responsibility of an insane czar who is trying to build his power based on oil, money, and power, betraying young Russians to death.

OSCE monitors have impartially relayed the tragic reality of this conflict every day under often difficult and dangerous conditions. The Putin government and its proxies must restore the monitors' ability to fulfill their mandate.

I am personally grateful to have visited Russia a number of times where I was so impressed by the talented citizens who today who are being betrayed by Putin in his obsession for oil, money, and power.

Two months ago, I visited Kyiv, and it is horrifying to know of the attacks.

The pictures that we see here—they have been sent worldwide—this is the road to the airport. I was so impressed when I was there in December to see the four, six, eight, now ten lanes of boulevards filled with cars, a very modern society with high rise buildings that could be anywhere in America, could be anywhere in the world, in the modern world.

Now, sadly, we see that the cars are congested there and blocked. You have families. They have their pets with them. They have all the property that they could possibly carry. They have children. They have infants. They have elderly and sick persons and are trying to flee the rocket attacks solely the responsibility of Putin.

Sadly, in Belarus, dictator Lukashenko has become a puppet of Putin to subject Belarusians to autocracy, facilitating Putin's illegal war on the people of Ukraine.

It is inspiring that the legal president of Belarus, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, would have her first loyalty to the people of Belarus, not to the war criminal, Putin.

In conclusion, God bless Ukraine. God save Ukraine. Long live President Volodymyr Zelensky. God bless America.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Thank you, Mr. WILSON, for all you do, and your expertise in foreign affairs is a great blessing to all of us.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROSE).

Mr. ROSE. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Louisiana for yielding me time this evening.

Madam Speaker, today, I rise to remind President Biden that the State of the Union is in crisis, more so than at any time in my lifetime.

After sitting in the House Chamber last night listening to the President speak, I couldn't help but think about the people of Tennessee that are struggling to make ends meet.

They are struggling due to skyrocketing inflation that has been fueled by President Biden and congressional Democrats' insatiable desire to recklessly spend trillions of dollars by

borrowing massive amounts of money from China and elsewhere, and highly mortgaging our children's and grandchildren's and their children that follow after them, the future for these generations. It is gutless, and it is wrong.

Madam Speaker, the State of the Union is not strong. In fact, under only 1 year of President Biden's leadership, migrant encounters at our southern border have increased 96 percent. More police officers were killed than in any year since 1995. The price of gasoline has increased 33 percent. The fentanyl that comes across our southern border has become the leading cause of death among people aged 18 to 45, with an American dying every 5 minutes and 15 seconds.

Afghanistan has been surrendered back to the Taliban, leaving behind hundreds of Afghans who were aligned with us during that long struggle, along with billions of taxpayer dollars in modern American weaponry. Now, another American ally is under attack by out-of-control Russian dictator Vladimir Putin.

It is time to wake up and recognize that Biden's administration and Congressional Democrats' policies are failing the American people. In fact, those policies have begun to do real damage to us at an ever-increasing pace.

The people of my State, Tennessee, see right through this charade and implore the President to act now before it is too late and reverse his policies to match the rhetoric that we heard in the State of the Union address.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Madam Speaker, that was so well said. We are going to stay in the State of Tennessee.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. BURCHETT), who is from that same area.

Mr. BURCHETT. Madam Speaker, I thank Mr. JOHNSON for his leadership.

Madam Speaker, let me start off by offering my prayers to Ukraine, its people, and its leaders. I have asked my family to do that. Every night when we say our prayers, we pray for the people of Ukraine and their safety and the miracle of Biblical proportions that needs to occur in that country. It has happened before, and it can happen again. All of us hope that their country finds peace. We want to see this conflict end, Madam Speaker.

Innocent Ukrainians are caught in the middle of Vladimir Putin's unprovoked war against their country. These civilians are not at all responsible for the situation they find themselves in, yet they are the ones who are always paying the price.

Homes are destroyed. Food and water are scarce. Medical supplies are in short supply. Many institutions necessary for a stable society are under attack. On top of it all, the Ukrainians are living under the constant threat of Putin dropping a vacuum bomb or something worse. Some reports indicate that thermobaric bombs have been introduced to the theater, a whole new kind of hell that we are not used to in this country.

Discussions are now taking place about the United States supporting the Ukrainians with humanitarian aid. The question remains, how will we pay for this important matter? Congress could save a whole lot of money, Madam Speaker, if we would seize Russian-held assets and use them to pay for humanitarian aid to Ukraine. Using a creative funding mechanism like this ensures that we are responsible stewards of our constituents' tax dollars, especially given the challenges they face here at home.

Since 2015, American taxpayers have spent nearly $3 billion on humanitarian aid to Ukraine. What is wrong with having those responsible for the current humanitarian crisis pay for it, Madam Speaker? Vladimir Putin's invasion sparked this crisis. It makes sense that Russia should pay for the destruction and suffering it is causing these poor, innocent Ukrainians.

I appreciate Mr. JOHNSON's truculent use of this apparatus, and I do appreciate his lackluster approach.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CLYDE).

Mr. CLYDE. Madam Speaker, I appreciate Mr. JOHNSON's leadership in this Special Order.

Last night, President Biden had an opportunity to pivot his failing administration by using the State of the Union to present a new plan that would actually help the American people and address the multitude of crises that he created by his policies.

Instead, President Biden wasted his State of the Union speech by doubling down on his failed agenda and flat-out lying to the American people.

When I heard his tough talk on sanctioning Russia and his vow to buy American, I had hope that maybe this would include energy, American oil and gas. But no, his administration continues to double down on Green New Deal priorities and promote the purchase of oil and gas from other countries.

Why would he do that? Why would he encourage the United States to continue to buy over 635,000 barrels a day from Russia alone? Just look at the spot price of oil, $114 per barrel today, which means we are sending Vladimir Putin over $72.5 million every day to fund his war machine against Ukraine. Every dollar we spend on foreign energy weakens domestic energy production.

When he spoke about inflation, Biden's only so-called solution to combat 40-year high prices and hyperinflation was to tell businesses to lower costs. That was it.

Despite promising that he will secure the southern border, Biden's severely misguided immigration policies have led to over 2.1 million illegal encounters at our border in his first year alone, not to mention record high levels of dangerous drugs like fentanyl flooding into our communities.

Just today, his own acting assistant secretary of Border Security and Immigration Policy at DHS admitted in our Homeland Security Committee meeting that they are actively working to fight against and overturn the lower-court-mandated remain in Mexico policy at the Supreme Court level.

Last night, the President conveniently claimed victory over COVID and urged Americans to stop looking at COVID as a partisan dividing line. But don't forget, Biden has routinely enforced medical tyranny and used the pandemic as a weapon to sow division. Throughout his Presidency, Biden has said that unvaccinated Americans are destroying our economy, killing our people, and are the root of our country's problems. No, Mr. President, that is simply not right.

But it was right to say last night that the answer is not to defund the police. So why the change in message? For years, Democrats have dangerously called for defunding our brave men and women in law enforcement. Even candidate Biden said funding should be redirected away from our police.

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Meanwhile, there was no mention of the Biden administration's abysmal failure in Afghanistan that resulted in 13 fallen heroes, handed billions of dollars worth of military equipment to the Taliban, and abandoned Americans behind enemy lines.

After a year of his failed leadership, the American people know good and well that Biden's speech was nothing but lip service. Actions speak louder than words, Mr. President. Americans are desperately waiting for—and deserve—a leader who will act on their behalf to fix the crises facing our Nation. We are still waiting.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Thank you, my friend. Well said. Madam Speaker, I am happy to yield next to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON), the Republican leader of our House Agriculture Committee.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. I thank the gentleman for his leadership in this Special Order hour and for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I rise today during this Special Order to offer thoughts on the real state of our Union. Last night, President Biden addressed the Nation and attempted to rewrite the history of his first year in office.

His speech included a lot of Washington-speak and was short on solutions to our everyday challenges: Record-high inflation, the skyrocketing cost of gas, and supply chain disruptions affecting everything from food to consumer goods.

President Biden owns this energy crisis, which is the direct result of his administration crippling domestic production: Ending the issuing of permits, the production on Federal lands, the

stopping of pipelines, the list goes on and on and on.

When we don't produce our own energy, it makes us more vulnerable to global market fluctuations such as those caused by Russian aggressions in Ukraine. You heard my good friend talk about how America under President Biden is buying over half a million barrels of oil a day. In some small part or large part, America is funding, through that, the Russian aggression into Ukraine.

President Biden continues to ignore the national emergency at our southern border. I was just there last week, and it was incredible. We have unprecedented illegal migration, we have millions of apprehensions and limited deportations. This is a serious situation that continues to threaten our national security.

Madam Speaker, actions speak louder than words, and no amount of grandstanding is going to change the fact that the American people have a starkly different view from the President on the direction of our country.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Thank you, my friend, for your leadership. That was well said. As we say over and over and over, energy security is national security, and it is unconscionable that we are funding Putin's aggression in Ukraine.

Madam Speaker, I am happy to yield next to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. MILLER), my dear friend.

Mrs. MILLER of Illinois. Madam Speaker, House Democrats who attacked unmasked and unvaccinated Americans as super-spreaders and said they should be fired from their jobs suddenly decided to lift the mask mandate and crowd together last night, hugging and kissing each other in a packed room right before the State of the Union to benefit President Biden's political optics.

COVID restrictions weren't lifted because they were destroying children's lives or killing small businesses. The restrictions ended because a politician's poll numbers got too low, and he needed a political reset. The American people are disgusted by this political double standard. They are never going to forget it.

But we are not surprised. Every decision the Biden administration makes has gone against the needs and the will of the American people.

Americans want secure borders and police protection. What does the left do? Open our borders, facilitate an invasion, and defund and demoralize our police.

Americans want energy independence and affordable gas. What does the left do? They dismantle our domestic energy industry and are forcing Americans to buy Chinese solar panels and batteries.

The left may be woke, but Americans are awake. The state of the Union is ready for a change.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Well said. The hypocrisy was on display last night. It is just absurd.

Madam Speaker, I am happy to yield next to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOOD).

Mr. GOOD of Virginia. Madam Speaker, last night's speech should have been the shortest State of the Union Address in history. It is easy for everyone to see the state of the Union is much worse after one year under the Biden Presidency.

This President, in order to keep energy independence, which is a national security issue and an economic security issue, all he had to do was nothing. If he would have just stayed in his basement and we paid him to stay home, the country would be so much better off today with the prices we are paying at the pump, with the security of our Nation.

There is nothing that impacts middle-income, lower-income, fixed-income Americans than what we are paying at the pump. And now we are at risk of it going from $4 a gallon to $7 a gallon because of this President, and he has the travesty to not release American energy in the face of Russian aggression in Ukraine.

This President needs to allow all the drilling to take place in the United States, for us to unleash our resources and bankrupt the Putin regime so he cannot finance the invasion into Ukraine. But, no, what is happening? We are buying some 75,000 gallons of Russian oil a day at the cost of $100 a barrel, enriching Putin's regime to the cost of $75 million per day.

But it is worse than that. What did this President have to do to keep a secure border? All he had to do was nothing. If he had stayed home after January 20, 2021, Americans would still be largely safe at the border because illegal immigration had been eradicated under the previous administration.

But what did he do? He forced the cessation of the border wall, and he does not permit the border agents, the Border Patrol to do their job. Meanwhile, 2.2 million illegal aliens came across our border last year, and have been distributed into the interior of our country, flown at taxpayer expense all over the country in the dark of night from 160 countries.

We don't know what they are doing while they are here, and this President has not just allowed it to happen; he has facilitated it to happen. As a matter of fact, last night he had the gall to say, hey, we want to secure the border, when his policies have done just the opposite and continue to do just the opposite.

Article IV, Section 4 of the Constitution says it is the responsibility of the President to protect the States from invasion, and he is doing just the very opposite willfully, purposefully, intentionally. That is why so many of us have signed onto impeachment articles against this President, just because of what he has done on the border. Let's pretend he had done everything else well—use your imagination—in his first year in the White House. Just because of what he is doing to the American people at the border, and he has the gall in the speech last night to lie to the American people and say that he wants to secure the border. It should have been the shortest speech ever because to get up there and lie to the American people about the policies that he is implementing that are harming this country, it is a travesty. Thank you, Chairman JOHNSON.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Mr. GOOD said it so well, and that passion is felt all around this country. I hear it from my constituents. I know Mr. GOOD does as well. All of us do. People couldn't even tune in last night. Our constituents are writing to us saying they couldn't even watch it because it was nauseating how untrue it was. Here we are.

Madam Speaker, I yield next to the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MANN).

Mr. MANN. Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague and friend from Louisiana for his leadership and for hosting this here tonight.

Less than 24 hours ago, the President delivered the State of the Union Address in this very Chamber. I would like to respond on behalf of the Big First District of Kansas.

Last night, Americans hoped to hear our Commander in Chief address the many crises facing our country and explain his plans for fixing them; a reasonable request. Instead, we heard a monologue of half-truths and empty promises. This administration has failed on the world stage, creating one foreign policy disaster after another, and the repercussions are posing threats to America's food supply, energy security, and our freedom.

On the home front, this administration has created record inflation, which is destroying livelihoods and killing small businesses across the country and in my district. Drugs and crime are destroying American communities and families, and we have an open southern border where drugs and human trafficking run rampant. The supply chain is still in disarray. Our country's debt is at an all-time high, almost $30 trillion, and the President has halted our march toward energy independence by killing the Keystone XL pipeline. The Biden administration has made a disaster in his handling of the issues at home.

Abroad, our country has an egregious trade deficit with China, a country that ripped off American farmers to the tune of $16 billion in the phase one trade deal, and this administration has done nothing to hold them accountable.

The President was getting lots of applause last night for talking a big game about supporting Ukraine, but we have done nothing meaningful so far as in response to the humanitarian crisis Vladimir Putin has created there. His financial sanctions won't prevent China from bailing out Russia financially, and President Biden won't stop buying half a million barrels of oil a

day from Putin because, again, President Biden killed the Keystone XL pipeline.

Furthermore, the President clearly isn't worried about the food implications of Russia taking over Ukraine, which is the breadbasket of Europe, by the way, and the third largest grain exporter in the world, because he still hasn't even appointed a USDA under secretary of foreign trade and agriculture. In 13½ months he hasn't even nominated one.

Americans are a resilient people. We have proven that over the past 2 years. I would argue that Kansans are among the most resilient of all. We have made it through worse times than these. But I am standing here today to say enough is enough. We need to get this country back on track, and to do that we need a President who actually leads.

Last night, I hoped that the President would tell us about how he plans to hold Russia accountable for its inhumane invasion of Ukraine, stop inflation, fix the supply chain, secure our southern border, and stand up for American farmers and ranchers who feed, fuel, and clothe the world. But he did not. Instead I heard an out-of-touch stump speech from a politician who wanted me to believe that everything is going to be just fine as long as he is in the White House.

I pray for the President, and I want him to be successful, but in order for that to happen, he must lead.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Very well said, my friend. Thank you for being here.

Madam Speaker, I yield to another colleague now, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GROTHMAN).

Mr. GROTHMAN. Madam Speaker, I would like to comment a little bit on the speech last night and some of the issues that have been ignored and should be addressed and some of the issues that were given such short shrift it was almost comical.

The first issue I would like to address is inflation. Next time I should get my own billboard here. But if you look at M2, which is one measure of the monetary supply, in the 1970s—and I am old enough to remember the 1970s when inflation was really a horrible thing and something that we were never supposed to repeat—M2 was going up at a rate of about 7 percent year over year. We now are up about 37 percent year over year.

I mean, if you look at a graph, it is shocking the degree to which the Federal Reserve is just flooding money into our system. Of course, a major reason why they have had to do this is wildly excessive spending, because if you have excessive spending and foreign governments do not want to buy your debt, and who would want to buy your debt, you wind up with no alternative but to degrade the value of the dollar.

I thought it was particularly amazing that the President said or told businesses that you have to ''lower your costs,'' meaning that we shouldn't reduce wages, which is fine, but like it is an easy thing to lower your costs. I wonder, has President Biden ever actually talked to the businesses who are raising their prices?

The first thing I hear about is the metals, the aluminum, the different kinds of steel that are up 300, 400, 500 percent. When the market, the cost of these things go up to that degree, and you are a businessman, what in the world are you supposed to do?

The cost of transportation is going up, and the amount we pay truckers, which is a tremendously good occupation, has gone up. Sometimes you can't even get trucks. And what has President Biden done? He imposes a vaccine mandate on truckers, which further reduces the supply of an occupation that is already in demand, thereby guaranteeing the cost is going to continue to go up even more.

I strongly encourage President Biden to have some of his staff run around Washington, D.C., or maybe run around and talk to some of the factory owners in this country and ask them or advise them what they are supposed to do to ''lower their costs.'' Most of them, because we have a shortage of people working, are already probably exceeding last year's output in product. Despite the fact that they are doing that, and so, therefore, they are getting more per hour worked, but they can't find any new ways to reduce costs.

□ 1830

But, again, I hope President Biden sends some of his cabinet members around the country and either advises them on how it is going to be easy to lower your costs or hears from them how impossible it is for them to lower their costs.

By the way, every single manufacturer I have talked to in the last 2 months—and I bet I have talked to 15, 20—every one of them thinks inflation is going to get worse. When I talk to farmers who use a variety of fertilizers, whatever, that goes into their product, they see the costs going through the roof. And every single farmer I talk to thinks inflation is going to get worse.

So I strongly encourage the Biden administration to have some people get out there among the hoi polloi and find out what is really going on with regard to inflation.

Next, President Biden talked about the police. And maybe President Biden doesn't realize what the problem he and his allies have created by going after the police. In Milwaukee, the city just to the south of my district, there was a dramatic increase to an all-time record high number of murders in 2020, something that you never thought you would see again, and it was exceeded again in 2021.

Why is that happening? It is because President Biden and his allies have adopted an antipolice rhetoric, in particular implying an amount of racism out there, and they are pushing a bill that has already been through this House, a bill that will make it much easier to hire a policeman.

Now, if a policeman wants to do his job, sometimes they have to arrest people, sometimes they have to wrestle with people. If you can wind up being sued, you are much less likely to want to do that. And when you have police that are less engaged, particularly in our busiest cities, what are you going to get? More crime. We cannot say we are serious about the spiraling number of people who are being shot to death or stabbed to death in this country until we allow the police to be police again. We have got to stop that police hatred that goes on.

And I don't care whether we eventually send a few hundred million dollars around the country to hire more police or whatever President Biden has up his sleeve, what we have got to do is we have got to build respect for police again so that they are free to maintain the safety in this country.

The third thing I will look at that I thought, again, was misleading to the public, concerns election laws. Many States, including Wisconsin, have a photo ID law. President Biden and his acolytes imply that a photo ID law is motivated by racism. Again, this is unnecessarily divisive.

One of the reasons why I feel that Joe Biden is the most divisive President in my lifetime, I have praised him for his speech last night in which he didn't call this country racist after using the racial word or white supremacy so much in his inaugural speech; nevertheless, it is a little bit ridiculous when in order to have fair elections some of us want to have photo ID and then people stand around when photo ID is needed for things that probably have a much more dramatic impact on the average person's life, but it doesn't bother them.

We had a requirement here in town that you present proof of vaccine with which you had to produce a photo ID, if you wanted to go to a restaurant in this town. I would say it is a fairly significant thing. Did anybody say that the District of Columbia was being racist because they required a photo ID if I want to eat at a restaurant?

They want to look at my ID before I get in an airplane. If I had to fly somewhere to get some surgery, if I had to fly somewhere to see an ailing relative, that could be a real life-changing experience. Does anybody say, oh, it is racist to require a photo ID if I got on an airplane? We just put up with this routinely.

Nevertheless, President Biden fans the flames of division by claiming that those of us who want to make sure that we have fair elections are motivated by racism when photo IDs are needed so commonly.

The next thing I want to point out that I think he gave short shrift to with an insultingly small amount of time was the huge number of people who are dying of drug overdoses in this country.

I got this job only 7 years ago. At the time, 47,000 people a year died of drug overdoses. By comparison, in 12 years during the Vietnam war, 57,000 people died. And every politician was supposed to talk about it. Now we shoot up from 47,000 to 100,000 people, and President Biden can't even bring himself to talk about fentanyl, the drug responsible for most of those deaths.

I don't know why he wouldn't talk about fentanyl. My guess is because overwhelmingly it is coming across the southern border, and he doesn't want to do anything about the southern border. However, I would hope in the future, President Biden would meet with law enforcement around the country, find out what it is like to have to tell the parents or siblings or children of the people who have died that their relative has died. That is a horrible thing.

And I think to gloss over the 100,000 deaths we have every year in this country—twice the number of people who died in the 12 years in Vietnam—was I thought very callous. But, again, I would encourage President Biden to ask members of his administration to get out and about a little bit, talk to relatives of people who have died of drug overdoses, particularly fentanyl, and maybe it will cause him to devote a little bit more time on that in next year's State of the Union address when he realizes what a horrible situation we have.

There are many other things that I don't think were addressed accurately or in depth during the State of the Union address that should have been.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Madam Speaker, I thank Mr. GROTHMAN. That was well said. There is lot. We know you can go all night because there was a lot to complain about.

Madam Speaker, tonight you have heard the response of so many of my Republican colleagues to the lackluster State of the Union address that was held here last evening. Perhaps the most glaring problem with his speech is that the President tried to ignore the fact that it is his lack of leadership that is what has created this dangerous situation that we are all in right now. All the crises you have heard about, the American people know the facts.

I grew up in the seventies and eighties. I was a child of the Reagan era, and we remember in the Cold War he reminded us we maintain the peace through our strength. What he communicated to us so clearly is weakness invites aggression. We have projected weakness on the world stage, and it is inviting Russian aggression. We pray and hope that we do not get a similar aggression from our other adversaries like China, North Korea, Iran, and the rest.

The only thing holding back terrorists and tyrants and dictators and rogue operators around the globe is their perception of a strong America. That is what we stand for. We wish we could have heard that from the President in a more honest tone last night, but we didn't get it.

So we are here. We are going to continue to work on this side of the aisle to fix these problems, and we look forward to the election cycle this fall where we believe the fortunes around here are going to change pretty substantially.

Madam Speaker, I thank my colleagues for being here tonight, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

CONGRESS MUST UNIFY AND STAND FOR THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, last evening the President of the United States was strong, and he was clear to stay away from divisive rhetoric. But do my friends on the other side of the aisle realize that anything that has not been accomplished is because they have been obstructionists?

The Wall Street Journal says that the President and his American Rescue Plan has led to less damage, and it is the biggest and best recovery, at least in the past 50 years. It has had the least economic impact in terms of long-term unemployment, weak label markers, inexperienced workers, evictions and foreclosures. President Biden's American Rescue Plan has led to less of that than any recovery in the last 50 years.

We know that in Ukraine it is a disaster. People are dying. It is Putin's war, but the President has brought NATO together.

And, yes, if we could pass Build Back Better, which they have obstructed, we would be able to have childcare for all of America.

So I wanted to just, for this one moment, get on the floor to say in all that they have said, why don't they take the call of the President? Let's unify and stand for the American people. Stop complaining, and let's get to work. President Biden called us to work as a strong America.

FULL EQUALITY FOR PUERTO RICO

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2021, the Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Puerto Rico (Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN) for 30 minutes.

GENERAL LEAVE

Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the subject of this Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN. Madam Speaker, I rise today joined by a good group of colleagues and legislators here in the House to commemorate the 105th anniversary of granting U.S. citizenship to the people of Puerto Rico and to reaffirm our commitment to full equality for the island's two million Americans, which can only be achieved through statehood.

Many people will ask how long has Puerto Rico been part of the United States? Before the Spanish-American War, Puerto Rico was part of Spain. After the Spanish-American War we became a possession, a territory of the United States in 1898.

In 1906, President Theodore Roosevelt called on Congress to confer American citizenship to Puerto Ricans. Legislation was introduced to that effect between 1912 and 1913, which was supported by President William Howard Taft and then the Wilson administration. President Wilson had even campaigned in 1912 on a promise to ensure U.S. citizenship for Puerto Ricans.

On this day, March 2nd, President Woodrow Wilson signed the Jones-Shafroth Act, which extended statutory U.S. citizenship to the residents of the island.

The Jones-Shafroth Act would not be the last time Congress acted on a question of citizenship. In 1940, the Nationality Act conferred birthright citizenship to persons born in Puerto Rico.

The signing of the 1917 law cemented our relationship as an integral part of the United States.

For 150 years, Puerto Ricans have been proud American citizens, and we have contributed greatly to this country in every field of endeavor. We even have Supreme Court judges, a lot of entrepreneurs, and many others in many areas. We proudly uphold and defend the ideals that define our Nation, including more than 235,000 Puerto Ricans who have honorably served in the U.S. Armed Forces fighting side-by-side with our fellow citizens from the States.

Yet, despite our contributions, despite a longstanding commitment to the values that come with being an American citizen, the reality is that we are still not equal. That is the reality of Puerto Ricans every day. And then you have 3.2 million Americans living on the island and more than 5 million living on the mainland. That tells you that because of the current territorial status, Americans in Puerto Rico lack full voting representation in this Congress.

For example, I can represent people on this floor, but I cannot vote here for any measure that affects my island.

□ 1845

I do the job of at least four Members of Congress. We do not have Senators that can be the voice of Puerto Rico because they are not elected on the island. Yet, we need to apply all Federal laws to the island but without having a say or a vote on each of them.

Our people cannot vote for our President, our Commander in Chief, and we have no say in the Federal decision-making process, which impacts every aspect of our lives.

Even though we are U.S. citizens and the Federal Government can and often does treat the island unequally under Federal laws and programs, and while it is true that Congress could pass legislation today to address some of those disparities, it is similarly true that any future Congress could undo such efforts.

When you revise our Constitution, specifically, the territorial clause of the U.S. Constitution, Article IV, Section 3, it says specifically that: ''The Congress shall have power to dispose of and make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory or other property belonging to the United States.''

Yet, we are the most powerful Nation on Earth still having a colony in the Caribbean for more than 105 years.

That is the reason. Because we are a territory, we will be always at Congress' mercy. As a territory, we will never truly enjoy the same rights and responsibilities as our fellow citizens in the States.

Only statehood can guarantee our full equality as U.S. citizens. That is why the people of Puerto Rico have voted to reject the current territorial status, not once, not twice, three times in a row. To be admitted as a State of the Union, most recently in November 2020 when a clear majority, an absolute majority of the people, 73 percent of the people who voted in that election, of those 73 percent of the people who voted, 53 percent voted for statehood. That is an absolute majority.

You don't have any delegates. You don't have any mail. This is direct votes, in-person votes of the people of the island asking for statehood. Even statehood got more votes than any politician on the island. Statehood got more votes than any political party on the island. That means that is the biggest consensus ever on the island, three times in a row.

As we commemorate the 105th anniversary of our American citizenship, it is crucial that Congress act to end Puerto Rico's undemocratic territorial status and to respond to a vote for equality through statehood.

I am proud to have partnered with Congressman DARREN SOTO, our brother from Florida, to introduce bipartisan legislation to achieve this using H.R. 1522, the Puerto Rico Statehood Admission Act, that will make a formal offer of statehood.

Never before has Congress even asked the people of Puerto Rico whether we want to continue as a territorial colonial status or we want to achieve statehood or independence.

This will be the first time ever this question will be made to the people on the island coming from Congress in a binding process—same thing happened in Hawaii, same thing happened in Alaska. They were asked the simple question: Do you want to become a State of the Union, yes or no?

That same question was a referendum we held locally in Puerto Rico by the local laws with that majority.

To say that, this bill will make a formal offer of statehood, outlining a clear process to enable the island's admission into the Union, should it be ratified by Puerto Rican voters in a federally sponsored yes-or-no referendum.

Having said that, I think it is time. It is long overdue that we resolve the Puerto Rican unfinished democracy business.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SOTO), our main sponsor on the Democrat side.

Mr. SOTO. Madam Speaker, I thank the Resident Commissioner.

Madam Speaker, here is my partner in equality in the Resident Commissioner JENNIFFER GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN. And she is not the only one. Florida is in the House tonight in support of you—Representative DEMINGS, Representative WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Representative SALAZAR. We are all here to support our brothers and sisters back in my family's native island.

This is a little bit about history today, 105 years of citizenship. You know, I checked on ancestry.com, and the roots of my family back in Puerto Rico go back way further than they could ever tell—on the Soto side and on the Casanova side—with a few coming in the mid-1800s from the Canary Islands, but the rest back further than you can uncover through the internet.

When Teddy Roosevelt comes up on that San Juan Hill and you have the Spanish-American War, my relatives, my ancestors, were already there for an unknown and distant amount of time.

I also see Representative WILD. Representative WILD, thank you for being here as well from Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania is in the House.

When I think about the turn of the 20th century, my ancestors, some of whom I got to meet, like my great-grandmother, Altagracia Casanova, who still farmed by the time I was a little kid in Sabana Hoyos in Puerto Rico, they became citizens by statute. Then my great-grandparents, they had draft cards. They went and served in World War I. The first shots of World War I were fired off the coast of San Juan as the Germans attempted to enter the Caribbean.

From there, we saw my grandparents stationed in places in the Caribbean in South America during World War II. We know of the great, famed Borinqueneers serving in all of those wars together, as well as Korea.

This citizenship has been earned, encouraged, and in blood, in contributions in science and art and manufacturing and in so many other ways that have made this such a great United States of America.

But it is the recent history that I am most concerned about. After the 936 exemption ended, my family moved to central Florida from Puerto Rico. They were worried about the economic climate. They moved to central Florida for economic opportunity. My family up north, where I was raised, we soon followed and found ourselves in central Florida.

We don't want people to have to be forced to relocate because they are worried about economic prosperity. That is already in our family history as well.

Then you look at after that recession coming in, then PROMESA, austerity measures, that would never happen to a State. The types of cuts to government, the type of attack on sovereignty was terrible. We have many pensioners who served as civil servants in Puerto Rico who now live in central Florida, places like Representative DEMINGS' and my districts and, I have no doubt, in south Florida and WASSERMAN SCHULTZ' and SALAZAR's districts as well. So it affects us directly and indirectly.

Then we see, on top of that, Hurricane Maria. What devastation, the highest death toll of any natural disaster in modern American history. We see how important it is to have representation and how important it is to have fair treatment.

Then it has been the latest battles over these last couple of years. You and I have fought together, along with our allies here, on everything from food assistance to Medicaid to finally getting Puerto Rico treated equally in the American Rescue Plan, to finally getting the people of Puerto Rico treated equally in infrastructure.

But those battles will continue if we do not resolve the territorial status. That is why I was honored to co-introduce our bill, together with our friends, to admit Puerto Rico as a State, after a binding plebiscite, of course.

I feel very good about where we are headed, to a bipartisan vote on the floor and putting forward a bill that the Senators can vote for.

This is about making sure, as we see tyranny attacks of democracy versus autocracy in Ukraine and, frankly, in so many places around the Caribbean, Central and South America, this is where we can take a stand in the Caribbean for democracy and give our brothers and sisters back on the island the opportunity to forge your own destinies, and your Florida Rican brothers and sisters are with you.

Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN. Madam Speaker, I say thank you to our main sponsor. I will say, I don't have the vote here in the House so I depend on all Members of the House to support Puerto Rico in many ways.

In that sense, I will be always grateful, DARREN, for your commitment and your help.

Madam Speaker, I recognize now a dear friend from Florida as well who is here.

Before recognizing her, I recognize a former Member of the House and current Governor of Puerto Rico. Pedro

Pierluisi is here on the floor of the House. Thank you, Governor, for supporting this.

Madam Speaker, this is a bipartisan issue. You won't find any other bill that will have bipartisan support. This is not a Republican issue. This is not a Democratic issue. This is the cost of equal rights. This is civil rights. This is democracy.

Madam Speaker, I cannot find a better person to speak about that than my good friend from Miami, Congresswoman SALAZAR.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. SALAZAR).

Ms. SALAZAR. Madam Speaker, I thank the Resident Commissioner.

Madam Speaker, for over 120 years, Puerto Rico, as we have said here, has enriched the United States with its culture and its people.

The beautiful island of Puerto Rico that I know so well is the jewel of the Caribbean. Millions of Americans have flocked to its beaches and rainforests to soak in the incredible natural beauty of the island of Puerto Rico.

With that background, 105 years ago, as we have heard before, Puerto Ricans became citizens of this great country, the United States. Puerto Ricans are true Americans and true patriots because over 35,000 of them currently serve in the United States Armed Forces.

Madam Speaker, 235,000 Puerto Ricans are veterans who have served alongside their fellow countrymen from the mainland, from the beaches of Normandy to the Mekong Delta. Its people, the Puerto Ricans, have made the ultimate sacrifice in the name of freedom and in the name of the United States of America.

I should say that Puerto Rico holds a very special place in my heart because after my parents fled Castro's Cuba, my family found refuge in San Juan, the capital of the island of Puerto Rico. Because of that decision, I spent a fantastic childhood in the island because we went to live in paradise in the 1960s.

It was in Puerto Rico where I first learned about American values. It was in Puerto Rico where I learned the meaning behind the American flag and the central value of freedom and liberty.

Puerto Ricans received the Cuban exile community with open arms. That is why today I take this opportunity from the floor of the United States Congress, as a Congresswoman for the city of Miami, the heart of the Cuban exile community in the United States. I thank the Puerto Ricans for their noble act of welcoming millions and millions of Cubans to the island and giving them the possibility of living in freedom, in peace, and living in paradise.

Puerto Ricans have welcomed people from around the world to visit paradise and the Caribbean on American soil, the best of both worlds. Today, Puerto Ricans are American ambassadors, showing the beauty and diversity of our great country to the rest of the world.

For that reason, I thank my very good friend, mi amiga, Resident Commissioner JENNIFFER GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN, for her leadership on this floor. She is a relentless champion for the island's future, for what the island deserves, and for what we need to see for the future of Puerto Rico.

Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN. Thank you, Maria Elvira. You touched my heart with those words.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. WILD).

Ms. WILD. Madam Speaker, I am proud to rise today on behalf of the more than 80,000 Puerto Rican constituents who call my district, Pennsylvania's Greater Lehigh Valley, home.

My community would not be what it is without the contributions of the Puerto Rican community. The United States would not be what it is without the contributions of this community. Every aspect of our national legacy, our cultural and artistic heritage, our groundbreaking discoveries in science and technology, the dynamism of our economy, and the strength of our Armed Forces has been shaped indelibly by these fellow citizens.

□ 1900

And yet despite their service, residents of the island cannot vote for the Commander in Chief. They lack voting representation in Congress. And despite paying into programs like Medicare and Medicaid, they do not have equitable coverage under these programs.

I am here to deliver a clear message. As United States citizens, the people of Puerto Rico have the right to full representation in their government. This is a principle at the very core of our Nation's founding. It should not be controversial, and, in fact, it is widely accepted among Americans of both political parties.

In fact, my colleague who has gathered us all here today and who has introduced the Puerto Rico Statehood Admission Act is a Republican. Thank you for having me. Today, the 105th anniversary of the date when the people of Puerto Rico became United States citizens must mark the moment when we finally begin the work of passing legislation to give the people in Puerto Rico a long overdue voice and a vote in their future.

Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN. Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ).

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Speaker, I am proud to stand today with my friends and colleagues as we mark the 105th anniversary since United States citizenship was granted to the people of Puerto Rico. In many ways, today is a joyous day in recognition of the decades of activism undertaken by our Puerto Rican sisters and brothers.

Yet, amidst the celebration, it is also an acknowledgement that for too long we have treated Puerto Rico and her residents as second-class citizens with laws and policies that put them at a real disadvantage. The residents of Puerto Rico, more than 3 million strong, pay Federal taxes, are U.S. citizens with U.S. passports and U.S. currency, and they have long served bravely in our military, just ask any Borinqueneer who fought valiantly in the Korean war.

Yet, the people of Puerto Rico continue to be denied equal rights, including voting representation in the United States Congress. This inequality has real consequences. As we saw so vividly in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria, Puerto Rico faced injustices that no U.S. State would ever endure.

These inequities exist not only when it comes to recovery assistance, it can be seen in tax and Medicare inequities. Put simply, these disparities are un-American. A stronger political voice can help remedy that.

Today, I stand in solidarity with my colleagues in calling for what has been long overdue: statehood for Puerto Rico.

In 2020, Puerto Ricans voted overwhelmingly in support of statehood. The Puerto Rican people should be given a chance to cast a vote where those results will be respected. Now is the time for us to listen loudly and clearly to the calls from the Puerto Rican people. It is a matter of civil rights both on the island and in the greater diaspora.

Legislators on both sides of the aisle understand how crucial it is that we fully support this effort, and I am proud to work with my friend, JENNIFFER GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN, and was proud to work for many years with her predecessor, now Governor, Pedro Pierluisi. Today is proof of that.

Puerto Ricans have made their desire for statehood clear, and Congress must follow suit. I will continue fighting for statehood to ensure that every citizen's voice is heard and to give respect to the Puerto Rican people that is long overdue.

As we commemorate this 105th anniversary of citizenship for Puerto Ricans, let us remember that Puerto Rican statehood is a long overdue step toward equality and democracy for all. You cannot have true equality without full representation. We will be a better and stronger Nation when we include Puerto Rico as our 51st State.

Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN. Madam Speaker, I would like to recognize at this time and yield to the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. DEMINGS).

Mrs. DEMINGS. Madam Speaker, we are a government of the people, by the people, and for the people, but our brothers and sisters, our fellow Americans on the island of Puerto Rico are not recognized as a government by the people. Puerto Rican Americans received citizenship 105 years ago today.

If we are going to truly be the land of the free, we must make good on America's promise to be a government of the people for all people. We need to be who we say we are. We need to be the country where every voice and every person matters. For over a century, the residents of Puerto Rico have been treated as second-class citizens within our country. It is un-American and it is unjust.

Second-class citizens not only in their vote, but also in healthcare, senior assistance, and the Child Tax Credit. This is wrong. Today, on the 105th anniversary of the citizenship for Puerto Rico, it is time for us to stand up, yet again, and declare that equal rights are an American value, and that fairness and justice are American values, and that the Americans on the island of Puerto Rico must have justice, must have fair treatment, and must have statehood.

We fought this year to ensure that the residents of Puerto Rico would start to receive equal treatment on Federal programs like Social Security, Medicare, and the Child Tax Credit. This fight is not over, and we are not giving up.

Yet, even with the weight of this fight for a century, I feel optimistic. In fact, I feel better than I ever have before. Puerto Ricans have spoken with a clear voice, with a fair and open vote, and demanded that it is time for full representation.

I am grateful for the leadership of Congresswoman GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN and Congressman SOTO on this issue, and I look forward to continuing the work in Congress until we get this done.

Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN. Madam Speaker, how much time do I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman has 5 minutes remaining.

Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN. Madam Speaker, you heard many of the Members of Congress supporting this quest of Puerto Rico's civil rights and democracy rights to vote. Sometimes people forget the contributions people of Puerto Rico have made to this great Nation, contributions that we feel proud of, like the nine Puerto Rican Medal of Honor recipients: Private First Class Fernando Luis Garcia, Master Sergeant Juan Negron, Private Demensio Rivera, Private Miguel Armando Vera, Private First Class Carlos Lozada, Staff Sergeant Conde Falcon, Captain Euripides Rubio, Specialist Hector Santiago, Captain Humbert Roque, and I can speak about many others.

Historically, Puerto Rico has ranked among the top U.S. jurisdictions in terms of per capita military service. It is estimated that more than 18,000 Puerto Ricans served our Nation during World War I; 65,000 Puerto Ricans during World War II; 61,000 during the Korean war; 48,000 during the Vietnam war; 10,000 during the Gulf war, and 25,000 during Operation Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. Yet, just last week we have 300 more that are already in Poland with the current situation in Ukraine. That is the patriotism Puerto Ricans feel about this Nation.

Why do all those soldiers never receive the same benefits from being in the military when they come back home? Why should they be treated differently with even programs that do not apply to them? And they cannot vote for the Commander in Chief? Even this Congress gave the Congressional Medal of Honor to our Borinqueneers, the 65th Regiment that fought in Korea, but yet they cannot vote for their Commander in Chief.

Over 1,200 U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico have died while serving, paying the ultimate sacrifice in defense of America's freedom, while lacking full voting representations and equality back home. Defending freedom, defending democracy around the world, but not having them back home.

Our island is proud and rich in the tradition of military service. Today, thousands of Puerto Ricans serve on Active Duty and Reserves and all branches of the U.S. Armed Forces. Approximately, 8,400 currently serve in the Puerto Rico Army National Guard, and since 9/11 they have carried out over 16,000 deployments, more than 34 States in the Union.

Over 90,000 American veterans call Puerto Rico home. Unfortunately, despite our military contributions and their honorable service on behalf of the Nation's ideals, the current territorial status hurts Puerto Rico's veterans and servicemembers. It denies them the representation in the Senate and in the House, and it denies them the right to vote for the President. It perpetuates the inequities of Federal laws and programs which are detrimental to veterans in terms of economic opportunity, health, security, and quality of life.

Statehood for Puerto Rico and congressional action to end the territorial status will benefit our veterans and the thousands of Puerto Ricans who currently serve in the U.S. Armed Forces. It will provide them real democracy through a vote and equal representation in Congress; through the ability to elect their Commander in Chief; and through a permanent union with their fellow citizens in the States.

This is the time to respond for Puerto Rico. This is the right of the island to become part of this great Nation, more than 105 years since being a territory. This is the time for Congress to act.

You have H.R. 1522, a bipartisan bill with more than 79 cosponsors, Republicans and Democrats, asking for statehood and equality. With that, statehood will address many of the inequities in the Federal law that currently hinder economic growth and progress in Puerto Rico.

Madam Speaker, we celebrate the U.S. citizenship for Puerto Rico, but we want statehood now.

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

CURRENT BORDER INSECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2021, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. DAVIDSON) for 30 minutes.

Mr. DAVIDSON. Madam Speaker, I have requested this time to address part of the State of the Union that was not addressed last night. In fact, we saw that the President was so bold as to say that the border is secure and tout the fact that they have caught 2 million people at the border, as if that is success. That is what was said.

What wasn't said is what has been going on at the border for a long time and has been made worse by the policies that Joe Biden and his administration have put in place. Frankly, by the United States laws that he and his administration have ignored, and that Secretary Mayorkas enables every day that he leads the Department of Homeland Security down the wrong path for our country.

So, we are here to talk about, stop the cartels. We are introducing a bill called the Stop the Cartels Act. We spend so much time on the sympathetic cause of immigration and we conflate border security with immigration.

We can have an incredibly secure border regardless of our immigration policy, and border security is, in fact, national security. The cartels pose a serious threat to the United States of America. The products that they push in our communities have killed over 100,000 people.

□ 1915

This past year, the leading cause of death for 18 to 45 year olds is fatal overdoses. The drugs are bad, but now they are poisoned with fentanyl, and we are not taking the threat seriously. So the first portion of the Stop the Cartels Act will focus on gathering intelligence.

As we look at the country of Mexico, our southern neighbor, it controls the whole land portion of our southern border. That border is controlled by the cartels. I had Brandon Judd, the president of the Customs and Border Patrol Union, at a hearing that we had to have offsite because Speaker PELOSI won't have the hearing on the topic in any of our hearing rooms. She won't let the committees of jurisdiction deal with it, so Republicans are forced to go offsite to talk about this important topic.

When I asked him: Who controls the border? You or the cartels? Do the cartels control the border more than you?

He said: You are not putting words in my mouth. That is the exact point. The cartels control the border. We don't control the border.

I said: Why don't you control the border?

He said: Because of policies.

Do you need more resources?

That is a different topic. What we need is good policy. We had policies

that were working to control the border, and now we have policies that are not working.

The Border Patrol controls it. We are not even on defense, we are not even on the field, and we are not even in the stadium because the policies of this administration changed so that it gave complete control of our southern border to the cartels.

Now, we could talk about all the corruption and the problems that the cartels are causing for Mexico. That is a problem that Mexico has to deal with, and we should be able to help them once we prioritize intelligence collection on the cartels on par with the other threats to our country, on par with China, with Russia, with Iran, with North Korea, with al-Qaida, with ISIS, and with the known credible threats to our country.

The cartels should have the same level of intelligence priority as those other hostile or potentially hostile countries. And the cartels are clearly hostile. They do a lot of business here—billions and billions of dollars.

So we have highlighted this map. These are the areas that we already know which cartels control. You have the states of Mexico listed, but you also have color coded which cartels control that. We would like to have the granular detail of what is the org chart, who leads the cartels. I am not saying we don't have that, but we do not have it at the right priority. And then when we do have the intelligence—just as we have seen, the intelligence community got Ukraine incredibly right. The problem wasn't that we didn't have good intelligence with respect to Russia, the problem was the administration didn't do the right thing with the intelligence. But let's first get the right intelligence on the cartels.

So the next thing is we have cities, States, and counties that are completely ignoring the United States law. It is a Federal policy to decide who is a citizen and who is not a citizen. And when we go to enforce our laws as to who is here legally versus who is here illegally, that is clearly Federal jurisdiction.

We have cities, States, counties, and other communities that are ignoring these laws—sanctuary cities. And those sanctuary cities are saying: Not only would this be a great place to base your illicit activity, cartels, we will protect you by being a sanctuary. Please come locate your illicit activity here. Bring your drugs, bring your guns, bring your labor trafficking, your sex trafficking, your human trafficking, and bring your money laundering business and every form of corruption into our communities. That is what these first two maps show.

But let me show you next what the impact on our communities is, Madam Speaker.

This young lady to my right is Lizzie Murphy. She died at 21 years old. Drugs are bad, but now they are poisoned with fentanyl. Seeing that it is not a good idea to take it without a prescription or a specific use—a lot of people refer to it as a safe party drug—it is a bad decision. But it is not supposed to kill you. But when it is laced with fentanyl, that is what is happening to our young people. That is how fentanyl killed over 60,000 Americans last year. Not all of it is in the heroin. Not all of it is in the really hard stuff. Some of it is in the stuff that people never suspect is going to kill them. They take one pill, and they are dead.

That is what happened to my friends, Mark and Kristi Murphy when their little girl took one Xanax. Their daughter—she is sitting here hugging her sister, close friends, best friends—doesn't have her sister anymore.

This is wrecking our communities, and we have got communities inviting this in by being sanctuary cities.

We have got a President of the United States who is not just doing nothing, he is doing worse than nothing. He is making it worse by empowering the cartels. They exploit people, and they cause harm to our communities.

To highlight the ways this is happening and the ways to solve it, I have asked some of my colleagues to join me in this Special Order.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. BIGGS).

Mr. BIGGS. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. It is good to be here.

I am glad my friend is raising awareness. I am going to go as quickly as I possibly can because I don't know how much time I am going to take up.

But let's talk about fentanyl for just one quick second. Local reporting out of Tucson was that last year 13 million fentanyl pills were seized in Arizona alone—13 million. DEA has said 40 percent of all pills seized have a lethal dose of fentanyl in them. I want you to think about that, Madam Speaker. You add that 13 million and you take it into what agents and local law enforcement has told us, and that is they only interdict 8 to 10 percent. That means you have got over 100 million fentanyl pills floating around.

The cartels control all of the border between every port of entry on our border with Mexico. Let me give you an example, Madam Speaker, of the story out of southern Arizona recently just in the last couple weeks.

A lady was found wandering around. Local law enforcement deputies found her and assisted her.

What did she have on her possession?

A bag full of pills. They wanted to know what this was, was this an illicit drug or illicit? What is going on?

She said: These are morning-after pills. I knew when I would be coming across the border that I would be raped multiple times so I brought a bunch of morning-after pills.

That is fact. That is what is happening. It is not humane on the border. I find myself baffled by this.

So let's talk about cartels a little bit more. In a story from just early January—and I have been down to the border and talked to this team since then, a cartel, a Mexican cartel put out a hit on Cochise County sheriffs' deputies—two of them—because they are on the border team. There is a small border team down there. They are very effective. They had a hit put on them by a cartel.

So what happens? What happens?

Why is the Biden administration ignoring this crisis?

Let's take a look at something else. In September of last year I said: How many unaccompanied children have been brought into the country?

One hundred ten thousand roughly.

They finally responded to a series of questions I had just this week.

They said: We have lost contact with 20,000 of those children.

They basically have lost 20,000 unaccompanied children.

This is the border under President Biden.

Now, in Cochise County, 82 miles, a remote border crossing area, between the Border Patrol and the Cochise County Sheriff's Office, about 16,000 illegal immigrants are detected every month in a huge, huge county. Two years ago the county recorded an average of 4 to 500 illegal aliens per month. Let's give it to you more starkly, Madam Speaker: under the Trump policies, we slowed down illegal immigration. Under the Biden policies, we went from 4 to 500 people a month in this massive county to now 16,000 a month.

What are they paying the cartels?

A minimum of $1,000, but typically more like $4,000 per person coming in. Most of these folks don't have $4,000.

So what happens?

They become indentured servants of cartels, and they are located in—and I know Mr. DAVIDSON is going to show you a map, Madam Speaker—they are in virtually every community in this country.

There is a reporter named Jorge Ventura. Jorge does a lot of work on the border issues. And I want to talk to you about cartels again and how they have infiltrated not just the border but they are also beyond the border. A year ago there were illegal marijuana farms in southern California. There are about 100 in L.A. County. It is a huge county both geographically and population wise. Its neighboring county, San Bernardino County, had about 2 or 300. Today over 200 illicit marijuana farms are in L.A. County and over 1,100 in San Bernardino County.

Now, why is that important?

It is important for you to understand that those are coming in from cartels. The mayor of Lancaster, Rex Parris, said in July of last year that it is the cartels. They had seized more than 16 tons of marijuana worth about $1.2 billion, and the mayor said: ''We are very, very close to driving down the freeway and seeing bodies hanging from the overpasses. That is what is coming.''

Why does he say that?

Because the cartels are ruthless. They have little value for human life. When you hear about children, toddlers being thrown over a border fence, that is the coyotes.

Whom do they work for?

The cartels. When you hear of children 2, 3, and 4 years of age wandering around in 115-degree heat in Arizona's desert without an adult present and without water, that is the cartels. They don't care about human life. This is a business enterprise, and the product is to move people and drugs into the country.

So what happened just a week ago, not even a week ago?

Prosecutors in Mexico in the town of San Jose de Gracia in the western State of Michoacan said that they can't determine how many people were killed because attackers cleaned up the scene and removed any bodies.

Mexicans have been left wondering what happened to about one dozen men who disappeared after they were seen lined up against a wall by drug cartel gunmen in this small village.

In a video filmed by a resident of the town that was later posted on social media, bursts of gunfire break out, smoke covers the scene, the camera cuts away, and all the men, perhaps as many as 17, were killed.

That is what cartels do. Cartels do not care about human life. And when I have had multiple briefings, as I go down to the border virtually every month of every year, I wonder where the border czar in this administration is. She got to El Paso, almost made it to the border, and didn't quite get there. It is kind of like when she went over to Ukraine, she made it to Germany but didn't make it into Ukraine.

I look, and I say: What happened?

Why is this happening?

And my briefers tell me the border is controlled by cartels. Between every port of entry no one enters this country without a cartel knowing about it.

When I was in the Tucson sector right before Christmas, I went down and you see 2 miles of fencing, and there is 8 feet of gap, then another 2 miles of fencing, and then it just stops, and then it goes for literally 60 miles with no fencing other than the Normandy barrier. I went to the gap, and I am standing there looking into Mexico. You can see, Madam Speaker, that gap is where all the pathways lead, and there is all the debris and crud that is out there.

I said to my folks who were with me: Please videotape it because I am going to explain what was going on here.

I didn't bother to tell CBP, because I get down a lot. Sometimes I tell them I am going to be there. An agent rolls up.

He said: Who are you talking to?

He didn't know who I was.

I said: I am not talking to anyone. I am doing the video here for my constituents.

He said: Oh. I thought you were talking to the cartel scouts.

I said: What do you mean?

He said: We literally chased—before we detected you, we chased four cartel scouts back up through that gap, and they sit in a hooch on this little bluff.

That is where the cartel scouts are as they are sending people through.

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The way it works is this. They will send a group of 100 people to some place, maybe the San Miguel gate down near Sassabe, near the Tohono O'odham Reservation. That takes the four or five people that are trying to patrol that area. They will go to that gate. They have to process those individuals. It is so remote that it takes literally hours to remove those people and get them bused to a detention facility and processed.

In the meantime, they will see what we call ''known got-aways,'' dozens of known got-aways rolling through other parts of that border. They are dressed in camouflage. They are wearing carpet shoes. They have got backpacks filled with fentanyl and methamphetamine on their backs.

I am just telling you, I appreciate my friend from Ohio, his efforts, and this very important piece of legislation. And I call upon this administration, don't tell the American people—I am reminded of the ''Darkest Hour.'' It is a movie with Winston Churchill. The King says to Winston: Don't lie to the people. Tell them the truth.

I am asking this administration: Tell the people the truth. They can take it. They understand.

Because last year, over 2 million, about 2,500,000 people, entered this country illegally; another 1.2 to 1.3 million entered legally. Now, of those 2.5 million, probably about 1.5 million are wandering around this country. They are somewhere in this country today. This administration let them go.

Madam Speaker, we have to get control of our border. I find it remarkable that the deputy Homeland Security director was saying that we really need to protect the borders, that you won't have a sovereign nation without a protected border. But he wasn't talking about our border, which isn't protected. He was talking about the Ukrainian border.

I asked them to have the same concern and care for the U.S.-Mexico border as they profess to have for the Ukraine border.

Mr. DAVIDSON. Madam Speaker, look, if we look over on the far right, how does a young lady lose her sister? How does a young lady, 21 years old, in Ohio wind up dead from fentanyl poisoning, poison in the drugs?

They know drugs are bad, but they are not supposed to kill them. They are in Ohio. Ohio is not—I mean, we do have a border. It is on Lake Erie with Canada. That is not the border that is causing our young people to die. That is not the one that is causing the leading cause of death for 18- to 45-year-olds to be fatal overdoses.

It is all the way down here on the southern border. And it is not officially the Mexican Government. It is the cartels. And we refuse to collect the intelligence at the right level.

At our southern border, we have a joint task force. We don't have a joint interagency task force. We have that out in the Pacific Ocean. We have that in the Caribbean and the Atlantic Ocean. But we don't have a joint interagency task force.

The place probably that it makes the absolute most sense to have an interagency task force is at the southern border. We have Customs and Border Protection. We have people that are focused on smuggling of people, smuggling of drugs, of guns. We have people that are focused on counterfeit property.

We are focused on levying taxes at the border, inspecting fruit at the border, and everything else. But we don't have an interagency task force that uses the power of our military to conduct surveillance, that uses the power of our Director of National Intelligence and all the resources that we have to know everything about the cartels, not some benign name like Sinaloa, but, specifically, who leads that.

We know who leads Russia. We know it is Vladimir Putin. They are a nation-state.

But we have these transnational criminal organizations that go unnamed. Again, they are involved in the activities not because they care so much about the activity itself. They want the money.

We don't have an organized way to collect all the intelligence on the money. What yachts are they buying? What properties do they own? How do they move this heavily cash business into other goods and services?

They move everything that can store value possible all over the world to try to clean up this money. We don't have the kind of pressure that was just brought to bear on Vladimir Putin going against the cartels.

Vladimir Putin we finally recognized as evil as he invaded Ukraine. But when he was doing the menacing, threatening activity, when we had at least gone so far as to collect the intelligence, we didn't take the actions that could have stopped him.

Here, we can't even go so far as to collect the right level of intelligence. Intelligence is the first thing.

The next slide I have deals with the sanctuary cities. We are going to defund the sanctuary cities. They can't keep getting funded. They have to conform to U.S. law.

We just had a Supreme Court ruling that said if you want to get paid for providing Medicare and Medicaid services, you have to make your employees conform. We can do that to American citizens, and we can't do that to deal with the cartels.

Now, it is a different topic, I will grant you, but it is the same thing, the strings attached to the money. We

have to put the strings attached to the money to say, if you want the money that is collected here in the city, you have to reflect the laws of the United States of America, and you can't offer sanctuary to these cartels that are killing our young people.

There is more to the bill, but let me highlight in another way the consequences of not stopping the cartels.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUDD).

Mr. BUDD. Madam Speaker, up there where you sit, last night Joe Biden stood here and delivered his State of the Union address. He spoke about lots of issues. But he didn't even touch on the biggest issue facing our country today, and that is the southern border.

Make no mistake, the state of our border, it is not good. The Border Patrol has encountered over 150,000 illegal aliens—not last year but just last month, in January, just 33 days ago, when they tallied up those numbers. That is a 96 percent, almost 100 percent increase from last year.

Over 62,000, out of that 150,000, 62,000 of those individuals were released into the United States. It is unbelievable. It is unacceptable. It is dangerous.

When I get to travel around North Carolina and visit with law enforcement, as I love to do and have the honor of doing, the sheriffs tell me there are about 3,200 counties in this amazing country. They said every single sheriff right now is a border sheriff because of the policies that are happening right here, just down the street in the White House. There are drugs, fentanyl.

We think about the devastation and the suffering years ago in the Vietnam war, a decade where we lost about 70,000 servicemembers. We think about what we lose every single year, not in a decade, but every single year from drug overdoses. That is about 70,000, largely because of what happens at the border.

Just a few months ago, when I was down there visiting with our Customs and Border Patrol agents, they were off duty that day. We were in a pickup truck as far as from here to, Madam Speaker, where you sit. They slammed on the brakes and said: I am sorry. I have got to go on duty. I have to arrest these cartel members.

He said the sad thing is they will be back out on the street or, in this case, back out in the desert in just a few days.

We looked all up and down the border, and there was tens of millions of dollars of steel just laying there. Then there was tens of millions of dollars' worth of idle diesel equipment that has been idle since January 20 of last year.

He said: You know what? We need to finish this wall.

That is what the Customs and Border Patrol agent told me. He says: But what we really need, what we really need is an administration that has our back and, sir, right now, we don't have that.

Instead, Madam Speaker, what we have is an astounding 11,200 pounds of fentanyl, deadly fentanyl that was seized last year, and even more has made it into the homeland. It is killing thousands of our fellow Americans. Dangerous cartels are flooding this country with counterfeit prescription pills containing fentanyl and meth. All of this can be prevented and should be prevented. It must be prevented.

The bottom line is it is time to finish the wall. It is time to support our border agents and end this administration's dereliction of duty.

Mr. DAVIDSON. Madam Speaker, this is a gravely serious matter. I highlighted a young lady, Lizzie Murphy; her sister, Catherine; her mom and dad, Mark and Kristi Murphy, who lost their daughter, their best friend, their sister.

Communities like this are losing young people all over our country. I kind of wish I could say that it was only happening where the sanctuary cities are pictured. I kind of wish I could say it was only right next to the border that we have the problem.

But our whole country is experiencing the problem because we won't secure the border. This administration won't secure the border. They won't listen to the men and women whose duty it is to secure the border.

I went down there a week after Joe Biden was inaugurated and they said: We told him. We will see what happens. They said they are going to do these things, and we told them this is what is going to happen.

Now, when we go to the border, when they come and talk to us up here, the exact same things they knew were going to happen are happening.

We stopped sanctuary cities. We put strings attached to the grants. But the other thing is we have this Flores settlement. Congress has not provided clarity on the Flores settlement, so we provide funding so that we can hold people as long as they need to be held till their cases are adjudicated on the Mexican side of the border.

We put pressure on the Government of Mexico to cooperate with us in this, and we put pressure on the Government of Mexico to resume their cooperation on intelligence-gathering.

Just yesterday, ahead of the State of the Union, I have my county sheriffs—Butler County Sheriff Jones was here in Washington, D.C. Why? Not because he is a border sheriff in the strict geographical sense, but because he is a border sheriff there in Ohio.

Let me close, Madam Speaker, by just highlighting that what happened to this family could happen to anybody. I appreciate the time to speak tonight.

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

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

Cheryl L. Johnson, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled a bill of the House of the following title, which was thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.R. 4445. An act to amend title 9 of the United States Code with respect to arbitration of disputes involving sexual assault and sexual harassment.

ADJOURNMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 11(b) of House Resolution 188, the House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon (at 7 o'clock and 42 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, March 3, 2022, at 9 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

EC–3537. A letter from the Associate Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Phosphoric Acid; Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance [EPA-HQ-OPP-2020-0214; FRL-9380-01-OCSPP] received February 28, 2022, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

EC–3538. A letter from the Associate Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Air Plan Approval; California; Ventura County Air Pollution Control District [EPA-R09-OAR-2021-0620; FRL-9188-02-R9] received February 28, 2022, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

EC–3539. A letter from the Associate Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Fatty Acids, Esters with Ethoxylated Triethanolamine; Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance [EPA-HQ-OPP-2021-0364; FRL-9534-01-OCSPP] received February 28, 2022, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

EC–3540. A letter from the Associate Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Fluridone; Pesticide Tolerances for Emergency Exemptions [EPA-HQ-OPP-2021-0337; FRL-9459-01-OCSPP] received February 28, 2022, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

EC–3541. A letter from the Associate Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Adipic acid; Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance [EPA-HQ-OPP-2021-0635 and EPA-HQ-OPP-2021-0636; FRL-9551-01-OCSPP] received February 28, 2022, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

EC–3542. A letter from the Associate Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Air Plan Approval; North Carolina: Mecklenburg Volatile Organic Compounds [EPA-R04-OAR-2021-0055; FRL-8986-02-R4] received February 28, 2022,

pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

EC–3543. A letter from the Associate Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Air Plan Approval; Wisconsin; Permit Streamlining Updates [EPA-R05-OAR-2020-0504; FRL-9202-02-R5] received February 28, 2022, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

EC–3544. A letter from the Associate Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Potassium acetate; Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance [EPA-HQ-OPP-2020-0349; FRL-9550-01-OCSPP] received February 28, 2022, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

EC–3545. A letter from the Associate Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Air Plan Approval; Wisconsin; Serious Plan Elements for the Wisconsin Portion of Chicago Nonattainment Area for the 2008 Ozone Standard [EPA-R05-OAR-2020-0698; FRL-9215-02-R5] received February 28, 2022, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

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. WAGNER:

H.R. 6891. A bill to exclude government officials of the Russian Federation from certain international meetings, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. CICILLINE (for himself, Mr. ESPAILLAT, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. HARRIS, and Ms. KAPTUR):

H.R. 6892. A bill to designate Ukraine under section 244 of the Immigration and Nationality Act to permit nationals of Ukraine to be eligible for temporary protected status under such section, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. ADAMS:

H.R. 6893. A bill to provide for the long-term improvement of minority-serving institutions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and Labor.

By Mr. BARR (for himself, Ms. TENNEY, Mr. MAST, and Mr. GREEN of Tennessee):

H.R. 6894. A bill to limit the authority of the Secretary of the Treasury to authorize United States financial institutions to engage in certain Russian-related energy transactions blocked by Executive order 14024, and for other purposes; 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. BILIRAKIS:

H.R. 6895. A bill to establish the Commission on Sustaining Medicare and Social Security, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. FOXX (for herself and Ms. ROSS):

H.R. 6896. A bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act to improve consumer take-back programs by allowing persons who are authorized to collect controlled substances from ultimate users and other non-registrants for destruction through an authorized consumer return program to open and inspect packages, to provide a secure method of transporting substances to another location of destruction, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, 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. GIMENEZ:

H.R. 6897. A bill to designate certain unelected entities claiming to be governments as foreign terrorist organizations, to impose certain measures with respect to countries that support such entities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committees on the Judiciary, Armed Services, and Transportation and Infrastructure, 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 Mrs. HAYES (for herself, Mr. TAKANO, and Ms. JAYAPAL):

H.R. 6898. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to change certain eligibility provisions for loan forgiveness for teachers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and Labor.

By Mr. HILL:

H.R. 6899. A bill to prohibit the Secretary of the Treasury from engaging in transactions involving the exchange of Special Drawing Rights issued by the International Monetary Fund that are held by the Russian Federation or Belarus; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. HUIZENGA:

H.R. 6900. A bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to prohibit U.S. financial institutions from participating in the secondary market for certain Russian bonds; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ (for herself, Mr. PFLUGER, Ms. STANSBURY, Mr. CUELLAR, Mr. DOGGETT, and Ms. GRANGER):

H.R. 6901. A bill to prohibit the use of Federal funds for the private interim storage of spent nuclear fuel, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. LONG:

H.R. 6902. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 660 East Harrison Street, in Republic, Missouri, as the ''Special Agent Sgt. Joseph M. Peters Post Office''; to the Committee on Oversight and Reform.

By Mr. MCCLINTOCK (for himself and Mr. LAMALFA):

H.R. 6903. A bill to require the Secretary of Agriculture to carry out activities to suppress wildfires, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, and in addition to the Committee on Natural Resources, 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 Ms. PORTER (for herself, Ms. TLAIB, and Ms. DELAURO):

H.R. 6904. A bill to amend title XXVII of the Public Health Service Act, the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, and the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to prohibit a group health plan and a health insurance issuer offering group or individual health insurance coverage from reducing contracted rates, or terminating contracts, with health care providers during a public health emergency; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committees on Education and Labor, and Ways and Means, 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. RICE of South Carolina:

H.R. 6905. A bill to provide for the withdrawal of normal trade relations treatment with the Russian Federation, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. SABLAN:

H.R. 6906. A bill to amend Public Law 94-241 to authorize the Secretary of Homeland Security to increase the number of permits that are available for employers in Construction and Extraction Occupations seeking Commonwealth Only Transitional Workers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, 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 Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ (for herself, Mr. SIRES, Mr. LAWSON of Florida, Mrs. DEMINGS, Mr. CRIST, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Mrs. CHERFILUS-MCCORMICK, and Mrs. MURPHY of Florida):

H.R. 6907. A bill to direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to reinstate the processing of applications for parole under the Cuban Family Reunification Parole Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BURGESS (for himself, Ms. KAPTUR, Ms. MALLIOTAKIS, Mr. CARSON, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. HARRIS, Mr. MCKINLEY, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Mr. COHEN, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. TIMMONS, Mr. PAPPAS, Mr. UPTON, Mr. BROOKS, Mr. CRENSHAW, Mr. SWALWELL, Ms. KUSTER, Mr. CARTER of Georgia, Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana, Mr. STEUBE, Mr. COSTA, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. ARRINGTON, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, Mr. FALLON, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. BRADY, Mr. TONY GONZALES of Texas, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. MOORE of Alabama, Mr. ADERHOLT, Mr. NEWHOUSE, Mr. CAREY, Mr. MOORE of Utah, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. COMER, Mr. PALMER, Mr. PFLUGER, Mr. STEWART, Mr. NORMAN, and Mr. WENSTRUP):

H. Con. Res. 76. Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that the International Criminal Court should immediately proceed with prosecuting Russian President Vladimir Putin with war crimes should any harm befall Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy as a result of actions taken or directed by any Russian entity or authority; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. CRENSHAW (for himself, Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Mr. STEWART, Mr. MOORE of Utah, Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, Mrs. CAMMACK, Mr. STEUBE, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. DUNCAN, Mr. MOOLENAAR, Mr. JACOBS of New York, Ms. VAN DUYNE, Mr. BABIN, Mr. ARRINGTON, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, Mr. ELLZEY, Ms.

MALLIOTAKIS, Mr. ROY, Mr. WALTZ, Mr. BARR, Mr. GARCIA of California, Mr. TIMMONS, Mr. CARTER of Texas, Mr. ARMSTRONG, Mr. ROUZER, Mr. LAMALFA, Ms. LETLOW, Mr. SMUCKER, Mr. MURPHY of North Carolina, Mr. BISHOP of North Carolina, Mr. RICE of South Carolina, Mr. KELLY of Mississippi, Mr. BACON, Mr. WESTERMAN, and Mr. GUEST):

H. Res. 959. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that Congress does not recognize the Russian Federation as the inheritor of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics seat as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mrs. HINSON (for herself, Mr. FLEISCHMANN, Mr. RUTHERFORD, and Mr. PALAZZO):

H. Res. 960. A resolution of inquiry directing the Secretary of Homeland Security to provide certain information relating to enforcement and removal operations; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. STEIL (for himself, Mr. MCCARTHY, Mr. SCALISE, Ms. STEFANIK, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, and Mr. LOUDERMILK):

H. Res. 961. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the House wing of the United States Capitol and House Office Buildings be open and accessible to the public; to the Committee on House Administration.

PRIVATE BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 3 of rule XII, private bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois:

H.R. 6908. A bill for the relief of Mykhaylo Gnatyuk and Melnik Gnatyuk; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois:

H.R. 6909. A bill for the relief of Tetyana Zvarychuk; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois:

H.R. 6910. A bill for the relief of Igor Klyuchenko; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

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. WAGNER:

H.R. 6891.

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

Article I, Sec. 8

By Mr. CICILLINE:

H.R. 6892.

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

Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution of the United States

By Ms. ADAMS:

H.R. 6893.

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

Under Article 1, Section 8 of the Constitution.

By Mr. BARR:

H.R. 6894.

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

Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. BILIRAKIS:

H.R. 6895.

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

Article I, Section 8

By Ms. FOXX:

H.R. 6896.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3: Congress shall have the Power . . . ''to regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian tribes.''

By Mr. GIMENEZ:

H.R. 6897.

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

Article I, Section 8. To make laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers, and all other powers vested by this Constitution in the government of the United States, or in any department or officer thereof.

By Mrs. HAYES:

H.R. 6898.

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

Article 1 Section 8

By Mr. HILL:

H.R. 6899.

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

Article 1, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution

By Mr. HUIZENGA:

H.R. 6900.

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

Article I, Section 8 of the United State Constitution

By Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ:

H.R. 6901.

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

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. LONG:

H.R. 6902.

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

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 7: The Congress shall have the Power to establish Post Offices and post Roads

By Mr. MCCLINTOCK:

H.R. 6903.

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

Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2 (the Property Clause), which confers on Congress the power to make all needful Rules and Regulations respecting the property belonging to the United States

By Ms. PORTER:

H.R. 6904.

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

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. RICE of South Carolina:

H.R. 6905.

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

Article 1 Section 8 Clause 1 of the US Constitution

By Mr. SABLAN:

H.R. 6906.

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

Article 1, Section 8 of the Constitution.

By Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ:

H.R. 6907.

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

Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution

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By Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois

H.R. 6908.

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

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

By Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois

H.R. 6909.

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

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

By Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois

H.R. 6910.

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

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

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

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

H.R. 72: Mr. MCKINLEY, Mr. BUDD, Mr. BILIRAKIS, and Ms. MALLIOTAKIS.

H.R. 304: Mr. PALLONE.

H.R. 318: Mr. GARBARINO.

H.R. 350: Ms. BROWN of Ohio and Mrs. CHERFILUS-MCCORMICK.

H.R. 431: Mr. CARBAJAL, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. DELGADO, Ms. CHU, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. DESJARLAIS, Mr. HARDER of California, and Mr. FOSTER.

H.R. 432: Ms. PORTER.

H.R. 675: Ms. SCANLON.

H.R. 783: Mr. BISHOP of Georgia.

H.R. 859: Mr. MOOLENAAR.

H.R. 955: Mr. RYAN.

H.R. 1235: Mr. GROTHMAN.

H.R. 1255: Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Ms. SEWELL, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. HILL, Ms. BONAMICI, and Mr. CARTWRIGHT.

H.R. 1282: Mr. CASTEN, Mr. BUCSHON, Mr. ELLZEY, and Ms. JACOBS of California.

H.R. 1364: Ms. BARRAGÁN.

H.R. 1621: Ms. GARCIA of Texas and Mr. KELLER.

H.R. 1731: Ms. NEWMAN.

H.R. 1745: Mr. ELLZEY.

H.R. 1842: Mr. KIND, Mr. MCEACHIN, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Mr. COOPER, Mr. WALTZ, Ms. HOULAHAN, and Mr. SCHRADER.

H.R. 1933: Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI.

H.R. 2021: Mr. GARAMENDI.

H.R. 2046: Mr. LONG, Mr. HUDSON, and Mr. BABIN.

H.R. 2161: Mr. AUCHINCLOSS, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Ms. NEWMAN, Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI, Mr. CUELLAR, and Mr. HARDER of California.

H.R. 2222: Mr. MEEKS.

H.R. 2223: Mr. ELLZEY.

H.R. 2238: Mr. AGUILAR and Mr. MCEACHIN.

H.R. 2271: Mr. KHANNA and Ms. NEWMAN.

H.R. 2311: Mr. ROSE.

H.R. 2447: Mr. NEWHOUSE and Mrs. TORRES of California.

H.R. 2486: Mr. KIND.
H.R. 2499: Mr. SCHRADER, Mr. HUFFMAN, and Mr. TORRES of New York.
H.R. 2525: Mr. ALLRED, Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI, and Ms. ROSS.
H.R. 2528: Mr. CARSON and Ms. NORTON.
H.R. 2549: Mr. KILDEE and Mr. GOMEZ.
H.R. 2565: Mrs. LEE of Nevada, Mr. MCEACHIN, and Mr. PETERS.
H.R. 2589: Ms. UNDERWOOD.
H.R. 2669: Mr. POSEY.
H.R. 2717: Mr. CICILLINE.
H.R. 2718: Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS, Mrs. MILLER of West Virginia, and Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois.
H.R. 2734: Ms. KUSTER.
H.R. 2748: Ms. FOXX, Mr. GUEST, Mr. TIMMONS, and Mr. LEVIN of California.
H.R. 2807: Ms. SCHRIER.
H.R. 2903: Mrs. LURIA and Mr. NORMAN.
H.R. 3054: Mr. POCAN.
H.R. 3056: Mr. LANGEVIN.
H.R. 3109: Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia.
H.R. 3342: Mr. UPTON.
H.R. 3440: Mr. BLUMENAUER.
H.R. 3482: Mr. ROUZER.
H.R. 3488: Ms. KUSTER.
H.R. 3541: Mr. VALADAO.
H.R. 3586: Mr. TRONE.
H.R. 3773: Ms. DEGETTE.
H.R. 3811: Mr. DONALDS.
H.R. 3824: Mr. NEGUSE and Mr. MCGOVERN.
H.R. 3867: Ms. BARRAGÁN.
H.R. 3897: Ms. DEGETTE, Ms. STANSBURY, Ms. BOURDEAUX, and Mr. SMUCKER.
H.R. 4003: Mr. CICILLINE.
H.R. 4017: Ms. GARCIA of Texas.
H.R. 4057: Ms. PORTER.
H.R. 4075: Ms. HOULAHAN.
H.R. 4146: Mr. LAMB and Mr. SCHRADER.
H.R. 4166: Mr. SARBANES.
H.R. 4173: Ms. BARRAGÁN, Mr. KHANNA, and Mr. PETERS.
H.R. 4194: Ms. LOFGREN.
H.R. 4199: Mr. DAVIDSON.
H.R. 4217: Mrs. TRAHAN.
H.R. 4286: Mr. PAPPAS.
H.R. 4315: Mr. PAPPAS.
H.R. 4437: Ms. NORTON.
H.R. 4472: Mr. BISHOP of Georgia.
H.R. 4479: Mr. RUTHERFORD.
H.R. 4602: Mr. SWALWELL and Mr. RUIZ.
H.R. 4603: Ms. DEGETTE.
H.R. 4736: Ms. SCANLON.
H.R. 4750: Ms. HOULAHAN.
H.R. 4801: Ms. SCHRIER.
H.R. 4892: Mr. GRIJALVA.
H.R. 5048: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY.
H.R. 5172: Mr. LAMB.
H.R. 5209: Ms. MENG.
H.R. 5318: Mr. AMODEI.
H.R. 5382: Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana.
H.R. 5429: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY.
H.R. 5497: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY.
H.R. 5514: Mr. BAIRD.
H.R. 5526: Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD.
H.R. 5699: Mr. THOMPSON of California.
H.R. 5759: Mr. RICE of South Carolina.
H.R. 5819: Mr. COOPER.
H.R. 5922: Mr. SAN NICOLAS.
H.R. 5954: Mr. PFLUGER.
H.R. 6132: Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. CARL, and Mrs. HARTZLER.
H.R. 6134: Mr. PERLMUTTER and Mr. GROTHMAN.
H.R. 6145: Mr. OWENS.
H.R. 6161: Mr. GROTHMAN and Mr. OWENS.
H.R. 6184: Mr. MOONEY, Mr. NORMAN, Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana, Mr. PALMER, and Mr. NEWHOUSE.
H.R. 6202: Mr. COLE.
H.R. 6205: Ms. NORTON.
H.R. 6273: Mr. RYAN, Mr. KATKO, and Ms. MATSUI.
H.R. 6280: Mr. OWENS.
H.R. 6353: Ms. DEGETTE.
H.R. 6394: Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 6397: Mr. FITZPATRICK.
H.R. 6403: Mr. RICE of South Carolina.
H.R. 6421: Mr. STEUBE.
H.R. 6448: Ms. PORTER, Mr. CORREA, and Mr. RESCHENTHALER.
H.R. 6470: Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 6486: Mr. DONALDS.
H.R. 6495: Mr. ZELDIN.
H.R. 6523: Mrs. MURPHY of Florida.
H.R. 6534: Mr. DONALDS.
H.R. 6557: Mr. TAKANO.
H.R. 6577: Mr. DESAULNIER and Ms. NEWMAN.
H.R. 6592: Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas.
H.R. 6597: Mr. OWENS.
H.R. 6630: Mr. LAMALFA, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mr. HARDER of California, Mr. CALVERT, Mr. CORREA, and Mrs. STEEL.
H.R. 6631: Mr. LAMALFA, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mr. HARDER of California, Mr. CALVERT, Mr. CORREA, and Mrs. STEEL.
H.R. 6636: Mr. RYAN.
H.R. 6647: Mr. RUTHERFORD.
H.R. 6649: Mr. DAVIDSON.
H.R. 6658: Mr. OWENS and Mr. BANKS.
H.R. 6659: Mrs. KIM of California, Mr. CAREY, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. SCHWEIKERT, Mr. EMMER, Mr. WEBSTER of Florida, Mr. CALVERT, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. TIMMONS, Mr. VAN DREW, Mr. BUCHANAN, and Mr. GROTHMAN.
H.R. 6668: Mr. RESCHENTHALER.
H.R. 6676: Mr. RUTHERFORD.
H.R. 6685: Mr. JONES.
H.R. 6702: Mr. GROTHMAN.
H.R. 6703: Mr. WESTERMAN.
H.R. 6735: Ms. MANNING.
H.R. 6738: Mr. FITZPATRICK.
H.R. 6748: Mr. COLE, Mr. LUETKEMEYER, Mr. FERGUSON, Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana, Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana, Mr. STEUBE, Mr. PALMER, Mr. FITZGERALD, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. HUIZENGA, Mrs. SPARTZ, and Mr. JACKSON.
H.R. 6754: Ms. MALLIOTAKIS.
H.R. 6756: Mrs. HAYES.
H.R. 6759: Mr. NADLER.
H.R. 6764: Mr. GROTHMAN and Mrs. HARTZLER.
H.R. 6800: Mr. DONALDS.
H.R. 6821: Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana.
H.R. 6823: Ms. UNDERWOOD, Ms. LOIS FRANKEL of Florida, and Mr. SAN NICOLAS.
H.R. 6825: Ms. MANNING.
H.R. 6829: Mr. MCCLINTOCK.
H.R. 6835: Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. KIND, Mr. BEYER, Mr. HIGGINS of New York, Ms. SÁNCHEZ. Ms. PLASKETT, Mr. VEASEY, Mr. RICE of South Carolina, Ms. CHU, and Ms. DELBENE.
H.R. 6836: Mrs. BEATTY.
H.R. 6840: Mr. FULCHER.
H.R. 6847: Mr. LEVIN of California.
H.R. 6853: Mrs. HAYES, Mr. VARGAS, and Mr. HIMES.
H.R. 6854: Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky and Mr. BARR.
H.R. 6858: Mr. ELLZEY, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. OWENS, Mr. LATURNER, Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS, Mr. CLINE, Mr. FERGUSON, Mrs. HARTZLER, Mr. LAMALFA, Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. KINZINGER, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mrs. SPARTZ, Mr. GIMENEZ, Mr. SIMPSON, and Mr. MEIJER.
H.R. 6862: Mr. MCGOVERN.
H.R. 6864: Ms. SCHRIER and Mr. PANETTA.
H.R. 6866: Ms. NEWMAN and Ms. ADAMS.
H.R. 6872: Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York.
H.R. 6874: Mr. TURNER.
H.R. 6884: Mr. PFLUGER.
H.R. 6886: Mr. BALDERSON, Mr. FERGUSON, Mr. ESTES, Mrs. WALORSKI, Mr. CAREY, Mr. MOOLENAAR, Mr. BUCSHON, Mr. VALADAO, Mrs. MILLER of Illinois, Mr. GIBBS, Mr. GUTHRIE, Mr. NORMAN, and Ms. VAN DUYNE.
H.R. 6887: Mr. WEBER of Texas.
H.R. 6890: Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. VAN DREW, and Mrs. MURPHY of Florida.
H.J. Res. 46: Mr. BIGGS, Mr. LAMALFA, Mr. BUCK, and Mr. MCKINLEY.
H.J. Res. 53: Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois and Ms. BONAMICI.
H.J. Res. 73: Mr. GRIJALVA.
H. Con. Res. 33: Ms. BROWN of Ohio.
H. Con. Res. 72: Mr. HARDER of California.
H. Con. Res. 75: Ms. JACKSON LEE and Mr. CRENSHAW.
H. Res. 237: Ms. SALAZAR, Ms. WILLIAMS of Georgia, Mr. FITZPATRICK, and Ms. PORTER.
H. Res. 489: Mr. GALLEGO.
H. Res. 806: Mr. MALINOWSKI.
H. Res. 833: Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. PANETTA, Mrs. TORRES of California, Mr. DOGGETT, and Mr. MCGOVERN.
H. Res. 881: Mr. GOOD of Virginia and Ms. Sánchez.
H. Res. 888: Mr. MCNERNEY.
H. Res. 920: Mr. CONNOLLY.
H. Res. 923: Ms. NEWMAN.
H. Res. 934: Mr. RUTHERFORD and Mr. MEUSER.
H. Res. 956: Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. KEATING, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, and Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania.

DELETIONS OF SPONSORS FROM PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

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

H.R. 2748: Mr. BOWMAN.
H.R. 6886: Mr. WENSTRUP.

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PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 117th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 168 WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2, 2022 No. 38

Senate

The Senate met at 11 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Mighty God, help us. Protect us and preserve lives. Be a shield for the nations of our world. Do not abandon those who put their trust in You. Lord, provide our Senators with a durable faith that will cling to You even during a raging tempest. Thank You for being the God of our salvation who refuses to permit evil to triumph. Be merciful to us, dear God, and grant us Your peace, for we find joy when we take refuge in You.

We pray in Your mighty Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

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

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. WARNOCK. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WARNOCK). Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 3717, S. 3723, AND S. 3724

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I understand that there are three bills at the desk due for a second reading en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bills by title for a second time en bloc.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 3717) to withdraw normal trade relations treatment from, and apply certain provisions of title IV of the Trade Act of 1974 to, products of the Russian Federation, and for other purposes.

A bill (S. 3723) to impose sanctions with respect to the Russian Federation in response to the invasion of Ukraine, to confiscate assets of the Russian Federation and remit those assets to the legitimate Government of Ukraine, and for other purposes.

A bill (S. 3724) to provide emergency supplemental appropriations in response to the crisis in Ukraine, and for other purposes.

Mr. SCHUMER. In order to place the bills on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I would object to further proceeding en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bills will be placed on the calendar.

NOMINATION OF KETANJI BROWN JACKSON

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, now for my remarks.

Earlier this morning, it was an honor—a truly rare honor in my time in public service—to meet with Judge Jackson for the first time since her nomination to the Supreme Court. Before the meeting, I said Judge Jackson was brilliant and beloved, but now that I have met her, I will add another word: ''belongs.'' She is not only brilliant and beloved but belongs on the Supreme Court.

I believe her nomination certainly merits a good number of votes from both parties, and I hope we see that as we move forward in the process. I am certain that when other Senators have a chance to meet with Judge Jackson, they will understand why she is beyond qualified to replace Justice Breyer on the Supreme Court.

For one, if confirmed, Judge Jackson would have one of the most diverse professional backgrounds of any sitting Justice. Throughout her career, she has been a Federal defender; worked in private practice; sat on the U.S. Sentencing Commission; served as a district judge and as a circuit court judge on the DC Circuit; and of course, she was a clerk to Justice Breyer, the very same Justice whose seat she would now fill.

As a district judge, Judge Jackson rendered more than 550 rulings and was rarely reversed by higher courts, illustrating her evenhanded application of the law and facts. Then, when you meet with her, you see that she has brought that broad experience and adopted it into her being. She empathizes with people. She emphasized to me that as a judge, she should try to understand both sides. You could tell, when you met her, that she really believed it and, since, has sort of integrated all of her experiences into her being. She had an incredibly phenomenal interview, as well as has an amazing record.

For all of these reasons, Judge Jackson's nomination has already won support from individuals and organizations across the political spectrum. She is supported by civil rights advocates; she is supported by conservative judges and lawyers; she is supported by the Fraternal Order of Police. Someone who was a public defender is now supported by the Fraternal Order of Police? You can't get much better than that. And she is supported by scores of

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

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men and women who had the honor of working with her over the years.

I have gone through her record. You can hardly find a single person she has met, as she has walked through life and met people, who has said a bad thing about her. And when you meet her, you can see why. When you meet her, you can see why.

America will be much better off with someone like Judge Jackson on the Supreme Court. Our country deserves someone deeply experienced, broadly supported, and someone whose elevation as the first Black woman Justice signifies a long overdue step toward perfecting our Union.

I am grateful to have had the chance to have met with the judge. I thank her for her time this morning, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to elevate this outstanding nominee to the Supreme Court very soon.

In having met her and having studied her record, she deserves the support of Members from the other side of the aisle, and I am hopeful she will get a good number of them to support her.

STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, on the State of the Union, last night, before a joint session of Congress, President Biden made the case to the Nation and to the world that in the face of immense challenges, the United States remains strong and ready to meet the tests of our time.

In an hour-long speech delivered before a Chamber that was much fuller than last year, President Biden demonstrated, yet again, the kind of leader he has been all of his life: optimistic, unifying, decent, and honest. He is honest about where we are today and where we must go. I applaud President Biden for laying out a bold, strong, and comprehensive vision that will resonate with the vast majority of Americans.

In particular, I was glad the President focused on three important things. First, he united the parties in supporting Ukraine and against Putin. Second, he showed how under Democratic leadership America has turned the corner on COVID. Third, he confronted the urgency of lowering costs for American families, something our caucus has been focusing on.

First, I was glad that President Biden united the room, the country, and the world in opposing Vladimir Putin and his savage assaults on Ukraine. It is obvious that the President has done an incredibly good job in unifying the Europeans and the West as a united front against Putin. That was felt by people on both sides of the aisle.

When the President called on the Chamber to stand up and applaud Oksana Markarova, the Ukrainian Ambassador, the feeling in the room reminded me of the unity we all felt after 9/11. But just like on 9/11, that unity comes with the sobering recognition that the scale of Putin's brutality in Ukraine is worsening. Ukraine's State Emergency Service reported this morning that more than 2,000 civilians—2,000 men, women, and children—children—have now been killed as a result of Putin's savage brutality.

What is happening in Ukraine is carnage, and the blood of every one of those innocent people falls on the hands of Vladimir Putin and on his band of crony oligarchs. This evil man must be stopped.

As an important step, last night, the Senate unanimously passed bipartisan legislation that will protect America, our government, and our critical infrastructure from cyber attacks. Finally, the holds were lifted from the other side of the aisle, and we passed unanimously this cyber legislation. It is more important now than ever before because Putin is brandishing a cyber weapon.

Cyber warfare is truly one of the dark arts perfected by Putin's authoritarian regime. It is a weapon he is happy to employ around the world. When our authorities in government know of these attacks, they can prepare against future attacks. They will know who is attacking, where they are attacking, how they are attacking, and that will allow them to strengthen our defenses against future cyber attacks.

Many in the industry—at times, I believe even the Chamber of Commerce—were not for this legislation, but with the urgency of the moment—the need to protect ourselves from cyber attacks—finally, the Senate rose to the occasion. So I thank Senators PETERS and PORTMAN for getting this bill done.

The passage of this bill was little noticed because it came right before Congress adjourned for the State of the Union, but it is a giant step forward to protecting ourselves, and I am glad that we got it done last night. But, of course, we must do more.

The Senate must keep working on a bipartisan basis to pass a robust aid package in the upcoming omnibus so we can send an unmistakable message to Ukraine that we stand with them and a message to Putin that we stand against him. The quickest way we can assure that aid reaches Ukraine is through the omnibus, which needs to get done next week; so I am glad that we seem to be having bipartisan support to get that done.

Second, I was also glad President Biden showed how the country under Democratic leadership is turning the corner in the fight against COVID–19. By passing legislation last year to fund vaccines, expand testing, and support our healthcare workers, we are beating this disease.

What the President said last night was absolutely correct in that we cannot—we cannot—have COVID control our lives anymore, but neither can we let our guard down. Right now, as cases are dropping across the board, Congress must pass more funding for vaccines, testing, and therapeutics.

''Therapeutics'' is a word for medication that helps alleviate the virulence of COVID. Very few people who take the therapeutics have to be hospitalized. We also have to ensure that our doctors and nurses and healthcare workers are prepared in case another variant comes this way so that we can stay as close to normal as possible even if another variant arrives. We have to have an ample supply of vaccines, of therapeutics, and of testing ahead of time. We cannot wait. Some of our Republican colleagues seem to be saying: Oh, we don't need this now.

We do need it now while we still have the chance. If Congress waits until another variant arrives, it will be too late.

Let me say that again. Even as cases drop across the board, we cannot be complacent against COVID. Congress must pass more COVID funding now so we can be ready by funding vaccines, testing, therapeutics, and supporting our healthcare workers. If Congress waits until another variant arrives, it will be too late. So we need our Republican colleagues to join us in a bipartisan way, just as they are joining us on Ukraine.

Finally, I am glad that President Biden zeroed in on cutting costs for American families. A year into the President's first year, the economy is surging and creating an unprecedented number of jobs. But people are struggling because costs are also going up. Your wages are going up, but if the costs keep going up, it eats up those wage increases.

Now, why are costs up? Costs are up because of supply chain disruptions stemming from COVID and pent-up demand, as people during COVID didn't buy a lot of things. All the while, Americans are watching incredulously as some of our largest corporations are raising prices despite growing profits. In some cases, executives are seeing lavish pay increases, and in the end, Americans are footing the bill.

Senate Democrats will not stand for this, and we are working with the President to lower costs and build upon the wage growth we have seen over the past year. We are laser-focused on reducing America's costs, from lowering the costs of insulin so no one pays more than $35 a month, to lowering the cost of all prescription drugs, to lowering the cost of meat at the grocery store, to fixing our ocean shipping lines so the bottlenecks don't raise their costs. Shipping costs have gone way up, as the President mentioned.

Do you know what else we can do to lower costs? We can innovate. Congress should continue working to finalize our bipartisan, bicameral jobs and supply chains bill so we can boost American manufacturing, solve our chip crisis, and make our country less dependent on foreign tech companies.

In short, despite everything the world faces, President Biden reminded supporters and critics alike why the American people entrusted him with

the Presidency. He didn't shy away from our challenges but, rather, advanced an optimistic and unifying plan for how to meet the moment.

Senate Democrats will continue working with the President to precisely move our country forward on lowering costs, on addressing COVID, and on defending our democracy in this hour of peril.

I thank the President for his leadership. Let us continue in our work.

I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

POSTAL SERVICE REFORM ACT OF 2022

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 3076, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3076) to provide stability to and enhance the services of the United States Postal Service, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Schumer (for Peters) amendment No. 4955, to modify the deadline for the initial report on the operations and financial condition of the United States Postal Service.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader is recognized.

STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, last night, President Biden gave a State of the Union Address that might have worked OK for a popular administration that had been successfully tackling America's problems and naturally earning high marks, but that is not the reality in which we live.

Democrats spent the last 12 months making major and painful policy errors. The public overwhelmingly disapproves. President Biden didn't need to stay the course and rehash a scattered wish list; he needed to make a dramatic pivot. But he chose not to.

The President first discussed Ukraine. Everyone agrees with the sentiments President Biden expressed, but the sentiments are not enough. The President articulated no meaningful new steps, no specific plan. He made no explicit commitment to keep flowing weapons, intelligence, and advanced capabilities into Ukraine as long as the Ukrainians need them, nor did he explain why his administration was slow to provide lethal assistance in the first place. Instead, the President focused on trying to claim credit for the remarkable European and worldwide response that his administration did not foresee, let alone orchestrate.

Apart from Ukraine, the President's other remarks on our dangerous world were not just insufficient; they were basically nonexistent.

The President spoke for over an hour but only mentioned China twice. Neither time had anything to do with national security or military modernization. The President only mentioned Iran one time, and it was literally by accident. There were zero mentions of North Korea, zero mentions of the botched Afghanistan retreat the administration originally boasted was a ''success.'' Our 13 servicemembers who lost their lives were completely unmentioned until Governor Reynolds took the microphone. And there were zero mentions of rebuilding the defense budget that President Biden actually tried to cut last year.

Meanwhile, the President's speech tried to skate by the serious kitchen-table concerns that are actually keeping families up at night. The President talked about ''made in America'' but keeps fighting against energy independence. Democrats want us to ''Buy American'' but not American oil or gas. On President Biden's watch, we have set a new record for importing Russian oil, and we are begging OPEC to produce even more, and his energy vision is to dump huge subsidies into supply chains that are dominated by China—borrowing from our grandkids to build back Beijing.

The President tried yet again to revive the zombie spending plans which a bipartisan majority of Senators have already killed and buried because they would make inflation even worse. He tried to brag about fancy technology on our southern border, as if we hadn't just seen a new record for illegal crossings on his watch.

The President's address was not responsive to the country's concerns. He needed to pivot, but he didn't.

CNN conducted an instant poll. As you might expect, it oversampled Democrats. Even so, the percentage who gave the President's speech high marks was the lowest they have seen in 15 years.

Iowa's hugely successful Governor, Kim Reynolds, offered the clearest possible contrast. She spoke for the working families who are suffering under Democrat policies. She outlined a commonsense Republican vision of stability at home, strength abroad, law and order on our streets, and sanity in our public schools.

November is just months away. If President Biden does not correct course sharply and quickly, the American people may correct course for him.

TRIBUTE TO ANGIE SCHULTE

Mr. President, now on an entirely different matter, one of the occupational hazards of Senate service is having to say goodbye to truly remarkable staff professionals.

I have already been through this rodeo with Angie Schulte. All the way back in 1988, this dedicated caseworker left my office for the nonprofit sector, but back in 2010, I leapt at the chance to hire Angie back as my State office manager, and her second tour of duty has been a huge success.

I have known Angie for 40 years now. I have watched her master a wide variety of roles. She is an integral part of my State office. She keeps all of us on task and on time. But, unfortunately, tomorrow, her second tour of service will end with a second farewell. Angie is retiring after decades of hard work and phenomenal public service.

For 12 years, Angie has been the steady rudder steering my instate team. If there was a complicated problem, she would fix it; a scheduling conflict, she would resolve it; a new staffer needed help growing into her role, she would provide it. Angie combines meticulous efficiency with a totally charming and cheerful demeanor.

My relationship with Angie actually predates my time in the Senate. Her mother Jeannette was my personnel director for my county administration. I was a newly elected Republican in a heavily Democratic county government who needed all the smarts and all the help that I could get. Angie's mother Jeannette proved invaluable.

In 1982, her daughter Angie came on board as office receptionist. I quickly promoted her, not once but twice. She served as office manager in my Neighborhood Response Office. When I won statewide in 1984, Angie was one of my first hires.

With the same vigor that helped Louisville residents settle property disputes and parking tickets, Angie began helping Kentuckians across the State navigate the morass of Federal Government redtape. Expertise, an eye for detail—Angie grew into the consummate public servant. Our whole team was overjoyed to welcome Angie back after her tenure with Metro United Way, one of the Commonwealth's largest nonprofits.

Angie is famous for humming and whistling while she works and for throwing extravagant birthday parties for her colleagues. She is unfailingly upbeat. She has a permanent positive attitude and, boy, does she get results for Kentucky.

As you can see, it has been an honor to have Angie's talents on our team. I am just grateful that when her sterling 40-year career concludes tomorrow, a 40-year friendship will not.

So, Angie, I wish you every happiness as you spend more time with Steve, with Kathleen and Becca, and with those grandkids, Grant, Logan, and Elizabeth.

I am eternally grateful for your outstanding good work.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, last night, President Biden delivered his

State of the Union Address. While the President tried to put a positive spin on things, the truth of the matter is the United States is not thriving under Democratic control.

On the economic front, of course, Americans are struggling under the burden of the worst inflation in 40 years. There are Americans raising families today who had not yet been born the last time inflation was this bad.

Under Democratic control, Americans have seen their standard of living decline as they face massive increases in the price of basic necessities from groceries to gas. Inflation is so bad that despite wage increases in 2021, Americans saw a de facto pay cut. After months of ignoring soaring inflation numbers, the President and congressional Democrats have at last been forced to start talking about inflation.

Unfortunately, it has become clear they still don't understand why this inflation disaster happened and how their massive government spending spree—the so-called American Rescue Plan Act—helped create this crisis. ''The American Rescue Plan helped working people—and left no one behind,'' the President said in his speech last night. ''It worked.'' ''It worked,'' he said. If President Biden believes that, I have some oceanfront property in South Dakota to sell him.

The truth of the matter is that working Americans are struggling right now in large part due to the American Rescue Plan. The American Rescue Plan Act was not a targeted COVID relief bill. It was a massive, unnecessary spending spree that sent too much government money into the economy, and, predictably, the economy overheated as a result.

I am glad that Democrats are starting to acknowledge our inflation crisis, but it would be nice to see them recognize how it actually came about and commit to not repeating their mistakes in the future.

Inflation is not the only domestic crisis that we have been facing on Democrats' watch. Our Nation is also experiencing a border crisis that has resulted in a security, enforcement, and humanitarian nightmare. Almost from the day the President took office, we have seen a massive surge in attempted illegal immigration across our southern border, and there is no end in sight.

In January, the Border Patrol encountered more than 150,000 individuals illegally trying to cross our southern border, the highest January number in more than 20 years. These numbers, of course, only reflect individuals the Border Patrol has been able to apprehend. A Department of Homeland Security official recently stated that more than 200,000 individuals have successfully evaded apprehension since October and have disappeared—disappeared—into our country, more than 200,000 individuals. It is not surprising. The Border Patrol is stretched thin and lacks sufficient resources to deal with this never-ending border surge. But it is deeply concerning. There are 200,000 people entering our country without any security check or vetting, raising the risk of drug traffickers, criminals, or even terrorists finding their way into our communities.

But perhaps the most concerning thing is that a full year after this massive surge began, the President generally continues to act as if this border crisis doesn't exist. He is apparently unaware of or can't be bothered to deal with the real security risk that this represents for our country.

The President did allude to securing the border last night—something he does periodically—but given his track record, I am not holding my breath. In fact, he hasn't even visited it nor has the Vice President, for that matter.

When it comes to the world stage, things are a little better. The President's first year in office was distinguished by his disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan, which weakened our national security, diminished our standing with our allies, and resulted in our abandoning thousands of Afghans who had worked with us and whom we had promised to protect.

Currently, we are facing another international crisis—Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine. While this is a crisis of Vladimir Putin's making, President Biden was slow to move weapons and resisted imposing sanctions before Russia attacked. I hope that in the days to come, the President will stand strong against Russian aggression and not hesitate to impose any additional sanctions that may be necessary to isolate Putin and his cronies and to halt the Russian advance.

As I said, the United States is not thriving under Democratic control. A big reason for that is because the President and congressional Democrats have had one thing on their minds since taking office and that is implementing a wide-ranging, far-left socialist agenda.

Democrats' lack of leadership on the big issues facing our country and our world has been striking. I think the truth is that Democrats have seen those big issues as distractions from their real goal in taking office, and that is implementing that far-left agenda. While inflation spiked and then spiked again, Democrats were AWOL. They were focused on passing a massive tax-and-spending spree that would unquestionably make our inflation problem even worse.

And when that failed, they turned their focus to a Federal takeover of election law that they hoped would give them an advantage in the November elections.

This week, as Vladimir Putin continued to pursue his apparent dream of reconstituting the Soviet Union by pushing further into Ukraine, Democrats took a vote on, of all things, legislation to remove virtually all State-level restrictions on abortion.

Yes, that was the big vote this week—legislation to remove nearly every State-level restriction on abortion, despite the fact, I might add, that the majority of the American people support restrictions on abortion. But that doesn't matter to Democrats. If the Planned Parenthood wing of the party wants a vote on unrestricted abortion on demand, that is what it gets.

In yet another example of just how far the Democratic Party has run to the left and just how disconnected Democrats have become, last week, John Kerry, who serves as President Biden's climate chief, expressed his hope that war with Ukraine would be averted because of the carbon emissions such a war would create and how the war might distract from climate change.

You can't make it up. At the time of his remarks, Russia was on the verge of invading a sovereign nation—and possibly condemning an entire country to Soviet oppression—and a key member of the President's administration was worried about how the war might distract from climate change.

I am a longtime supporter of clean energy, but we have a big problem when members of our country's leadership are looking at the imperialist takeover of a sovereign nation, and their biggest concern is not human life and human freedom but carbon emissions.

But it is another sign of just how ideological the Democratic Party has become. Nothing—nothing—is allowed to come between the Democratic Party and its far-left agenda.

President Biden made some nods toward bipartisanship last night, but it remains to be seen whether Democrats and the President are capable of setting aside their far-left agenda to address the priorities facing this country. And given some of the measures the President proposed last night, I have my doubts.

But I hope—I hope for the sake of our Nation—the Democrats will rethink their evermore rigid allegiance to the far left and instead work with Republicans in a bipartisan fashion.

The American people deserve better than what Democrats have given them over this past year.

I yield the floor.

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL UNDER CHAPTER 8 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, OF THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE CENTERS FOR MEDICARE & MEDICAID SERVICES RELATING TO ''MEDICARE AND MEDICAID PROGRAMS; OMNIBUS COVID–19 HEALTH CARE STAFF VACCINATION''

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to consideration of S.J. Res. 32, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (S.J. Res. 32) providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services relating to ''Medicare and Medicaid Programs; Omnibus COVID–19 Health Care Staff Vaccination''.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 2:30 p.m. is equally divided between the leaders or their designees.

The Senator from Massachusetts.

POSTAL SERVICE REFORM ACT

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, as I speak here today on the U.S. Postal Service Reform Act, Russian President Vladimir Putin is waging a cruel, unjust, and barbaric war of choice, financed by a global addiction to fossil fuels, an addiction which Russia is only too happy to exploit right now.

And the most effective way to reduce the long-term security threat to Ukraine and Europe and the United States and the whole world is to say that we are going to empty Vladimir Putin's oil-and-gas-funded piggy bank, setting ourselves and our allies on the course to a future powered by domestic clean energy.

We can use the power of our Federal Government to not only apply sanctions but also destroy Putin's dirty energy business model.

The U.S. Government has 700,000 vehicles in its fleet, and 160,000 of the U.S. Government's vehicles belong to the U.S. Postal Service. Our Postal Service could play an important role in destroying the Putin business model by committing to clean instead of dirty energy to fuel its fleet. And it should start by reversing Postmaster General Louis DeJoy's short-term decision to buy dirty, new postal trucks, energy-inefficient postal trucks, gas-guzzling postal trucks.

As we import oil from Russia, we don't need a new fleet of gas-guzzling postal vehicles in the United States because if we don't get a truly next-generation electric fleet of postal trucks, we need the next generation of Postal Service leadership delivered express to the American people.

This is just the latest stop in DeJoy's disastrous postal route, and it is time for him to resign. This is just a leftover agenda from the Trump years, this commitment to inefficiency, to the consumption unnecessarily of oil and natural gas in our country.

The Postal Service Board of Governors and the Biden administration just can't let this bad business, bad-for-climate, bad-for-health decision stand. If DeJoy won't get rid of this decision, the U.S. Postal Service should get rid of him, especially at this moment where Russia is fueling an unconscionable invasion of Ukraine with oil money from the United States.

It is the American people who have been paying $20 billion a year for Russian oil coming into our country to put in the gasoline tanks of the United States. And then he takes that money and uses it to buy tanks and planes and weapons to invade the Ukraine.

A new fleet of electric postal trucks would receive a stamp of approval from the American people as it would lower costs, reduce pollution, and provide public health benefits while backing out the Russian oil that comes into our country every single day.

Louis DeJoy wants to claim he doesn't have the money to go electric, but that false statement should be marked ''return to sender.''

One study found that full electrification would save the U.S. Postal Service $4.3 billion over the lifetime of the fleet. In other words, going all electric saves money for the American taxpayer because going all electric is cheaper than going all gasoline or all diesel. We just save money, but we don't have to send any money to Putin to run our Postal Service because that just doesn't make any sense in 2022.

Since taking office in 2020, Louis DeJoy has tried to pinch pennies at the U.S. Postal Service, so why is he now proposing a fiscally irresponsible plan that leaves $4.3 billion on the table instead of in U.S. Postal Service's budget?

If our new postal fleet is made up of vehicles that get less than 10 miles to the gallon, no better than the vehicles already in use, we are going to be tying our mail delivery system of the future to the dirty oil, inefficient oil, inefficient vehicle strategy of the past.

We shouldn't be proposing the Postal Service use the same energy from the time of the Pony Express, and these vehicles that we are using today move at about the same speed as the Pony Express.

It is time for us to just think smarter and not harder. That is all electric. That is backing out oil. That is just saying that we can have an infinity sign next to the efficiency of these vehicles which we are driving and not this 10-mile-a-gallon, 1930s, 1920s view of how efficient the postal vehicles in our country should be.

So this is simple. Electric postal trucks are cheaper. Electric postal trucks are cleaner. And this isn't charity; it is business. And you don't have to take my word for it. Ask some of our most successful companies in the mail delivery industry.

These are the competitors to the Postal Service. The Postal Service is constantly coming up here saying that we need more subsidies; we need more help to compete against these private-sector competitors. Well, UPS just placed a 10,000-vehicle purchase order for electric trucks. FedEx is moving to achieve a fully electric fleet by the year 2040. And Amazon is purchasing 100,000 new electric delivery vehicles; that is 20 times more than our U.S. Postal Service is planning to get under Louis DeJoy.

These trucks also would work for UPS routes today. Ninety-six percent of USPS routes are compatible with electric postal routes. Electric vehicles aren't the future; they work for us, for our budgets, and for our energy security right now.

We need to protect our planet, and having all electric vehicles just dramatically reduces the greenhouse gases that we emit. But we also have to protect our national security. We have to be telling Russia that we don't need your oil any more than we need your caviar.

And the only way to do it, ultimately, is for the United States—you just find a way to break our addiction. And the way to break our addiction is to just move to the kinds of transportation, automotive, U.S. Postal Service vehicles that don't need oil and still get you just where you want to go.

So that is our challenge right now. And we need to protect everything—everything—our health, our environment, our economy, our national security, and our own morality by ensuring that we move in this direction.

And we need to protect our planet and our Postal Service by putting a ''Forever Stamp'' on our transportation future, a fleet of battery-operated electric vehicles that will usher in a clean vehicle revolution in America and destroy the demand for oil and gas so that the business model of Russia is destroyed.

This is the weapon that we can be using. This is the message we should be sending to the rest of the world. So I urge the White House, the U.S. Postal Service, and the Congress to take any and all possible steps to right this wrong decision from Louis DeJoy. The U.S. Postal Service needs to tear up this deal and buy a clean fleet, and if it doesn't, it needs to get a clean start without Louis DeJoy, who is looking at the world in a rearview mirror.

You have to look straight ahead to this all-electric vehicle future. Let's ensure that the Postal Service's next-generation delivery vehicles create a livable world for the next generation, not only of America but as a model for what the rest of the world has to do.

What I hear from my Republican friends, what I hear from the American petroleum industry is, well, the Biden administration should just open up more leases to drill for oil, open up more leases immediately for more drilling.

Well, here is the problem with the Republican Party; here is the problem with the American Petroleum Institute: The oil industry, the oil giants, have hoarded thousands and thousands of leases on public lands all across the United States, and they have not drilled on them.

I have introduced legislation for years saying: Use it or lose it. You want the lease? You say it is imperative? You are going to pay for that lease and then you don't drill on it?

Do you know what they are doing? They just hoard all of that land, and the land is the size of huge States in our country. That is how much land they have right now or that is owned

by the American people and leased to the oil companies.

So they want to start drilling? Why did you bid for all those leases in the years gone by? Do you want to know why? They want to use this whole Russia situation as an opportunity to get even more leases that they won't drill on and to get them cheap and to create a false sense of emergency here, when, if they want to drill, they have already got all of the leases they would ever need. They have a backlog of 20 years they haven't even started on.

So when you hear these crocodile tears from the American petroleum industry, from the American prevarication industry, that is what it is all about. If they wanted to drill, they would be drilling right now—onshore, offshore. They have the leases. All they want to do is just get more and more and more and cheaper and cheaper and cheaper from the American people, while fighting to stop an all-electric vehicle revolution, stop a wind and solar revolution in our country. That is what their agenda is. That is what the American Petroleum Institute is all about—it is stopping an all-electric revolution; it is stopping a wind and solar revolution; it is stopping a battery revolution—because it destroys their business model as well, while hoarding leases, not drilling on them, and then coming in here hat in hand, demanding, in a lot of ways, that we give them even more leases that they are not going to drill on. They are just going to hoard it and save it for years, decades, generations to come. It is sad. It is a sad commentary on American corporate greed, but that is where we stand right now.

So just be prepared to hear more lies from the American oil industry, lies that go right to the heart of what we really have to do as Americans for the next generation, and that is to stand up to those oil companies, stand up to the Russian oil oligarchs, and say: We are moving away from you historically. That is what young people in our country want. They want us to unleash our technological innovation genius in order to solve this problem, and it is wind, it is solar and all-electric vehicles and battery storage technologies. And it is a moral challenge for us. It is a national security challenge for us. It is an environmental challenge for us. It is an economic challenge for us.

We can already see the impact this oil control of the global economy has upon ordinary consumers in America and the rest of the world. Inflation is spiking—oil. Russia is invading Ukraine—oil. A new U.N. report says that we now have an evermore dangerous warming of our planet—oil. And what did they do? They continued to lie. They continued to try to control our agenda so that we cannot pass the legislation to unleash our technological genius. That is our greatest strength. Their greatest strengths are their natural resources, but ultimately, our greatest renewable resources are the brains of the American people, especially the younger people, because if they were unleashed to invent and deploy all of these new technologies, it would revolutionize not just our country but revolutionize the whole rest of the world.

We gave the young people in our country in the 1990s and the early 2000s a chance to do that with our telecommunications system. It is now called the internet. It is called broadband. Young people did that. We have to give the same opportunity to young people to do the same thing so that we back out the oil, we revolutionize the way in which we transport ourselves, and we give hope to the rest of the planet that the United States is going to use all of its resources to accomplish that goal.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, last night, of course, we all listened to President Biden's prime-time opportunity to explain what his administration is doing to address the many challenges that our Nation is facing.

Here at home, we know family budgets are being plundered by the worst inflation in four decades. We are paying higher prices for everything from food to gasoline. We also know that there have been spikes in violent crime that have created public safety concerns in communities across the country. After a year of hearing folks on the Democratic side of the aisle, the progressive base of the Democratic Party, calling for defunding the police, it was welcome to hear the President say last night that we should fund the police. It is long overdue.

Of course, there is the humanitarian crisis at the southern border. As I have said before, Texas has 1,200 miles of common border with Mexico, and, of course, we have seen records shattered month after month of people coming across the border, claiming asylum, and then being placed by U.S. authorities into the interior of the United States, given a notice to appear for a future court hearing, which, in all likelihood, will never occur.

The human smugglers and drug cartels have figured out the weaknesses in our own laws and policies, and they are exploiting them, to the detriment of the American people.

On drugs alone, 100,000 Americans died of drug overdoses last year, the overwhelming amount of which those drugs came across the southern border into the United States. And the cartels are smart. They figured out that if you flood the border with people, that is going to take the Border Patrol off the frontlines, and here come the drug cartels moving their poison across the border.

Of course, the trials we are facing now abroad are not any easier. The precipitous withdrawal from Afghanistan without any kind of warning or consultation with our NATO allies has caused the world to doubt the future of American leadership, and then the Chinese Communist Party over in the People's Republic of China continues to commit genocide against the Uighurs and threaten attacks against a democratic Taiwan.

Of course, very much on our minds today is the fact that Vladimir Putin is attempting to seize a sovereign nation and redraw the maps of Europe and testing the resolve of the United States and other democracies around the world.

I, of course, like many, attended the President's address last night and listened closely as he spoke about each of these challenges, beginning with the conflict—or I should say war—in Ukraine.

When it comes to Russia, our allies are not strong enough on their own to deter Vladimir Putin or the Russian Federation. They are looking to the United States as part of NATO—the North Atlantic Treaty Organization—for leadership.

I was pleased to hear President Biden deliver a clear message to the world that we stand with the democracy in Ukraine and we will do everything we can to help the Ukrainians deter Putin and to defend their country. The President said we will continue to send military, economic, and humanitarian assistance to Ukraine, and it is clear that there is bipartisan support for that. But the fact of the matter is, most of our allies in Europe have been the ones who stepped up to the threat—of course, it is in their neighborhood—and we could have but did not impose sanctions before Putin invaded rather than after the fact.

I was disappointed that the President did not speak about what is at stake in Ukraine. It is something I talked about here on the floor a few weeks back.

With so many challenges in our own backyard, it is easy for folks in Texas or Colorado or New Jersey or anywhere else around the country to wonder, why should I care about what is happening in Ukraine?

Americans want to know, what difference does a war or a military conflict on the other side of the globe—what relevance does it have to me, and if it is important, how can we best help?

Well, we know the answer to that question here in the House and the Senate. We know that this conflict is key to preserving our rules-based international order, that if Putin can get away with this, he can get away with anything. If Putin gets away with this, President Xi is waiting for his opportunity to unify Taiwan with mainland China. So this is a global geopolitical crisis. We know China and Iran, as I mentioned, and other adversaries are paying close attention.

If Texans want America to stay out of another world war, then we better slam the door on Vladimir Putin now.

President Biden had a window to remind the American people and our allies around the world what is at stake in this conflict. Vladimir Putin has even put his nuclear forces on active reserve. He is rattling the nuclear sabre in order to threaten and intimidate NATO and the United States and the rest of the world, but he is also finding an incredible amount of courage and resilience and leadership by people like President Zelenskyy in leading the courageous Ukrainian people in their effort to resist this invasion.

So this is a very serious and very dangerous moment. Many of the things that Vladimir Putin has done are eerily similar to what happened in Nazi Germany in the late 1930s and 1940s.

On another topic, the President alluded to inflation last night, but he didn't instill much confidence that he had a concept of what was at stake or how to solve the problem. When he talked about his plan to address inflation, he said we need to cut our expenses and overhead. Well, I talked to some of the cotton producers in Texas last week when I was home, and they told me that one of the biggest problems they have are the increasing costs of their inputs, things like diesel and energy, fertilizer, and the like. They don't have any room to cut their overhead unless they go out of business entirely.

So the President did not inspire much confidence when it came to dealing with the scourge of inflation. But one thing we can do is quit making it worse by trying to continue to shovel more and more money out the door, chasing fewer and fewer goods and services.

The President did try to recycle some of the elements of the Build Back Better—or, as I like to call it, the ''Build Back Broke''—bill, but that bill, that policy is dead and buried. The President couldn't even get support among his own political party. But he did try to rebrand it and respond to it in a way—rebrand it in a way that appeared to deal with the concerns that everybody has about increasing costs and inflation, but it just did not make any sense.

The President repeated the same line that has already been shot down a number of times. He talked about raising taxes on the American people, and he says no one earning $400,000 a year or less would pay a penny more under his plan. But, of course, this is the same President who said that the price of the $5 trillion Build Back Better bill was zero. I think the President has lost a lot of credibility when it comes to talking about taxes and spending.

Well, what the President talked about last night was really a laundry list of his liberal agenda. This isn't a new plan. This is the same old plan with a new name broken down into smaller pieces. None of this is going to address what is confronting the American people today when it comes to inflation or crime or the border or regaining America's leadership and credibility in world affairs.

While I mention crime, when it comes to crime, the President did affirm that defunding the police is not the answer.

I see our friend, the Senator from New Jersey, on the floor of the Senate. I think he led an effort for us to have a vote on funding the police rather than defunding the police.

Of course, this is a complete reversal from what we have heard from many of the President's nominees, including those at the Department of Justice—people like Vanita Gupta who for months, if not years, chanted this mantra of defunding the police and criticizing the men and women in law enforcement who are the thin blue line between us and chaos. But there are some shining examples that I think the President could have pointed to. One is Dallas, TX. It is a shining example of how supporting our police both financially and with moral support and with smart plans can make a difference.

In most major cities across the country today, crime is up in all categories. In Dallas, TX, violent crime is down by 8.5 percent, and that is no accident. It is thanks to the great leadership of Dallas's mayor Eric Johnson and Chief Garcia, chief of the Dallas Police Department.

I asked Chief Garcia yesterday in a hearing in front of the Senate Judiciary Committee, I said: Is there any reason, Chief Garcia, that the plan you implemented in Dallas couldn't work elsewhere around the country? And he said: No, there is no reason.

Of course, every plan needs to be adapted to local conditions; but what the Dallas Police Department and the city council and mayor have done is something that can be replicated in other parts of the country.

Chief Garcia and other witnesses also testified to the importance of Project Safe Neighborhoods, which is a Federal program designed to go after gun criminals, particularly people who are felons in possession or people who use firearms for carjacking, drug transactions, and the like.

The fact of the matter is that Federal law with its mandatory minimum sentences for using a firearm illegally in violation of Federal law is a huge deterrent. And if you can't deter people from using firearms, you certainly can lock them up for an extended period of time which, I think, sends a strong message that this sort of activity will not be tolerated and will deter future criminal activity.

So there is a lot we can do when it comes to crime. We can also make sure that people who are suffering from mental health challenges aren't diverted to jails and denied the treatment that they need that can help them on the road to recovery. Those are the kinds of things that I wish we could have heard more about from the President last night.

I was shocked when the President said we need immigration reform last night. I have been in the Senate for quite a while now, a member of the Judiciary Committee. I am the ranking member on the Immigration Subcommittee. When my party has been in the majority, I have been the chairman of the Immigration Subcommittee. For the President to say immigration reform is something we ought to do struck me as a throwaway line. And the reason I say that is because he has done nothing, zero, zip, nada, to stop the flood of migrants across our southern border, together with the illegal drugs that come right behind them.

I have tried to do my best on a bipartisan basis working with people like Ms. SINEMA, a border State Senator from Arizona, to come up with some modest suggestions for the administration to deal with the crisis at our border. Unfortunately, we have not heard a peep out of the administration, at the same time that the President's poll numbers, when it comes to border security and immigration, are in the cellar. You would think that they would be looking for some sort of bipartisan opportunity to register a win and make some progress, but that would be wrong.

Well, I was hopeful that we would hear more about the President's plan to work with Republicans in a 50–50 Senate to build consensus for bipartisan solutions. Other than the bipartisan support for Ukraine, we didn't hear much about that last night. What we heard was a long laundry list of partisan legislation that has been tried and failed during this last year.

The Biden administration needs to do more to address inflation in a smart way—in an effective way. They need to do more to support our men and women in uniform who are the thin blue line between us and criminals; and they need to do something—anything—to address the humanitarian crisis at the southern border.

I was hoping this could be a reset moment. You know, we all make mistakes in life, but the real test is whether we learn from those mistakes. But from the comments that the President made last night when it comes to these failed policies, it appears that he has learned nothing.

The American people elected a 50–50 Senate expecting to force us to work together, and we should do that. We should put the tried-and-true formula of building consensus and passing positive legislation to help the American people. We should use that formula again. It just simply blows my mind that the President and his party, with the prospect of an evenly divided Congress, has tried to do so many things on a purely partisan basis, and, as you might expect, has failed to do so when he has been unable to unite even his own political party.

Well, we need a stronger and a safer and a more prosperous country. As Governor Kim Reynolds said yesterday

evening, we can't project strength abroad if we are weak at home. And we can't support our allies, NATO, and our own military to deter authoritarian thugs like Putin if our economy isn't strong here at home as well.

So I continue to be an optimist and hope for the best, but last night's message was not encouraging.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 1216

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I come to the floor to ask a unanimous consent request, and I am going to state the reasons for that before I ask for the request. And I appreciate my friend from New Jersey coming over to help me at this particular time.

So, today, the issue is fentanyl. Today's vote on this bill, as amended, should be a yes for every Member of the Senate. This measure extends the lifesaving authority placing fentanyl drugs in schedule I. In fact, a 15-month extension of this authority similar to the bill that I offer right now passed the Senate, and it passed the Senate unanimously in 2020.

In case that you have not read the headlines for the past few years, fentanyl and its analogs are killing tens of thousands of Americans each year, and it happens that fentanyl and analogs are now the No. 1 cause of death for Americans ages 18 to 45, the most productive years of a person's life.

The Drug Enforcement Administration placed fentanyl and analogs on schedule I in the year 2018. Congress has already extended this authority like I am seeking today five times in 4 years. Now, we are on the verge of extending it for a sixth time before it expires on March 11.

During the Biden administration, these reauthorizations have gotten shorter and yet shorter. The periods of extension have been as short as just a few weeks. This has created constant doubt about whether fentanyl scheduling will even continue.

I have received calls from families of people who have overdosed on fentanyl. I have received calls from law enforcement seeking our help for them to enforce the law. For the last 10 months, these families and these law enforcement people have been in terror that this authority will disappear, that thousands then would die from the fentanyl overdoses.

We have extended fentanyl scheduling five times in 4 years, but four have been in the last 10 months alone. While extensions preserve a lifesaving authority, this kind of legislation by extension is neither sustainable nor reflective of the great gravity of keeping fentanyl drugs in schedule I. A permanently scheduled solution is the best answer; but, unfortunately, a permanent scheduling action isn't feasible right now.

Now, why would that be the case? Because some members of Congress don't support keeping fentanyl analogs in schedule I—or maybe at all. Some reject our criminal drug laws altogether. That seems unbelievable, but that is what I sense from some of my colleagues. Fortunately, this is a fringe opinion and not very representative of the majority of Congress. Republicans and Democrats alike have voiced support for permanently scheduling fentanyl analogs, including even President Biden. But until Congress agrees on a bipartisan and a permanent solution, we must maintain the authority by extension.

For years, I have been leading the fight to extend this authority in hopes of finding a permanent solution. I have urged Leader SCHUMER to support measures that extend fentanyl scheduling as long as possible. I have asked President Biden to engage with bipartisan congressional leaders on a permanent solution. And I have requested that Chairman DURBIN hold a hearing on this issue in the Judiciary Committee. All these requests have obviously gone unanswered and ignored, or I wouldn't be here today asking for unanimous consent.

Scheduling fentanyl analogs matters. And why does it matter? It can save lives. Congress has the power. Congress has the responsibility to act. So we ought to do that in just a few minutes. But we can't make meaningful bipartisan change unless we have enough time to do it.

So let's pass a long-term extension and finally then lead the way to a permanent solution.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent request that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 45, S. 1216; further, that the Grassley amendment at the desk be considered and agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be considered 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. Is there an objection?

Mr. BOOKER. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, I have to preface my remarks with my deep respect for the senior Senator from Iowa. I respect him not just because he slays it on Twitter, but I respect him because of his heart, because we have a great working relationship, and because we have worked together to deal with the drug crisis in America. We have worked together to make the judicial system more just.

What you hear from the senior Senator is passion that comes from the crisis, as he said. I have traveled his State considerably, and the opioid crisis is a crisis from New Jersey to Iowa—all over our country. He read the statistics, but you could hear from his heart that these are families he knows; that these are people who have seen the tremendous loss of young people through opioid overdoses.

We cannot in this country tolerate one more overdose. I agree with the Senator's sense of urgency in that we cannot tolerate one more death and that we have to address this public health crisis. But with this goal in mind, I cannot support the bill as it is offered today because extending the temporary scheduling of fentanyl analogs alone is a failed experiment.

We have seen this temporary scheduling. We are in it right now. Classwide scheduling has not curbed the overdoses. In fact, overdoses have increased during the period that fentanyl analogs have been scheduled by nearly 40 percent from June 2019 to May 2020.

Here is what makes it even worse.

As a result of just blanket classwide scheduling—this broad sweep approach—the FDA recently testified that there is a potential lifesaving antidote to these fentanyl analogs. It is basically a stronger version of naloxone. That stronger version has been placed, because of this blanket scheduling, as a schedule I. The FDA knows that this could actually endanger more people.

Why in the midst of a public health crisis are we criminalizing the next naloxone instead of rushing it to the hands of researchers for study and evaluation?

When you put something in schedule I, it is a declaration that doesn't even have any health benefits. This is bad science and, therefore, bad policy.

This bill, as it is now, would not prevent the steady increase of fentanyl-related overdoses that we are seeing nationwide. It wouldn't achieve that because we have had temporary scheduling, and it is still going up. It will not prevent the loss of one loved one that we see happening right now or the pain that motivates my friend and senior Senator from Iowa.

This is a public health crisis, and our strategies should be informed by the science as a public health response. It requires a response that is dictated by science- and evidence-based interventions. Temporary scheduling, again, is not simply that. Classwide scheduling impedes scientists' and impedes researchers' abilities to develop evidence-based public health solutions that are needed to overcome the fentanyl crisis and deal with these fentanyl analogs.

Look, right now, temporary scheduling has given this false impression that Congress is doing something to deal with fentanyl analogs while the death count goes up. What it has done, really, is allowed the government to neglect the deeper calling for us to really deal with the challenges as they are. There are a lot of evidence-based intervention strategies—things we know that work—that we are not investing in. There are things that could help these crises in our communities.

Fundamentally, research by the FDA has confirmed that what is being proposed—classwide scheduling—has improperly scheduled substances with therapeutic promise and low abuse potential. We need to submit all fentanyl-related substances to the same scientific evaluation that we have done for other controlled substances. We need to test for their dangerousness. We must identify those that might be lifesaving overdoses.

All we have done for nearly 4 years now is schedule these substances without thinking about the scientific and medical evidence. Kicking the can down the road by temporarily scheduling these substances, yet again now, without making any effort to follow the scientific process, is irresponsible. We are preemptively criminalizing substances that may not be harmful and may actually be antidotes, that might be the answer in helping to curb these horrific overdoses and these horrible deaths. The temporary scheduling of fentanyl analogs without testing for pharmacological effects means that people will be convicted and incarcerated for substances that may have no pharmacological effect.

I want to again make clear that I am committed to ending this pandemic. I carry a picture in my wallet of someone who died from an overdose—it was given to me as I crisscrossed this country—so as to never forget the everyday emergency.

As the President mentioned in his speech to this body yesterday, confronting the opioid epidemic is something that Republicans and Democrats, united, can get behind. It should be bipartisan, but at the same time, our response should not be guided by the same old drug war ideologies that didn't stop the overuse of drugs. It should be guided by the scientific evidence. It should be guided by compassion. It should be guided by what works.

Classwide scheduling ignores the scientific and medical guidance. It sets in place a dangerous precedent, and it repeats mistakes we have made too many times in the past.

I have seen the drug war go awry. I have seen this body act in ways that have compounded problems and not helped people. I have seen the people with addictions—that are diseases—with nothing but jail and prison. We can get out of this crisis if we follow the science and if we follow what works, but it means Democrats and Republicans coming together.

I have tremendous respect for my colleague. I know we can find a way to move forward together. I know, if we continue to work together, we are going to find a way forward. I know, because of my experience with the senior Senator and his grace, that if we dedicate ourselves to working together, we can get good things done for this country. We have done it before. In this case, I think we can do it again.

So, with the deepest respect to my colleague, I respectfully object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I would like to have just a short rebuttal.

I thank my friend for his kind remarks about me as I know that he and I have worked together on a lot of pieces of legislation.

I want to express my disappointment that my bill to extend fentanyl scheduling by 14 months cannot proceed at this point, but I won't back down from trying to extend this authority in a meaningful and long-term way.

There is more than one way to advance this bill. Today's vote is just one of those ways. Like history shows us, this authority can be included in funding legislation or move as a bipartisan, unanimous bill. I will continue my efforts for its inclusion in the upcoming omnibus appropriations bill, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Unless the Senator from New Jersey has something to say, I would like to proceed on another issue.

Mr. BOOKER. The Senator may proceed. I have nothing else to say.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

RUSSIA

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, there are 192 nations on the face of this globe. Not one of those 192 nations, including Ukraine, is a threat to Russia. Regardless, the Russian military is continuing to wage a full-scale war on the nation and the people of Ukraine.

I am not sure of the reasons because I don't know Putin. The highest I have been in the leadership of Russia was, once or twice in my life, when having a meeting with Mr. Lavrov, the Foreign Minister. I think, when it comes to Putin, he has got to satisfy his ego or he is sick or maybe both.

The Ukrainian military and civilians are fighting for their homes. Obviously, they want to be an independent nation. They have our moral support and even some of our weapons, and they probably need a lot more help from the United States, short of putting troops in that country. I wish we had gotten them more defensive weapons before this invasion, but I still think there is more that we can do.

I am an original cosponsor of the NYET bill. ''Nyet'' is the word for ''no'' in Russian. This legislation that goes by this acronym, the NYET Act, literally says no to Russian aggression, with tough, targeted support for Ukrainian resistance efforts, even if that turns into a guerilla war, and there are a number of other bills to crush the Putin regime.

Russia, as we know, is a major oil and gas producer, so Putin's actions are hurting not just Ukrainian and Russian citizens but Americans as well. Just think of the $1 or more increase in the price of gasoline we are paying today compared to 1 year ago. This situation comes at the same time Americans across the country are already paying more for gas than at any time since 2014. That number comes from AAA data.

Last night, I was encouraged to hear President Biden pledge to ''use every tool at our disposal'' to limit gas price hikes after he imposed sanctions on Russia. It is time for Congress and the White House to rethink policies that threaten our energy independence and, at the same time, our national security.

That is why already this week I have helped to introduce the American Energy Independence Act with Senator HAWLEY, which would reverse the President's shutdown of the energy sector and return it to full production so that we will have energy independence like we had until 12 months ago.

Last night, the President talked about buying American products. Yet it seems like oil and natural gas—very major components of our economy—were excluded from his rhetoric. When it comes to oil, the United States imports nearly 700,000 barrels of oil a day from Russia. That is why I introduced legislation yesterday with Senator MARSHALL that would ban purchases of Russian oil.

I am also backing a new bill by Senator RUBIO to make American oil companies sever ties with Russian state-owned oil and gas companies as many of these companies already have done.

I support harsh sanctions that hit Putin where it really hurts him. In turn, you will affect the entirety of the Russian people, who are innocent of this dictator's running of their country, all the harm he is causing them right now. But we ought to free the world from a Russian energy blackmail and keep gas affordable here at home with American-produced energy.

Some of my colleagues are looking to lower prices at the gas pump by pushing for a gas tax freeze. That would be a very short-term, unsustainable move that would blow a hole in the highway trust fund.

Instead, I hope colleagues on both sides of the aisle can work with the President to reverse decisions that have increased the price of domestic fuel production.

You remember, on the first day in office, President Biden decided to shut down the Keystone Pipeline. President Biden should restart and expedite that pipeline.

Also, in January 2021, President Biden issued an Executive order pausing new oil and gas leases on public lands and Federal waters.

In July 2021, the Interior Department halted all oil drilling on leased land within the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Now, take all these actions. They signal to capital investors that the heavy hand of the Federal Government will work against fossil fuel investments at every turn. You know, you read about bank regulators all the time, discouraging banks from making loans to energy fossil fuels. This hostile regulatory environment has crippled investment in fossil fuels, which, in turn,

is the reason we have the high price of gasoline.

Instead of more redtape, the President and Congress should work to cut regulations and Federal permitting that slow down, and has slowed down, domestic energy production.

We were, as you know, energy independent 12 months ago. Now, we are energy dependent. We have the President begging OPEC and Russia to ship us more oil.

Policies that encourage investments in fossil fuel production will increase domestic production, and the result would be lower gas prices, just like we can look back at the last 12 months, and all the action that has been taken has driven up the price of gasoline.

But instead of focusing on domestic energy independence last fall, as I have already referred to, President Biden instead asked OPEC to pump more oil. The OPEC cartel, of course, did not honor that request.

In 2000, when he was a Senator, now-President Biden acknowledged that anticompetitive behavior from OPEC harms American consumers and called on President Clinton to consider legal action against OPEC. OPEC is an organization which blatantly colludes to raise the price of oil.

I have introduced the bipartisan bill entitled No Oil Producing and Exporting Cartels—it goes by the acronym NOPEC—which would allow the Department of Justice to hold OPEC accountable for its anticompetitive behaviors that artificially inflate global oil prices. I ask again for President Biden to publicly support the passage of NOPEC and work with Congress to pass this legislation into law.

Besides focusing on fossil fuels, we know that ethanol makes up 10 percent of the gas sold in the United States. When oil prices are high, it gives higher blends of ethanol a clear competitive advantage.

Historically, gas prices gradually rise in the spring and peak late summer when people are driving more frequently. But last fall, the Supreme Court rejected EPA's regulation allowing year-round E15 sales. Congress must move quickly to ensure that E15 can be sold this summer. E15 is a cleaner, higher-octane type of gasoline that contains more homegrown ethanol and less petroleum.

Both biodiesel and ethanol are proven domestic supplies of fuel that enhance our energy independence and, at the same time, lower greenhouse gas emissions.

Domestic biofuel producers are ready to step up and to give consumers lower gas prices that increase our national security and provide jobs in the heartland—good-paying jobs.

Most Americans do not care where the oil was produced when they fill up their gas tanks. They just want to fill up their gas tanks without taking out a loan to do it. But when conflict occurs in oil-producing regions around the world, Americans quickly realize the importance of your gas being a mix of West Texas crude and Iowa ethanol.

In just over a year, we can see how the United States is losing energy independence. Instead of focusing on domestic fuel production, the President and his administration have caved to the most radical environmentalists in shaping our energy policy. It is time to reverse course.

I am taking the President at his word when he said in the State of the Union Address last night that he wants to use every tool at his disposal to limit gas price hikes. So I have just given several ways that we can use every tool that the President is talking about. And, of course, it is time to get to work.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, first, I want to thank my colleague who just spoke about some really important issues.

Senator GRASSLEY from Iowa talked about the fentanyl crisis that is facing our country. Unfortunately, this synthetic opioid is now killing more and more Americans. We are back to record levels of overdose deaths, and probably two-thirds of them are caused by fentanyl.

He is absolutely right. We need to be sure it is scheduled clearly as an illegal drug, as well as all the variants of it.

STRENGTHENING AMERICAN CYBERSECURITY ACT OF 2022

Mr. President, I am coming on the floor today to talk about another issue that is really important to our country, and that is protecting us from cyber attacks.

Last night, I commend this body because the U.S. Senate passed legislation called the Strengthening American Cybersecurity Act of 2022.

What does that mean? It means that we took the time to do our homework, had hearings, and reported out legislation that helps protect our government data, including personal data of American citizens, but also our national security data and other sensitive information from cyber attacks.

Also, we put in place provisions to help protect the private sector, particularly critical infrastructure.

With what is going on right now around the world, particularly with regard to Russia and Ukraine, it is incredibly important that we put up better defenses here in this country, as well as helping Ukraine and other countries to fight against these cyber attacks.

In recent years, we have seen this time and time again. I am sure you remember the Colonial Pipeline. Remember, they shut down gasoline distribution to the eastern part of the United States. These were cyber attacks.

You probably heard of some of these other cyber attacks, like SolarWinds or ones where these criminal gangs demand a ransom using so-called ransomware. This is happening increasingly.

Again, my concern is, particularly with what is going on today in our volatile and dangerous world, that it will continue to happen and even become much more dangerous for us.

The House of Representatives now has a chance to take up this legislation and pass it. They have been working with us on this all along on a bicameral basis, the House and the Senate, Republican and Democrat. This hasn't been a partisan issue. It has been one of these issues where we have worked together.

Senator PETERS, who is the chair of the Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee—I am the ranking Republican, top Republican—we have worked together on this, but so did a lot of other members across the aisle.

Senator RUBIO and Senator WARNER, Senator COLLINS, and others, they vitally represent the Intelligence Committee, which also has a strong interest in this.

In my role as the ranking member on Homeland Security, we spend a lot of time focused on the oversight of this issue, how to respond to things like SolarWinds we talked about or Colonial Pipeline or other cyber attacks. What we have found is that these cyber attacks are increasingly sophisticated and that our own government doesn't have the tools they need, and that is why this legislation is so important.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine is an atrocity. It must not stand. But one of the things they have done in Ukraine for the last 8 years—and, really, before that as well, but particularly the last 8 years, since 2014 when Ukraine decided to turn to the West, to turn to us—is Russia had done these cyber attacks relentlessly in Ukraine. And they are stepping them up right now, along with the horrible scenes we see of the bombings of innocent civilians in their apartment buildings. I saw today that not only have hospitals and childcare institutions been bombed but also the Holocaust memorial in Kyiv has been damaged. So what the Russians are doing is appalling, and the entire freedom-loving world needs to stand up to it, and we need to help Ukraine more.

But one thing they have also done is they have launched these cyber attacks against the Ukrainian Government and against the private sector infrastructure in Ukraine. That, too, is a place where we can help.

But, again, we need to be sure that we have our own house in order here to be able to be more helpful, to be able to provide the best practices, and to help Ukraine be able to deal with these attacks, both kinetic attacks, these military attacks, and also the cyber attacks.

Many times, the cyber attacks are also mixed with disinformation attacks because the Russians are flooding the zone and trying to take their disinformation and their lies and spread it around to the Ukrainian people. By the way, not many people are

believing it anymore because it is so outrageous.

In China, we see another sophisticated cyber adversary ramping up their rhetoric and their incursion into Taiwan's air defense zone. All these threats make enacting this legislation we passed last night all the more important.

Legislation has three complementary bills combined into one. First, it will protect our critical infrastructure better from cyber attacks by increasing our visibility as a country into these cyber attacks and building the government's ability to warn potential victims and mount a nationwide defense and provide best practices to our critical infrastructure.

It will strengthen the government's own response and recovery capabilities, protecting sensitive data as well. And, finally, it will make government acquisition and use of cloud services more secure, more accountable, more efficient, and, significantly, keep countries like China and Russia from being able to access the cloud.

All of these bills were passed out of the Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee with strong bipartisan support. And, again, it passed the Senate overwhelmingly last night.

The first of these bills that I mentioned is called the Cyber Incident Reporting for Critical Infrastructure Act. Cyber attacks against U.S. critical infrastructure, whether by foreign governments, like Russia and China, or criminal organizations, are, of course, a serious national security threat.

Today, no one U.S. Government agency has visibility into all the cyber attacks occurring against critical infrastructure on a daily basis. We need that. We need to know what is going on to be able to warn other infrastructure and to be able to respond quickly.

Right now, if Russia initiates a cyber campaign against U.S. critical infrastructure, there would be nothing to ensure that the U.S. Government is notified of that so it can mount a nationwide response and, again, warn other critical infrastructure operators similarly situated.

This bill would change that, enabling a coordinated, informed U.S. response to cyber attacks against the United States.

The Cyber Incident Reporting Act will require critical infrastructure owners and operators to report substantial cyber attacks within 72 hours and ransomware payments within 24 hours to what is called the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency. It is called CISA.

CISA has done an effective job in the Trump administration, now in the Biden administration, but they need these tools to be able to do a better job.

CISA having this information will be able to use the data to immediately contact the FBI and other appropriate law enforcement but also to help with best practices to mitigate the damage and to warn other critical infrastructures of threats, help these victims recover, analyze trends, and enable a whole-of-the-nation defense and response to these attacks.

It is a cyber attack. It is not soldiers with guns, but it can have some of the same horrible impacts and damage to our economy and to individuals. Again, think of the oil pipeline, Colonial Pipeline, being basically shut off to the whole East Coast of the United States.

The second bill that is part of this package is called the Federal Information Cyber Security Modernization Act, or FISMA.

FISMA is the acronym for the way in which we protect our Federal Agencies. And, unfortunately, we know that Federal Agencies—government Agencies—have failed to protect Americans' data—our data, personal data.

Last August, I released a report with Chairman PETERS detailing the significant cyber security vulnerabilities of eight different key Federal Agencies—Homeland Security, State, Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, Health and Human Services, Agriculture, Education, and the Social Security Administration—the Social Security Administration where a lot of our sensitive information is kept.

This report that we issued followed a report just a few years ago, in 2019, that I issued with Senator CARPER when I was chair of the Permanent Committee on Investigations, and we investigated all eight of these Agencies to determine how they were doing in terms of pushing back against cyber attacks.

In last year's report, only the Department of Homeland Security had an effective cyber security program. No other Agency we reviewed met the standard. And we found that, governmentwide, the average cyber security grade in pushing back against these cyber attacks was a C-minus—not the grade I would have wanted to take home to my parents. But that is the truth. We are just not prepared.

The report identifies several common Agency vulnerabilities, including the failure to protect personally identifiable information. Again, think about some of these Agencies, HHS or Social Security. That is a big issue; second, maintain an accurate list of the Agencies' IT equipment so they know what they have; third, install security patches quickly; and, fourth, replace vulnerable and insecure legacy technology. A lot of these Agencies have technology that needs to be updated that is stovepiped—in other words, isn't working well together and that makes it difficult to push back against these cyber attacks.

In the 7 years since FISMA was last updated, Federal Agencies have had these same vulnerabilities year after year, putting America's data at risk. So this legislation takes the important steps to remedy these systemic problems we identified. It incorporates recommendations from my bipartisan reports with Senator PETERS and Senator CARPER and will adopt a risk-based approach to cyber security budgeting; position the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency—CISA, we talked about earlier—as the lead Agency in securing these Federal networks. There needs to be accountability, and that is missing now.

We need to require Agencies to notify Americans whose personal identifiable information is compromised during a breach. To me, this is just a basic requirement for government. If you have personal information that has been breached because the government system has not been properly protected, you ought to be told about that so you can take your own steps to protect yourself.

Complement the Cyber Reporting for Critical Infrastructure Act by ensuring that Federal Agencies and contractors also notify CISA when they suffer a breach. We talked about that earlier. But having that information is very helpful.

And, finally, update the requirements for congressional notification when an Agency suffers a major cyber incident.

We have an oversight responsibility here. We need to know if there has been a major cyber attack.

Finally, this legislation includes a third part, which is called the FedRAMP Authorization Act. This is the one that will authorize the Federal Risk and Authorization Management Program that deals with cloud computing and protecting the cloud. FedRAMP is a governmentwide program administered by the General Services Administration that provides Agencies and cloud service providers with a standard approach to evaluating, authorizing, and monitoring the security of cloud services. So when a Federal Government Agency wants to use the cloud services, they have to go through this process.

In the first 4 years of FedRAMP, the program authorized only 20 cloud service providers. Today, there are more than 230 cloud service providers—30 percent of which are small businesses. This act builds on the successes of FedRAMP and Agencies' continued push to adopt commercial cloud solutions by addressing existing costs and processing times.

But it also includes measures to strengthen the government's response to foreign interference in our cloud systems. Supply chain security experts have warned us about the weaknesses in FedRAMP that leave our cloud systems vulnerable to interference from countries like Russia and China, North Korea, Iran.

The reforms in this bill will allow for increased transparency and better monitoring of possible foreign influences in FedRAMP-approved systems. For example, it requires an Agency to review, on an interagency basis, government standards to identify and assess the origin of software and code to

provide the transparency and accountability needed into the FedRAMP-approved systems that are developed and maintained by foreign engineers in countries like Russia and China.

This bill also requires private-sector, third-party assessment organizations to disclose to GSA any information they have related to any foreign interests, any foreign influences, any foreign control, of course, or ownership, and to report a change in foreign ownership or control to GSA within 48 hours.

We have had instances like this where we are using cloud-based services that then become bought by a foreign entity and that is not reported and therefore they continue to provide these services, which is something we need to stop.

I commend the hard work of so many of my colleagues in crafting this broader legislation, including Chairman PETERS, Chairman WARNER, Ranking Member RUBIO, Senator COLLINS of the Intelligence Committee, as well as so many other colleagues on the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee and the Intel Committee.

I also want to thank our colleagues in the House, particularly Representatives CLARKE and KATKO, because this has been a truly bicameral exercise, both in terms of the oversight and identifying what the problems are and coming up with appropriate legislation.

And by the way, this legislation is strongly supported by those in the administration who are responsible for dealing with cyber attacks. They need these tools, and they want these tools.

We are not done yet because it has just passed the Senate. It has not passed the House. But we need to move quickly to enact these important changes to modernize our cyber security posture.

I urge the House to act quickly, to be sure we can protect ourselves from cyber attacks, particularly in this increasingly dangerous environment. I would hope that we could send this critically important legislation to the President's desk for signature very soon and be sure we are doing all we know to do to be able to better protect our country and our citizens in cyber attacks.

H.R. 3076

Mr. President, we are also on the floor today talking about the postal reform legislation. I know we are going back and forth trying to determine how many amendments will be offered and which amendments are germane or relevant to the legislation or not. But let me just say that we already had a strong vote to move to this legislation. We had a vote of over 70 Members, which is rare around here—a strong bipartisan vote saying let's move forward with this postal reform. And it is really important we do it because the post office is in deep trouble. And if we don't act, it is going to get a lot worse. We are going to have big problems.

In looking at this issue, again, in my oversight responsibilities on the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, it looks like, in the next few years, the post office would probably go insolvent. And none of us wants that. When that happens, there would probably be a big government bailout.

So this legislation, along with internal reforms that the post office is making themselves—and I commend them for that—is intended to avoid that problem. It is intended to ensure that we can get this under control before there is an insolvency.

Right now, the post office is projecting a 10-year loss of $160 billion if we just continue with the status quo. The reality is, the post office is in a tough business situation. Think about it. How many first-class letters have you sent recently? And how many did you send 5 years ago or 10 years ago? Probably more. Increasingly, we are relying on sending things by email and not sending them by first-class mail. That changes the post office's business model.

They are also delivering to more and more addresses because everybody wants to be connected to the post office to receive packages, to receive other kinds of mail—advertising, newspapers, bills. People who are reliant on getting their prescriptions through the mail are very eager to see the post office be strong and, of course, be a post office that addresses their universal service requirement—in other words, goes to every single mailbox around America.

So the math doesn't work very well when you have more and more addresses and not as much first-class mail to be sent out. That is one reason that the post office is in trouble. And we need to address that new reality.

The current Postmaster General, by the way, whose name is Louis DeJoy, came and talked to some of us yesterday about this and talked about an ambitious plan that he has embarked on along with the support of the postal Board of Governors and the support of the previous administration and this administration to ensure that we can transform the post office by finding efficiencies, including transforming existing capabilities to make sure they more efficiently meet the needs of the American people.

He has a 10-year plan that makes changes to make the post office more efficient, but it also continues to have this universal service obligation where everybody is going to be getting their mail. In fact, under our legislation, there is also a 6-day-per-week mail delivery requirement. So it is not just that everybody's post office box or mailbox or door is being serviced by the post office but that it is done 6 days a week.

But he needs help to do that. In particular, he has made it very clear to us that he needs the financial space to be able to put these reforms in place to be able to take away some of the huge liabilities that they currently face at the post office. That is what we do in this legislation.

First, we eliminate a burdensome prefunding requirement for retiree health benefits. This has really been a problem for the post office. It has made their lives much more difficult. We mandated this in Congress back in 2006 for current employees. This has crippled the post office financially.

You should know, by the way, prefunding of healthcare retiree benefits is something the Federal Government does not do. So other Agencies and Departments don't have to do that. It is also not something the private sector does. So it is something that the post office uniquely has had to deal with, and, again, it has been a financial burden for them that has really made their financial statements extremely difficult.

Second, we require post office employees who are retiring, who have been paying into Medicare their entire career, by the way, to join up with Part B and Part D of Medicare—in other words, to go into Medicare, and instead of having the Federal employee health benefit plan be their plan, to have that be the backup and have Medicare be their primary payer.

Everybody is in Part A, by the way, already—Medicare Part A. But some Postal Service employees are not enrolled in Parts B and D.

Now, about 75 percent are enrolled in entire Medicare but, again, about 25 percent are not. So that saves money for the post office because Medicare is not as generous a program, frankly, as Federal employee health benefit plans or the new Postal Service Federal health benefit plan.

Third, we require the Postal Service to maintain its current standard of this 6-day-a-week delivery we talked about through an integrated delivery system of mail and packages. That simply says that the status quo ought to continue so that you are delivering packages and letters at the same time, not separately. That would be incredibly inefficient, to say, OK, you are going to have a separate system for packages and a separate system for letters.

In addition to doing all these things, the Congressional Budget Office estimates that the bill is going to save money. It is going to save $1.5 billion a year to the American taxpayer.

I would also like to note what the bill does not do because there has been some information out there, including one editorial I saw recently. One, it doesn't appropriate any new funds to the U.S. Post Office.

Two, it does not change the accounting or cost structure for packages and letters. So it does not disadvantage private-sector carriers. It is the status quo. And that is very important to me.

Third, it does not impact the solvency of the Medicare hospital trust fund. That is the Part A trust that is

going broke in a short number of years. And that is the big focus of a lot of us: make sure that doesn't happen. It does not affect Part A trust fund at all.

It also does not increase the Medicare Part B or Part D premiums. And that is important, I think, to a lot of us.

And, finally, it does not allow the post office to enter into new commercial services like postal banking, which I believe would be a big mistake.

The legislation received strong bipartisan support when it was taken up in the House of Representatives a couple of weeks ago. It passed by a vote of 342 to 92. Not much gets passed in terms of major legislation along those lines. And I am proud of the people who worked hard on this on both sides of the aisle and both sides of the Capitol to come up with a bipartisan bill. It is not the bill any one of us would have written, but it is the right bill to save the post office.

I think Republicans and Democrats alike in the House looked at this and said: We have to do something here. We do not want the post office to go belly-up.

Some say that this is a whole lot better than the alternative. I agree with that. I think that is one of the reasons we need to pass this. It does get the Postal Service back on track; again, with reforms being undertaken internally at the post office itself—that combination of what we are doing here to provide them some financial space to be able to make the reforms and the reforms that they are doing.

I encourage my colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation. Let's put the Postal Service in a position to succeed, to continue to provide these essential services. Small businesses and our veterans with regard to their healthcare, prescriptions being delivered, and our rural constituents absolutely need the post office to be there to service them. They rely on this. That is why so many, again, of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle strongly support this legislation.

I want to thank my colleague Senator PETERS for working with us over time to find consensus on this bill. Let's pass it and ensure that the Postal Service—the post office—remains viable for years and years ahead. Nothing is more important to my rural constituents, who talked to me about this quite a bit, than ensuring that the post office stays healthy. It is really important to, again, some of the veterans I represent who get their needed medication through the mail.

It is important to our voting system in this country because a lot of voting is by mail, including in Ohio, where for many years we had absentee voting that is no-fault absentee. We rely on our post office to ensure our ballots get delivered on time.

This is an opportunity on a bipartisan basis to ensure the post office remains strong. I hope we take advantage of it and pass this legislation and have appropriate amendments in the meantime and get this done in short order.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. ROSEN). The Senator from Indiana.

S.J. RES. 32

Mr. BRAUN. I am here today to talk about vaccine mandates. Of course, I led the effort on the vaccine mandate that was preposterous when our administration said ''Either take a vaccine or lose your job,'' impacting down to 100 employees.

Thank goodness the Supreme Court weighed in, citing that Congressional Review Act as one of the reasons it did it, taking that cue from here in Congress. But there still are mandates remaining, and it has to do with the Biden administration's pandemic policies that have just gone too far, and millions of workers are dealing with the consequences.

You cannot make these arbitrary decisions, especially when it was clear we were coming to some type of resolution, some type of different dynamic with the COVID saga, and then drop these kinds of mandates upon any entity at the worst possible time.

In this case, we are talking about the CMS vaccine mandate on healthcare workers—10 million of them affected. The very same frontline workers who have been heroes and served their fellow Americans during the pandemic were given a choice: your careers or a vaccine.

With all of the logic that went into the Supreme Court's ruling on employers with employees down to 100, it should apply to healthcare entities as well.

It is no surprise that you see healthcare workers leaving at the highest rate—leaving their profession—in over 20 years. It is worse in rural areas, like the State of Indiana, and that compounds other problems that rural places are contending with.

It also fails to acknowledge evidence-based science that clearly tells us stuff now that we didn't know before, like natural infection has a much better defense against COVID and it has more durability.

Common sense doesn't make any difference, and now we have got this. He has robbed these healthcare workers of the freedom to make their own choices and added to the challenges patients have had to access the healthcare system. Today, the Senate can overturn this mandate—another example of government in overdrive, getting into individual decisions it was never intended to.

I urge my colleagues to correct this later today, and let's base this on science, not political science, which seems to drive so many of the decisions here.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MARSHALL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to use a stethoscope as a prop during my remarks.

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

Mr. MARSHALL. Madam President, last year, I put my sport coats and ties away and broke out some scrubs, found my stethoscope and a lab coat, and went to work fighting COVID on the frontlines of hospitals and community centers in Wyandotte County, KS, and Seward County, KS.

This is a picture of some of the heroes I worked with. I think what is important to note is this is a time when none of us knew how bad this virus was. It reminded me, as a medical student, working on HIV patients. Myself geared up from head to toe with patient protective equipment, personal protective equipment, nurses, respiratory therapists, radiology techs—all of us not knowing how bad this virus was and how easily it could spread.

Today, these heroes are being punished. These heroes came to work every day covered from head to toe in personal protective equipment, with each one knowing that they could contract COVID–19 from any one of their patients at any given time.

This particular setting, an ICU—an ICU with 8 beds and 13 patients.

Despite the risk to them, to their families—think about that. Think about having children at home or a spouse, that you were not only risking your own life but the fear of taking this virus home with you. But they threw themselves into the fire, so to speak, all in the effort to save Kansans from a pandemic that was raging across our communities.

In the earliest months of this pandemic and still to this day, our healthcare heroes have displayed sacrifice and dedication to the American people. It is a reminder to all of us how essential these people are in ensuring the safety of our communities.

They weren't left unscathed. Between burnout and suicide, the pandemic took a heavy toll on their physical and mental health—doctors, nurses, all the supporting staffs in these hospitals, in the nursing homes, in the emergency rooms.

The resulting exodus of fatigued and demoralized doctors and nurses and other frontline workers is exacerbating a labor shortage which already existed across rural Kansas and across rural America long, long before the pandemic occurred.

Since February of 2020, roughly one in five healthcare workers has quit their job—one in five—according to a poll published late last year. In September, the American Nurses Association sent a letter to HHS Secretary Becerra urging the Agency to declare the nursing shortage a national crisis and to take immediate action to confront the issue.

I can tell you, I don't talk to any doctor back home, any hospital administrator, who is not going to grab me and say: We have got a huge nursing shortage. You have to do something about it.

The nursing homes, the rehab centers are all suffering huge, huge nursing shortages. The nursing colleges are now having a huge shortage of teachers. Nearly a third of the country's 15,000 nursing homes reported a shortage of nurses or aides. Hospitals have been forced to recruit foreign nurses, and National Guardsmen have had to fill in as nursing assistants to ease these problems. These shortages are particularly impactful in rural areas like my home State of Kansas.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services acknowledges there are currently ''endemic staff shortages for all categories of employees at almost all kinds of healthcare providers and suppliers.'' Despite this acknowledgement, President Biden and his public health officials went forward with this vaccine mandate, knowing it could and would lead to more firings—firings like those we saw in New York, where 33,000 healthcare workers were fired—33,000. They were fired, retired, or placed on unpaid leave because they chose not to abide by the State's mandatory inoculation policy.

Labor shortages at healthcare facilities will impede access for the elderly and the poor—those who are supposed to be cared for under Medicare and Medicaid.

In addition to the impact this would have on the healthcare workforce, this mandate puts additional burdens on hospitals and State surveyors. The rule requires covered entities to comply with redtape by requiring them to develop and implement policies to ensure compliance with the mandate, meanwhile taking nurses away from that contact with the patients who need the attention.

CMS estimated that the cost of this mandate on private-sector entities would exceed $158 million. Follow-on guidance issued by CMS recently also required State surveyors to enforce the Federal Government's vaccine mandate by verifying compliance at healthcare facilities. This will take away, again, limited resources at the State level and prevent them from fulfilling their traditional surveying and certification duties, not to mention multiple States have laws on their books prohibiting vaccination as a condition of employment for State agencies.

As a physician, I am confident that the vaccine has saved lives, and I am so grateful for the vaccines. However, whether to receive it or not is a personal choice between individuals and their doctor, not mandated via unconstitutional Executive actions. I still believe in the sanctity of the patient-physician relationship.

Make no mistake, this Federal vaccine mandate is not about public health or science and fails to account for changes in data and the circumstances of the virus. If it were, we would recognize natural immunity as a highly effective way to combat the virus. Mountains of evidence show that those who achieved immunity through natural infection—many of them being on our frontline, those healthcare heroes from yesterday—are highly protected against reinfection.

The mandate was also crafted when the Delta variant was the dominant strain in the United States. Omicron is now the dominant strain. It is much milder and has a 91-percent lower risk of death than Delta.

Additionally, research shows the traditional COVID vaccine dosing regimen provides little protection against transmission of the Omicron variant, basically said that natural immunity is at least as good if not better than vaccination from the original vaccines.

As noted by Dr. Fauci, ''Omicron, with its extraordinary, unprecedented degree of . . . transmissibility, will ultimately find just about everybody,'' and even those who have received the initial vaccine and subsequent booster ''will still get infected.'' And we saw that play out, right? We all saw that play out. Many, many people who had gotten the vaccine ended up with the Omicron virus, and certainly we also found out that natural immunity was much better than the original vaccines against Omicron.

Most absurdly, in late January, the CDC issued guidance that allows COVID-positive healthcare workers to return to work. Let me say that again. The hypocrisy. The CDC issued guidance that allows COVID-positive healthcare workers to return to work even if they are still testing positive. How many people in America would want a COVID-positive respiratory therapist intubating their loved one in an ICU?

These examples just show how flawed the science is behind the CMS vaccine mandate. As previously stated, that is because this vaccine mandate is not about public health or science. The Biden administration's mandate is about fulfilling their desire to control every aspect of our lives, and it is a slap in the face to the hard-working men and women who never took a day off in the frontline fight of the COVID–19 battle.

These are real people with real families. They are working to feed their families, and they have mortgages to pay. And these are smart people. These are well-educated people—people who thoughtfully considered the vaccine and then decided it was not best for them. These were my medical school classmates, successful physicians working at medical centers, experts in their fields who had looked at the data and had deeply either religious reasons or scientific reasons for not taking the vaccine.

Each day, we hear from Kansans faced with the difficult decision of taking the jab or losing their job. We even surveyed dozens of healthcare providers across the State who are already citing shortages and other staffing issues due to the mandate. In fact, 87 percent of the surveyed oppose the mandate or cited numerous concerns with it.

These jobs can't be replaced overnight, and with the March 15 deadline for nearly all healthcare workers who haven't received two doses looming, what we are about to witness is a government-induced labor shortage and, in turn, a health crisis we can't afford. That health crisis will affect every American, whether you are waiting for your elective hip to be replaced or you are waiting to get your loved one moved from a hospital setting into some type of a nursing home or assisted living facility. You all, every one of us, will be impacted.

One respondent put it best when he told us this:

> [W]e are concerned that the execution [of the mandate] will exacerbate an already dire workforce crisis in long term care. A hard deadline with no resources for providers or glide path for unvaccinated workers is likely to push too many out the door and ultimately, threaten residents' access to long term care.

Now, I know some here will say that the Supreme Court ruled to uphold this mandate earlier this year and this is settled, but that is not the full story here. The Supreme Court opinion which lifted the stay on the rule focused primarily on the Secretary of HHS's statutory authority to impose conditions upon healthcare facilities participating in Medicare and Medicaid. This does not mean it is a good rule or it is a beneficial condition to have placed on those facilities given everything I have laid out here today. In fact, it is a hardship to those facilities, and it is a hardship for the families of the loved ones who are in those facilities.

This fight against a harmful rule continues here on the Senate floor, and I am going to keep fighting along with all those throughout this Nation's Federal judicial system.

Quick update. Sixteen States have joined together in a new filing last month to once again block the Federal Government from enforcing the mandate in their respective States. Sixteen States think the CMS has got this wrong. They think the White House has got this wrong. Additionally, the attorney general in my home State of Kansas, Derek Schmidt, is leading the fight. He, along with nine other attorneys general, has asked a separate Federal court to reopen litigation.

No, we are not even close to stopping this fight.

It has been an incredibly tough time these past couple of years. We have lost over 950,000 Americans to COVID–19. We have seen mental health issues skyrocket, suicides on the rise, and substance abuse increase.

But if there is one thing that is for sure, though, it is that Americans will keep fighting to get through this. Frontline workers in hospitals, doctors' offices, community health centers, and beyond will fight even harder; that is if we remove the burden of the vaccine mandate and our healthcare heroes aren't forced to leave their jobs.

Just this week, England terminated their COVID vaccination requirement for all health and social services. We must do the same. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution of disapproval to invalidate President Biden's overreaching and harmful vaccine mandate for our healthcare workers. This is a major element of the government's overreaching COVID–19 response that must begin to be scaled back. Not only is it coercive and unconstitutional, the mandate does not take into account the fact that natural immunity is as effective as the vaccines and that vaccines do not prevent transmission of the Omicron variant. Additionally, we all know—we all see it—we have a massive labor shortage in our healthcare industry and must do everything in our power to fight for Americans who ran to the sound of the battle, for these are the true heroes of the pandemic and deserve our best fight and utmost respect.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Madam President, as you saw at the State of the Union Address last night, a number of pandemic restrictions in Congress have seemingly ended, thanks to the CDC's convenient decision to update its guidance on mask wearing and social distancing earlier this week.

Some Democratic politicians in the room were cheering, chanting, embracing, and crowding. Though many of them continue to publicly condemn those who have chosen not to wear masks or socially distance, they were maskless and were not distanced themselves. So why the immediate change? Well, perhaps it is because they simply could not waste the political opportunity for partisan theater with which they could raise the curtain on their Big Government aspirational new normal.

Sure, President Biden can attempt to hide behind CDC guidance, the very same CDC guidance that crafted a complex system to provisionally grant Americans permission to live as free citizens, but he fell into a perpetual pitfall of the left. He forgot that Americans are a lot smarter, perhaps, than he thinks they are.

Americans can see through the transparent political theater and the constructive convenient timing. They see the hypocrisy. They know that the only science that has changed is the political science. They saw the powerful elite gather to praise their own playacted benevolence, foresight, and leadership, all while countless Americans who are suffering from the real failures of President Biden and his party are losing their jobs because of draconian Federal vaccine mandates.

What a sorry state of affairs and what a sad set of conditions.

Americans see and feel the hypocrisy. The people of Utah and the United States do not want the false freedom pushed by a political class that refuses to relinquish control over citizens' lives. They want real freedom, the kind promised by the Declaration of Independence and protected by the Constitution. They want to be able to live their lives, raise their families, and make their own medical decisions without a ''Mother, may I'' from President Biden or the vast throngs of nameless, faceless, unelected, unaccountable Federal bureaucrats.

They want to be able to provide for their families without the threat of being fired if they don't submit to a medical procedure that they don't want.

I am honored to join my friend and colleague, Senator MARSHALL, in standing for American workers. Today, we stand for the millions of healthcare workers that were some of the heroes of this pandemic. They came to work and cared for the sick before vaccines were even available. They should not be forced to submit to a procedure or risk their livelihoods.

This isn't our first effort to end these Federal mandates. I have tried dozens of bills dozens of times to end this draconian overreach. I am proud to continue this fight.

We will not stop until freedom is restored. We will not stop until American moms and dads can provide for their families without kowtowing to President Biden's vaccine mandates and without submitting to Presidential medical orthodoxy in this or any future administration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak for up to 15 minutes, followed by Senator MARSHALL for up to 1 minute, prior to the scheduled rollcall vote.

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

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, as my colleague from Utah just noted a minute ago, he has been asking for votes on this matter repeatedly. And today, he and others seek to invalidate a regulation issued by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services that require most healthcare providers to be vaccinated.

And suffice it to say, this is something that the Supreme Court has ruled on. The Supreme Court has actually taken this up and agrees with our position that, in effect, this is an area where there is a strong public interest. And I believe what my colleague is proposing is just far outside the mainstream of opinion regarding vaccinations in America. There simply is a point where an anti-mandate agenda becomes a dangerous anti-vaccine agenda, and my colleagues on the other side, in my view, have crossed that line quite some time ago.

So I am just going to take a few minutes to describe why I think this is such an extreme position outside what the vast majority of Americans agree and in contrast to what the Supreme Court has said.

Americans support a vaccine provision or requirement for healthcare workers by a 20- or 30-point margin—no surprise about that. Everybody is concerned about sitting in a room with a doctor or nurse who may be contagious and who has been unvaccinated. I want to particularly emphasize the people affected here who are the most vulnerable based on what we have seen during the pandemic. We are talking about those with chronic illness and seniors.

Three-quarters of the Americans who died of COVID–19 were seniors, and 200,000 of those COVID deaths were Americans living or working in long-term care facilities like nursing homes. Many others were in and out of hospitals and doctors' offices routinely.

Making sure that healthcare workers are vaccinated, colleagues, I don't think is about any partisan position. It is about a commonsense policy designed to keep seniors—people I have worked with for 7 years; before I came to the Congress, I was director of the Gray Panthers—I think we all believe we want vulnerable people to be safe. So I am going to start by quoting a ruling by the Roberts Court—hardly, at this point, colleagues, some kind of radical left judiciary. Recently, they allowed the vaccine requirement for healthcare workers to go forward, and I am just going to quote:

> Ensuring that providers take steps to avoid transmitting a dangerous virus to their patients is consistent with the fundamental principle of the medical profession: First, do no harm. It would be the very opposite of efficient and effective administration for a facility that is supposed to make people well to make them sick with COVID–19.

This vaccine provision or requirement is about keeping our healthcare workforce safe. Doctors and nurses in our country are overwhelmed. That is what they just told me as I went about my State, going to hospitals and vaccination sites and other healthcare programs.

These providers have been working nonstop for years under extraordinary stress, and what they are all about is honoring that Hippocratic Oath and trying to save lives. At times in this pandemic, our hospitals have been jampacked with COVID patients. If lots of doctors and nurses are out sick during a big COVID wave, that has got an impact on the standard of care for everybody. It drops for COVID patients, for stroke patients, for people hurt in car accidents. Our country desperately needs to protect our healthcare workforce.

Now, right at the heart of my colleagues' case—and as my friend from Utah said, we have had a number of debates about this subject—my colleagues say every person is unique, and there needs to be flexibility when it comes to vaccines. Colleagues, I am just fine with that. The fact is, the administration is allowing for medical and religious exemptions. Flexibility is written into the rule because that is just plain old common sense.

Vaccine requirements aren't anything new for healthcare workers. Flu shot requirements have been common for a long time. When you go into healthcare, it is understood that a vaccine requirement can be part of the job.

Furthermore, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has already pushed back the deadline for healthcare workers in several States to have their first vaccine dose. Originally, the deadline was in December. Now, it is February. The idea that this is somehow an inflexible and unreasonable mandate coming from nowhere is just plain wrong.

I would just close by way of saying it is time for us to move past these battles that I think regrettably continue to make this pandemic—which strikes me as having nothing to do with politics—such political hutzpah.

It is good news that the Omicron wave is receding. With any luck, that will be the last major COVID wave that threatens to overwhelm our healthcare system. We all want our lives to get back to normal, and the way to do that is with smart public health policies—and smart public health policies, we know, consistently get broad support from the American people. That is what the vaccine provision requirement for healthcare workers is all about. That is why the Supreme Court upheld it.

I would urge that we oppose this joint resolution and do everything we can to make sure that healthcare workers are going to be vaccinated. And as I said to my constituents when I was home this weekend, what I wanted to make sure was that everybody who could, get vaccinated as quickly as possible.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MARSHALL. Madam President, I appreciate the comments of my colleague from the great State of Oregon, but his arguments all rely upon one assumption, and that is that the vaccine works to prevent transmission.

But the vaccines don't work to prevent transmission.

The Supreme Court's ruling was not a ruling on merit. The Medicare and Medicaid vaccine mandate will impact every family, every person across this great Nation. We already have a dire shortage of doctors, nurses, ultrasound techs, custodians, housekeepers, kitchen staff in all these hospitals and nursing homes. This mandate will result in more staffing shortages and firings.

The science behind this mandate is quite outdated. Natural immunity is stronger than immunity achieved through vaccination at this point in time.

Last night, during the State of the Union Address, President Biden said:

> Let's stop looking at the COVID–19 as a partisan dividing line.

Let's take him at his word. Let's make our actions be consistent with his words. Let's repeal this divisive mandate today.

I urge all my colleagues to support our resolution.

I yield the floor.

VOTE ON S.J. RES. 32

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time has expired.

Under the previous order, the clerk will read the joint resolution by title for the third time.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The joint resolution having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the joint resolution pass?

Mr. MARSHALL. Madam President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN), the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN), the Senator from California (Mr. PADILLA), and the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE).

The result was announced—yeas 49, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 67 Leg.]

YEAS—49

Barrasso	Graham	Risch
Blackburn	Grassley	Romney
Blunt	Hagerty	Rounds
Boozman	Hawley	Rubio
Braun	Hoeven	Sasse
Burr	Hyde-Smith	Scott (FL)
Capito	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Cassidy	Kennedy	Shelby
Collins	Lankford	Sullivan
Cornyn	Lee	Thune
Cotton	Lummis	Tillis
Cramer	Marshall	Toomey
Crapo	McConnell	Tuberville
Cruz	Moran	Wicker
Daines	Murkowski	Young
Ernst	Paul	
Fischer	Portman	

NAYS—44

Bennet	Hickenlooper	Rosen
Blumenthal	Hirono	Sanders
Booker	Kaine	Schatz
Brown	Kelly	Schumer
Cantwell	King	Shaheen
Cardin	Leahy	Sinema
Carper	Manchin	Stabenow
Casey	Markey	Tester
Coons	Menendez	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Warner
Duckworth	Murphy	Warnock
Durbin	Murray	Warren
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Whitehouse
Hassan	Peters	Wyden
Heinrich	Reed	

NOT VOTING—7

Baldwin	Klobuchar	Smith
Feinstein	Luján	
Inhofe	Padilla	

The joint resolution (S.J. Res. 32) was passed, as follows:

S.J. RES. 32

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That Congress disapproves the rule submitted by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services relating to ''Medicare and Medicaid Programs; Omnibus COVID–19 Health Care Staff Vaccination'' (86 Fed. Reg. 61555 (November 5, 2021)), and such rule shall have no force or effect.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. OSSOFF). The Senator from Arkansas.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 3731

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, the world is in chaos everywhere you turn. In the last week, Vladimir Putin has launched an unprovoked, naked war of aggression against the people of Ukraine. The reason he did this is because of his imperial ambitions to reincorporate Ukraine into the greater Russian Empire in his mind but also because he perceived weakness and opportunity in the West and, regrettably, from President Biden.

We saw last night the President congratulated himself on the diplomatic coalition he has put together to confront Vladimir Putin. That is akin to Neville Chamberlain celebrating the coalition he assembled against Germany after Germany invaded Poland. The whole point was to deter Vladimir Putin. That failed. Why did that fail? Because for the last year, the President has projected weakness and signaled to Vladimir Putin that he didn't have the nerve to counteract his ambitions. His first action in office was to give Vladimir Putin his No. 1 foreign priority—a no-strings-attached extension of a one-sided nuclear arms control treaty. Shortly after that, he gave Vladimir Putin his second foreign priority. He waived sanctions on the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline. We didn't really take stern measures for the Colonial Pipeline hack from Russian-affiliated hackers. We rewarded Vladimir Putin with a high-stakes summit last summer.

But it is not just foreign policy; it is also domestic policy here at home. As day follows night, Vladimir Putin gets emboldened and more aggressive when the price of oil is higher. For the last year, the Biden administration has done everything they can to stifle the production of American oil and gas that would not only keep the price of gasoline lower for our citizens, keep the price of heating their homes lower, it would also constrain Vladimir Putin by reducing the revenues he has for his war machine.

But the Biden administration's war on oil and gas has, in fact, emboldened him, so much so that we are to this day still importing hundreds of thousands of barrels of Russian oil and petroleum products every day.

Since Vladimir Putin launched his naked war of aggression last week, we have filled his coffers with millions and millions of American dollars to fund his aggression against the Ukrainian people. We still haven't taken the steps necessary to stop this—sanctions on Russian oil and gas to cut off those revenues, to bankrupt Vladimir Putin's war machine, but also to continue the pressure that those sanctions impose,

to begin to once again pump more oil and gas here at home.

If we really wanted to add the pressure to Vladimir Putin that oil and gas sanctions would put on him, we would unleash a flood of American oil and gas into the market and deprive Vladimir Putin of those revenues. But, instead, on the very day—literally the very day—last week when Vladimir Putin invaded Ukraine, President Biden halted all new oil and gas leases on Federal lands. Think about that. A ruthless dictator invades an innocent nation of 45 million souls, using oil and gas as a weapon against the West, which could come to the aid of that nation, and President Biden's action on that day was to halt all new oil and gas leases on Federal lands.

To the extent the President even talked about energy in his speech last night, he simply made pipedream promises about green energy that maybe will come true in a decade or two but will do nothing at the moment to deter Vladimir Putin and, in fact, will continue to embolden him by highlighting a lack of seriousness to confront and undermine his aggression.

In fact, the President only mentioned oil once last night in that entire speech when he bragged about releasing 30 million barrels of oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, which wouldn't fuel our country for even 2 days.

What we need is not half measures; we need a sustained, reliable, and affordable flow of American energy. That is why I am here to ask for unanimous consent for my bill ordering the Biden administration to start issuing new oil and gas leases for Federal lands.

It won't solve all of our problems, but it is an important and immediate step that we can take to start producing the American oil and gas that will undercut Vladimir Putin's war machine.

President Biden's foolish energy policy couldn't have come at a worse time for Ukraine, but we can begin to end it right now by putting our American oil and gas workers back to work. I urge my colleagues to stand with Ukraine and to support the bill. It is really a choice between American energy or Russian energy. We can decide.

Therefore, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 3731, which is at the desk; further, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. MARKEY. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I reserve the right to object and to explain why to my colleagues here in the Senate.

This is an unfortunate, terrible exploitation of a crisis in Russia by the oil and natural gas industry of the United States of America. They have no shame. They have no conscience. They have no sense of decency.

This industry, this unscrupulous industry led by the American Petroleum Institute—really the ''American Prevarication Institute,'' which is what we are hearing here today and what we have heard on airways with tens of millions of dollars of television ads saying we have just got to ''drill, baby, drill'' here in the United States, that that is the answer to the invasion of Ukraine by the Russians.

Well, a few facts might be helpful so that the American people can understand, once again, that all the American Petroleum Institute is about is tipping consumers upside down at the pump and shaking money out of their pockets. That is who they are.

So just a few facts here: The oil industry in the United States has bid for leases on American public lands. Right now, 53 percent of the leases that the oil industry, the natural gas industry of the United States have onshore in our country—in our forests, in our fields—they are not drilling on them.

Fifty-three percent of all the leases that they have from the American people, have they been drilling to protect us against this day? No, they have not.

What about offshore? Well, offshore, the oil industry is not using 77 percent of all of their existing leases off our shores. Right now. And what do they do? They come in here with crocodile tears, if only you would give us more leases, if only you would take more of the American people's land and give it to us, then we will drill.

Well, this is just hypocrisy on stilts. This is just, again, the American Petroleum Institute engaging in exploitative profit-making actions, and the Republican Party, sadly, is cooperating with them in this time of crisis for the short-term benefit of the American Petroleum Institute—which should hang its head in shame about this debate that we are having right now, when 77 percent of all the leases offshore they haven't drilled yet; 53 percent of all the leases onshore they haven't drilled yet.

And by the way, that area, you want to know how big it is? It is just slightly smaller than the State of Arkansas. In other words, they have got almost an Arkansas of public lands that they already own, they are already leasing from the American public, and they are not drilling on it. That would be every square inch of Arkansas. They are not drilling.

What they do is they bid low for all the leases. They keep them. They wait for the day when the price goes high. Then they start drilling. They just hoard them. And they are looking for this as another opportunity to hoard more—to hoard more.

Now, the President has responded by deploying the Strategic Petroleum Reserve in the short term. There are 600,000 barrels of oil a day that come into the United States. Thank God our Strategic Petroleum Reserve has 600 million barrels; in other words, you can deploy 600,000 barrels every day for 1,000 days out of our Strategic Petroleum Reserve to make up for the Russian oil. We can do that right now.

But one thing that we should never do is just get stampeded by this oil and gas industry greed. This industry that has blocked our movement to all-electric vehicles, blocked our movement to wind and solar, blocked our ability to blunt the need to have oil for our vehicles, natural gas for our homes because it is inconsistent with their business interests, their profit-making. They should just be ashamed of what they are doing here today—ashamed.

And the Republican Party should have no part of it. GOP should not stand for ''Gas and Oil Party.'' That is what we are hearing here today. That is what I am listening to.

And if we are going to respond, let's respond together as a nation. Let's not break this down into partisan politics, special interest politics in our country. Let's come together as a nation. Let's work to ensure that we are protecting ourselves, that we are protecting consumers.

And if the American Petroleum Institute wants to be part of this, there is nothing stopping them from bringing out 2 or 3,000 rigs this week, starting to drill on an area the size of Arkansas, waiting for them, so the oil can start pumping—not waiting to go through a whole leasing process, bidding process. They can do it right now. And you know what is going to happen? They are just going to sit there because they are making a bundle. They are tipping people upside down. They are exploiting this.

And by the way, let's not understate the partnership which American companies—some key oil companies—have with the Russians. That is real, too, right now. Let's just not forget the whole history of this. How do we get here? How do we get bad foreign policy? How do we get bad national policy? How do we get bad oil and gas policy? How do we get it? Well, ultimately, behind the curtain in almost every instance you find an oil and gas interest somewhere involved.

And we are hearing it here today. We are hearing it here today. They want to drill off the coast of Florida. They want to drill off the coast of Maine or, at a minimum, they want the leases so they will be ready someday to be able to do it. That is their goal. And meanwhile, they just sit on their hands, not drilling, not drilling on an area the size of Arkansas because they know the less they do that is the more that we can create a panic in our country, with false answers—answers that may work on FOX, but it doesn't work in reality. It just doesn't work. It is just wrong—plain wrong—to be using this as an issue right now for the benefit of the ''American Prevarication Institute.'' And behind this whole curtain of dark

money in our country looms the largest voice, which is the oil and gas industry of our country.

So we have got a chance here. We have got a chance to respond in the short run with the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, getting our allies to produce more oil, asking our own American companies to produce more oil, and then passing out here on the floor the tax breaks for all-electric vehicles.

Now, I will give you a little number. If we just deploy 15 million all-electric vehicles, we would back out all the oil from Russia, just 15 million all-electric vehicles. The next 15 million backs out all of the Saudi oil. The next 15 million backs out all of the oil from the Middle East.

You want to do something? You want to terrify them? You want to destroy their business model in Russia or the Middle East? That is what you should be doing. But, no, what we hear from the Republicans is we are not going to support any of that agenda: no money for wind, no money for solar, no money for all-electric vehicles, no money for new battery storage technologies—no, no, no, no to the long-term solution for the next generation of Americans, young people, pages here in the well who want to know what is the plan for the long term.

So that is the sad fact of what is happening here today on the floor. So, from my perspective, we don't need to be throwing good land and waters at bad actors in our society. It just is wrong. We shouldn't do it. And as a result, I object to the motion of the Senator from Arkansas.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

Mr. COTTON. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

MEDICARE

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, imagine this. You are a CEO of a company, and one day your CFO comes into your office with bad news. The company's costs are rapidly growing, and you aren't bringing in enough money to keep pace with the rising costs. The solution here is simple: come up with a plan to reduce costs and continue serving your customers and honoring your agreements while ensuring that the company can stay afloat.

If you don't adapt and evolve, you fail and go out of business. Most Americans understand that. Unfortunately, Congress is not like most Americans. We are in charge of running Medicare, and for decades, the cost of Medicare has risen dramatically, but Congress has no plan to address future costs.

And now we have Medicare's Board of Trustees reporting that the hospital insurance trust fund, the fund which supports Medicare Part A, will be insolvent in 2026. You can see here is where we are. In just 4 short years—in just 4 short years—we are going to run out of money to keep paying for services for Americans most in need.

We are talking about things like emergency surgery, in-home healthcare, and hospice care. By 2030, 4 years after insolvency, the trust fund will be $335 billion in debt. Medicare Part A cannot pay when it lacks funds.

What makes matters worse, the Medicare trustees have been warning about this for years. They have told us that Medicare Part A hasn't met even the most basic short-term goals for fiscal health since 2003.

Let's go back to the imaginary company I mentioned earlier. If you were an employee of that company and your salary depended on the company's success, how would you feel if, for 18 years, the company's leadership knew that the company would go under unless they fixed the problem, but it never happened?

Instead of fixing the problem, no one did anything. They just kept using up the company's savings. That is basically what has happened and continues to happen with Medicare.

Here is what is shocking. Absolutely nothing has been done. Washington has completely ignored the warnings about the rising costs and declining revenues for Medicare, and there is no plan to repair the system. Career politicians in the Washington establishment have acted recklessly and immorally.

They are plunging Medicare into billions of dollars of debt, debt that our grandchildren will have to pay off for the benefit of those in the present. To make matters worse, Washington politicians think they can continue to treat Medicare like a piggy bank and draw as much money as they want from it to pay for another unsustainable and unfunded program.

We saw them use Medicare savings to help fund road construction in an infrastructure bill. Make no mistake, I want to have better ports and better highways, but robbing Peter to pay Paul with money Peter doesn't have? That is wrong.

Kicking the can down the road and letting our debt balloon is a disservice to the 60 million—60 million—Americans, including the 4.5 million Floridians, who rely on Medicare.

Now, Senator SCHUMER is trying to pass a bill that will stick Congress's greedy hand into the Medicare trust fund—this time to pay for the U.S. Postal Service.

In 2020, Part B spending was $418 billion. By 2030, the cost will double to $871 billion.

Look at this. I mean, this is unbelievable.

The Part B and Part D trust fund is funded through a combination of premiums paid by beneficiaries and direct transfer from the U.S. Treasury of collected tax revenue. That means the future costs of Medicare Parts B and D are going to be paid for by higher premiums for retirees and higher taxes for all Americans.

Today, someone who retires at the Postal Service can keep their health plan into retirement, with the option of adding Medicare, but the Postal Service needs to pay the full cost of the health plan if the retiree doesn't choose Medicare. Now, this is costly to the post office, so the proposed solution in Senator SCHUMER's postal reform bill is to force all future retirees into Medicare as a means of saving money for the post office. This actually just shifts costs away from the Postal Service onto the Medicare Program—from one government program to another—and it is a cost borne by hardworking taxpayers and nonpostal retirees. This is a gift to the post office balance sheet, but it is a cost to everybody else. In other words, the solution is as bad as the problem.

On top of that, the CBO doesn't even have an accurate estimate of how much this bill will actually cost. I sent a letter to the CBO asking what the future cost of the bill would be to Medicare. While they could tell me there would be $5 billion in new deficits, they couldn't provide data past 2031, when Medicare will be most affected by this proposal. Yet Congress wants to pass this bill and pretend like it is solving a problem when it only makes matters worse. If you look at the limited CBO score we have and think about what it says, it shows that it increases costs to Medicare and reduces costs to the Postal Service.

Advocates are quick to say that it saves the government money, but that is wrong. The post office keeps all the savings and just moves the costs to Medicare. It doesn't actually save the taxpayer any money.

We have got to stop doing business like this. How can anybody in this body explain to their constituents that this is the right way to pass bills? How can anyone really say with a straight face that kicking the can down the road is the right thing to do?

Do you know why the American people don't trust us? It is stuff like this. When Congress passes a bill like this, with zero committee process, zero amendments so far considered in the Senate, and the bill ends up being terrible, well, it is not hard to see why the American people don't have a ton of faith in Congress to solve problems.

In 2020, Medicare spending was almost $1 trillion. That is $1 trillion in mandatory spending without any review by Congress.

I want real reform. I want to make sure retirees have the healthcare they have paid into and that the Postal Service is actually sustainable. That is why I have introduced an amendment to require the Postal Service to pay for any new costs to Medicare that this bill will bring. This will ensure that Medicare isn't used like a piggy bank. This will ensure that the taxpayer and future nonpostal retirees aren't forced to bear the burden of this Postal Service bailout. It would ensure that the Postal Service pays their fair share.

I am thankful to have the support of groups like 60 Plus that represent the interests of America's seniors.

Unlike many career politicians who are running Washington off a fiscal cliff with over $30 trillion worth of debt, I have actually been a CEO. I have run companies and have had to help solve financial problems. I have listened to CFOs and have worked with budgets to turn things around. I didn't come to Washington to fit in and maintain the status quo. I came to make real change that benefits American families, and this bill, as written right now, doesn't do anything to help anyone.

I urge my colleagues to support my amendment and join me in demanding that Senator SCHUMER slow down and put this bill through the proper process. American taxpayers and voters who sent us here deserve better than this.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). The Senator from Texas.

TEXAS INDEPENDENCE DAY

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, today is Texas Independence Day. One hundred eighty-six years ago today, Texans declared our independence from Mexico, and we fired a shot for liberty that was heard around the world.

As I have done a number of years in the past, I am going to read the letter from the Alamo that Lieutenant Colonel William Barret Travis wrote calling for help. It is a letter that energized Texans across our great State and that energized lovers of liberty everywhere.

I read this letter the very first time that I ever stood and spoke on the Senate floor, and these are the words that inspire us even 186 years after they were written.

Colonel Travis writes:

> To the People of Texas & All Americans in the World—
>
> Fellow Citizens & compatriots—I am besieged, by a thousand or more of the Mexicans under Santa Anna—I have sustained a continual Bombardment & cannonade for 24 hours & have not lost a man—The enemy has demanded a surrender at discretion, otherwise, the garrison are to be put to the sword, if the fort is taken—I have answered the demand with a cannon shot, & our flag still waves proudly from the walls—I shall never surrender or retreat. Then, I call on you in the name of Liberty, of patriotism & everything dear to the American character, to come to our aid, with all dispatch—
>
> The enemy is receiving reinforcements daily & will no doubt increase to three or four thousand in four or five days. If this call is neglected, I am determined to sustain myself as long as possible & die like a soldier who never forgets what is due to his own honor & that of his country—Victory or Death.
>
> William Barret Travis, Lt.Col.comdt.
>
> PS: The Lord is on our side—When the enemy appeared in sight we had not three bushels of corn—We have since found in deserted houses 80 or 90 bushels and got into the walls 20 or 30 head of Beeves.
>
> Travis.

The brave men and women at the Alamo would go on to give their lives for liberty, including Travis, Jim Bowie, and Davy Crockett.

Shortly thereafter, the Texans were victorious at the Battle of San Jacinto. With a cry in the air of ''Remember the Alamo,'' the heroes who gave their lives for liberty inspired a successful revolution, and the Republic of Texas was formed.

Sam Houston, one of the founding fathers of the Lone Star State, was also born on this very day 229 years ago.

Sam Houston was a great American. He was born in Virginia and spent many years in Tennessee, where he served in the U.S. House of Representatives and then became the Governor of Tennessee. In Texas, he was the George Washington of Texas. He served as the commander in chief for the Texas Army and led the Texas Army to victory in our revolution. When Texas became independent, Houston served in the Texas House of Representatives and then as President of the Republic of Texas. When Texas joined the United States, he served in the U.S. Senate and then, finally, as the Governor of Texas.

He was a tireless, talented leader and a great statesman who believed in freedom. His words, ''Govern wisely and as little as possible,'' are still true today, and the Lone Star State still endeavors to follow that principle.

The Republic of Texas was an independent nation from 1836 to 1845—for 9 years. Then Texas joined the United States of America.

Indeed, there is one fact I discovered a couple of years ago. Heidi and I are members of the First Baptist Church in Houston. We discovered that the First Baptist Church was actually started by American missionaries in a foreign country. Texas was an independent nation, and American missionaries came to the Republic of Texas and founded the First Baptist Church, which, today, thrives in my hometown of Houston.

Texans are proud Americans, but we are also proud of the history—the diverse, brave, extraordinary history—of those Texans all those years later. William Travis, Sam Houston, Jim Bowie, Davy Crockett, and all of the people they led risked everything to make freedom a reality for generations of Texans.

I am reminded of a story that was told to me by a former Senator from Texas, my friend Phil Gramm.

Phil Gramm, in the early 1980s, was a Member of the House of Representatives. He was a Democrat. He was a conservative Democrat. Ronald Reagan was President, and Phil Gramm, as a conservative Democrat in the House, introduced the Reagan tax cuts, and he fought for the Reagan tax cuts. Phil described a meeting with other conservative Democrats in Texas back when we had conservative Democrats in Texas—a meeting wherein he was urging his fellow Democrats to support the Reagan tax cuts. Phil drew an analogy to the Alamo on that fateful day when Colonel Travis drew a line in the sand with a sword and called on each of the men there to step across that line and commit to defending the Alamo.

One of those other conservative Democrats said to him at the time: Phil, everybody who stepped across that line died.

Phil, in not missing a beat, chuckled and said: Yes. Yes, they did. And do you know what? Everybody who didn't step across that line died, too, and nobody remembers their names.

Today, I celebrate heroes—heroes who fought to make freedom a reality for generations of Texans. Today, we celebrate, and we honor their sacrifices.

To every Texan, I wish you a very happy Texas Independence Day.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

UKRAINE

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, the Ukrainian people have captured the hearts of freedom-loving men and women around the world since Putin launched his unprovoked invasion of their homeland last week.

Even as we speak, they are still under attack, not just in the capital of Kyiv but in cities all across Ukraine. The images coming out of Ukraine are truly heartbreaking: newborn babies in need of intensive care, kindergarten buildings and apartment complexes being shelled indiscriminately, and tearful goodbyes between loved ones.

Putin's invasion has caused Europe's largest refugee crisis this century. According to the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, nearly 900,000 Ukrainians have fled to neighboring countries so far, but many of the other images we have seen show inspiring courage. Citizens of EU countries have welcomed their Ukrainian neighbors with open arms. Regular, everyday men and women—teachers and software engineers and moms and dads—have taken up arms to defend their country and their loved ones. President Zelenskyy has chosen to remain in Ukraine when he could have fled, refusing to desert his people in their darkest hour.

The English writer G.K. Chesterton once said:

> The true soldier fights not because he hates what is in front of him, but because he loves what is behind him.

I can't think of a better way to describe this conflict.

The Russians are fighting to fulfill Putin's imperial ambitions. The Ukrainians are fighting to protect their families, their democracy, and everything that they hold dear. That may be their greatest advantage as they, God willing, continue to hold out in the coming days.

Responsibility for this horrific invasion lies squarely with Putin. Leading up to this crisis, President Biden and our allies offered Russia every opportunity to choose deescalation and peace. Instead, Putin chose to use diplomacy as a smokescreen, buying time while he prepared for war.

In a deliberate message of contempt for the international community, Putin ordered the attack to begin

while the U.N. Security Council was meeting to discuss Russia's buildup on the Ukrainian border. Here is a glimpse into how little power organizations like the U.N. have in moments of crisis like this: During this meeting on what to do about Russia's coming invasion, the Russian Ambassador was presiding.

Innocent Ukrainians as young as 6 years old are being killed because one man fancies himself the next Joseph Stalin. Because of one man's desire to restore the borders of the Soviet Union, the fundamental principles of security in Europe are in peril.

In response to this invasion, President Biden has announced new sanctions against Russia. These measures will affect 2 of Russia's largest banks—Sberbank and VTB—as well as 45 of their subsidiaries. The administration is also imposing sanctions against several other Russian financial institutions and a number of state-owned enterprises.

The United States, with our allies and partners, not just in Europe but also in Asia, have agreed to pursue even more aggressive sanctions against Russia. That includes beginning to remove certain Russian banks from the global SWIFT financial messaging network. It includes freezing the currency reserves of Russia's central bank. All of this will make Putin and his inner circle feel the pain. It will hurt Russia's ability to wage war now and in the future. Many companies are joining this effort on their own, and they are withdrawing from the Russian market.

Putin's unprecedented aggression demands an unprecedented response. Beyond economic sanctions, this invasion has only made the NATO alliance stronger and more resolved to stand firm against unlawful aggression. This includes Germany, which has traditionally taken a more positive view of Russia than many of our other European allies.

Germany's Chancellor, Olaf Scholz, has rightly committed to increasing Germany's military investment after decades of putting defense spending on the back burner. Scholz also said Germany would seriously pursue options to reduce their reliance on Russia for natural gas. If he follows through on increasing Germany's military spending, that will bring German defense investment above the 2 percent target NATO has set for its members by 2024—a target that most NATO countries still aren't meeting.

While historically neutral Sweden and Finland are considering joining NATO, they aren't members yet, but they are still sending much needed military aid to Ukraine. Even Switzerland has broken its tradition of neutrality in order to freeze billions in Russian assets being held in Swiss banks, and our other allies and partners around the world, like Japan and Australia, are helping fund the Ukrainian resistance as well.

After this near universal condemnation from the world's democracies, Putin hasn't backed down. No. He has turned to nuclear blackmail. He put Russia's nuclear forces into special combat readiness on Sunday, explicitly using Russia's nuclear deterrent to discourage Western nations from supporting Ukraine.

This kind of escalation is unthinkable to Americans but not to Putin. This is why the men and women of the U.S. Strategic Command, which is based at Offutt Air Force Base in Nebraska, work day and night to deter threats like these. There is a reason that their motto is ''Peace is Our Profession.'' Separately, at least five Offutt-based jets from the Air Force's 55th Wing are flying reconnaissance missions in Europe. Together, these planes have flown 10 of the 86 missions the United States and our NATO allies carried out in the days leading up to the Russian attack. I was told of these missions during a visit to Offutt last Friday.

In addition to what we have done so far, I believe the Ukraine crisis demands that we fundamentally reevaluate our approach to dealing with Putin. We can no longer pretend that he might, one day, play by the same rules as the rest of us.

Since he came to power, Presidents of both parties have sought to improve relations with him. Too often, they have overlooked decades of bad behavior to try to achieve that goal, hoping that American restraint might lead Moscow to take that same approach.

If it wasn't clear even before this attack, the events of the past week have proven that idea to be a fantasy.

Putin thought Russia would get a quick win when he invaded Ukraine. He never expected this kind of resistance from the outmatched and the outnumbered Ukrainians. But he didn't account for their bravery. He didn't account for the fact that while Russia is fighting to gobble up more land in Eastern Europe, the Ukrainians are fighting to protect their children, spouses, parents, and their very way of life.

After the events of the past week, Putin's naked aggression, his imperial ambitions, and his contempt for the international order are undeniable.

Global norms and treaty obligations mean nothing—they mean nothing to him. Russia had explicitly sworn to uphold Ukraine's territorial integrity in the 1994 Budapest Memorandum, one more agreement added to the long list of those Russia has violated under Putin.

After his completely unprovoked invasion, this would-be 21st-century czar has lost whatever credibility he had left. The United States and our allies must keep this in mind as we think about where we go from here.

We have to accept that as long as Putin is in power, a cooperative relationship with Russia will not be possible. We have to do what we can to push back against Putin's warmongering and continue to support the brave people of Ukraine.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

KLEPTOCRACY

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, as I rise today, kleptocracy is on the march in Europe, showing how unchecked corruption leads to evil.

Vladimir Putin's corrupt regime fabricated a pretext to invade and subjugate the sovereign and peaceful nation of Ukraine. Putin's attack helps divert the Russian people from his festering corruption and misrule, as jailed Russian opposition leader Alexey Navalny put it.

America and our allies are meting out stiff sanctions; and my colleagues and I here in Congress are working on additional measures to deliver punishing financial blows to Putin and his corrupt oligarchs. But we must consider how we arrived at this moment.

Putin has, for decades, deployed corruption and kleptocracy to strengthen his grip on Russia's government and to project power and influence throughout the region. In the process, he decimated Russia's free press, attacked—physically and economically—all political opposition, and grew his own personal fortune to what is thought to be the largest in the world. I say ''thought to be'' because Putin's wealth is hidden behind shell corporations and nestled in tax havens, far from the view of the people he robs and oppresses. And along the way, he cultivated—through favors, force, or fortunes—a group of oligarchs who serve him.

It is important to understand that Putin isn't special. We have plenty of kleptocrats around the globe. Putin just happens to be in charge of a big and oil-rich country with a military at his command, a gangster with an army running a gas station, as Senator McCain used to say.

America is engaged in a growing clash of civilizations against this brand of corrupt leadership. Democracy and the free market are on one side; kleptocracy and corruption are on the other. And we will prevail in this clash by pursuing one powerful value of rule of law society: transparency.

Kleptocrats and criminals seek the protection of our rule of law and our secure financial system to stow their illicit money, but they need anonymity. They need to hide it. That is why so much anonymously owned luxury real estate sits empty in America, in some places actually driving up local housing costs for normal people. And that is why shell corporations in American States multiply.

The Pandora Papers last year revealed webs of American shell corporations and trusts hiding dirty assets. It revealed professionals—lawyers, accounts, and real estate agents—aiding and abetting the hiding of those dirty assets. Shining the light of transparency on kleptocrats' money is a potent countermeasure to their power.

Late in 2020, Congress passed the most important anti-money laundering

reform law in two decades: the Corporate Transparency Act. It was very bipartisan. Senators GRASSLEY, GRAHAM, WYDEN, RUBIO, BROWN, CRAPO, WARNER, COTTON, and I all spent years getting that bill done. Our aim was to arm law enforcement with knowledge of the ''beneficial owner''—the real person—who is behind American shell corporations.

Now, the Treasury Department's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, FinCEN, is implementing our beneficial ownership provisions. And the new rule promises to be a strong countermeasure.

It requires anyone who exerts substantial control directly or indirectly over a legal entity to identify themselves as the beneficial owner. That is what we wanted. It is clear enough so that companies know what they have to do, while minimizing the risk that bad actors can evade disclosure.

And its timelines for reporting and updating beneficial ownership information are fair, providing law enforcement and national security officials timely information without imposing unreasonable turnarounds for legitimate companies.

The beneficial ownership rule also avoided a trap. Some had urged FinCEN to add exceptions to the reporting requirements on top of the ones Congress included in the bill. Well, we worked hard to come up with the right list of excepted entities. It is encouraging to see FinCEN stand firm and avoid watering down the rule with new unjustified exceptions.

FinCEN is also working on a review of Bank Secrecy Act regulations with an eye toward a new ''anti-money laundering and counterterror financing'' framework. This review offers a chance to take on some big challenges.

We need to make sure American professionals aren't aiding and abetting kleptocrats. Investing in hedge funds, luxury real estate, high-priced art, expensive cars, mega yachts all requires help from professionals, and those professionals aren't bound to ''anti-money laundering and counterterror financing'' safeguards like our banks are.

Private investment funds are worth about $11 trillion. You can hide a lot of mischief in $11 trillion. An FBI intelligence bulletin leaked in 2020 warned that ''threat actors'' used those funds to launder their money into rule-of-law financial systems. That is a vulnerability we need to close.

This aiding and abetting problem, giving aid and comfort to our enemies, extends to professional services from lawyers, accountants, company and trust formation agents, even PR firms. But on this front, FinCEN's hands are tied. Congress will need to step in to clean that up.

Kleptocrats and criminals constantly change the methods they use to hide their money. Trade-based money laundering, for instance, allows bad actors to trade everything from vegetables to washing machines as a way to move their money around internationally. We need better coordination among key agencies involved in overseeing trade and better information on suspicious financial and trade activity that is shared more efficiently among various Federal authorities.

Real estate is a massive target for money launderers. In August of last year, the watchdog group Global Financial Integrity released a report showing over $2.3 billion laundered through American real estate over the previous half decade. As Global Financial Integrity would tell you, this is just what they could identify. The real number is probably far higher.

The good news there is we have a countermeasure that works well. In 2016, FinCEN started the ''geographic targeting order'' program, which requires title insurers to report to FinCEN beneficial ownership information of shell companies that stash money in high-priced real estate. That program started in New York and Miami, then expanded to a dozen jurisdictions nationwide. The Congressional Research Service has reviewed it and said these targeting orders work.

Now, FinCEN is proposing a rule to make these orders permanent and expand coverage across the United States. It looks like FinCEN will deliver that improvement. And if it does, that is a big win, particularly if that rule lines up with our beneficial ownership rule and if it extends to cover commercial, as well as residential real estate.

In Congress, we should pass legislation to help FinCEN address professional aiders and abettors. There is bipartisan legislation in the House, the ENABLERS Act, which I hope to introduce here in the Senate. I have also introduced bipartisan legislation to make it a crime for foreign officials to demand bribes from Americans. At the moment, it is only a crime to pay bribes. And we should pay close attention to others in the dark economy, like drug traffickers and terrorists.

I am working on legislation to target money laundering related to the illicit narcotics trade. Indeed, we had a hearing on it today.

Finally, we need to work together with the international community. When U.S. defenses are strengthened, kleptocrats will direct their dirty money to some other willing sanctuary. So it matters that the Biden administration has announced a transatlantic, interagency task force to help crack down on ill-gotten assets stowed in the West by Russian oligarchs and their families, their mistresses, their stooges, whomever. This is exactly the right approach. We must work with friends abroad to close off hidey-holes for oligarchs, bolster the rule of law, expand judicial transparency, and increase access to justice in struggling jurisdictions.

I met recently with a Member of the Ukrainian Parliament who said a phrase—that we were talking about actually during the Munich Security Conference codel—which was: It is not enough to freeze the oligarch's assets; we need to seize the oligarch's assets.

We can do so even theatrically, and to take a camera through the preposterous and grotesque wealth and show the people of Russia what was stolen from them would be as significant a public relations victory as when Ukrainians went through their oligarch's mansion and showed everything from gold toilet seats to private petting zoos.

Kleptocrats, like Putin and his oligarchs, can be defeated. A little sunlight will vanquish them. Free societies and the rule of law can win the long battle we face against kleptocracy and corruption.

This is a national security matter, not just a question of doing good. This is a national security matter, and these are the tools—the ones I have described, the tools of transparency—that will secure our victory.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to talk about the war in Ukraine. One week ago, Vladimir Putin attacked Ukraine by land, by sea, and by air. Now we know that thousands of people are dead.

Vladimir Putin prepared for this invasion, and he prepared over the course of at least 3 months. Month after month after month, he moved troops, he moved weapons, and he moved them to the border with Ukraine. Now, many of these troops are attacking the capital city of Kyiv. The Ukrainian people are fighting bravely. Their example is an inspiration to the world. They are outnumbered, they are outgunned, and yet they continue to fight for their freedom.

Make no mistake, Vladimir Putin has caused this war. He alone is responsible. He is responsible for the death and the destruction that the world is witnessing now. Yet, it is undeniable that the Biden administration's so-called deterrence and diplomacy have failed.

Joe Biden ran for President on competence and on his foreign policy expertise. As a candidate for President, Joe Biden said Putin's days of tyranny would be over if he became President—Putin's days of tyranny would be over if Joe Biden were elected President. The opposite has occurred under this administration.

Vladimir Putin has become emboldened like never before. Putin is cunning, he is opportunistic, and he is aggressive. When he sees an opportunity, he takes it. He can smell weakness, and he views Joe Biden as weak and ineffective. Clearly that has become even more so after Joe Biden's disgraceful and deadly surrender from Afghanistan. Enemies of ours around the world have become emboldened.

After Afghanistan fell, Vladimir Putin increased his weapons testing.

Just a few months later, Vladimir Putin put 100,000 troops on the border of Ukraine. How did the President of the United States, Joe Biden, respond? He lobbied this body, the Senate, against imposing sanctions on Vladimir Putin.

In January, this Senate voted on sanctions for Putin's Nord Stream 2 Pipeline. I came to the floor; I argued that the Senate needed to act quickly. Almost every Democrat in this body had previously supported sanctions. Under pressure from the White House, the Democrats reversed course. They buckled to the demands of the President of the United States, who had a different view than this body in a broad, bipartisan consensus had had previously of sanctioning the Nord Stream 2 Pipeline between Russia and Germany. Senate Democrats blocked the sanctions.

Look, energy is the reason that Vladimir Putin is flush with cash. He has hit the jackpot. His energy revenues are up, and more than $1 out of every $3 that Vladimir Putin has in Russia's treasury is energy-related. High energy prices today that Americans are paying at the pump and people around world are paying are the reason why Putin can indefinitely—how he can afford this invasion.

So who is Putin's No. 1 rival for energy production? Well, it is the United States. But under Joe Biden, American crude oil production is down—down more than a million barrels each and every day from what it was prior to the pandemic.

It is not a lack of American energy resources, and it is not a lack of American energy workers. They want to work. The energy is in the ground. This is a direct result of the far-left driven anti-American energy policies of the Joe Biden administration.

On Joe Biden's first day in office, he killed the Keystone XL Pipeline, and he bragged about it. So how much energy would be coming across from the Keystone XL Pipeline? Well over 800,000 barrels a day. But that number today is zero.

How much energy are we bringing in from Russia each and every day into the United States, imported from Russia, sending money to Vladimir Putin? Well, 670,000 barrels a day. If he hadn't killed Keystone, we would be bringing more energy in that way, and we are now buying and sending money to Vladimir Putin. And the President bragged about it, thumped his chest: I killed Keystone.

He also blocked new oil and gas leases on public lands, stopped American exploration for energy in the Arctic. Joe Biden approves of Vladimir Putin producing energy; it seems he is only opposed to American energy production.

Just days before he surrendered in Afghanistan, Joe Biden sent his National Security Advisor to beg Russia to produce more oil to sell to us. It is hard to believe. People watching said that can't be true, and I would say: Go to the White House website. Go right now; see if it is still there. It was there two nights ago—the National Security Advisor saying: We are asking OPEC+—and the ''plus'' is Russia; it is Putin—to produce more energy to sell to us.

Why should we depend upon people who are our enemies, whose intentions are not kind or caring for us, and who is now—Vladimir Putin is attacking his neighbor in a bloodthirsty way—rather than allow us to produce American energy that we have today in the ground in this Nation?

So it is no wonder that Putin can now afford another assault. Oil hit over $100 a barrel last week—the highest in 7 years, and it is even higher than that today.

Today, American families in every State are paying $1 a gallon or more for each additional gallon of gas that they put in the tank than they were the day Joe Biden became President of the United States, and that is soon going to be even a higher number, a higher amount that people are going to be paying as a result of this President's policies. The situation is getting worse.

President Biden's response to the buildup to the war in Ukraine has been mismanagement and weakness. After Russia invaded Ukraine, Joe Biden issued sanctions on Russia that are far too little too late. The Biden deterrence was after the fact. That didn't seem more like punishment than deterrence. It reminds me when President Obama said he was going to be leading from behind. Deterrence after the fact is the same thing as no deterrence at all. Try to deter someone from doing something.

Even after the invasion has occurred and even after we see the tanks lined up heading into Kyiv, Joe Biden is not yet ready to sanction Russian energy and clearly not ready to produce American energy to make up for what we buy from them.

His Deputy National Security Advisor went to the podium and said our sanctions are not designed to cause any disruption to the current flow of energy from Russia to the world. This administration has caused plenty of disruption in the flow of energy from America, from our homeland. We are not going to disrupt energy from Russia, oh, no. It was actually Germany that stood up and finally stopped Putin from getting the pipeline. Joe Biden won't touch the one industry that is propping up Vladimir Putin. Yet he seemed to be happy—Joe Biden seems to be happy with his continued war on American energy. He has effectively put harsher sanctions on American energy workers than he does on Russian energy thugs.

The war in Ukraine is going to lead to higher energy prices in this country; there is no doubt about it. But we have seen no change in Joe Biden's energy policies in spite of the abundant energy resources we have in this country. The White House Press Secretary was asked recently if Joe Biden was considering allowing more energy production here at home in the United States. We have the resources; we have the workers; the jobs are necessary; and, effectively, she just said no. We heard nothing about it in the State of the Union last night—not a thing.

Over the weekend, actually, the President's Press Secretary went on television and doubled down. She said she refused to rule out importing oil from Iran. Oil and gas leases on Federal lands are still in limbo.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, FERC—and there will be a hearing before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee tomorrow—recently decided, in a 100-percent partisan 3-to-2 vote, to make it even harder to build natural gas pipelines in America. Harder.

The day after Russia invaded Ukraine, this administration, the Biden administration, said uranium was no longer a critical mineral for the United States—no longer a critical mineral. American businesses get half of the uranium we use from Russia and its partners. It is a critical mineral but not according to the Biden administration. Now we are going to become even more dependent on Russia, and Putin will get even wealthier.

It seems like Joe Biden and his advisers want to turn our energy sector into what we have seen over the last number of years in Germany—dependent on other countries, begging enemies to help us keep the lights on.

And just before the Russian invasion, John Kerry, the President's Climate Envoy, said in an interview with BBC—this is the former Secretary of State of the United States—said he was concerned that the war in Ukraine would distract people from his climate agenda. You can't believe it. This is very disturbing to people all around my home State, and I would think all around America. This is a delusional obsession, distracted from the reality of the world and of our Nation.

Innocent people are being slaughtered. Vladimir Putin is conducting nuclear drills. People around the world are terrified. People are looking to the United States for leadership, and we have a high official of this administration concerned it is going to distract from this White House's and this administration's climate agenda.

The American people know what we need to do. We need to continue to support and send lethal weapons to our friends in Ukraine, and clearly we need to produce more American energy. We have it. We have it in the ground. This administration will not let us get it out. More American energy will help us at home. It will help bring down prices at home. More American energy will help us defund Putin's military aggression. It is our energy dollars that are paying for Putin's killing machine.

More American energy will help our allies from being held hostage by

Vladimir Putin. This is why I have introduced legislation called the ESCAPE Act, Energy Security Cooperation with Allied Partners in Europe. It expedites the sale of natural gas from America to our NATO allies so they don't have to buy it from Vladimir Putin. I brought it to the floor yesterday, and Democrats objected to a unanimous consent to pass it.

I sent a letter to the President today with every Republican on the Senate Energy Committee as well as Senator LUMMIS—sent a letter to the White House today detailing 10 specific actions that the President of the United States can take right now to produce more American energy and undermine Vladimir Putin and help other NATO allies and help the people of Ukraine. We as a nation are much better off selling American energy to our friends than for us as a nation to have to buy energy from our enemies. More American energy means more American strength and more American security.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KAINE). The majority whip.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, 2 weeks ago, I came to the floor to request unanimous consent for the Senate to take up and confirm six U.S. attorneys and two U.S. marshal nominations.

These nominees are all highly qualified. They have critical law enforcement experience, and they want to serve this country at new levels. They were voted out of the Judiciary Committee, which I chair, by a voice vote. They have the support of their home State Senators. They have the support of other local law enforcement. They deserve to be confirmed. We need them—right now—without further delay.

And the obvious question is, Why are they being held up? Why are these dedicated men and women not yet in office, ready to tackle violent crime—which we know is a problem across America? Why aren't they in office to prosecute fraud and terrorism? Why aren't they there to protect families and children across America? One reason—the junior Senator from Arkansas.

You see, when I made my unanimous consent request—a request joined by the majority leader and Senators from all the affected States—one Senator objected. Only one Senator refused to allow these individuals' confirmation so that they could continue to serve this Nation and the cause of law enforcement. And that same Senator, the junior Senator from Arkansas, continues to engage in this mindless obstruction, jeopardizing the safety of communities outside of Arkansas for reasons which are still hard to understand.

Why is the junior Senator blocking well-qualified individuals from law enforcement? What has he got against law enforcement at this moment in America's history? Well, it doesn't have anything to do with the nominees themselves or their qualifications. We have asked him over and over. He has no complaint about any single one of them. He happened to pick these people out as his political targets. He is concerned about a completely unrelated issue. Let me tell you what it is.

In the summer of 2020, Federal law enforcement personnel were dispatched to Portland, OR, to help protect the Federal courthouse. A number of those Federal officers now face lawsuits relating to the events that happened there.

The Department of Justice often represents Federal employees who were sued in their individual capacity. Under governing regulations, the Department of Justice goes through a process to determine that such representation would be ''in the interests of the United States.''

And in this matter, the Department of Justice has either represented or paid for the representation of more than 70 law enforcement officials who have been sued. The Department has declined to represent one individual—only one—and continues to review three additional requests for representation.

The Senator from Arkansas says he wants to know why, but the Department of Justice has made it clear it can't comment on these four cases. Remember what you first learned when you were elected to the U.S. Senate and somebody came to you and said: I need for you to be my advocate. I need for you to be my champion.

You said to them: I would like to do it, but first you have to sign a privacy waiver, a confidentiality waiver. I can't represent you or talk about you unless I have that waiver.

The last time we came to the floor, I asked the junior Senator from Arkansas: Have these three who are being under review, for example, these Federal employees, given you a privacy waiver? Can you tell us what the circumstances are that slowed it down?

No. So here he is, their champion and advocate, and they don't trust him with a privacy waiver or they would rather their circumstances not become public. They made that decision. It is pretty complicated in a way. The bottom line is, who is paying for this complication and the stalling tactic? Innocent people, six U.S. attorneys, two U.S. marshals—not in the State of Arkansas.

The Department of Justice has made it clear it can't comment on these cases ''in light of significant confidentiality interests and applicable privileges.''

The Senator from Arkansas is hearing none of it. For example, DOJ's regulations make it clear that communications about an employee's request for representation are protected by an attorney-client privilege. The Senator from Arkansas wants us to ignore that. The Privacy Act prevents the Department of Justice from disclosing personal records related to employees without their consent.

Unless things have changed in the last 2 weeks, the Senator who is advocating for these people has never received that. He has never received those consents. These privileges protect the privacy of the very law enforcement personnel whose interests the junior Senator from Arkansas claims to represent. The Senator claims to be speaking on behalf of his deputy marshals, but he is asking the Justice Department to violate legal privileges and attorney-client privileges that are designed to specifically protect them and other Federal employees.

It is important to add that it is standard practice for any Member of Congress to obtain a Privacy Act waiver. We have done it thousands of times in our office—an act that gives a waiver for a constituent, authorizing the office to make inquiries on their behalf. Apparently, the Senator from Arkansas doesn't have that waiver or he would explain to us what the circumstances are. It seems that the people he wants to protect don't trust him with that information or don't want it to become public.

The Senator is upset that the Justice Department is following the law and a process required by their own rules and regulations—a process that now affects four individuals. His response is to block the confirmation of every U.S. attorney and every U.S. marshal on the Senate calendar. How can you claim, as he does, to be tough on crime if you are blocking well-qualified law enforcement officials from serving because of a grievance that has nothing to do with them personally? The junior Senator from Arkansas should let these law enforcement officials do their job.

Often we hear the complaint: Oh, they want to defund the police. You heard last night, President Biden said we need to fund the police and got a standing ovation from everybody.

This is a new approach. Instead of funding the police, this one Senator is going to stop law enforcement from even doing their job. For example, yesterday, I chaired a hearing in the Judiciary Committee. We examined how the Federal Government can help prevent and respond to the surge in carjackings across America over the last 2 years. It was an important bipartisan hearing with witnesses from law enforcement, community groups, and the automobile industry testifying about solutions to a problem that is an urgent issue in many of our communities and testifying to the need for U.S. attorneys to enforce the law in their jurisdictions. The same junior Senator from Arkansas, who is leaving these U.S. attorneys spots vacant because he is unhappy with the way he is being treated by the Department of Justice, didn't attend the hearing. And he is blocking votes on Federal law enforcement nominees charged with helping to protect our communities from

carjackings and other violent crimes. How can that be anything other than soft on law and order?

Before I proceed to my unanimous consent, I want to note the overwhelming support these U.S. attorneys and U.S. marshal nominees have from law enforcement professionals in their States. We are receiving dozens of letters because of this outrageous hold by the Senator from Arkansas—letters that speak not just to the nominees' qualifications but the need to confirm them now.

Consider the support for Chief LaDon Reynolds to be the U.S. marshal for the Northern District of Illinois. Senator DUCKWORTH and I have received letters from the director of the Illinois State Police and police chiefs in towns and cities like Park Ridge, Hazel Crest, and Calumet Park. It is unanimous. Chief Reynolds is a man for the job, and he is waiting and waiting and waiting on the junior Senator from Arkansas.

The Senate has also received letters of support for several of the other nominees who face this needless blockade. Aaron Ford, the attorney general of Nevada, has written in support for Jason Frierson to be that State's U.S. attorney. Both Senators from Nevada took the floor last time we brought this issue up and supported him.

The chiefs of police of Rochester, Duluth, and Saint Paul, MN, have joined the Sheriff of Ramsey County, MN, urging the Senate to quickly confirm Andrew Luger as Minnesota's U.S. attorney and Eddie Frizell to be the State's U.S. marshal.

Mark Totten, nominated to be U.S. attorney for the Western District of Michigan, has the support of county prosecutors and sheriffs throughout the State, as well as from Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel and the Michigan Association of Police Organizations.

And the Sheriff of DeKalb County, GA, urges the Senate to swiftly confirm Ryan Buchanan to be U.S. attorney for the Northern District of Georgia.

These law enforcement officials want reinforcement. We have the professionals to take over these positions now; one Senator holds them up. They are just a few examples of the broad bipartisan support these nominees enjoy.

These State and local law enforcement officials know how eminently qualified the nominees are, and they have told us as much. They know we can't and shouldn't waste another day supporting law enforcement. They know it is time for the Senate to act now.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations en bloc: Calendar Nos. 660, 661, 662, 663, 739, 740, 741, 742; that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc without intervening action or debate; the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that any statements related to the nominations be printed in the Record; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and the Senate resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I reserve the right to object because, here we are again, 2 weeks later and nothing has changed.

The Democrats and the Department of Justice once again want their well-connected and wealthy political nominees confirmed, while the Department of Justice hangs out to dry four career law enforcement officers and threatens them with fiscal ruin and bankruptcy.

The Senator from Illinois said I am having none of it. You are absolutely right; I am having none of it.

These officers, I remind you, faced down leftwing street militias for months in Portland. They were attacked with blinding lasers, ball bearings, Molotov cocktails. There were efforts to lock them into the courthouse and set it afire and burn them alive.

Now, the Senator from Illinois keeps saying that my objections are completely unrelated—those were his words—or had nothing to do with these nominees. We have heard this now for weeks. I don't know why he keeps repeating it. I will give my answer once again. I am not making objection to some random, unconnected agency. I am not upset that the Corps of Engineers didn't approve a water project in Arkansas.

I am not making some doomed-to-fail demand like Merrick Garland should resign in disgrace—though he should. I am making a very specific point about this Department.

If Merrick Garland and the Democrats want their political nominees to be confirmed on a fast-track basis, then they need to protect their career law enforcement officers from financial ruin and bankruptcy.

I have talked to these officers; the anxiety and the stress that this has created for them is real. They have received no explanation whatsoever beyond ''not in the interest of the United States.'' That is not an explanation; that is a conclusion.

Three of them haven't heard anything at all. It has been months—actually, more than a year. The Senator from Illinois said the Department of Justice often represents law enforcement officers sued for actions in the line of duty. It is not ''often represents.'' It is ''almost always represents.''

I have spoken with multiple former Department of Justice leaders. They say they cannot remember a time when they declined to represent a law enforcement officer sued for actions in the line of duty.

The Senator from Illinois, once again, waves around the idea of a privacy waiver like it is a big ''gotcha'' or something. I don't have a privacy waiver, but I know what these officers would say. They would say, We have no idea what the Department would tell us.

So if the Senator from Illinois would like me to be a good bureaucrat and run off and get a privacy waiver, I guess I could do that. And then once they gave it to me, I would ask them, Why did you get denied coverage? And they would say, I don't know. They won't tell us anything.

The point of the matter here is that career law enforcement officers are being hung out to dry and facing financial ruin. And they cannot get an answer, and we cannot get an answer.

Now, is it possible they engaged in misconduct? Sure. It happens. However, I would note, as I did last time, that all four officers are on unrestricted active duty—unrestricted active duty. Three are in the special operations group. One is in the warrant group. Both assignments likely to result in situations where the threat of violence, and even lethal violence, is high.

If these officers somehow acted inappropriately in Portland to the point we can't represent them when they are sued by leftwing activists, surely, they shouldn't be serving high-risk warrants. Surely, they shouldn't be out on the street in the special operations group. So I can only infer that is not the case.

The Department of Justice won't tell us anything more. They won't tell these officers anything more. None of these facts has changed—nothing in 2 weeks.

The only thing we know that we didn't know 2 weeks ago, actually, is that three of these marshals received an award for their service in Portland.

This is the award that was given out to marshals who risked their lives in defense of the Federal courthouse in Portland. I blurred out the names to protect the safety of those marshals, but, I assure you, their names are on there. They received an award for their service. They are being sued for that very service, and the Department of Justice won't represent them. They deserve answers.

The Senator from Illinois said that last night the President spoke about funding the police after the Democrats spoke for years about defunding the police. Well, I have a suggestion, How about funding these officers' legal defenses? How about that for funding the police?

Stand by the law enforcement officers who did their job and can't now get an explanation for why Merrick Garland is not standing by them.

And until that happens, I guess we can keep coming down here every week or 2 weeks because they deserve to be represented or we deserve a credible, fact-based explanation.

Now, I am just one Senator. I can't block these people forever. We can have a vote on them. We were in session yesterday for 10 hours; we didn't

have a single vote. On Monday night, we voted on late-term partial-birth abortion. If these are so important, we can have a vote on them. Or the Department of Justice could just do what it should, which is right and moral: It should represent law enforcement officers who are being sued for actions in the line of duty, or it should give an explanation for why they are not.

So I do object, and I will continue to object until that happens.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The majority whip.

Mr. DURBIN. Right and moral? Is it right and moral to deny law enforcement officials—the Senator is now leaving the floor.

Is it right and moral to deny these law enforcement officials an opportunity to serve across the United States?

I listened carefully, and I was waiting for him to spell out—the Senator from Arkansas who just walked off the floor—his objection as to the qualifications of these law enforcement officers. He has none. There are none.

These men he calls political appointees, the same thing happened under the Trump administration. Over 85 of their U.S. attorneys were approved by voice vote, with no delay. One was held over for 1 week; that was it.

And yet he has made a crusade of this to try to stop these individuals from serving in the States where they are desperately needed.

The Senator from Arkansas is blocking the confirmation of these individuals and, at the same time, calling the Democrats soft on law and order. Go figure.

Don't lecture me on law and order if you are coming to the floor to prevent qualified law enforcement professionals from helping the Justice Department combat violent crime.

The reason I come to the floor and will continue to come to the floor is because we have a serious crime problem in my State and in the city of Chicago. I want to have the U.S. marshal there on the job doing everything he is supposed to do to help the local and State law enforcement bring down the violence and the death rate.

The Senator from Arkansas just doesn't seem to understand basic law. The Department of Justice has an attorney-client privilege with these individuals as they review their cases. He has been unable to get a waiver so that he can even tell us publicly what the complaint might be by the Department of Justice from the viewpoint of those Federal officials.

He can't do it. It is good enough for him, if they are under review, to stop all other U.S. attorneys and marshals across the United States.

Is this what America wants to see in Washington, this kind of obstruction? I think not. It doesn't take political courage to harm an innocent person. And what the Senator from Arkansas has done is to harm individuals who simply want to serve America and make it safer.

My Republican colleagues frequently claim to be the party of law and order; but in this matter, they are the ones playing politics on law enforcement.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

(Mr. DURBIN assumed the Chair.)

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. OSSOFF). Without objection, it is so ordered.

STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, obviously, the images coming out of Ukraine and the heroism that we are seeing is inspiring people all across America, all across the world, and it is spurring governments to action, appropriate action.

Just the other day, there was a world leader in charge of one of the world's most important countries who was spurred to action. Despite his country and his government having a leftwing leaning, he made announcements—historic, remarkable announcements—that not only stunned his country but stunned his world about the importance of a strong defense, military defense, about the importance of being realistic about energy policies. No, I am not talking about President Biden, unfortunately. I am going to get to that. He missed a huge opportunity to do just that. I am talking about the world leader German Chancellor Olaf Scholz who in the last 2 days has said Germany, because of the current crisis, is going to almost double its defense budget to achieve its 2 percent GDP portion of national defense within the next year or two—a huge, stunning announcement by the Chancellor.

A country that is addicted to Russian natural gas is now saying we are not going to have any and we are going to stop the Nord Stream 2 gas line—a huge, stunning announcement. That is global leadership.

And, unfortunately, President Biden missed the opportunity last night at the State of the Union to do exactly the same on exactly the same issues.

Let me talk about this a little bit more. I think we are starting to fully understand the implications as a nation and as a world of what is happening in Ukraine. We have entered a new era of authoritarian aggression, led by Russia's and China's dictators who are increasingly isolated and dangerous, who are driven by historical grievances, who are paranoid about their democratic neighbors and are willing to use military force and other aggressive actions to crush the citizens in countries like Ukraine and Hong Kong and Taiwan.

These dangerous dictators—Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping—are increasingly working together to put forward and implement their vision for the world: spheres of influence that revolve around them.

If you saw and read, they joint communicated just a few weeks ago before the Beijing Olympics, Xi Jinping and Putin. It is a wake-up call to the world. It is a scary, darn document. That is what is happening.

Again, we need to wake up; this administration needs to wake up to this new era of authoritarian aggression because it is going to be with us, unfortunately, in my view, for years, if not decades.

The President had the opportunity to do what the Chancellor of Germany did in the last few days, and he didn't. My view of this situation is that we need to face it as a country with strategic resolve and confidence and recognize that our country has extraordinary advantages, particularly relative to China and Russia.

If we are wise enough to utilize and strengthen these advantages, what are they? They are our global network of allies, our lethal military, our world-class supplies of energy and other natural resources, our dynamic economy, and, most important, our democratic values and commitment to liberty.

We must always remember that Putin and Xi Jinping's biggest weaknesses and biggest vulnerabilities are that they fear their own people. They fear their own people. We need to remember that and exploit this vulnerability in the months and years ahead.

But what happened last night? Again, it was a missed opportunity because the President could have—should have—followed the lead of the Chancellor of Germany, and he didn't.

He put forward a few good ideas that, I think, drew bipartisan support in the Chamber, certainly, talking about the brave people of Ukraine. That was something that all Americans are seeing and supportive of. Also, the President's commitment to defend every inch of NATO territory, I think, is an important redline that he drew last night that, again, all of us support, but it was important for him to articulate it. Other topics—opioids, mental health, helping our veterans—count me in on those.

But what he didn't do was step up in front of the American people and, like the Chancellor of Germany, say: It is a new world, and we need to recognize it, and the Biden administration is going to make a course correction on some critical issues.

What were those critical issues? Well, they are the exact issues that the Chancellor of Germany announced to his people.

Yesterday, 23 Senators—we sent a letter to the President respectfully imploring him to address the same issues that the Chancellor of Germany just did in this new era of authoritarian aggression. We need a much stronger, robust military budget that can ensure the lethality and readiness of our

forces. If you don't believe that, you are not watching what is going on in Ukraine.

What we don't need is another Biden budget like he put forward last year that increases, by double digits, the budgets of literally every Federal Agency in the Government of the United States, with the exception of two: Homeland Security and the Department of Defense.

The Biden budget last year cut those, and I guarantee you the dictators in Beijing and the dictator in Moscow noticed. You can't do that. He didn't even mention it last night—didn't even mention it last night. And I guarantee you the dictators in Moscow and Beijing noticed and so did our European allies, which is, again, why what the Chancellor of Germany did was so extraordinary. He announced a budget doubling the budget of the German military—stunning.

But the other area that we suggested strongly to the President of the United States to address to the American people in this new era of authoritarian aggression is energy.

In our letter to the President yesterday, we respectfully called out the President and said: With respect, Mr. President, you recently told the American people in a press conference that your administration was using ''every tool at our disposal to protect American families and businesses'' from rising energy crisis, but that is not true. It is not true, and the whole world knows it. Heck, the administration knows it.

So we suggested 12 actions that the President of the United States could take and announce at the State of the Union that would help us with regard to energy: bring down costs, put American energy workers back to work, and not let Putin blackmail European allies of ours with energy and continue to use it as a weapon.

We asked for a course correction on the Biden administration's energy policies, which, from day 1, have focused on restricting, delaying, and, indeed, killing the production of American oil and gas.

All of this has had the predictable result, the catastrophic result of driving up energy prices at the pump and in home heating for American citizens—enormous increases, hurting working families, increasing pink slips for American energy workers like those in my State, the great State of Alaska, and again in the current crisis, significantly empowering our adversaries, especially Vladimir Putin, who has used energy as a weapon against our allies for decades.

So I am not going to go into each one of the topics or the actions that we suggested the President of the United States take, with the exception of one because it is so apparent that we need to do it and so apparent that the President should have announced it last night that I want to just briefly mention it again here.

We called on—and today in a press conference many of us called on—many Republicans and some Democratic Senators now have called on the Biden administration to undertake sanctions and an embargo against Vladimir Putin's strongest weapon, his export of natural gas and oil.

Now, many people are saying: Well, you can't do that as it relates to our European allies. What we are saying is, we understand there are challenges there. We are not talking about Europe. We are talking about the United States of America.

I want you to understand these numbers. Right now, we are buying an average of almost 700,000 barrels a day of Russian oil. By the way, that number has increased 35 percent—actually over 35 percent during President Biden's first term. At the same time, the Biden administration is going to States like mine and saying, We are going to try to shut down Alaskan oil production.

Does anyone in America, does anyone in the U.S. Senate, does anyone in the Biden administration think that that makes sense—increase imports of Russian oil to the United States while shutting down the production of American energy?

They are doing it. We all know they are doing it. Heck, they know they are doing it. It makes no sense.

In the last year, imports from the United States paid for that went back—oil imports of Russian oil, paid for in the United States going back to Russia—put $17 billion into Putin's war chest—$17 billion.

So a number of us—like I said, Republican and now Democratic Senators—have been saying: This is nuts. We are trying to sanction Putin. We are trying to isolate Russia from the global economy, and there is this giant loophole, and it is coming right to the United States. We are paying for hundreds of thousands of barrels a day of Russian oil going back to Putin, and they are still trying to shut down American energy production. Come on.

Of course, some of this is driven by the far left that the Biden administration listens way too much to. Come on, Mr. President, my colleagues here, this is insane, and everybody knows it. Everybody knows it.

What are we doing right now? We are subsidizing this war. We are subsidizing—by the importation of 7,000 barrels a day of Russian oil in the United States, we are subsidizing Putin's war on Ukrainians.

By the way, our friends in Canada, they just announced that they are not going to import any more Russian oil. Prime Minister Trudeau, well done, sir.

By the way, had the Keystone Pipeline not been killed by the President of the United States a little over 12 months ago, we would have up to 700,000 barrels of oil from Canada. I would much rather be getting oil from Canada than Russia right now.

If you think that this is an issue that is not impacting Ukraine, here is what the Foreign Minister of Ukraine recently said about this topic:

> We insist on a full embargo for Russian oil and gas around the world. Buying Russian oil and gas right now means paying for the murder of Ukrainian men, women and children.

That is the Foreign Minister of Ukraine. What he is asking for is something we can easily do—block any more Russian oil, Russian natural gas coming into the United States of America. People say: Well, where would we get it, then? I will tell you where we would get it. We would get it from the United States of America.

The only thing that the President mentioned last night on this topic in a glancing manner—to be honest, it was a lame glancing manner. It was almost a pathetic attempt to just barely recognize that this giant issue had to be touched upon. He said we are going to briefly release oil out of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. We are not going to produce more, which we could. We are just going to release a little more oil out of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

Here is my answer to that: Mr. President, there is a much better Strategic Petroleum Reserve than the one you referenced last night. It is called the great State of Alaska. That is America's Strategic Petroleum Reserve. And you need to let us, as your fellow Americans, help our fellow citizens and the rest of the world by producing. So it was a missed opportunity last night.

We have world leaders who, right now, the Prime Minister of Canada on the imports of Russian oil, the Chancellor of Germany on significantly recognizing the new era in which we are all in, saying: I have got to be serious about national defense and our military, and I have got to be serious about energy.

We had respectfully asked the President of the United States last night in the State of the Union to do just the same—just the same. The American people were watching, and he had an opportunity to talk about the consequences, long term, of this new era of authoritarian aggression and say: ''And I am going to make some course corrections as the President of this administration because it is going to be what is good for the American people and our allies,'' and he didn't do it. He didn't do it, and it was a big missed opportunity for our country and for the world.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KING). The majority leader.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—S.J. RES. 38

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that at 11 a.m. on Thursday, March 3, S.J. Res. 38 be discharged from the Committee on Finance and the Senate proceed to its consideration; further, that there be 3 hours for debate only, with the time equally divided between the Leaders, or their designees, on the joint resolution; and that following the use or yielding back of that time, the joint resolution be

read a third time and the Senate vote on the resolution, with no intervening action or debate.

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

H.R. 3076

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I am about to file cloture on the postal reform bill, so let me say a few words about that. So this week the Senate has kept making progress toward our goal of passing and ultimately enacting the largest bill to support the U.S. Postal Service in a long, long time.

This is a bipartisan bill, long overdue and far-reaching in how it will place our post office on secure footing for the future.

Democrats have spent the day working with Republicans on a list of amendments that they want to hold with regard to this bill, and these negotiations are ongoing.

So while we work on an agreement—and to keep the process moving—I will be filing cloture so that we can take the next steps toward the final passage.

It is my hope that we can arrive at an agreement tomorrow and finish this bill before the weekend. There is every reason in the world to do so.

At the end of the day, the vast majority of Democrats and Republicans want to see this bill sent to the President's desk quickly.

I want to thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for their continued work, especially Chairman PETERS.

This postal reform bill has been a long time coming, and when passed it will ensure that the tens of millions of Americans who rely on the post office every single day for medicine, Social Security, checks, other goods, they can be sure that the post office remains in good hands and is strengthened.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The 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 Calendar No. 273, H.R. 3076, a bill to provide stability to and enhance the services of the United States Postal Service, and for other purposes.

Charles E. Schumer, Gary C. Peters, Mazie K. Hirono, Tina Smith, Margaret Wood Hassan, Jeff Merkley, Ron Wyden, Patty Murray, Debbie Stabenow, Jack Reed, Mark Kelly, Cory A. Booker, Robert Menendez, Jon Tester, Jon Ossoff, Sheldon Whitehouse, Martin Heinrich.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call for the cloture motion filed today, Wednesday, March 2, be waived.

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations en bloc: Calendar Nos. 441, 445, 458; that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc without intervening action or debate; that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that any statements related to the nominations be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and the Senate resume legislative session.

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

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nominations of Claire A. Pierangelo, of California, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Madagascar, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Union of the Comoros; Virginia E. Palmer, of Virginia, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Ghana; and David John Young, of Virginia, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Malawi?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now resume legislative session.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

BUDGETARY REVISIONS

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, S. Con. Res. 14, the fiscal year 2022 congressional budget resolution, included a reserve fund in section 3003 to allow the chairman of the Committee on the Budget to revise budget aggregates and committee allocations for legislation that would not increase the deficit over the period of fiscal years 2022 to 2031.

The Senate is considering H.R. 3076, the Postal Service Reform Act of 2022, which meets the condition of not increasing the deficit over the relevant 10-year period. As such, I am filing a revision to the aggregates and committee allocations under the budget resolution, which were last revised on February 8. Specifically, the Congressional Budget Office estimates that the bill would increase on-budget direct spending by $430 million over 5 years but decrease it by $73 million over 10 years.

I am also refiling two tables that I previously filed on February 8 to correct the amounts of budget authority allowable for fiscal year 2022.

I ask unanimous consent that the accompanying tables, which provide details about the adjustment, be printed in the RECORD.

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

REVISIONS TO BUDGET AGGREGATES—BUDGET AUTHORITY AND OUTLAYS

[Pursuant to Sections 4004 & 4009 of S. Con. Res. 14]

[$ in billions]

	2022
Current Spending Aggregates:	
Budget Authority	4,145.465
Outlays	4,504.246
Adjustment:	
Budget Authority	0.612
Outlays	−3.754
Revised Aggregates:	
Budget Authority	4,146.077
Outlays	4,500.492

Note: This table makes two adjustments. It republishes the table filed on February 8 to exclude $2.9 billion of budget authority from increased enterprise guarantee fees pursuant to section 3110 of S. Con Res. 11 (114th Congress), the FY 2016 budget resolution. It also adjusts for the effects of H.R. 3076, the Postal Service Reform Act of 2022, reducing both budget authority and outlays by $62 million.

REVISIONS TO ALLOCATION TO SENATE COMMITTEES

[Pursuant to Section 3003 of S. Con. Res. 14, the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2022]

[$ in billions]

	2022	2022–2026	2022–2031
Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs:			
Budget Authority	163.094	858.603	1,822.637
Outlays	162.131	867.724	1,839.039
Adjustments:			
Budget Authority	−0.062	0.430	−0.073
Outlays	−0.062	0.430	−0.073
Revised Allocation:			
Budget Authority	163.032	859.033	1,822.564
Outlays	162.069	868.154	1,838.966
Environment and Public Works:			
Budget Authority	48.743	243.930	492.473
Outlays	14.326	39.006	63.219
Adjustments:			
Budget Authority	0.674	28.580	93.681
Outlays	−7.011	−61.650	−88.619
Revised Environment & Public Works:			
Budget Authority	49.417	272.510	586.154
Outlays	7.315	−22.644	−25.400

Note: Homeland Security and Government Affairs adjustment includes the on-budget effects of H.R. 3076, the Postal Service Reform Act of 2022. Environment and Public Works adjustment republished from February 8 to exclude $21 billion over ten years of increased enterprise guarantee fees from budget authority pursuant to section 3110 of S. Con. Res. 11 (114th Congress), the FY 2016 budget resolution.

PAY-AS-YOU-GO SCORECARD FOR THE SENATE

[Revisions Pursuant to Section 3003 of S. Con. Res. 14, the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2022]

[$ in billions]

	Balances
Current Balances:	
Fiscal Year 2022	−8.362
Fiscal Years 2022–2026	−75.890
Fiscal Years 2022–2031	−138.704
Revisions:	
Fiscal Year 2022	−0.062
Fiscal Years 2022–2026	0.430
Fiscal Years 2022–2031	−0.073
Revised Balances:	
Fiscal Year 2022	−8.424

PAY-AS-YOU-GO SCORECARD FOR THE SENATE—Continued

[Revisions Pursuant to Section 3003 of S. Con. Res. 14, the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2022]

[$ in billions]

	Balances
Fiscal Years 2022–2026	−75.460
Fiscal Years 2022–2031	−138.777

Note: Adjustment reflects the on-budget effects of H.R. 3076, the Postal Service Reform Act of 2022.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. KELLY. Mr. President, on February 16, 2022, I missed vote No. 56, cloture on Executive Calendar No. 692, Celeste Ann Wallander, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense. Had I been in attendance, I would have voted yes.

Mr. President, on February 16, 2022, I missed vote No. 57, cloture on Executive Calendar No. 476, David A. Honey, of Virginia, to be Deputy Under Secretary of Defense. Had I been in attendance, I would have voted yes.

Mr. President, on February 16, 2022, I missed vote No. 58, confirmation of Executive Calendar No. 692, Celeste Ann Wallander, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense. Had I been in attendance, I would have voted yes.

Mr. President, on February 16, 2022, I missed vote No. 59, confirmation of Executive Calendar No. 476, David A. Honey, of Virginia, to be Deputy Under Secretary of Defense. Had I been in attendance, I would have voted yes.

Mr. President, on February 17, 2022, I missed vote No. 60, motion to invoke cloture on the Motion to Proceed to H.R. 6617; a bill making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2022, and for other purposes. Had I been in attendance, I would have voted yes.

Mr. President, on February 17, 2022, I missed vote No. 61, on the amendment S. Amdt. 4929: Lee Amdt. No. 4929; to prohibit funding for COVID–19 vaccine mandates. Had I been in attendance, I would have voted no.

Mr. President, on February 17, 2022, I missed vote No. 62, on the amendment S. Amdt. 4927: Cruz Amdt No 4927; to prohibit the use of Federal funding for schools and early childhood development facilities that enforce COVID–19 vaccine mandates on children in order to protect the rights of parents to make medical decisions that affect their child. Had I been in attendance, I would have voted no.

Mr. President, on February 17, 2022, I missed vote No. 63, on amendment S. Amndt. 4930: Braun Amndt. No. 4930; to strike the Statutory PAYGO exemption and require balanced budgets in concurrent resolutions on the budget. Had I been in attendance, I would have voted yes.

Mr. President, on February 17, 2022, I missed vote No. 64, on passage of the bill: H.R. 6617; a bill making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2022, and for other purposes. Had I been in attendance, I would have voted yes.

HONORING SERGEANT MARLENE R. RITTMANIC

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to the remarkable life of Sergeant Marlene R. Rittmanic, a 21-year veteran of law enforcement who was fatally shot and passed away on December 30, 2021, while serving in the line of duty. Sergeant Rittmanic started her remarkable career at the Iroquois County Sheriff's Police Department, serving 7 years before transferring to the Bradley Police Department in 2007, for the last 14 years.

Throughout her years of protecting and serving, Sergeant Rittmanic received the Officer of the Year Award for Kankakee County and countless letters of commendation for her service to the community. She will be remembered by her colleagues as a model officer and someone who looked forward to making memories with her fellow officers as the department's photographer, posting inspirational and team-building photographs of the officers and the community.

Sergeant Rittmanic was not only a dedicated law enforcement officer, but also a devoted wife and citizen who was loved and respected in her community. Sergeant Rittmanic served in the U.S. Army and was a proud disabled veteran. Sergeant Rittmanic, a poet, also penned the prophetic poem, ''The Color We Bleed is That of Deep Blue,'' in 2001.

Sergeant Rittmanic was tragically killed in the line of duty while fulfilling her oath to serve and protect the people of the Village of Bradley, IL, and I am grateful for her years of service. She leaves behind her wife, Lyn, and their 2 rescue dogs, Trigger and Abeline. May her service, sacrifice, and kind spirit serve as an inspiration to us all.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING THE NAVAL SURFACE WARFARE CENTER INDIAN HEAD DIVISION

• Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the Naval Surface Warfare Center at Indian Head, MD. They were recognized as a winner in the 2022 Federal Laboratory Consortium National Awards Program, also known as the FLC. The FLC Awards Program annually recognizes Federal laboratories and their industry partners for outstanding technology transfer achievements.

The Excellence in Technology Transfer Award recognizes employees of FLC member laboratories and non-laboratory staff who have accomplished outstanding work in the process of transferring federally developed technology.

Indian Head received the award for its efforts in developing Silent Spring, a technology that desensitizes homemade explosives or HMEs. HMEs are extremely sensitive and unpredictable; a stray spark, a change in temperature, exposure to sunlight, or even an accidental bump can set them off.

Silent Spring shields volatile explosive materials from these potential triggers. This allows explosive ordnance disposal and law enforcement personnel to more safely move the explosive materials, while preserving forensic evidence and minimizing damage to existing infrastructure.

Silent Spring is now available commercially and is approved within the Department of Defense to address the highest priority EOD threats. The partnership has already provided hundreds of product units to Department of Defense explosive ordinance disposal users for demonstration and training and will soon do the same for the civilian public safety and law enforcement communities.

''This collaboration is one of many we have across the command that deliver innovative technologies to the warfighter,'' said NSWC IHD commanding officer Capt. Eric Correll. ''The faster we can get new innovative products to our warfighters and our first responder partners, the better.''

This emphasizes the need to invest in energetics experts. The need for this experience is more apparent than ever. As foreign threats emerge, the bright minds at Indian Head have been able to meet and exceed these threats.

Indian Head does not just explore the detection of explosive devices. They also look at ways to enhance the United States' capabilities to deter foreign aggressors.

Indian Head is a premier facility that has developed ejection seats for our pilots and have developed materials that ensure that our military has the best and sharpest tools to deter our adversaries and keep the people of this country safe.

Indian Head is an unsung hero that has tirelessly worked to ensure our national security and has humbly provided to this country for over a hundred years. We must recognize the importance of energetics research in this country. Other countries are recognizing this, and we cannot ignore this.

We need to continue to invest in this research and development, these are vital capabilities that keep our aggressors at bay.

I want to recognize and thank Indian Head for all of their contributions to the security of our country and for this great achievement.•

RECOGNIZING VALOR K9 ACADEMY

• Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, as a member and former chairman of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, each month I recognize and celebrate the American entrepreneurial spirit by highlighting the success of a small business in my home State of Idaho. Today, I am pleased to honor Valor K9 Academy as the Idaho Small Business of the Month for March 2022.

Headquartered in Horseshoe Bend, Valor K9 Academy has established

itself as one of the premier dog training companies in the Nation. Following their combined 20 years of Active-Duty service in the U.S. Air Force, veteran owners Amy and Justin Pishner realized their lifelong dream of training dogs and opened Valor K9 Academy.

Thanks to Amy and Justin's passion for training dogs and dedication to providing individualized service for each client, Valor K9 Academy has gained national recognition since its founding in 2014. What started as a two-person company has grown sixfold, with locations in Idaho, Washington, and Tennessee. The success of Valor K9 Academy has also allowed Amy and Justin to open a second business, Valor Protection Dogs, which they operate out of Horseshoe Bend.

In addition to developing lifelong relationships with its canine clients, Valor K9 Academy has immersed itself in the community. The business routinely donates proceeds to support local rescues and Idaho veterans in need. Thanks to its efforts, Valor K9 Academy is a beacon of entrepreneurial and philanthropic spirit for all of Idaho to behold.

Congratulations to Amy, Justin, and all of the employees at Valor K9 Academy for being selected as the Idaho Small Business of the Month for March 2022. Thank you for your service to our Nation, and thank you for serving Idaho as small business owners and entrepreneurs. You make our great State proud, and I look forward to your continued growth and success.●

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message from the President of the United States was communicated to the Senate by Mr. Swann, one of his secretaries.

PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

REPORT OF THE CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY THAT WAS ORIGINALLY DECLARED IN EXECUTIVE ORDER 13660 OF MARCH 6, 2014, WITH RESPECT TO UKRAINE—PM 22

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 Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs:

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 Executive Order 13660 of March 6, 2014, which was expanded in scope in Executive Order 13661 of March 16, 2014, Executive Order 13662 of March 20, 2014, and Executive Order 14065 of February 21, 2022, and under which additional steps were taken in Executive Order 13685 of December 19, 2014 and Executive Order 13849 of September 20, 2018, is to continue in effect beyond March 6, 2022.

The actions and policies of persons that undermine democratic processes and institutions in Ukraine; threaten its peace, security, stability, sovereignty, and territorial integrity; and contribute to the misappropriation of its assets, as well as the actions and policies of the Government of the Russian Federation, including its purported annexation of Crimea, its use of force in Ukraine, and its purported recognition of the so-called Donetsk People's Republic or Luhansk People's Republic regions of Ukraine, continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. Therefore, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13660 with respect to Ukraine.

JOSEPH R. BIDEN, Jr.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *March 2, 2022*.

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 12:30 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives delivered by Mrs. Alli, one of its reading clerks, announced that pursuant to section 1094(c)(2)(A)(xv) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022 (Public Law 117–81), and the order of the House of January 4, 2021, the Speaker appoints the following individual on the part of the House of Representatives to the Afghanistan War Commission: Ms. Shamila Chaudhary of Washington, D.C.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

The message further announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

H.R. 4445. An act to amend title 9 of the United States Code with respect to arbitration of disputes involving sexual assault and sexual harassment.

The enrolled bill was subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bills were read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

S. 3717. A bill to withdraw normal trade relations treatment from, and apply certain provisions of title IV of the Trade Act of 1974 to, products of the Russian Federation, and for other purposes.

S. 3723. A bill to impose sanctions with respect to the Russian Federation in response to the invasion of Ukraine, to confiscate assets of the Russian Federation and remit those assets to the legitimate Government of Ukraine, and for other purposes.

S. 3724. A bill to provide emergency supplemental appropriations in response to the crisis in Ukraine, and for other purposes.

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–3299. A communication from the Director of the Legal Processing Division, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Termination of the Employee Retention Credit under Section 3134 of the Code in the Fourth Calendar Quarter of 2021 for Certain Employers'' (Notice 2021–65) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 16, 2022; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–3300. A communication from the Chairman of the United States International Trade Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's Annual Performance Report for fiscal year 2021 and Annual Performance Plan for fiscal year 2022–2023; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–3301. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''The Administration, Cost, and Impact of the Quality Improvement Organization Program for Medicare Beneficiaries for Fiscal Year 2019''; to the Committee on Finance.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. MANCHIN, from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, with an amendment:

S. 270. A bill to amend the Act entitled ''Act to provide for the establishment of the Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site in the State of Kansas, and for other purposes'' to provide for inclusion of additional related sites in the National Park System, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 117–87).

By Mr. MANCHIN, from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 1320. A bill to establish the Chiricahua National Park in the State of Arizona as a unit of the National Park System, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 117–88).

By Mr. MANCHIN, from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, with an amendment:

S. 753. A bill to reauthorize the Highlands Conservation Act, to authorize States to use funds from that Act for administrative purposes, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 117–89).

By Mr. MANCHIN, from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, without amendment:

S. 1589. A bill to designate certain land administered by the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service in the State of Oregon as wilderness and national recreation areas, to withdraw certain land located in Curry County and Josephine County, Oregon, from all forms of entry, appropriation, or disposal under the public land laws, location, entry, and patent under the mining laws, and operation under the mineral leasing and geothermal leasing laws, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 117–90).

By Mr. MANCHIN, from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 2433. A bill to require the Secretary of the Interior to develop and maintain a cadastre of Federal real property (Rept. No. 117–91).

By Mr. MANCHIN, from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, without amendment:

S. 2490. A bill to establish the Blackwell School National Historic Site in Marfa, Texas, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 117–92).

By Mr. DURBIN, from the Committee on the Judiciary, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 2992. A bill to provide that certain discriminatory conduct by covered platforms shall be unlawful, and for other purposes.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. WYDEN for the Committee on Finance.

*Robert Michael Gordon, of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services.

*Rebecca E. Jones Gaston, of Oregon, to be Commissioner on Children , Youth, and Families, Department of Health and Human Services.

*January Contreras, of Arizona, to be Assistant Secretary for Family Support, Department of Health and Human Services.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. KAINE (for himself, Mr. MARKEY, and Ms. DUCKWORTH):

S. 3726. A bill to address research on, and improve access to, supportive services for individuals with long COVID; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. KENNEDY:

S. 3727. A bill to ensure that employees of the Internal Revenue Service are brought back to their offices until the backlog of 2020 tax returns has been eliminated; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BENNET (for himself and Mr. HICKENLOOPER):

S. 3728. A bill to amend the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 to reauthorize the Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area, Cache La Poudre National Heritage Area, and South Park National Heritage Area in the State of Colorado, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself, Mr. RISCH, and Ms. ERNST):

S. 3729. A bill to amend section 203 of Public Law 94–305 to ensure proper authority for the Office of Advocacy of the Small Business Administration, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself, Mr. RISCH, and Ms. ERNST):

S. 3730. A bill to ensure a complete analysis of the potential impacts of rules on small entities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. COTTON:

S. 3731. A bill to restart oil and gas leasing and permitting on Federal land, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

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

S. 3732. A bill to block the property of Russian state-owned entities; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. RUBIO:

S. 3733. A bill to prohibit investment by institutional investors in securities issued by Russian entities; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Ms. WARREN (for herself, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. KELLY, and Ms. ROSEN):

S. 3734. A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to designate Gold Star Families Day as a legal public holiday, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. SCOTT of Florida (for himself, Mr. CRAMER, and Mr. KENNEDY):

S. 3735. A bill to impose sanctions to deter aggression by the People's Republic of China against Taiwan, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself and Mr. BURR):

S. 3736. A bill to amend the Natural Gas Act to protect consumers from excessive rates, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. MURPHY (for himself and Mr. LUJÁN):

S. 3737. A bill to establish the Public Health Information and Communications Advisory Committee for purposes of providing recommendations and reports, and to support educational initiatives on communication and dissemination of information during public health emergencies; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. JOHNSON (for himself, Mr. BARRASSO, and Ms. LUMMIS):

S. 3738. A bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior to reissue final rules relating to listing the gray wolf in the Western Great Lakes and Wyoming under the Endangered Species Act of 1973; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

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

S. 3739. A bill to designate certain unelected entities claiming to be governments as foreign terrorist organizations, to impose certain measures with respect to countries that support such entities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. KELLY (for himself and Mrs. BLACKBURN):

S. 3740. A bill to provide for a comprehensive and integrative program to accelerate microelectronics research and development at the Department of Energy, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. HEINRICH (for himself and Mr. CRUZ):

S. 3741. A bill to prohibit the use of Federal funds for the private interim storage of spent nuclear fuel, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. WICKER, and Mr. PETERS):

S. Res. 529. A resolution supporting a democratic, pluralistic, and prosperous Bosnia and Herzegovina on the 30th Anniversary of its declaration of independence; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mr. COONS, Mr. BARRASSO, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. BRAUN, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. CARPER, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. ERNST, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. KING, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Ms. WARREN):

S. Res. 530. A resolution designating March 4, 2022, as ''National Speech and Debate Education Day'' ; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 403

At the request of Mr. YOUNG, the names of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) and the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) were added as cosponsors of 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.

S. 544

At the request of Ms. ERNST, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 544, a bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to designate one week each year as ''Buddy Check Week'' for the purpose of outreach and education concerning peer wellness checks for veterans, and for other purposes.

S. 765

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. OSSOFF) was added as a cosponsor of S. 765, a bill to improve United States consideration of, and strategic support for, programs to prevent and respond to gender-based violence from the onset of humanitarian emergencies and to build the capacity of humanitarian actors to address the immediate and long-term challenges resulting from such violence, and for other purposes.

S. 1030

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1030, a bill to prohibit the use of Federal funds to install permanent fencing around the United States Capitol, any of the Capitol Buildings, or any portion of the Capitol Grounds.

S. 1115

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1115, a bill to prohibit drilling in the outer Continental Shelf, to prohibit coal leases on Federal land, and for other purposes.

S. 1170

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1170, a bill to amend the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act

to improve the efficiency of summer meals.

S. 1578

At the request of Ms. ROSEN, her name was added as a cosponsor of S. 1578, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to authorize a loan repayment program for mental health professionals to relieve workforce shortages, and for other purposes.

S. 1845

At the request of Mr. WICKER, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1845, a bill to provide for pay and allowances for members of the Coast Guard during a funding gap, to provide full funding to address the shoreside facility maintenance and recapitalization backlog of the Coast Guard, and to diversify the Coast Guard, and for other purposes.

S. 1945

At the request of Mr. COONS, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1945, a bill to provide for the long-term improvement of Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and for other purposes.

S. 2036

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the names of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) and the Senator from Mississippi (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH) were added as cosponsors of S. 2036, a bill to amend the Packers and Stockyards Act, 1921, to establish the Office of the Special Investigator for Competition Matters, and for other purposes.

S. 2108

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2108, a bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to eliminate work disincentives for childhood disability beneficiaries.

S. 2244

At the request of Mr. KAINE, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2244, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide for teacher and school leader quality enhancement and to enhance institutional aid.

S. 2275

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2275, a bill to authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services to build safer, thriving communities, and save lives, by investing in effective community-based violence reduction initiatives, and for other purposes.

S. 2373

At the request of Mrs. CAPITO, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2373, a bill to reestablish United States global leadership in nuclear energy, revitalize domestic nuclear energy supply chain infrastructure, support the licensing of advanced nuclear technologies, and improve the regulation of nuclear energy, and for other purposes.

S. 2456

At the request of Mr. PETERS, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2456, a bill to direct the Federal Communications Commission to take certain actions to increase diversity of ownership in the broadcasting industry, and for other purposes.

S. 2508

At the request of Mr. REED, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2508, a bill to amend the Truth in Lending Act to extend the consumer credit protections provided to members of the Armed Forces and their dependents under title 10, United States Code, to all consumers.

S. 2700

At the request of Ms. ROSEN, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. KAINE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2700, a bill to require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to improve the detection, prevention, and treatment of mental health issues among public safety officers, and for other purposes.

S. 2736

At the request of Mr. BURR, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2736, a bill to exclude vehicles to be used solely for competition from certain provisions of the Clean Air Act, and for other purposes.

S. 2828

At the request of Mr. TILLIS, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2828, a bill to authorize U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to process employment-based immigrant visa applications after September 30, 2021, and to award such visas to eligible applicants from the pool of unused employment-based immigrant visas during fiscal years 2020 and 2021.

S. 2889

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2889, a bill to amend the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 to address the timing for the use of funds with respect to grants made to shuttered venue operators.

S. 3293

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3293, a bill to expand access of veterans to mental health care from the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

S. 3360

At the request of Mr. REED, the names of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 3360, a bill to reauthorize title II of the Higher Education Act of 1965, and for other purposes.

S. 3571

At the request of Mr. HEINRICH, the names of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER), the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA) and the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 3571, a bill to promote remediation of abandoned hardrock mines, and for other purposes.

S. 3611

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the names of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) and the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER) were added as cosponsors of S. 3611, a bill to provide for improvements in the reimbursement of eligible health care providers through the Provider Relief Fund, and for other purposes.

S. 3642

At the request of Ms. WARREN, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3642, a bill to permit employees to request changes to their work schedules without fear of retaliation and to ensure that employers consider these requests, and to require employers to provide more predictable and stable schedules for employees in certain occupations with evidence of unpredictable and unstable scheduling practices that negatively affect employees, and for other purposes.

S. 3700

At the request of Mr. WARNOCK, the names of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS), the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE), the Senator from Nevada (Ms. ROSEN), the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN), the Senator from Nevada (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO) and the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 3700, a bill to provide for appropriate cost-sharing for insulin products covered under Medicare part D and private health plans.

S. 3718

At the request of Mr. MARSHALL, the names of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN) and the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) were added as cosponsors of S. 3718, a bill to prohibit the importation of petroleum and petroleum products from the Russian Federation.

S. 3725

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the names of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 3725, a bill to withdraw normal trade relations treatment from products of countries that commit acts of aggression in violation of international law against other countries or territories and to amend the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act to modify the foreign persons subject to sanctions and to remove the sunset for the imposition of sanctions.

S.J. RES. 10

At the request of Mr. KAINE, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 10, a joint resolution to repeal

the authorizations for use of military force against Iraq, and for other purposes.

S.J. RES. 37

At the request of Mr. PAUL, the names of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) and the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES) were added as cosponsors of S.J. Res. 37, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention relating to ''Requirement for Persons To Wear Masks While on Conveyances and at Transportation Hubs'' .

S.J. RES. 38

At the request of Mr. MARSHALL, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 38, a joint resolution relating to a national emergency declared by the President on March 13, 2020.

S. CON. RES. 9

At the request of Mr. HEINRICH, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. Con. Res. 9, a concurrent resolution supporting the Local Radio Freedom Act.

S. RES. 334

At the request of Ms. WARREN, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 334, a resolution memorializing those impacted by and lost to the COVID–19 virus.

AMENDMENT NO. 4933

At the request of Mr. SCOTT of Florida, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 4933 intended to be proposed to H.R. 3076, a bill to provide stability to and enhance the services of the United States Postal Service, and for other purposes.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. KAINE (for himself, Mr. MARKEY, and Ms. DUCKWORTH):

S. 3726. A bill to address research on, and improve access to, supportive services for individuals with long COVID; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, some studies have shown that upwards of 50 percent of people who have had COVID–19 will experience some form of post-acute sequelae of COVID–19 infection PASC, 6 months after infection, including neurological, cardiovascular, respiratory, and mental health symptoms. To date, there have been over 78 million cases of COVID–19 in the United State and an untold number who were infected but did not have access to testing to confirm their diagnosis. PASC, commonly known as long COVID, is a growing public health crisis in this country. I myself have experienced these symptoms and know firsthand the importance of increasing our understanding of the causes and possible treatments for long COVID. Given the disproportionate impact of COVID–19 on communities of color, persons with disabilities, seniors, and first responders, we must ensure that there is equity in our work to address the needs of individuals with long COVID.

That is why Senators Markey, Duckworth, and I are introducing the Comprehensive Access to Resources and Education for Long COVID Act, or the CARE for Long COVID Act, legislation that would expand our knowledge of the symptoms of long COVID, barriers to care, and disparities in diagnosis and treatment. This bill would synthesize data on patients' experience with long COVID, compiling information crucial for further research and improved policy and treatment. Additionally, this bill would encourage research and recommendations around the health system's response to long COVID, with an emphasis on reducing disparities in communities that have experienced disproportionate harm during the pandemic. To ensure actionable research, this bill would require dissemination of findings to healthcare providers, patients, Federal Agencies, and other key stakeholders in a manner that is accessible.

This bill would also ensure that adults and children with long COVID have the resources they need to navigate workplaces and schools, building on efforts by the Biden administration to recognize long COVID as a disability. Specifically, this bill would facilitate interagency coordination to educate the public on the impact of long COVID and the rights associated with employment, disability status, and education for individuals with long COVID. To ensure that individuals with long COVID can access existing resources, this bill would fund grants for medical-legal partnerships and other collaborations between healthcare providers, community-based organizations, and legal services. Recipients would be able to use grant funds to support cooperative efforts, provide technical assistance, or hire staff in order to help individuals with long COVID access healthcare, social services, or legal services.

Robust response to the long COVID crisis will continue our efforts to address the equity and well-being of historically marginalized communities. We cannot afford to let the needs of individuals with long COVID go unmet any longer. I urge my colleagues to support the passage of the CARE for Long COVID Act so that we can take necessary steps towards meeting the needs of diverse communities with long COVID.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 529—SUPPORTING A DEMOCRATIC, PLURALISTIC, AND PROSPEROUS BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA ON THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF ITS DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. WICKER, and Mr. PETERS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 529

Whereas Bosnia and Herzegovina has historically been a pluralistic society influenced by and composed of a diverse set of religions, cultures, and ethnicities;

Whereas, on March 3, 1992, Bosnia and Herzegovina declared independence, and on April 7, 1992, the United States recognized Bosnia and Herzegovina as an independent state;

Whereas more than 100,000 people died and 2,000,000 more were displaced in Bosnia and Herzegovina between 1992 and 1995;

Whereas the United States, alongside the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), played a crucial role in ending the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and brokering the General Framework Agreement for Bosnia and Herzegovina (also known as the ''Dayton Agreement'' and the ''Dayton Accords'') in November 1995;

Whereas the Dayton Accords ended the war, affirmed the territorial integrity and political independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina, established the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republika Srpska, and two tiers of government at the state, entity, district, canton, and municipal levels, installed the NATO Stabilization Force (SFOR) as an international interim peacekeeping force, and created the Office of the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina (OHR) to oversee civilian implementation of the accords;

Whereas, since the Dayton Accords were signed, the Government and people of Bosnia and Herzegovina have made important strides toward re-building a peaceful society based on democracy, human rights, the rule of law, and a free-market economy;

Whereas, in 2004, the United Nations Security Council adopted United Nations Security Council Resolution 1575 authorizing a multinational stabilization force led by the European Union (EUFOR) as the legal successor to SFOR in Bosnia and Herzegovina;

Whereas, in 2008, the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board set out the requirements that need to be met prior to the closure of the OHR in the 5+2 Agenda;

Whereas, since 2009 and the case of Sejdić-Finci, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) has issued judgments concerning ethnic- and territory-based discrimination in the elections of Bosnia and Herzegovina and requiring reforms, which have yet to be implemented;

Whereas Bosnia and Herzegovina was invited to join a NATO Membership Action Plan in 2010, and Bosnia and Herzegovina submitted its first Reform Program to NATO in 2019;

Whereas Bosnia and Herzegovina formally applied for European Union membership on February 15, 2016;

Whereas, on May 29, 2019, the European Union adopted a roadmap to membership for Bosnia and Herzegovina, outlining needed reforms in the areas of democracy, the rule of

law, fundamental rights, and public administration;

Whereas the United States and the European Union have called on Bosnia and Herzegovina to implement election and targeted constitutional reforms to ensure broad participation in the 2022 general election in Bosnia and Herzegovina and to comply with the Sejdić-Finci judgments from the ECHR;

Whereas, on October 20, 2021, the United States and the European Union issued a joint statement supporting the territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina and calling ''on all parties to respect and protect state institutions, resume constructive dialogue, and take steps to advance progress on the EU integration path—including on relevant reforms'';

Whereas some politicians in Bosnia and Herzegovina and other countries in the region continue to make statements downplaying or denying the 1995 Srebrenica genocide;

Whereas Milorad Dodik, a Bosnian Serb member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, has hampered reconciliation efforts through genocide denial, engaged in proactive and destabilizing security maneuvers, threatened to withdraw Republika Srpska from state-level institutions, including the judiciary, the security services, the Indirect Tax Authority, and the armed forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and called for the dissolution of the OHR;

Whereas, on December 10, 2021, the parliament of Republika Srpska voted in favor of denying the constitutional and legitimate authority of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the areas of taxation, justice, and security and defense;

Whereas the United States has imposed sanctions on Milorad Dodik pursuant to Executive Order 13304 (68 Fed. Reg. 32313; relating to the Termination of Emergencies With Respect to Yugoslavia and Modification of Executive Order 13219 of June 26, 2001) and Executive Order 14033 (86 Fed. Reg. 31079; relating to Blocking Property and Suspending Entry Into the United States of Certain Persons Contributing to the Destabilizing Situation in the Western Balkans) for obstructing the Dayton Accords and corruption;

Whereas, on January 9, 2022, Milorad Dodik presided over commemorations of an unconstitutional holiday, Republika Srpska Day, which coincided with the day Bosnian Serbs declared their own state and ignited four years of war and bloodshed;

Whereas international financial institutions such as the International Monetary Foundation have warned that withdrawal from the Indirect Tax Authority would cripple the economy of Bosnia and Herzegovina;

Whereas, in 2020, the economy of Bosnia and Herzegovina contracted by an estimated 4.3 percent, and the youth unemployment rate rose to 33.6 percent, disrupting a five-year trend of decline in part due to the rampant corruption that remains unaddressed; and

Whereas at least 400,000 citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina have emigrated from Bosnia and Herzegovina over the past 8 years: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) congratulates Bosnia and Herzegovina on the 30th anniversary of its declaration of independence;

(2) reaffirms strong and longstanding bipartisan support for Bosnia and Herzegovina, and continues to believe that peace and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina is integral to the peace and stability of Europe as a whole;

(3) calls on all parties to uphold the spirit of unity enshrined in the Dayton Accords and to redouble their efforts to enact electoral and targeted constitutional reforms prior to the 2022 general election in Bosnia and Herzegovina;

(4) calls on the members of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina to recognize their critical role in preserving stability and to work together in the best interests of their constituents as part of a sovereign and independent Bosnia and Herzegovina within its internationally recognized borders;

(5) encourages the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina to continue pursuing membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the European Union and urges the European Union to increase its efforts, cooperation, and assistance to swiftly advance the accession process;

(6) calls on the President to prioritize efforts to combat political corruption, democratic backsliding, unemployment, and brain drain in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in particular, by focusing on youth engagement;

(7) commends the continued efforts of the Office of the High Representative (OHR) to advance reforms, reaffirms the authority of the OHR as articulated in the Dayton Accords, and calls on members of the Peace and Implementation Council to provide their full support to the OHR and advancement of the 5+2 Agenda;

(8) calls on the President to develop an inclusive and comprehensive strategy for Bosnia and Herzegovina, in coordination with Bosnian and Herzegovinian civil society and the European Union, and to increase engagement with minority groups in an effort to hear from a diverse cross-section of citizens in Bosnia and Herzegovina, inclusive of all ethnic, political, or religious affiliations;

(9) encourages the United Nations and its member states to continue to support the EUFOR-Althea stabilization force and to review the current levels of the force in the face of challenges to the integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina;

(10) encourages the United States to consider additional steps to support security and stabilization in Bosnia and Herzegovina and to support EUFOR;

(11) condemns individuals who are actively seeking to undermine the security, stability, and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina and urges the President and European allies of the United States to hold such individuals accountable for their actions, including through the use of sanctions where appropriate;

(12) condemns the inflammatory rhetoric of politicians in Bosnia and Herzegovina and others in the region who deny the severity or perpetration of war crimes and genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina;

(13) condemns politicians in Bosnian and Herzegovina and the region who—

(A) persist in rampant corruption for personal enrichment at the cost of the prosperity of the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina; and

(B) prevent Bosnia and Herzegovina from adopting the reforms necessary to secure membership in the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization; and

(14) emphasizes that the United States Government will continue to support the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina in their quest to build a unified, pluralistic, prosperous, and peaceful state.

SENATE RESOLUTION 530—DESIGNATING MARCH 4, 2022, AS ''NATIONAL SPEECH AND DEBATE EDUCATION DAY''

Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mr. COONS, Mr. BARRASSO, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. BRAUN, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. CARPER, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. ERNST, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. KING, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Ms. WARREN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 530

Whereas it is essential for youth to learn and practice the art of communicating with and without technology;

Whereas speech and debate education offers students myriad forms of public speaking through which students may develop talent and exercise unique voice and character;

Whereas speech and debate education gives students the 21st century skills of communication, critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration;

Whereas critical analysis and effective communication allow important ideas, texts, and philosophies the opportunity to flourish;

Whereas personal, professional, and civic interactions are enhanced by the ability of the participants in those interactions to listen, concur, question, and dissent with reason and compassion;

Whereas students who participate in speech and debate have chosen a challenging activity that requires regular practice, dedication, and hard work;

Whereas teachers and coaches of speech and debate devote in-school, afterschool, and weekend hours to equip students with life-changing skills and opportunities;

Whereas National Speech and Debate Education Day emphasizes the lifelong impact of providing people of the United States with the confidence and preparation to both discern and share views;

Whereas National Speech and Debate Education Day acknowledges that most achievements, celebrations, commemorations, and pivotal moments in modern history begin, end, or are crystallized with public address;

Whereas National Speech and Debate Education Day recognizes that learning to research, construct, and present an argument is integral to personal advocacy, social movements, and the making of public policy;

Whereas the National Speech & Debate Association, in conjunction with national and local partners, honors and celebrates the importance of speech and debate through National Speech and Debate Education Day; and

Whereas National Speech and Debate Education Day emphasizes the importance of speech and debate education and the integration of speech and debate education across grade levels and disciplines: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates March 4, 2022, as ''National Speech and Debate Education Day'';

(2) strongly affirms the purposes of National Speech and Debate Education Day; and

(3) encourages educational institutions, businesses, community and civic associations, and all people of the United States to celebrate and promote National Speech and Debate Education Day.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 4956. Mr. BARRASSO (for himself and Mr. RISCH) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3076, to provide stability to and enhance the services of the United States Postal Service, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4957. Mr. BARRASSO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3076, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4958. Ms. ERNST submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the

bill H.R. 3076, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4959. Ms. ERNST submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 3076, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4960. Mr. GRASSLEY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1216, to extend the temporary scheduling order for fentanyl-related substances; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4961. Mr. MERKLEY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3076, to provide stability to and enhance the services of the United States Postal Service, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4962. Mr. MERKLEY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3076, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4963. Mr. MERKLEY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3076, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4964. Mrs. CAPITO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 3076, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4965. Mr. CORNYN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3076, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4966. Mr. TOOMEY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3076, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4967. Mr. MERKLEY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3076, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4968. Mr. SCOTT of Florida submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3076, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4969. Mr. SCOTT of Florida submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3076, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 4956. Mr. BARRASSO (for himself and Mr. RISCH) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3076, to provide stability to and enhance the services of the United States Postal Service, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. FERC APPLICATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The following policy statements issued by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission shall have no force or effect until the date described in subsection (b):

(1) The updated policy statement entitled ''Updated Policy Statement on Certification of New Interstate Natural Gas Facilities'' (Docket No. PL18–1–000 (February 18, 2022)).

(2) The interim policy statement entitled ''Consideration of Greenhouse Gas Emissions in Natural Gas Infrastructure Project Reviews'' (Docket No. PL21–3–000 (February 18, 2022)).

(b) DATE DESCRIBED.—The date referred to in subsection (a) is the later of—

(1) the date on which the Electric Reliability Organization (as defined in section 215(a) of the Federal Power Act (16 U.S.C. 824o(a)) certifies that disruption to pipeline natural gas supplies does not pose material risk to power system reliability in any season of the year in the territory served by any regional reliability entity, including the Western Electricity Coordinating Council, the Midwest Reliability Organization, the Texas Reliability Entity, and the Northeast Power Coordinating Council; and

(2) the date on which, as determined by the Administrator of the Energy Information Administration, prices for natural gas and wholesale electricity do not exceed, for not fewer than 3 successive calendar quarters, the average of prices for natural gas and wholesale electricity that were in effect for calendar years 2018, 2019, and 2020.

(c) REQUIREMENT TO TIMELY PROCESS FERC APPLICATIONS.—Unless and until the conditions described in paragraphs (1) and (2) of subsection (b) are met, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission shall timely process applications under section 3(e) and section 7 of the Natural Gas Act (15 U.S.C. 717b(e), 717f) pursuant to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission 1999 Policy Statement on the Certification of New Interstate Natural Gas Facilities (Docket No. PL99–3–000 (September 15, 1999)).

(d) RIGHT TO SEEK RELIEF.—Any party aggrieved by the failure of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to process an application described in subsection (c) in a reasonable time period may seek equitable relief in any Federal court of competent jurisdiction.

SA 4957. Mr. BARRASSO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3076, to provide stability to and enhance the services of the United States Postal Service, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

TITLE ____—ENERGY SECURITY

SEC. ___01. SHORT TITLE.

This title may be cited as the ''Energy Security Cooperation with Allied Partners in Europe Act of 2021''.

SEC. ___02. STATEMENT OF POLICY.

It is the policy of the United States—

(1) to reduce the dependency of allies and partners of the United States on Russian energy resources, especially natural gas, in order for those countries to achieve lasting and dependable energy security;

(2) to condemn the Government of the Russian Federation for, and to deter that government from, using its energy resources as a geopolitical weapon to coerce, intimidate, and influence other countries;

(3) to improve energy security in Europe by increasing access to diverse, reliable, and affordable energy;

(4) to promote energy security in Europe by working with the European Union and other allies of the United States to develop liberalized energy markets that provide diversified energy sources, suppliers, and routes;

(5) to continue to strongly oppose the Nord Stream 2 pipeline based on its detrimental effects on the energy security of the European Union and the economy of Ukraine and other countries in Central Europe through which natural gas is transported; and

(6) to support countries that are allies or partners of the United States by expediting the export of energy resources from the United States.

SEC. ___03. NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION.

The President should direct the United States Permanent Representative on the Council of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (in this title referred to as ''NATO'') to use the voice and influence of the United States to encourage NATO member countries, including the United States, to work together to achieve energy security for those countries and countries in Europe and Eurasia that are partners of NATO.

SEC. ___04. TRANSATLANTIC ENERGY STRATEGY.

(a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the United States and other NATO member countries should explore ways to ensure that NATO member countries diversify their energy supplies and routes in order to enhance their energy security, including through the development of a transatlantic energy strategy.

(b) TRANSATLANTIC ENERGY STRATEGY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State, in coordination with the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development and the Secretary of Energy, shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a transatlantic energy strategy, to be presented to NATO—

(A) to enhance the energy security of NATO member countries and countries that are partners of NATO; and

(B) to increase exports of energy from the United States to such countries.

(2) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term ''appropriate congressional committees'' means—

(A) the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate; and

(B) the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives.

SEC. ___05. EXPEDITED APPROVAL OF EXPORTATION OF NATURAL GAS TO UNITED STATES ALLIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3(c) of the Natural Gas Act (15 U.S.C. 717b(c)) is amended—

(1) by inserting ''(1)'' before ''For purposes'';

(2) by striking ''nation with which there is in effect a free trade agreement requiring national treatment for trade in natural gas'' and inserting ''foreign country described in paragraph (2)''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(2) A foreign country described in this paragraph is—

''(A) a nation with which there is in effect a free trade agreement requiring national treatment for trade in natural gas;

''(B) a member country of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization;

''(C) subject to paragraph (3), Japan; and

''(D) any other foreign country if the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense, determines that exportation of natural gas to that foreign country would promote the national security interests of the United States.

''(3) The exportation of natural gas to Japan shall be deemed to be consistent with the public interest pursuant to paragraph (1), and applications for such exportation shall be granted without modification or delay under that paragraph, during only such period as the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security, signed at Washington January 19, 1960, and entered into force June 23, 1960 (11 UST 1632; TIAS 4509), between the United States and Japan, remains in effect.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply with respect to applications for the authorization to export natural gas under section 3 of the Natural Gas Act (15 U.S.C. 717b) that are pending on, or filed on or after, the date of the enactment of this Act.

SA 4958. Ms. ERNST submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by

her to the bill H.R. 3076, to provide stability to and enhance the services of the United States Postal Service, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of section 101, add the following:

(e) STUDYING IMPACT ON MEDICARE PART B PREMIUMS AND PREVENTING ANY SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN MEDICARE PART B PREMIUMS.—

(1) STUDY AND REPORTS.—

(A) STUDY.—The Chief Actuary of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Office of the Actuary (referred to in this subsection as the ''Chief Actuary'') shall study the potential impact of the implementation of the provisions of, and amendments made by, this section (other than this subsection) on monthly premiums under part B of title XVIII of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395j et seq.).

(B) PRE-IMPLEMENTATION REPORT.—Not later than January 1, 2025, the Chief Actuary shall submit to Congress a report containing the results of the study conducted under subparagraph (A).

(C) ONGOING REPORTS ON PREMIUM IMPACT.—Not later than the date on which the Chief Actuary determines the monthly actuarial rate for enrollees age 65 and over in each of 2037 through 2042 for the succeeding calendar year according to section 1839(a)(1) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395r(a)(1)), the Chief Actuary shall submit to Congress a report on the amount of any projected increase in monthly premiums under such part B for such succeeding calendar year as a result of the implementation of the provisions of, and amendments made by, this section (other than this subsection).

(2) PREVENTING ANY SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN PART B PREMIUMS.—Section 1839(a) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395r(a)) is amended—

(A) in the second sentence of paragraph (1), by striking ''and (7)'' and inserting ''(7), and (8)''; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

''(8)(A) For each applicable year (as defined in subparagraph (C)), the Secretary shall reduce the amount of the monthly premium otherwise established under paragraph (3) for applicable enrollees by the amount the Secretary determines necessary to ensure that any increase in monthly premiums under this part for such enrollees as a result of the implementation of the provisions of, and amendments made by, section 101 of the Postal Service Reform Act of 2022 (other than subsection (e) of such section) is less than the applicable amount for such year.

''(B) In this paragraph, the term 'applicable amount' means, with respect to an applicable year, $15, increased by the percentage increase in the consumer price index for all urban consumers (U.S. city average) for the period beginning with July 2022 and ending with July of the year preceding the year involved. Any amount determined under the preceding sentence which is not a multiple of $1 shall be rounded to the nearest multiple of $1 (or, if it is a multiple of 50 cents but not a multiple of $1, to the next higher multiple of $1).

''(C) In this paragraph, the term 'applicable year' means any year (beginning with 2038 and ending with 2043) with respect to which the projected increase in monthly premiums under this part for the year (as reported under section 101(e)(1)(C) of the Postal Service Reform Act of 2022) as a result of the implementation of the provisions of, and amendments made by, section 101 of such Act (other than subsection (e) of such section) would result in monthly premiums under this part increasing by the applicable amount for such year or more.

''(D) In this paragraph, the term 'applicable enrollee' means, with respect to an applicable year, an individual who is not subject to a reduction in a premium subsidy pursuant to subsection (i) for months in such year.''.

SA 4959. Ms. ERNST submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 3076, to provide stability to and enhance the services of the United States Postal Service, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title II, add the following:

SEC. 210. REPORT ON SAVINGS BY POLITICAL COMMITTEES DUE TO NONPROFIT MAILING DISCOUNTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3626(e) of title 39, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(3) Not later than 30 days after the last day of each fiscal year, the Postal Service shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Oversight and Reform of the House of Representatives a report that details the amount that each of the following political committees saved during the fiscal year by paying the discounted rates for qualified nonprofit organizations under paragraph (1):

''(A) The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee.

''(B) The Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee.

''(C) The National Republican Congressional Committee.

''(D) The National Republican Senatorial Committee.''.

(b) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 3626(e)(2)(A) of title 39, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking ''Republican and'' and inserting ''National Republican Senatorial Committee, the'';

(2) by striking ''Committees'' and inserting ''Committee''; and

(3) by striking ''National Congressional'' and inserting ''Congressional Campaign''.

SA 4960. Mr. GRASSLEY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1216, to extend the temporary scheduling order for fentanyl-related substances; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

In section 2, strike ''by striking 'May 6, 2021' and inserting 'July 6, 2022' '' and insert the following: ''by striking 'March 11, 2022' and inserting 'May 11, 2023' ''.

SA 4961. Mr. MERKLEY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3076, to provide stability to and enhance the services of the United States Postal Service, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title II, add the following:

SEC. 210. REPORT ON ELECTRIC VEHICLES.

Not later than 45 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Postal Service shall submit to Congress a report analyzing—

(1) costs to the Postal Service of acquiring and operating electric vehicles versus internal combustion vehicles over the next 20 years, including assumptions about the price of electricity and gasoline; and

(2) any barrier to transitioning to a fleet of electric vehicles that exists for the Postal Service but does not exist, or does not exist to the same degree, for the competitors of the Postal Service that are currently purchasing electric vehicles.

SA 4962. Mr. MERKLEY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3076, to provide stability to and enhance the services of the United States Postal Service, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title II, add the following:

SEC. 210. PURCHASE OF NEXT GENERATION DELIVERY VEHICLES.

In carrying out the Next Generation Delivery Vehicle contract awarded to Oshkosh Defense on February 23, 2021, the Postal Service may purchase not more than—

(1) 200 internal combustion engine vehicles during fiscal year 2022;

(2) 1,000 internal combustion engine vehicles during fiscal year 2023; and

(3) 1,000 internal combustion engine vehicles during fiscal year 2024.

SA 4963. Mr. MERKLEY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3076, to provide stability to and enhance the services of the United States Postal Service, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. RURAL POST OFFICES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 404(d) of title 39, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking ''post office,'' and inserting the following: ''post office and, with respect to a determination to close a post office in a rural area, as defined by the Census Bureau, including such a post office that has been damaged or completely destroyed by fire, prior to making the determinations required by paragraph (4),'';

(2) in paragraph (3), by striking ''subsection.'' and inserting ''subsection and, with respect to a determination to close a post office located in a rural area, as defined by the Census Bureau, including such a post office that has been damaged or completely destroyed by fire, a summary of the determinations required under paragraph (4).'';

(3) by redesignating paragraphs (4), (5), and (6) as paragraph (5), (6), and (7), respectively;

(4) by inserting after paragraph (3) the following:

''(4) The Postal Service may not make a determination under subsection (a)(3) to close a post office located in a rural area, as defined by the Census Bureau, including such a post office that has been damaged or completely destroyed by fire, unless the Postal Service—

''(A)(i) determines that postal customers served by the post office would continue after the closing to receive substantially similar access to essential items, such as prescription medications and time-sensitive communications, that are sent through the mail; or

''(ii) takes action to substantially ameliorate any projected reduction in access to essential items described in clause (i); and

''(B) determines that—

''(i) businesses located in the community served by the post office would not suffer substantial financial loss as a result of the closing;

''(ii) any economic loss to the community served by the post office as a result of the closing does not exceed the cost to the Postal Service of not closing the post office;

''(iii) the area served by the post office has adequate access to wired broadband internet service, as identified on the National Broadband Map of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration; and

''(iv) there is a road connecting the community to another post office that is not more than 10 miles from the post office proposed to be closed (as measured on roads with year-round access).''; and

(5) in paragraph (7), as so redesignated, by striking ''(5)'' and inserting ''(6)''.

(b) MORATORIUM ON CLOSING RURAL POST OFFICES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding section 404(d) of title 39, United States Code, during the 1-year period beginning on the date of enactment of this Act, the Postal Service may not close a post office located in a rural area, as defined by the Census Bureau, including such a post office that has been damaged or completely destroyed by fire, except as required for the immediate protection of health and safety, or unless there is no significant community opposition to such closure.

(2) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in paragraph (1) shall be construed to limit the authority of the Postal Service to implement cost-saving measures with respect to the post offices described in that paragraph.

SA 4964. Mrs. CAPITO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 3076, to provide stability to and enhance the services of the United States Postal Service, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end, add the following:

TITLE IV—REFORMS TO PROMOTE MORE AFFORDABLE ENERGY

SEC. 401. LIMITING NEW RED TAPE AND COSTS FOR GASOLINE AND OTHER FUELS.

(a) PROHIBITION OF NEW METHANE REGULATIONS ON EXISTING OIL AND GAS SOURCES.—The Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (referred to in this section as the ''Administrator'') shall not finalize any regulation relating to methane emissions for existing oil and gas sources under section 111(d) of the Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. 7411(d)).

(b) WAIVER OF LOW VOLATILITY GASOLINE REQUIREMENTS.—In accordance with section 211(c)(4)(C)(ii) of the Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. 7545(c)(4)(C)(ii)), the Administrator shall temporarily waive low volatility gasoline requirements for any gasoline sold in the United States on or after the date of enactment of this Act until the average price of gasoline sold in the United States decreases to the average price of gasoline sold on January 1, 2021, as determined using data from the Energy Information Administration.

(c) PREEMPTION OF STATE LOW-CARBON FUEL STANDARDS.—Any low-carbon fuel standard implemented by any State, including any State-based program that regulates transportation fuels on carbon intensity for the purpose of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, is preempted by the Renewable Fuel Program under section 211(o) of the Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. 7545(o)) for the purpose of better aligning the gasoline supply in the United States.

(d) POINT OF ORDER AGAINST LEGISLATION THAT INCREASES GASOLINE OR NATURAL GAS PRICES BY IMPOSING CHARGE, FEE, OR TAX ON METHANE EMISSIONS FROM THE OIL AND GAS SECTOR.—

(1) POINT OF ORDER.—It shall not be in order in the Senate to consider any bill, joint resolution, motion, amendment, amendment between the Houses, or conference report that increases the price of gasoline or natural gas in the United States through the imposition of a charge, fee, or tax on methane emissions from the oil and gas sector.

(2) WAIVER AND APPEAL.—Paragraph (1) may be waived or suspended in the Senate only by an affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members, duly chosen and sworn. An affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members of the Senate, duly chosen and sworn, shall be required to sustain an appeal of the ruling of the Chair on a point of order raised under paragraph (1).

(e) PROHIBITION ON USE OF SOCIAL COST OF GREENHOUSE GAS ESTIMATES RAISING GASOLINE PRICES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In promulgating regulations, issuing guidance, or taking any agency action (as defined in section 551 of title 5, United States Code) relating to the social cost of greenhouse gases, no Federal agency shall adopt or otherwise use any estimates for the social cost of greenhouse gases that may raise gasoline prices, as determined through a review by the Energy Information Administration.

(2) INCLUSION.—The estimates referred to in paragraph (1) include the interim estimates in the document of the Interagency Working Group on the Social Cost of Greenhouse Gases entitled ''Technical Support Document: Social Cost of Carbon, Methane, and Nitrous Oxide Interim Estimates under Executive Order 13990'' and dated February 2021.

SEC. 402. EXPEDITING PERMITTING AND REVIEW PROCESSES.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) AUTHORIZATION.—The term ''authorization'' means any license, permit, approval, finding, determination, or other administrative decision issued by a Federal department or agency that is required or authorized under Federal law in order to site, construct, reconstruct, or commence operations of an energy project, including any authorization described in section 41001(3) of the FAST Act (42 U.S.C. 4370m(3)).

(2) ENERGY PROJECT.—The term ''energy project'' means any project involving the exploration, development, production, transportation, combustion, transmission, or distribution of an energy resource or electricity for which—

(A) an authorization is required under a Federal law other than the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.); and

(B)(i) the head of the lead agency has determined that an environmental impact statement is required; or

(ii) the head of the lead agency has determined that an environmental assessment is required, and the project sponsor requests that the project be treated as an energy project.

(3) ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT.—The term ''environmental impact statement'' means the detailed statement of environmental impacts required to be prepared under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.).

(4) ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND AUTHORIZATION PROCESS.—The term ''environmental review and authorization process'' means—

(A) the process for preparing for an energy project an environmental impact statement, environmental assessment, categorical exclusion, or other document prepared under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.); and

(B) the completion of any authorization decision required for an energy project under any Federal law other than the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.).

(5) LEAD AGENCY.—The term ''lead agency'' means—

(A) the Department of Energy;

(B) the Department of the Interior;

(C) the Department of Agriculture;

(D) the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission;

(E) the Nuclear Regulatory Commission; or

(F) any other appropriate Federal agency, as applicable, that may be responsible for navigating the energy project through the environmental review and authorization process.

(6) PROJECT SPONSOR.—The term ''project sponsor'' means an agency or other entity, including any private or public-private entity, that seeks approval from a lead agency for an energy project.

(b) TIMELY AUTHORIZATIONS FOR ENERGY PROJECTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—

(A) DEADLINE.—Except as provided in subparagraph (C), all authorization decisions necessary for the construction of an energy project shall be completed by not later than 90 days after the date of the issuance of a record of decision for the energy project by the lead agency.

(B) DETAIL.—The final environmental impact statement for an energy project shall include an adequate level of detail to inform decisions necessary for the role of any Federal agency involved in the environmental review and authorization process for the energy project.

(C) EXTENSION OF DEADLINE.—The head of a lead agency may extend the deadline under subparagraph (A) if—

(i) Federal law prohibits the lead agency or another agency from issuing an approval or permit within the period described in that subparagraph;

(ii) the project sponsor requests that the permit or approval follow a different timeline; or

(iii) an extension would facilitate completion of the environmental review and authorization process of the energy project.

(2) ENERGY PROJECT SCHEDULE.—To the maximum extent practicable and consistent with applicable Federal law, for an energy project, the lead agency shall develop, in concurrence with the project sponsor, a schedule for the energy project that is consistent with a time period of not more than 2 years for the completion of the environmental review and authorization process for an energy project, as measured from, as applicable—

(A) the date of publication of a notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement to the record of decision; or

(B) the date on which the head of the lead agency determines that an environmental assessment is required to a finding of no significant impact.

(3) LENGTH OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law and except as provided in subparagraph (B), to the maximum extent practicable, the text of the items described in paragraphs (4) through (6) of section 1502.10(a) of title 40, Code of Federal Regulations (or successor regulations), of an environmental impact statement for an energy project shall be 200 pages or fewer.

(B) EXEMPTION.—The text referred to in subparagraph (A) of an environmental impact statement for an energy project may exceed 200 pages if the lead agency establishes a new page limit for the environmental impact statement for that energy project.

(c) DEADLINE FOR FILING ENERGY-RELATED CAUSES OF ACTION.—

(1) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

(A) AGENCY ACTION.—The term ''agency action'' has the meaning given the term in section 551 of title 5, United States Code.

(B) ENERGY-RELATED CAUSE OF ACTION.—The term ''energy-related cause of action'' means a cause of action that—

(i) is filed on or after the date of enactment of this Act; and

(ii) seeks judicial review of a final agency action to issue a permit, license, or other

form of agency permission for an energy project.

(2) DEADLINE FOR FILING.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of Federal law, an energy-related cause of action shall be filed by—

(i) not later than 60 days after the date of publication of the applicable final agency action; or

(ii) if another Federal law provides for an earlier deadline than the deadline described in clause (i), the earlier deadline.

(B) PROHIBITION.—An energy-related cause of action that is not filed within the applicable time period described in subparagraph (A) shall be barred.

(d) APPLICATION OF CATEGORICAL EXCLUSIONS FOR ENERGY PROJECTS.—In carrying out requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) for an energy project, a Federal agency may use categorical exclusions designated under that Act in the implementing regulations of any other agency, subject to the conditions that—

(1) the agency makes a determination, in consultation with the lead agency, that the categorical exclusion applies to the energy project;

(2) the energy project satisfies the conditions for a categorical exclusion under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.); and

(3) the use of the categorical exclusion does not otherwise conflict with the implementing regulations of the agency, except any list of the agency that designates categorical exclusions.

SEC. 403. PROVIDING REGULATORY CERTAINTY.

(a) WATERS OF THE UNITED STATES.—The definitions of the term ''waters of the United States'' and the other terms defined in section 328.3 of title 33, Code of Federal Regulations (as in effect on January 1, 2021), are enacted into law.

(b) CODIFICATION OF SECTION 401 CERTIFICATION RULE.—The final rule of the Environmental Protection Agency entitled ''Clean Water Act Section 401 Certification Rule'' (85 Fed. Reg. 42210 (July 13, 2020)) is enacted into law.

(c) CODIFICATION OF NATIONWIDE PERMITS.—The Nationwide Permits issued, reissued, or modified, as applicable, in the following final rules of the Corps of Engineers are enacted into law:

(1) The final rule of the Corps of Engineers entitled ''Reissuance and Modification of Nationwide Permits'' (86 Fed. Reg. 2744 (January 13, 2021)).

(2) The final rule of the Corps of Engineers entitled ''Reissuance and Modification of Nationwide Permits'' (86 Fed. Reg. 73522 (December 27, 2021)).

SA 4965. Mr. CORNYN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3076, to provide stability to and enhance the services of the United States Postal Service, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ___. INELIGIBILITY OF SHIPMENTS FROM CERTAIN COUNTRIES TO BE EXEMPTED FROM THE ADVANCE ELECTRONIC INFORMATION REQUIREMENT.

Section 343(a)(3)(K)(vi)(II) of the Trade Act of 2002 (19 U.S.C. 1415(a)(3)(K)(vi)(II)) is amended, in the matter preceding item (aa), by inserting '', except for a covered nation (as defined in section 4871(d)(2) of title 10, United States Code),'' after ''exclude a country''.

SA 4966. Mr. TOOMEY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3076, to provide stability to and enhance the services of the United States Postal Service, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.

Nothing in this Act, or an amendment made by this Act, may be construed to permit the United States Postal Service to offer, directly or indirectly, financial services, including by entering into an agreement with a third party to provide financial services.

SA 4967. Mr. MERKLEY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3076, to provide stability to and enhance the services of the United States Postal Service, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title II, add the following:

SEC. 210. NEXT GENERATION DELIVERY VEHICLE CONTRACT.

Not later than 30 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Postal Service shall make available to Congress an unredacted version of the Next Generation Delivery Vehicle contract awarded to Oshkosh Defense on February 23, 2021 (contract award number 3DVPRT-21-B-0002).

SA 4968. Mr. SCOTT of Florida submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3076, to provide stability to and enhance the services of the United States Postal Service, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title II, add the following:

SEC. 210. REPAYMENT OF ORIGINAL CARES ACT LOAN REQUIRED.

Section 6001 of the CARES Act (39 U.S.C. 101 note; Public Law 116–136) is amended—

(1) in the section heading, by striking ''**FUNDING**'' and inserting ''**BORROWING AUTHORITY**''; and

(2) by striking subsection (c) and inserting the following:

''(c) LOAN REPAYMENT.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding the amendments to this section made by section 801 of division N of the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2021 (Public Law 116–260; 134 Stat. 2119), the Postal Service shall repay any amounts received from the Secretary of the Treasury under subsection (b).

''(2) TERMS AND CONDITIONS.—The agreement in principle between the Secretary of the Treasury and the Postal Service that was approved by the Board of Governors of the Postal Service on July 28, 2020, and any subsequent agreement entered into between the Secretary of the Treasury and the Postal Service to implement the agreement in principle, shall apply to the repayment of amounts under paragraph (1).''.

SA 4969. Mr. SCOTT of Florida submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3076, to provide stability to and enhance the services of the United States Postal Service, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 55, strike lines 15 through 18 and insert the following:

SEC. 202. PROHIBITION ON USE OF APPROPRIATED FUNDS TO SUBSIDIZE COMPETITIVE PRODUCTS.

Section 3633 of title 39, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(c) PROHIBITION ON USE OF APPROPRIATED FUNDS TO SUBSIDIZE COMPETITIVE PRODUCTS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—In addition to the prohibitions under subsection (a), the Postal Service may not use amounts that are appropriated for other purposes to subsidize competitive products or institutional costs that support competitive products.

''(2) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in paragraph (1) shall be construed to affect the authorization of appropriations under section 2401(c) to reimburse the Postal Service for revenue forgone under sections 3217 and 3403 through 3406.''.

SEC. 203. INTEGRATED DELIVERY NETWORK.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 101(b) of title 39, United States Code, is amended by inserting before ''The Postal Service'' the following: ''The Postal Service may maintain

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AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I have 7 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 AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY

The Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, March 2, 2022, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing on nominations.

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, March 2, 2022, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, March 2, 2022, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing on nominations.

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

The Committee on Veterans' Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, March 2, 2022, at 2 p.m., to conduct a joint hearing.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, March 2, 2022, at 3:30 p.m., to conduct a closed briefing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND BORDER MANAGEMENT

The Subcommittee on Government Operations and Border Management of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, March 2, 2022, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NEAR EAST, SOUTH ASIA, CENTRAL ASIA, AND COUNTERTERRORISM

The Subcommittee on Near East, South Asia, Central Asia, and Counterterrorism of the Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, March 2, 2022, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the following members of my office be granted floor privileges for the remainder of the Congress: Maia Hamin, Bonnie Million, Panya Gupta, Katie Rader, Felicia Chou, Raghav Aggarwal, Sarguni Singh, James Maloy, and Nadia Laniyan.

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

APPOINTMENTS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Armed Services, pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 117–81, appoints the following individual to serve as a member of the Afghanistan War Commission: Michael D. Lumpkin of Virginia.

The Chair, on behalf of the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 117–81, appoints the following individual to serve as a member of the Afghanistan War Commission: Laurel Miller of the District of Columbia.

The Chair, on behalf of the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Intelligence, pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 117–81, appoints the following individual to serve as a member of the Afghanistan War Commission: Lieutenant General Robert P. Ashley, Jr. of North Carolina.

The Chair, on behalf of the Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Armed Services, pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 117–81, appoints the following individual to serve as a member of the Afghanistan War Commission: Dr. Colin Jackson of Rhode Island.

The Chair, on behalf of the Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Intelligence, pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 117–81, appoints the following individual to serve as a member of the Afghanistan War Commission: Christopher A. Molino of Virginia.

DATA MAPPING TO SAVE MOMS' LIVES ACT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 224, S. 198.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 198) to require the Federal Communications Commission to incorporate data on maternal health outcomes into its broadband health maps.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I further ask that the bill be read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate read a third time.

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

The bill (S. 198) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed as follows:

S. 198

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 ''Data Mapping to Save Moms' Lives Act''.

SEC. 2. MAPPING BROADBAND CONNECTIVITY AND MATERNAL HEALTH OUTCOMES.

(a) INCORPORATION OF MATERNAL HEALTH OUTCOME DATA.—The Federal Communications Commission shall incorporate data on maternal health outcomes for not less than 1 year postpartum, as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention under subsection (b), into the most recently available broadband health mapping tools of the Commission.

(b) CONSULTATION WITH CDC.—The Federal Communications Commission shall consult with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention regarding the maternal health outcomes that should be incorporated into the most recently available broadband health mapping tools of the Commission under subsection (a).

SEC. 3. GAO STUDY.

Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall study and submit to Congress a report on—

(1) the effectiveness of internet connectivity in reducing maternal morbidity rates; and

(2) who is best suited to take responsibility for ensuring better internet connectivity to reduce maternal morbidity rates.

ELIMINATING LIMITS TO JUSTICE FOR CHILD SEX ABUSE VICTIMS ACT OF 2021

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 276, S. 3103.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 3103) to amend title 18, United States Code, to eliminate the statute of limitations for the filing of a civil claim for any person who, while a minor, was a victim of a violation of section 1589, 1590, 1591, 2241(c), 2242, 2243, 2251, 2251A, 2252, 2252A, 2260, 2421, 2422, or 2423 of such title.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on the Judiciary, with amendments as follows:

(The parts of the bill intended to be stricken are shown in boldface brackets and the parts of the bill intended to be inserted are shown in italics.)

S. 3103

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 ''Eliminating Limits to Justice for Child Sex Abuse Victims Act of **[**2021**]** *2022*''.

SEC. 2. ELIMINATION OF THE STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS.

Section 2255 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by striking subsection (b) and inserting the following:

''(b) STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS.—There shall be no time limit for the filing of **[**any**]** *a complaint commencing an* action **[**commenced**]** under this section.''.

SEC. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE; APPLICABILITY.

This Act and the amendments made by this Act shall—

(1) take effect on the date of enactment of this Act; and

(2) apply to—

(A) any claim or action that, as of the date described in paragraph (1), would not have been barred under section 2255(b) of title 18, United States Code, as it read on the day before the date of enactment of this Act; and

(B) any claim or action arising after the date of enactment of this Act.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported amendments be agreed to, the bill, as amended be considered read a third time and passed, and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The committee-reported amendments were agreed to.

The bill (S. 3103), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed as follows:

S. 3103

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 ''Eliminating Limits to Justice for Child Sex Abuse Victims Act of 2022''.

SEC. 2. ELIMINATION OF THE STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS.

Section 2255 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by striking subsection (b) and inserting the following:

''(b) STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS.—There shall be no time limit for the filing of a complaint commencing an action under this section.''.

SEC. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE; APPLICABILITY.

This Act and the amendments made by this Act shall—

(1) take effect on the date of enactment of this Act; and

(2) apply to—

(A) any claim or action that, as of the date described in paragraph (1), would not have been barred under section 2255(b) of title 18, United States Code, as it read on the day before the date of enactment of this Act; and

(B) any claim or action arising after the date of enactment of this Act.

NATIONAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP WEEK

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged

from further consideration and the Senate now proceed to S. Res. 527.

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

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 527) designating the week of February 12 through February 19, 2022, as ''National Entrepreneurship Week'' to recognize the importance and contributions of entrepreneurs and startups to the economic prosperity of the United States and the well-being of every community across the United States.

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

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 527) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of February 17, 2022, under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

NATIONAL SPEECH AND DEBATE EDUCATION DAY

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 530, submitted earlier today.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 530) designating March 4, 2022, as ''National Speech and Debate Education Day''.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 530) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, MARCH 3, 2022

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, finally, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m. on Thursday, March 3; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; that upon the conclusion of morning business, the Senate resume consideration of Calendar No. 273, H.R. 3076, Postal Service Reform.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 7:10 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, March 3, 2022, at 10 a.m.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate March 2, 2022:

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

CLAIRE A. PIERANGELO, OF CALIFORNIA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER–COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF MADAGASCAR, AND TO SERVE CONCURRENTLY AND WITHOUT ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION AS AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE UNION OF THE COMOROS.

VIRGINIA E. PALMER, OF VIRGINIA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER–COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA.

DAVID JOHN YOUNG, OF VIRGINIA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER–COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF MALAWI.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

IN HONOR OF THE LIFE OF COULSON TOUGH

HON. KEVIN BRADY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2022

Mr. BRADY. Madam Speaker, today I rise to honor the distinguished life and public service of my dear friend Mr. Coulson Tough. He dedicated his life to improving his community and country and ushered an idea of The Woodlands into one of the top places to live in the country.

At age 17, Coulson eagerly enlisted in the Army Air Corps, now known as the Air Force, where he served in Germany and France. After returning home, he attended the University of Michigan where he earned his bachelor's degree in Architecture and met his adoring wife Colleen Bohn. Coulson and Colleen then headed west to California to start their life together, and became parents to two wonderful children, Bruce and Cindy.

Mr. Tough spent the first 16 years of his career in architecture in California, where he designed a barn remodel for future president Ronald Reagan. In 1968, Coulson made the courageous decision to move his family to Texas, where he served as the Vice President of Facilities and Operations at the University of Houston. This is where Mr. Tough met George Mitchell, the founder of The Woodlands, and together, they created a thriving community.

Mr. Tough showcased his passion for architecture and, while working alongside Mr. Mitchell, as Vice President of Building Development for The Woodlands, helped bring his vision of a master planned community to life. The leadership and service of these two men undoubtedly made The Woodlands into what it is today.

Around The Woodlands, citizens are reminded of Coulson's legacy. He helped build 130 buildings and pioneered the procurement of public art across the community. His favorite art piece was a sculpture of a reclining boy termed ''The Dreamer,'' which resides at the intersection of West Panther Creek Drive and The Woodlands Parkway.

Mr. Tough's ideas live beyond his work as an architect. His dedication to serving his community was evident through his involvement in the Rotary Club, The Woodlands Community Presbyterian Church, the Conroe ISD Board, and The Woodlands Chamber of Commerce, where he hired me as President. In addition to serving as a Trustee on the Conroe ISD Board, he was honored to have a school in The Woodlands named after him, Coulson Tough Elementary.

Mr. Tough's most recent project was to design and construct the Mitchell Physics Building and the Institute for Fundamental Physics and Astronomy at Texas A&M University. Coulson retired at the age of 77, but continued consulting on projects both in The Woodlands and Galveston, Texas.

While we mourn with the Tough family, we also celebrate the life, service, and legacy that will live throughout our community for years to come. I am proud to join Mr. Tough's family, friends, and the entire Woodland's community in honoring his life and devotion to public service. May God bless Coulson Tough.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MIKE GALLAGHER

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2022

Mr. GALLAGHER. Madam Speaker, I was attending a funeral and was unable to participate in Roll Call numbers 46, 47, 48, 49, and 50. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 46, YEA on Roll Call No. 47, NAY on Roll Call No. 48, NAY on Roll Call No. 49 and NAY on Roll Call No. 50.

HONORING KENESHA LEWIS

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2022

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a tenacious and ambitious young lady, Mrs. Kenesha Lewis. Kenesha has shown what can be done through hard work, dedication, and a desire to achieve success.

With over 10 years of restaurant management experience, Kenesha has always had a love of serving people with excellence, bringing smiles to their faces.

Known as the ''fruit lady'' in her family for many years because of her love for fruit, Kenesha felt led in December 2018 to start creating beautiful fruit arrangements. She worked throughout the night, knowing she was being purposely driven because she was so filled with joy. After showcasing her arrangements on social media and seeing the positive and enthusiastic responses, Kenesha, with her husband Jason, birthed Kay's Kute Fruit, offering gorgeous fruit arrangements for all occasions, as well as their all-natural smoothies.

''Being a young woman here in the Delta, it's not a lot of health options,'' Kenesha says. ''It's not a lot of places you can go and get a healthy wrap and then you can go in the same place and have nice service.''

Kenesha got the idea to start a business after her husband kept getting on her case for eating too much sugar. ''I lost two teeth and he said, 'wait a minute now, you're too young to be losing these teeth.' '' she recalls, laughing. ''[he said] 'Let's figure this out.' So, we created smoothies together and I said, okay, this is good for me.''

It turns out, it was also good for business. Lewis exceeded her projected annual sales in her first month after opening. Growing up, she says people in her community were good entrepreneurs, but they usually worked out of their homes. Her mom is a stylist, and her dad ran a house painting business.

Being a black woman, now with a storefront downtown, she sees herself as a role model.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mrs. Kenesha Lewis for the outstanding work and accomplishments she has made thus far.

TRIBUTE TO JAY MYRON JACKMAN

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2022

Ms. ESHOO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and work of a dear friend and great man, Jay Jackman, who died of Parkinson's disease on January 17, 2022.

Jay Jackman was born in New York City in 1939 and raised in Brooklyn where his father instilled in him a love of political activism and a passion for justice. Jay was a graduate of Harvard College and the Columbia Medical School, did his medical residency at Stanford University, and was a graduate of the Hastings School of Law. He dedicated both his medical and legal careers to justice for all.

After his residency in psychiatry, Jay ran a drug treatment program in San Francisco, then moved to Hawaii. Upon his return to California, he worked in forensic psychiatry and psychiatry at Stanford University. He also served on the Foothill-DeAnza College Board for five years and was an advisor to the Democratic Clubs at Stanford. He served as a liaison from Stanford to the Democratic Party and was one of the early members of the Peninsula Democratic Coalition. He was a key member of the Santa Clara County Central Committee and the California Central Committee of the Democratic Party. After going to law school at age 60, he served as an expert witness in more than 250 capital cases, where he often tried to help prisoners escape the death penalty.

Jay leaves his beloved wife, Myra Strober, his children Tenaya, Rashi and Jason, and his stepchildren Jason and Liz.

Madam Speaker, I ask the entire House of Representatives to join me in honoring the life of this good and great man and in extending our most sincere condolences to Myra and his entire family. Jay Jackman bettered our country every day of his life, and was a special blessing to me and countless others.

IN RECOGNITION OF CHAMBERSBURG AREA SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL NAVY JUNIOR ROTC CADETS

HON. JOHN JOYCE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2022

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the Chambersburg Area Senior High School Navy Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (NJROTC) program.

Under the leadership of Cadet Lieutenant Commander Ethan Baker, and under the guidance of Commander Bruce Apgar and Master Sergeant Louise Montney, the Chambersburg Area Senior High School Trojan Cadets won multiple portions of the Academic, Fitness and Drill Competition held at Sterling High School in Camden, New Jersey this February.

The Varsity Cadets finished first overall in the competition after winning the Academics, Personnel Inspection, Color Guard and Armed Regulation Drill portions of the competition.

I am confident that the determination, attention to detail, and discipline that served these students so well in competition will continue to lead them to success in their academic and future endeavors.

It is inspiring to see our community's youth commit themselves to developing as leaders, and regardless of whether they find themselves serving our nation in uniform one day, I am incredibly proud of the work that the Chambersburg Area Senior High School NJROTC cadets done this past year, and I wish them every continued success.

HONORING LEFLORE COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL TEAM

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2022

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable team, Leflore County High School (LCHS) football team.

LCHS football team has had a tremendous football season. They ended their 2021 season with an 10–4 record.

On November 26, 2021, LCHS defeated Charleston High School. 24–22, in the North State 2A championship game in Charleston to advance to the state title game. On December 4, 2021, the Tigers lost to Scott Central, 72–24, in Hattiesburg.

Despite their loss, Leflore County celebrated them. LCHS is the district's only high school to reach the state championship in football since the Greenwood and Leflore County districts merged in 2019.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the remarkable Leflore County High School Team for their commitment and hard work.

CONGRATULATING ELIZABETH SAVAGE

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2022

Mr. HOYER. Madam Speaker, I rise to congratulate Elizabeth 'Liz' Savage, a career attorney in the Disability Rights Section of the Civil Rights Division (CRD) at the U.S. Department of Justice, who received the Maceo W. Hubbard Award in December. The Division's highest award, it recognizes her exceptional work as an expert in disability rights law and her commitment to educating Americans with disabilities on how to access reasonable accommodations guaranteed under law. The law referenced, of course, is the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which I was proud to sponsor and helps shepherd to enactment in 1990.

I've known Liz Savage for many years, and during the time that I was leading efforts to pass the ADA, she was working at the Epilepsy Foundation. Liz had been working with our former Majority Whip Tony Coelho, long a champion for disability rights, who served on the Epilepsy Foundation's board at the time. Tony, of course, was the original author of the ADA, and I was honored that he asked me to take charge of it after he left the House. When I did, I was grateful for Liz's support and assistance, as she helped lead grassroots organizing and outreach to Members of Congress to educate the public and policymakers about what the ADA would achieve and how important it would be to promoting equality, access, independence, and opportunity for those living with disabilities. She worked hard to build a coalition among national disability, civil rights, religious, and civic organizations in support of the ADA's enactment.

In addition to the ADA, Liz had a profound impact on a number of pieces of federal legislation during her time at the Epilepsy Foundation. These included the Family and Medical Leave Act, the Civil Rights Restoration Act, and Fair Housing Act amendments. Liz served as a tireless advocate in all of those efforts to ensure that the voices of people whose lived experience included dealing with a disability were included when policies were developed and adopted.

For more than three decades, Liz has continued to fight for the rights and equality of people with disabilities. Over the past ten years, she has been working in the Justice Department's Disability Rights Section, and the Maceo W. Hubbard Award she received in December is testament to her success and achievement in that role. I join in congratulating her and thanking her for the service and many contributions she has made and continues to make for her country and for Americans with disabilities. I hope my colleagues will join in congratulating Liz Savage as well.

ENSURING WE ARE PREPARED

HON. GREGORIO KILILI CAMACHO SABLAN

OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2022

Mr. SABLAN. Madam Speaker, as climate change accelerates, it is more important than ever that we put our infrastructure in good working order, hardened against the powerful typhoons and other natural disasters that are associated with a warming planet.

Today, I am introducing legislation that will ensure we have an adequate workforce in the Northern Mariana Islands to finish repairs from the typhoons that struck our islands in recent years and to build new infrastructure able to withstand future storms.

Congress made the decision that additional foreign workers would be needed for this purpose, when we passed the FY20 omnibus appropriation, U.S. Public Law 116–94. Title IX provided up to 3,000 permits for Commonwealth-only Transitional Workers (CW–1s) specifically for disaster-related construction projects during fiscal 2020, 2021, and 2022.

In the succeeding years, however, more funding has become available—for the Marianas public water in the American Rescue Plan Act, for better roads in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, for solid waste systems on the islands of Rota and Tinian in the 2019 Disaster Relief Act—and those projects will all require skilled labor.

Those projects will also occur in a timeframe beyond 2022. Not only do large-scale infrastructure projects take time to design, bid, and build, but the money is scheduled over a five-year period in many cases. Add to that the impact of the pandemic on business capacity and the supply chain and the need for workers stretches for years ahead.

How many workers will be necessary and when projects will be ready to proceed is not easily predicted. So, the legislation I have introduced today simply authorizes the Secretary of Homeland Security and the Governor of the Marianas to make the determination when construction workers are needed. The Governor will request the foreign workers to augment the Marianas labor force. The Secretary will then decide whether the request is justified, whether qualified U.S. workers are truly not available, and whether adding foreign workers would in any way reduce the wage-setting power of local, U.S. workers in our islands.

Congress has made an historic investment in the Mariana Islands in the form of disaster recovery assistance and in funding infrastructure that can withstand future disasters. But that funding will need labor. The legislation I am introducing today will help ensure that labor needs are met, that projects are built, and that the Marianas is in a stronger position to withstand the corning climate change.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

COST ESTIMATE FOR H.R. 5683, DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY BORDER SUPPORT SERVICES CONTRACTS REVIEW ACT

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2022

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Madam Speaker, I include in the RECORD the cost estimate prepared by the Congressional Budget Office for H.R. 5683, the Department of Homeland Security Border Support Services Contracts Review Act. The cost estimate was not available at the time of the Committee report filing.

U.S. CONGRESS,
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,
Washington, DC, March 1, 2022.

Hon. BENNIE G. THOMPSON,
Chairman, Committee on Homeland Security, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The Congressional Budget Office has prepared the enclosed cost estimate for H.R. 5683, the Department of Homeland Security Border Support Services Contracts Review Act.

If you wish further details on this estimate, we will be pleased to provide them. The CBO staff contact is Lindsay Wylie.

Sincerely,

PHILLIP L. SWAGEL,
Director.

Enclosure.

H.R. 5683, DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY BORDER SUPPORT SERVICES CONTRACTS REVIEW ACT—JANUARY 21, 2022

[By fiscal year, millions of dollars]

	2022	2022–2026	2022–2031
Direct Spending (Outlays) ..	0	0	0
Revenues	0	0	0
Increase or Decrease (−) in the Deficit	0	0	0
Spending Subject to Appropriation (Outlays)	*	6	**

* = between zero and $500,000.
** = not estimated.

Statutory pay-as-you-go procedures apply? No.

Increases on-budget deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2032? No.

No Mandate Effects:

Contains intergovernmental mandate? No.

Contains private-sector mandate? No.

H.R. 5683 would require the Under Secretary for Management at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to report to the Congress within 180 days of enactment on the department's active contracts that relate to U.S.-Mexico border security and that are above $50 million. The report would need to include an assessment of whether contract personnel are necessary to fulfill the department's mission on the U.S.-Mexico land border and a strategy to improve the effectiveness of such contracts. The bill also would require DHS to submit a plan to implement the strategy and brief the Congress every six months until the plan has been implemented.

Using information from DHS, CBO expects that the department would need about $2 million in contractor support and seven employees to produce the report and about twice as many employees to implement the strategy for two to three years after it is finalized. On that basis, and assuming the bill is enacted near the end of fiscal year 2022, CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 5683 would cost approximately $6 million over the 2022–2026 period; such spending would be subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Lindsay Wylie. The estimate was reviewed by Leo Lex, Deputy Director of Budget Analysis.

HONORING MICHAEL VOGEL

HON. LLOYD SMUCKER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2022

Mr. SMUCKER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Michael Vogel, who recently retired after coaching volleyball for thirty-one years at Hempfield High School in Landisville, Pennsylvania. Mike's time as coach was nothing short of incredible, with a list of records and championship wins to prove it. Just to name a few, he led Hempfield's girls' volleyball team to win five District 3 Class 3A titles and two state championships while also leading the boys' volleyball team to take seven PIAA–3A state titles and fifteen District 3 Class 3A crowns. As coach of Hempfield's boys' volleyball team for twenty-four years, the team had a record of 1,106–94, an astounding feat. These accomplishments demonstrate the immense dedication that Mike showed to Hempfield High School and the many players he coached over the years. He taught them the value of sportsmanship and hard work, lessons that will last a lifetime. And for that, everyone across our community should be thankful for Mike.

I wish Mike a restful and well-deserved retirement and hope that the next volleyball coach at Hempfield High School will be able to meet the high bar that Mike set.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. J. FRENCH HILL

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2022

Mr. HILL. Madam Speaker, in the first session of the 117th Congress, I missed votes on Roll Call numbers 262, 324, and 386. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call 262, YEA on Roll Call 324, and NAY on Roll Call 386.

HONORING THE LIFE AND SERVICE OF REVEREND DAVE WASHINGTON, JR.

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2022

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable public servant, Reverend Dave Washington, Jr.

Reverend Washington began his formal, education at Druid High School in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. He accepted a football scholarship to attend Alcorn State University, where he graduated with a degree in Chemistry. He later received a Master's Degree in Education Administration from Jackson State University.

Reverend Washington spent 11 years as a NFL Pro Football Player for the Denver Broncos, Buffalo Bills, and San Francisco 49ers. At the age of 25, and while still playing in the NFL, Dave became a real estate developer. He designed and built a middle-class residential subdivision in Port Gibson, MS, which he named Trace Hills. Upon his retirement from the NFL in 1981, he served under the administration of Governor William Winters before taking on the Directorship of the Farish Street YMCA, where he developed the city's largest little league football program.

For all the lives Reverend Washington has touched, his legacy will continue in our hearts and in our interactions with colleagues, friends, and family. He was truly a dedicated man, husband, father, friend, and educator. Reverend Washington, Jr. will forever be remembered for his business acumen and passion for education, sports, mentoring, and entrepreneurship was a catalyst to many of the worthy endeavors for which he was involved. He was one who truly used his platform to leverage opportunities for others. He conceived and produced youth programs such as the HIS Ranch Youth Summer Program, the 12+2 Men's Youth Program, the annual Scholarship 3-Point Slam Dunk Contest, the Canton Peace Rally and Golf Classic, and his crowning charitable achievement, ''Super Bowl Super Kids Super Sunday'', which was a precursor program to the modern-day NFL Experience. His exceptional life of unyielding faith, devotion to family and the greater good will be cherished by his high school sweetheart of 51 years, Dianne Williams and his four children.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Reverend Dave Washington, Jr. for his dedication and tenacity to serving his community and desire to be an example for all.

HONORING BENJAMIN M. PULEX

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2022

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor an extraordinary young man, Benjamin M. Pulex, who was taken too soon. I include in the RECORD his family's loving tribute.

Benjamin M. Pulex died at the age of 18 on Saturday, February 26, 2022, at his Skokie home with family at his side. Benjamin was born June 9, 2003, in Evanston, IL to devoted parents Magnolia Rivera-Pulex and Cesar Pulex. Benjamin grew up in a home filled with deep love and encouragement alongside his sister, Camila Pulex. Together the family prioritized values like love, respect, and gratitude. These values were often cultivated by regular family trips that fostered a sense of curiosity and stewardship for the environment and ocean life, while also turning Benjamin into a well-seasoned traveler. His annual trips to visit his family in Long Beach, California led to some of his greatest experiences and memories, especially alongside his cousin Angelo Pulex.

Benjamin graduated from Niles North High School (Class of 2021) with a group of amazing, long-time friends. Benjamin and his friends enjoyed soccer scrimmaging, playing video games, and eating out at local restaurants. Together (with support from Benjamin's father) they also founded a local soccer team, the Skokie United Futbol Team HS21.

After the Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) diagnosis that Benjamin received, he showed compassion and hoped that no other children would have to endure what he did. The greatest protection he had during his battle with ALS was the never-ending support and care given to him by his parents and family. Throughout every stage of Benjamin's illness Magnolia and Cesar were by his side providing the medical and emotional support he needed at any hour of the morning or night, while also striving to ensure that Benjamin found joy in moments and activities throughout the day. Together they quickly became movie and anime aficionados bonding over movie classics and anime shows between treatments.

Prior to his ALS diagnosis, Benjamin was an undergraduate student at North Park University interested in pursuing marine biology. He had received a private tour with the University of Washington's faculty in 2021 and was personally encouraged by faculty to transfer into the University of Washington's Friday Harbor Laboratories program. In a world full of complexity, Benjamin was the opposite—he was caring, grateful, honest, and above all humble. He retained simple yet abundant pleasures in life: spending time with his loving family, his amazing group of friends, watching Spiderman movies and anime, listening to 80's music classics, adhering to his fierce loyalty to Real Madrid by watching games and cheering any hour of the day, also extending that team loyalty to the Seattle Seahawks, and immersing himself into caring and learning more about ocean life. Benjamin had a sharp sense of humor and quick wit, even making jokes and playing pranks throughout his battle against ALS, staying true to himself until the very end.

Benjamin is survived by his parents, Magnolia Rivera-Pulex and Cesar Pulex, his sister Camila Pulex, and a large and loving extended family.

RECOGNIZING THE 34TH ANNIVERSARY OF MASSACRES AGAINST ARMENIANS IN SUMGAIT

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2022

Mr. COSTA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the thirty-fourth anniversary of the Sumgait pogroms, which is known as one of the most violent anti-Armenian massacres orchestrated by Azerbaijan.

In February of 1988, the Armenian people of Nagorno Karabakh, more commonly known by its people and descendants as Artsakh, rose in peaceful protest to demand their right to self-determination. On February 27, 1988, civilians were subjected to violent riots and massacres, which lasted for three days. Many innocent civilians were injured, killed, and tortured; some managed to escape and survive while coping with the catastrophe they survived.

Unfazed by their oppression, the Armenian community remained strong and dedicated to preserving their self-determination toward a free-democratic country, that would finally end their rule under the Soviet Union. The courage demonstrated by the people of Artsakh must never be forgotten.

Human rights violations cannot be ignored, and we must learn from our experiences to ensure basic human rights across the globe. In 2020, we saw the Azerbaijani government capture 25 Armenian soldiers and held them as prisoners of war. The fate of one prisoner remains unknown as of this date. The Azerbaijani government must be held accountable for its violent aggression against the Armenian people.

Today, the people of Artsakh continue to demonstrate strength and unity as they strive towards creating a better tomorrow for themselves and their sovereignty. As lawmakers, it's imperative that Congress continues to work with our counterparts to support a free, prosperous, and secure Armenia and hold Azerbaijan accountable.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of the thousands of Armenian Americans living in my congressional district, I ask my colleagues to stand with the people of Artsakh in remembering the lives lost during this tragic event. May their memory serve as a reminder for each one of us to continue advocating for human rights and democracy around the globe.

HONORING THE LIFE OF JIM LANCASTER

HON. JOHN W. ROSE

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2022

Mr. ROSE. Madam Speaker, I rise to celebrate the life of my friend, cousin, and lifelong Tennessean, Jimmie Knight Lancaster. He passed away on February 3rd after a remarkable 92 years on God's earth.

He was born on June 11, 1929 in Smith County, Tennessee and was the oldest of twin sons born to Edward and Dimple Knight Lancaster. He was raised in a log cabin on the family farm and attended Lancaster Elementary School. After graduating from Gordonsville High School in 1947, he attended Tennessee Technological University on a football scholarship where he received All-Conference honors as a single wing tailback. In college, he served as President of the "T" Club and was elected to Who's Who Among College Students while graduating with the highest honors and his Bachelor of Science degree in Agronomy Agriculture in 1951.

Mr. Lancaster dedicated much of his life to agriculture. He worked for the Wilson County Farm Bureau as its Agency Manager for over 43 years. In fact, he's now a member of the Wilson County Agricultural Hall of Fame in recognition of his exemplary work for local farmers throughout his career.

Jim had an unquenchable thirst for learning throughout his life. He became a Certified Life Underwriter in 1972, earned an Advanced Estate Planning Degree in 1973, and became a Chartered Financial Consultant in 1982.

As a charter member and former Sunday School teacher at the Westland United Methodist Church in Lebanon, Jim loved the Lord and cherished his family with all his heart. He and Vondell, the love of his life, were married for 67 years before her passing. Together they had five children, twelve grandchildren, eighteen great-grandchildren, and two great-great-grandchildren. Jim's and Vondell's loving marriage and devotion to family led to a lot of little Lancasters running around Middle Tennessee.

Jim was a joyful role model and so many people in his community knew Jim in that way. He served as a leader in many local organizations including the Chamber of Commerce, Boy Scouts, Lebanon Jaycees, the Peoples Bank, the Lebanon Rotary Club, and Cumberland University, and was local camp President of Gideon's International. He prided himself on being a consummate public servant and attempted to inspire others to do the same.

He received countless awards for his service over the years like becoming a member of the Robert E. Musto Insurance Hall of Fame, receiving an honorary Doctorate in Literary Letters from Cumberland University, the Jaycee's Distinguished Service Award, the Rotary Club's Paul Harris Fellowship Award and Bernie Bass Good Citizenship Award, Tennessee Technological University's Outstanding Service Award, and the Chamber of Commerce's Lifetime Membership Award. But he was a humble man who wasn't in it for recognition. He just loved serving his community and the people in it.

Jim Lancaster spent his entire life serving his community, the public, and the Lord. It is only suitable for Congress to recognize and honor his life and legacy. I was blessed to call Jim family. It is a bittersweet moment for me now to say he's gone to be with our Lord.

I thank Jim Lancaster for a life well lived that touched so many in such a positive way.

HONORING CHRYSTAL WILLIAMS-DAVIS

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2022

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable hero, Mrs. Chrystal Williams-Davis.

Chrystal was born August 27, 1971, to the late Emma Turner Williams in Marks, Mississippi. She was the last born of 10 children. She attended schools in Quitman County and graduated from Quitman County High School in 1989.

Immediately after graduating high school, she enlisted in the United States Army and was deployed in 1990 to Operation Desert Shield where she was in the Persian Gulf for one year serving during Operation Desert Shield/Storm. She received the Southwest Asia Service Medal, the Medal for the Liberation of Kuwait, The Army Commendation Medal, and The National Defense Medal. Chrystal served a total of ten years in the United States Army Reserve.

Chrystal returned home from Desert Storm and attained her certificate in Practical Nursing from Northwest Community college in 1995. Upon completion of Practical Nursing school, her mother Emma passed away suddenly. Chrystal was sad but remembered how proud her mother was of her accomplishment, and that gave her great comfort and pushed her even harder. She worked as a Licensed Practical Nurse for five years and decided it was time to advance her career in nursing. She then attended Mississippi Delta Community College where she obtained her Associate Degree in Nursing in 2005. She worked as an Intensive Care RN for several years and decided once again that she wanted to have the ability to do more for her patients after seeing

how chronic diseases affected her community. She obtained her Bachelors' Degree in Nursing with honors from Chamberlain College of Nursing in 2010 and her Master of Science degree in Nursing with honors from Walden University as a Family Nurse Practitioner in 2014, She has been employed with a rural health clinic, Northeast Mississippi Health Care, providing primary care to residents in Mississippi who might otherwise not be able to afford care. Chrystal has worked in various settings in the nursing field. She has worked with Special Needs adults, Women's Health, Medical Surgical Nursing, Emergency Room, Infection Control Nursing, Home Health, and Hospice. In her spare time, she provides nurse consulting. Outside of work, she is very active in her community, where she participates in community activism and provides health education in various settings. Her passion is for the education of young women on self-esteem.

Chrystal is married to Davie Davis, and they have three children: Chelsea, Jamaal and Dawoud. Chrystal gives her mother Emma all the credit for her ability to be a loving mother, sister, and aunt. Her mother Emma raised her to; ''Do her best at whatever she decides to do, but always remain humble and give God praise in everything.'' Her family and friends are very important in her life.

Chrystal has been a faithful member of the Nation of Islam for over twenty-five years; a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated; a member of various nursing leadership organizations; and, she is an active participant in all of these organizations.

Chrystal's leadership, passion, dedication, endurance, dependability, and service has made her synonymous with being one of the best, if not the best Nurse Practitioner in Mississippi. She is often praised by her patients for going above and beyond the call of duty to ensure that they receive the most competent health care services. Chrystal is recognized for her service to God, her family, her country, her community, and the people that seek her help.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Chrystal Williams-Davis, Family Nurse Practitioner, for her dedication to serving this great state and country.

HONORING TOBI PARKS AS IOWAN OF THE WEEK

HON. CYNTHIA AXNE

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2022

Mrs. AXNE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to ask the House of Representatives to join me in recognizing Tobi Parks, the founder of xBk and the Board Vice President for the National Independent Venue Association Foundation, as Iowan of the Week.

Surrounded by music her entire life, Tobi describes herself as a musician and creator at heart. Growing up with an understanding of what it takes to be successful in the music industry, Tobi was conscious that her unwavering passion for music could lead to a viable and fulfilling career path. Studying media communications and audio production at Webster University, Tobi was able to foster her interests academically. While at first, Tobi was scared to put herself out there, those concerns never stopped her from pursuing her dreams in the music industry whether it was completing gigs or hosting shows on the radio. After university, Tobi moved to New York, where she worked for Sony focusing on copyright and licensing work. However, in 2015, Tobi moved to Des Moines and in the same year, she established an artist-development nonprofit label called Station One Records. Station One Records was created with the objective of granting artists the development that she wishes she could have had. In the end, the nonprofit promotes that finding and cultivating talent is the priority rather than the financial benefits and end results.

As a woman of color and a member of the LGBTQ+ community, moving to Des Moines with her family was a considerable change from her life in New York City. The decision was made based on the fact that they had family in the area, and she could still be legally married in Iowa. Additionally, at the time, a member of the Des Moines Social Club advised her that one can do whatever they wish to do and find support anywhere in Des Moines. With that advice in mind, Tobi sought to build upon the live music ecosystem in Des Moines since she already had experience with running venues, booking artists, and touring. These experiences led to her founding xBk, which is a live entertainment venue in Des Moines in the Drake neighborhood. With the creation of xBk, there was an opportunity to increase the outreach of Station One, create a space to foster an artist community, and diversify the genres of music seen in Des Moines through the venue. Furthermore, with the COVID–19 pandemic, her work as the Board Vice President for the National Independent Venue Association Foundation has pushed for xBk and other businesses to obtain necessary aid through emergency relief programs and additional grants.

Tobi's involvement in the music industry and Des Moines community encourages both the development of those she helps and the diversity of the industry in general. Her determination and inclusive mindset have propelled her to success and make her truly worthy of being nominated for this award. Tobi serves as an inspiration and role model to all, and it is my honor to name her Iowan of the Week.

RECOGNIZING THE EXTRAORDINARY SERVICE OF LEN SIMICH

HON. DEAN PHILLIPS

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2022

Mr. PHILLIPS. Madam Speaker, today I recognize Len Simich for his extraordinary service to the state of Minnesota as the longtime leader of SouthWest Transit.

Since 1997, Len has served as the CEO of SouthWest Transit, a public transit agency serving the cities of Chaska, Chanhassen, Eden Prairie, and Carver. Under his leadership, SouthWest Transit has embodied its mission to be more than a transit agency by putting people first. This approach established SouthWest Transit as a nation-leading suburban transit agency and key contributor to the region's continued growth and economic development.

Len has helped guide SouthWest Transit from nearly the beginning, helming the agency for over two-thirds of its existence. In that time, he has spurred a fourfold increase in ridership, the construction of numerous new transit stations, and the implementation of innovative transit services such as SouthWest Prime. He also helped lead the agency through the many challenges that have faced transportation agencies in the past two-and-a-half decades, including the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the COVID–19 pandemic.

Len's dedication and ingenuity has been recognized time and time again at the state and national levels. Len was previously honored as the Minnesota Transit Professional of the Year, and the list of accolades for SouthWest Transit are too numerous to fully list but include the American Public Transportation Association's Outstanding Public Transportation System of the Year and the Federal Highway Administration's National Environmental Excellence Award.

Even as he embarks on his retirement, both SouthWest Transit and the communities the agency serves will continue to benefit from his visionary leadership. His service has made it easier for families and friends to share moments together, for residents to achieve economic success through access to job openings across the region, for seniors to live more independently and maintain access to the care and services they need, and for all to enjoy unique seasonal events like the Minnesota State Fair. Our region owes a debt of gratitude to Len for allowing us all to enjoy the fruits of his labor, and on behalf of a grateful community, we wish him a happy, healthy, and meaningful retirement.

HONORING CHRISTO (CHRIS) LUNDERMAN

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2022

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a tenacious and self-motivated gentleman, Mr. Christo (Chris) Lunderman. Mr. Lunderman has shown what can be done through hard work, dedication, and a desire to achieve success.

Chris Lunderman has been awarded top honors with the 2022 Black Engineer of the Year Awards (BEYA), which recognizes African-American scientists and engineers around the country. The winners chosen are leaders shaping the future of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), as well as promoting diversity and inclusion in the STEM pipeline. He was recognized at this year's BEYA STEM Global Competitiveness Conference, which was held in Washington, D.C., Feb. 17 through 19.

Lunderman, a research physicist in the Information Technology Lab (ITL), received the Outstanding Achievement and Science Spectrum Trailblazer Award, which focuses on individuals who have created new paths for others in science, research, technology, and development. In his day-to-day role, Lunderman leads a diverse, multi-disciplinary team of engineers, scientists and technicians in the design and installation of sensor systems and communications to better quantify the condition of aging infrastructure.

Lunderman also serves as a mentor to several ERDC employees, supports Diversity, Equity and Inclusion efforts and sits on an advisory board for employee morale efforts.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mr. Christo (Chris) Lunderman for his passion and dedication to the field of Engineering.

TRIBUTE TO SANDRA MORRISEAU

HON. SHEILA CHERFILUS-McCORMICK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2022

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Madam Speaker, I include in the RECORD the following Proclamation.

Whereas, Sandra Morriseau, 53, passed away on February 18, 2022, after a courageous health battle.

Whereas, Sandra was born on the 22nd of May in 1968 to parents Joseph (who preceded her in death) and Marie-Carmel Louisias. Her birthplace as well as the setting of her childhood was Brooklyn, New York.

Whereas, she attended Clara Barton High School in Brooklyn. Shortly after, in 1989, Sandra moved to Miami Shores Florida with her parents and brother. While living in Miami, Sandra attended Barry University and pursued a degree in Nursing. She graduated and very quickly realized her calling was in the entertainment industry. She spent her life committed to uplifting Haitian culture in the Miami area and had a zest for life that shined through all the events she worked on and the friendships she nurtured within the community.

Whereas, through hard work and grace, Sandra accomplished many feats. Some of her accomplishments included becoming the first Island television employees, working at the Little Haiti Cultural Center, helping produce Sound of Little Haiti, and multiple other impressive acts.

Whereas, in 2003, she married Riquet Morriseau and they had two beautiful children, Samara and Matthew Morriseau. Sandra was a dedicated wife and mother. She treasured her two children and embraced every moment with them.

Whereas, she was a loving and compassionate person who loved to go above and beyond in everything that she did. All her actions were committed with elegance and class. Those who knew her will remember Sandra for being a perfectionist, loving, and a caring daughter, sister, and friend.

Whereas, let us strive to honor her memory by pursuing our passions and living a full life as she would have wanted us to.

HONORING KYLE KILLINGER

HON. GREG PENCE

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2022

Mr. PENCE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a fellow Marine from Columbus who is making a difference for fellow veterans from sea to shining sea.

Kyle Killinger set out on foot, running from San Diego, California on a cross-country journey to raise awareness for veteran suicide.

Kyle completed his run just a few steps away from here at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall.

Kyle started his own non-profit, entitled, ''Because He's My Brother'' to raise awareness of veteran suicide and post traumatic stress.

He has raised money along his journey to benefit another organization that strives to prevent veteran suicide, SAVE 22. I hope that each and every veteran is inspired by Kyle's 3,000–mile run.

His long Journey through peaks and valleys is not unlike that of every man and women who has served our nation in uniform.

My hope is that anyone who needs help finds the courage to ask.

Semper Fi.

HONORING JARROD DIXON

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2022

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable young man, Mr. Jarrod Dixon of Copiah County.

Jarrod Dixon is a man of God and the Pastor of Faith Tabernacle M.B. Church located at 2117 Experiment Station Road in Crystal Springs, MS.

Jarrod graduated from the Enterprise Attendance Center in Brookhaven, MS. He received his bachelor's degree in Divinity from US Mingo Bible Institute and is currently working on his master's degree.

Jarrod is married to the beautiful Corte'zia Dixon, and they have one daughter, Kennedy Dixon.

Jarrod loves the Lord and desires to encourage young people to stop the violence while providing information that would enhance the lives of those in the community. He believes that we should not only provide for people's spiritual needs, but also provide for their physical needs as well.

Jarrod has demonstrated his leadership skills during his pastoral ministry by leading Faith Tabernacle to greater heights during the Covid–19 pandemic. He has been awarded the 2021 Copiah County Pastor of the Year Award and the Alderman Brown Spotlight Award. He attributes his awards to God's love for him and his love for God.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mr. Jarrod Dixon for all his hard work, leadership, accomplishments, here in the Second District of Mississippi.

HONORING THE 100TH BIRTHDAY AND SERVICE OF WALTER J. KUSZ

HON. JACK BERGMAN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2022

Mr. BERGMAN. Madam Speaker, it is my honor to recognize the 100th birthday and the service of Walter J. Kusz. Through his commitment to our country and his local community, Walter has become an indispensable part of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

Mr. Kusz was born on March 2, 1922, in Ironwood, Michigan, to Joseph and Magdalena Kusz and was the middle of nine siblings. Walter and his bothers all went on to serve in the U.S. Military after high school during World War II and the Korean War. He was drafted in 1943 and became a member of the U.S. Army–Air Corps after his completion of his basic training in Miami Beach, Florida. From there, Walter was assigned to Dowling Air Field in Washington, D.C., where he relayed meteorological data at the Pentagon to U.S. Bomber Command in Europe. He was then promoted to Staff Sergeant T–5 and joined Occupation Forces in Austria between 1945 and 1946.

As a Yooper and an avid outdoorsman, Walter also has a great passion for winter sports, snow skiing, and hunting. While serving in Europe, he joined the U.S. Army ski-jumping team and competed in competitions in Holmenkollen, Norway, and Garmisch, Germany, Following his military service, he became president of the Gogebic Range Ski Corporation and brought several competitions to the U.P. at Copper Peak during the 1970s and 1980s. In addition, Walter was a devoted hunter throughout his life, shooting his last buck at the age of 92.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of Michigan's First Congressional District, I ask you to join me in honoring the 100th birthday of Walter J. Kusz. His accomplishments inspire us all and we are grateful for his years of service to our country.

RECOGNIZING MRS. GLORIA JEAN WEIRICH MILSPAW'S 100TH BIRTHDAY AND LIFE OF COMMUNITY

HON. SCOTT PERRY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2022

Mr. PERRY. Madam Speaker, I am honored to recognize Mrs. Gloria Jean Weirich Milspaw upon the occasion of her 100th Birthday, as well as her continued, tireless service to our communities.

Born and raised in Middletown, Pennsylvania, Mrs. Milspaw became the first ever female drum major for the Middletown High School band in her sophomore year. She attended West Chester State Teachers College for two years as a music major but left early in part due to the Great Depression and World War II. Though she later took the Civil Service exam and scored extremely high, she was told that women couldn't be given the higher-level jobs that were ''reserved for men with families to feed.'' As a result, she was given a typewriter and became a secretary. It was then that she met her future husband, Captain (and later Lieutenant Colonel) Lynn G. Milspaw, an engineer and Air Force pilot. They were married in 1944 and endured the stress and hardship of his military duty in both World War II and Korea, as well as his later duty as a high-level civil servant for the Air Force. Gloria sang with and directed church choirs and various music groups in all their travels and duty stations.

While in Utah, Gloria took up and excelled at the hobby of watercolor, and within a few years she became President of the Utah Watercolor Association. After moving back to

Pennsylvania, she soon became a signature member of the Pennsylvania Watercolor Association as well. She also earned a degree in Interior Design, founded a small business, and took up skiing. One of her greatest challenges, however, was her rigorous fight against lymphoma—and—chemotherapy from which she made a full recovery at the age of 90.

Mrs. Milspaw, now 100 years young, resides in the same town in which she was born, and remains a beacon of health and wellness in our community. She exercises daily, paints and sells watercolors, serves God and her church, and is constantly learning more about the world. I am humbled and privileged to commend and thank Mrs. Gloria Milspaw on her many successes both at home and abroad, and her lifelong dedication to being an active member of our communities. I wish her a wonderful birthday celebration, and Godspeed for many more days of a life filled with good health, happiness, prosperity, and love.

HONORING HERMAN MOORE

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2022

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a tenacious and innovative gentleman, Mr. Herman Moore. Mr. Moore has shown what can be done through hard work, dedication and a desire to achieve success.

Herman Moore has been awarded top honors with the 2022 Black Engineer of the Year Awards (BEYA), which recognizes African-American scientists and engineers around the country. The winners chosen are leaders shaping the future of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), as well as promoting diversity and inclusion in the STEM pipeline. He was recognized at this year's BEYA STEM Global Competitiveness Conference, which was held in Washington, D.C. Feb. 17 through 19.

He is the leader and main technical developer of the Army Facilities Components System project. On that project, he plays an instrumental role by providing direction and input to teams, sponsors, and customers to resolve technical solutions and enhanced application features. Moore began his career at ERDC in 1996 and earned his master's degree in computer science in 2004.

With Moore's technical capabilities and leadership experience at ERDC, he is always looking for opportunities to serve as a mentor to junior scientists and to develop himself to advance the mission. His advice to engineers just beginning a career is to identify strengths and weaknesses.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mr. Herman Moore for his passion and dedication to the field of Engineering.

TRIBUTE TO PETER LEE

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2022

Ms. ESHOO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Peter V. Lee, the first and only Executive Director of the highly successful health benefit exchange, Covered California. He leaves the organization to 'look for the next mountain to climb.'

The story of the extraordinary success of Covered California is the history of Peter Lee's tenure. As of January 31, 2021, Covered California announced that 1,744,000 people, a new record high, had signed up for health coverage. Under Peter Lee's leadership, uninsured rates dropped 20.5 percent for Latinos, 12.4 percent for Asian Americans and African Americans, and 8.3 percent for Caucasians. All this has been achieved with rate increases kept low.

Peter Lee was unanimously confirmed as Executive Director by the Covered California board on August 23, 2011. Prior to serving as Executive Director of Covered California, he was the Deputy Director of the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation at CMS where he worked to improve care and reduce costs. He was the Director of Delivery System Reform for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services from 1995 to 2000 and the Executive Director of the Center for Health Care Rights. From 2000 to 2008, Peter was the CEO and Executive Director for National Health Policy of the Pacific Business Group on Health and the former Director of Programs for the National AIDS Network. Prior to this, Peter was a practicing attorney in Los Angeles.

Peter Lee is a member of a pioneering California health care family and his work at Covered California continued in that proud tradition. His grandfather, Russel Van Arsdale Lee, founded the Palo Alto Medical Clinic (now the Palo Alto Medical Foundation). His father, Peter Lee, founded the Family Medicine Department at USC and, at risk to his career, spoke out in favor of Medicare in 1965. His uncle, Dr. Philip R. Lee, helped create and implement Medicare, and served in the Clinton Administration as an Assistant Health Secretary. His uncle, Dr. Hewlett Lee, was a highly regarded and well-loved surgeon. Peter earned his undergraduate degree from UC Berkeley and his law degree from USC.

Peter Lee's work has improved the lives of millions of Californians and created a national model for other states to emulate. His tenure as Executive Director created a strong, vital organization well suited to continue its mission of service and innovation after his departure.

Madam Speaker, I ask the entire House of Representatives to join me in honoring and thanking Peter Lee for his outstanding work and in wishing him every blessing as he enters the next chapter in his superb career.

HONORING COLONIAL STEAK HOUSE'S INDUCTION INTO THE ARKANSAS FOOD HALL OF FAME

HON. BRUCE WESTERMAN

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2022

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Colonial Steak House of Pine Bluff for being inducted into the Arkansas Food Hall of Fame Class of 2022. The steakhouse was one of three winners out of ten finalists submitted in the state of Arkansas.

Having opened its doors in 1974, the Colonial Steak House has and continues to be a staple in the Pine Bluff community. This local restaurant embodies the resilient spirit of Arkansas, having survived a fire in the 1980s and the Coronavirus pandemic, For nearly fifty years, it has continually served the community, not only with great food, but also with its drive to make the Pine Bluff area better. This was highlighted in 2020 when a $1,200.00 tip was left for one server. Colonial's owners divided it amongst the employees, even those who had the day off. Allie Hall and her business partner Scott Mouser purchased the historic steakhouse from her mom Dana Gately in 2020, and between the three of them, they have over fifty years of experience running the restaurant. To this day, if you come on a busy night, you can find three generations of Gately's working there.

I take this time today to congratulate Allie Hall, Scott Mouser, Dana Gately, and the staff of the Colonial Steak House on this well-deserved honor. I thank them for their dedication to Pine Bluff, our community, and all the residents of Arkansas's Fourth Congressional District.

HONORING MARSHALL'S MUSIC AND BOOKSTORE

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2022

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Marshall's Music and Bookstore.

Marshall's Music and Bookstore is a Black-owned family business on Farish Street in Downtown Jackson. The store has been around for 84 years.

The store has its own story of surviving everything from the Great Depression, segregation and Jim Crow era to a pandemic, recession, and even digital transformation.

Maati Jone Primm is a third-generation owner of the store, which prides itself on educating children and adults about Black History—which Primm stresses don't begin in enslavement.

Books, literature, and music are stacked on tables and shelves. The walls are adorned with striking images of African American changemakers with roots in Mississippi.

Stacey Abrams from Gulfport, Ruby Bridges from Tylertown, Sam Cooke from Clarksdale, Charley Pride from Sledge, C.L. Franklin from Shelby, and Judge Mablean from Hazlehurst are only a few of the faces you will see.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Marshall's Music and Bookstore.

COMMEMORATING THE SUMGAIT POGROMS OF 1988 AND THE BAKU POGROMS OF 1990

HON. TED LIEU

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2022

Mr. LIEU. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the anniversary of the Sumgait pogroms of 1988 and the Baku pogroms of 1990, and to remember the innocent Armenians who tragically lost their lives during these horrific events,

From February 27–29, 1988, hundreds of Armenians living in Sumgait, Azerbaijan were targeted in violent, ethnically motivated attacks. Armenians were beaten, murdered, raped, burned alive, and driven out of their homes. Mass violence against Armenians continued in other Azerbaijani cities in the following years, including in Baku in 1990, and thousands of Armenians were displaced. At the time, Members of the U.S. Congress, both Democrat and Republican, urged Azerbaijan to stop these atrocious events and take steps to protect these Armenian communities.

Many believe that these pogroms occurred in response to peaceful protests led by ethnic Armenians in Artsakh, or Nagorno-Karabakh, who were demanding independence from Azerbaijan and calling for democracy. Throughout the dispute over Artsakh, anti-Armenian hatred and propaganda spread rapidly throughout Azerbaijan. It was this hatred and propaganda that fueled the Sumgait and Baku pogroms.

We must be vocal in rejecting hatred, violence, and discrimination—and work tirelessly to ensure that history does not repeat itself. I ask that my colleagues join me in honoring the memory of those lost in the Sumgait and Baku pogroms. And I will continue to work with the Congressional Armenian Issues Caucus to reaffirm our commitment to combatting human rights abuses around the world.

HONORING AMBASSADOR ROBERTO R. ROMULO

HON. ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2022

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Madam Speaker, as Co-Chair of the U.S.-Philippines Friendship Caucus, I rise today to pay tribute to a great Philippine statesman and friend to the United States, Ambassador Roberto "Bobby" R. Romulo, who passed away on January 23, 2022.

Ambassador Romulo graduated from Georgetown University with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Ateneo de Manila University with a Bachelor of Law. He started his professional career as an IBM marketing trainee in New York City. During his IBM career; he held marketing and management positions in New York, Thailand, Burma, Bangladesh and the Philippines, where he was President and General Manager.

In 1989, he was appointed Ambassador to Belgium, Luxembourg and the Commission of the European Communities. He was then elevated to the top of the Philippines's Department of Foreign Affairs in 1992. As a diplomat, he was decorated by the governments of Belgium, Thailand, Spain, Chile, France and the Philippines.

In 1995, Ambassador Romulo rejoined the private sector and was elected Chairman of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT), and Vice-Chair of San Miguel International. He was Chairman of Interpharma Investments Ltd. (Zuellig Pharma) from 1997 to 2007 and was a board member of MIH (a subsidiary of NASPERS, a South African Company) from 2002 to 2013. From 2003 to 2010, he served as an independent director of Singapore Land and UIC. Most recently, Ambassador Romulo was the Chairman of various organizations including AIG Philippines Insurance, Inc., MediLink Network Inc. and Nationwide Development Corporation (NADECOR). He also held board memberships at various corporations including PLDT, Equicom Savings Bank, Robinsons Retail Holdings, Inc., Maxicare Healthcare Corporation, and McLarty Associates.

In 1996, Ambassador Romulo was the founding Chairman of the APEC Business Advisory Council and continued as Chairman of the Philippine representation of the Council until 2010. From 1999 to 2001, he was Chairman of the e-ASEAN Task Force. From January 2001 to January 2007, he served as pro-bono senior advisor on international competitiveness to Philippines President Gloria Arroyo. He was a Co-Founder and Trustee of the US-Philippines Society. He administered the Society's "Carlos P. Romulo Awards" in recognition of the contributions of Filipinos and Americans who have strengthened Philippines-U.S. ties, a core mission of the Society.

He was also chairman of non-profit foundations: the Carlos P. Romulo Foundation for Peace and Development, which raises awareness of critical issues that significantly impact the peace and development of the Philippines and the region at large; the Zuellig Family Foundation, which focuses on improving health conditions in rural Filipino communities by providing training programs for local government health leaders; and the Asia-Europe Foundation of the Philippines, which brings together the peoples of Asia and Europe to address common global challenges.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to an extraordinary diplomat, statesman, and friend to the United States. Ambassador Romulo will be sorely missed by so many for his frankness, honesty, and dedication to deepening relations between our two countries.

HONORING THE RETIREMENT OF VAN BUREN TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SAFETY DIRECTOR GREGORY LAURAIN

HON. DEBBIE DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2022

Mrs. DINGELL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Director Gregory Laurain on the occasion of his retirement from Van Buren Police Department after over 40 years of service to Van Buren Township, Michigan. His significant service to our community is worthy of commendation.

Director Laurain is a graduate of the Northwestern University School of Police Staff and Command and the elite FBI National Academy. A well-rounded leader in public safety, he is also a graduate of the Van Buren Township Fire Academy. He began his career with the Van Buren Police Department in 1980, working as a reserve police officer. A member of the first full time class of police officers in the history of the township, he became a patrolman in 1981. Five years later he was promoted to Detective Sergeant. In 2006 he was promoted to the role of Patrol Captain, supervising seven units within the police department. In 2013, he was appointed to serve as Public Safety Director for Van Buren Township and was tasked with leading the entire Public Safety department, including the united police and fire departments. Under his leadership, the police department was accredited through the Michigan Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission making it one of only 43 agencies in the state to earn this honor.

As a leader known throughout Southeastern Michigan, Director Laurain's work did not end at the Township border. He served as Commander of the Western Wayne County Special Operations Team, as a member of the Drug Enforcement Agency Airport Interdiction Team, and with the Michigan State Police Narcotic Interdiction Team. Known for his selflessness, integrity, and tireless work ethic, Director Laurain is an example among his peers. He was named President of the Wayne County Chiefs Association and Board President of the FBI National Academy Associates Michigan Chapter. Director Laurain is a member of the Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police and the Southeastern Michigan Chiefs of Police. He resides in Michigan with his wife and is looking forward to spending more time with his two daughters and grandchildren in retirement.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Director Gregory Laurain for his over 40 years of exemplary service. He has effectively and selflessly served Van Buren Township and has been steadfastly dedicated to the safety of our community. I join with Director Laurain's family, friends, and colleagues in extending my best wishes to him in retirement.

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, March 3, 2022 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

MARCH 7

6 p.m.

Committee on Foreign Relations

To receive a closed briefing on the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

SVC–217

MARCH 8

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine United States Strategic Command and United

States Space Command in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2023 and the Future Years Defense Program; to be immediately followed by a closed session in SVC–217.

SD–G50

10 a.m.

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

To hold hearings to examine mandatory arbitration in financial service products.

SD–538

Committee on the Judiciary

To hold hearings to examine combating the rise in hate crimes.

SD–226

Committee on Veterans' Affairs

To hold a joint hearing with the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs to examine the legislative presentation of multiple veterans service organizations.

HVC–210/VTC

2:30 p.m.

Committee on Armed Services

Subcommittee on Cybersecurity

To receive a closed briefing on Department of Defense cyber operations.

SVC–217

Committee on Foreign Relations

Business meeting to consider the nominations of C.S. Eliot Kang, of New Jersey, to be an Assistant Secretary (International Security and Non-Proliferation), Sarah H. Cleveland, of New York, to be Legal Adviser, George J. Tsunis, of New York, to be Ambassador to Greece, James C. O'Brien, of Nebraska, to be Head of the Office of Sanctions Coordination, with the rank of Ambassador, Beth Van Schaack, of California, to be Ambassador at Large for Global Criminal Justice, Randi Charno Levine, of New York, to be Ambassador to the Portuguese Republic, Laura Farnsworth Dogu, of Texas, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Honduras, N. Nickolas Perry, of New York, to be Ambassador to Jamaica, Deborah E. Lipstadt, of Georgia, to be Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism, with the rank of Ambassador, and Barbara A. Leaf, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary (Near Eastern Affairs), all of the Department of State, routine lists in the Foreign Service, and other pending calendar business; to be immediately followed by a hearing to examine Russia's invasion of Ukraine, focusing on assessing the U.S. and international response.

SD–G50

MARCH 10

10:15 a.m.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Krista Anne Boyd, of Florida, to be Inspector General, Office of Personnel Management, and Dana Katherine Bilyeu, of Nevada, Leona M. Bridges, of California, Michael F. Gerber, of Pennsylvania, Stacie Olivares, of California, and Javier E. Saade, of the District of Columbia, each to be a Member of the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board.

SD–342/VTC

MARCH 15

10 a.m.

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

Business meeting to consider an original bill entitled, ''PREVENT Pandemics Act'', and other pending calendar business.

SD–106

Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S921–S959

Measures Introduced: Sixteen bills and two resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 3726–3741, and S. Res. 529–530. **Page S950**

Measures Reported:

S. 270, to amend the Act entitled ''Act to provide for the establishment of the Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site in the State of Kansas'' to provide for inclusion of additional related sites in the National Park System, with an amendment. (S. Rept. No. 117–87)

S. 1320, to establish the Chiricahua National Park in the State of Arizona as a unit of the National Park System, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. (S. Rept. No. 117–88)

S. 753, to reauthorize the Highlands Conservation Act, to authorize States to use funds from that Act for administrative purposes, with an amendment. (S. Rept. No. 117–89)

S. 1589, to designate certain land administered by the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service in the State of Oregon as wilderness and national recreation areas, to withdraw certain land located in Curry County and Josephine County, Oregon, from all forms of entry, appropriation, or disposal under the public land laws, location, entry, and patent under the mining laws, and operation under the mineral leasing and geothermal leasing laws. (S. Rept. No. 117–90)

S. 2433, to require the Secretary of the Interior to develop and maintain a cadastre of Federal real property, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. (S. Rept. No. 117–91)

S. 2490, to establish the Blackwell School National Historic Site in Marfa, Texas. (S. Rept. No. 117–92)

S. 2992, to provide that certain discriminatory conduct by covered platforms shall be unlawful, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute.

Pages S949–50

Measures Passed:

Medicare and Medicaid Programs and Omnibus COVID–19 Health Care Staff Vaccination: By 49 yeas to 44 nays (Vote No. 67), Senate passed S. J. Res. 32, providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services relating to ''Medicare and Medicaid Programs; Omnibus COVID–19 Health Care Staff Vaccination''. **Pages S924–36**

Data Mapping to Save Moms' Lives Act: Senate passed S. 198, to require the Federal Communications Commission to incorporate data on maternal health outcomes into its broadband health maps.

Page S958

Eliminating Limits to Justice for Child Sex Abuse Victims Act: Senate passed S. 3103, to amend title 18, United States Code, to eliminate the statute of limitations for the filing of a civil claim for any person who, while a minor, was a victim of a violation of section 1589, 1590, 1591, 2241(c), 2242, 2243, 2251, 2251A, 2252, 2252A, 2260, 2421, 2422, or 2423 of such title, after agreeing to the committee amendments. **Page S958**

National Entrepreneurship Week: Committee on the Judiciary was discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 527, designating the week of February 12 through February 19, 2022, as ''National Entrepreneurship Week'' to recognize the importance and contributions of entrepreneurs and startups to the economic prosperity of the United States and the well-being of every community across the United States, and the resolution was then agreed to.

Pages S958–59

National Speech and Debate Education Day: Senate agreed to S. Res. 530, designating March 4, 2022, as ''National Speech and Debate Education Day''. **Page S959**

Measures Considered:

Postal Service Reform Act—Cloture: Senate continued consideration of H.R. 3076, to provide stability to and enhance the services of the United

States Postal Service, taking action on the following amendment proposed thereto: **Pages S923–24, S947**

Pending:

Schumer (for Peters) Amendment No. 4955, to modify the deadline for the initial report on the operations and financial condition of the United States Postal Service. **Page S923**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the bill, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur on Friday, March 4, 2022. **Page S947**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing for further consideration of the bill at approximately 10 a.m., on Thursday, March 3, 2022. **Page S959**

Appointments:

Afghanistan War Commission: The Chair, on behalf of the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Armed Services, pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 117–81, appointed the following individual to serve as a member of the Afghanistan War Commission: Michael D. Lumpkin of Virginia. **Page S958**

Afghanistan War Commission: The Chair, on behalf of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 117–81, appointed the following individual to serve as a member of the Afghanistan War Commission: Laurel Miller of the District of Columbia. **Page S958**

Afghanistan War Commission: The Chair, on behalf of the Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Armed Services, pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 117–81, appointed the following individual to serve as a member of the Afghanistan War Commission: Dr. Colin Jackson of Rhode Island. **Page S958**

Afghanistan War Commission: The Chair, on behalf of the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Intelligence, pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 117–81, appointed the following individual to serve as a member of the Afghanistan War Commission: Lieutenant General Robert P. Ashley, Jr. of North Carolina. **Page S958**

Afghanistan War Commission: The Chair, on behalf of the Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Intelligence, pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 117–81, appointed the following individual to serve as a member of the Afghanistan War Commission: Christopher A. Molino of Virginia. **Page S958**

National Emergency Designation—Agreement: A unanimous-consent-time agreement was reached providing that at 11 a.m., on Thursday, March 3, 2022, S.J. Res 38, relating to a national emergency declared by the President on March 13, 2020, be discharged from the Committee on Finance and Senate proceed to its consideration; provided further that there be 3 hours for debate only with the time equally divided between the Leaders, or their designees, on the joint resolution; and that following the use or yielding back of that time, Senate vote on the joint resolution, with no intervening action or debate. **Pages S946–47**

Message from the President: Senate received the following message 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 Executive Order 13660 of March 6, 2014, with respect to Ukraine; which was referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs. (PM–22) **Page S949**

Nominations Confirmed: Senate confirmed the following nominations:

Claire A. Pierangelo, of California, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Madagascar, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador to the Union of the Comoros.

Virginia E. Palmer, of Virginia, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Ghana.

David John Young, of Virginia, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Malawi. **Page S947**

Messages from the House: **Page S949**

Measures Placed on the Calendar: **Pages S921, S949**

Executive Communications: **Page S949**

Executive Reports of Committees: **Page S950**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S950–52**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S952–53**

Additional Statements: **Pages S948–49**

Amendments Submitted: **Pages S953–57**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Pages S957–58**

Privileges of the Floor: **Page S958**

Record Votes: One record vote was taken today. (Total—67) **Page S936**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 11 a.m. and adjourned at 7:10 p.m., until 10 a.m. on Thursday, March 3, 2022. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S959.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

NOMINATIONS

Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nominations of Christy Goldsmith Romero, of Virginia, and Caroline D. Pham, of New York, who were both introduced by Senator Stabenow, Kristin N. Johnson, of Michigan, who was introduced by Senator Warnock, and Summer Kristine Mersinger, of South Dakota, who was introduced by Senator Thune, all to be a Commissioner of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, after the nominees testified and answered questions in their own behalf.

INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT AND JOBS ACT IMPLEMENTATION

Committee on Environment and Public Works: Committee concluded an oversight hearing to examine implementation of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act by the Department of Transportation, after receiving testimony from Pete Buttigieg, Secretary of Transportation.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Finance: Committee ordered favorably reported the nominations of Robert Michael Gordon, of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary, January Contreras, of Arizona, to be Assistant Secretary for Family Support, and Rebecca E. Jones Gaston, of Oregon, to be Commissioner on Children, Youth, and Families, all of the Department of Health and Human Services.

U.S. POLICY TOWARDS INDIA

Committee on Foreign Relations: Subcommittee on Near East, South Asia, Central Asia, and Counterterrorism concluded a hearing to examine United States policy towards India, after receiving testimony from Donald Lu, Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs.

CHIEF HUMAN CAPITAL OFFICERS

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: Subcommittee on Government Operations and Border Management concluded a hearing to examine chief human capital officers at 20, focusing on what is needed to empower CHCOs to ensure human resources practices support agencies' mission success, after receiving testimony from Michael J. Rigas, former Acting Director, Office of Personnel Management; Angela Bailey, former Chief Human Capital Officer, Department of Homeland Security; and Steven V. Lenkart, National Federation of Federal Employees, and Teresa W. Gerton, National Academy of Public Administration, both of Washington, D.C.

NOMINATIONS

Committee on the Judiciary: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nominations of Stephanie Dawkins Davis, of Michigan, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Sixth Circuit, who was introduced by Senator Peters, Arianna J. Freeman, of Pennsylvania, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Third Circuit, who was introduced by Senator Casey, Robert Steven Huie, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of California, who was introduced by Senator Padilla, Jennifer H. Rearden, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of New York, who was introduced by Senator Gillibrand, and Evelyn Padin, to be United States District Judge for the District of New Jersey, who was introduced by Senator Menendez, after the nominees testified and answered questions in their own behalf.

INTELLIGENCE

Select Committee on Intelligence: Committee met in closed session to receive a briefing on certain intelligence matters from officials of the intelligence community.

ECONOMICS OF CARTELS

United States Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control: Caucus concluded a hearing to examine the $150 billion drug market, focusing on the economics of cartels, after receiving testimony from F. Michael McDaniel, Director, Houston High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area, Office of National Drug Control Policy, Houston, Texas, on behalf of the National High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Director's Association; and Celina B. Realuyo, The George Washington University Elliott School of International Affairs, Lakshmi Kumar, Global Financial Integrity, and Erica Hanichak, Financial Accountability and Corporate Transparency Coalition, all of Washington, D.C.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 17 public bills, H.R. 6891–6902; 3 private bills, H.R. 6908–6910; and 4 resolutions, H. Con. Res. 76; and H. Res. 959–961 were introduced. **Pages H1274–75**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages H1275–76**

Reports Filed: There were no reports filed today.

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein she appointed Representative McGovern to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. **Page H1211**

Recess: The House recessed at 10:46 a.m. and reconvened at 12 noon. **Page H1216**

Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act: The House considered H.R. 3967, to improve health care and benefits for veterans exposed to toxic substances. Consideration is expected to resume tomorrow, March 3rd.

Pages H1219–46, H1255–57

Pursuant to the Rule, an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 117–33, modified by the amendment printed in part A of H. Rept. 117–253, shall be considered as adopted. **Pages H1219–28**

Agreed to:

Takano en bloc amendment No. 1 consisting of the following amendments printed in part B of H. Rept. 117–253: Bush (No. 1) that includes race and ethnicity as a demographic for a study on the incidence of cancer in veterans; Bush (No. 2) that includes race, age, period of service, military occupation, gender, and disability status of veterans in an epidemiological study on the health trends of veterans who served in the Armed Forces after September 11, 2001; Bush (No. 3) that amends the review of known cases of toxic exposure on military installations of the Department of Defense to include both in the United States and abroad; Bush (No. 4) that includes a study on veteran health outcomes related to waste from the Manhattan project in St. Louis; Cartwright (No. 7) that requires the Secretary of the VA to share a list of resources for toxic-exposed veterans, caregivers of toxic-exposed veterans, and survivors of toxic-exposed vets with national veterans services organizations and other veteran groups; Gibbs (No. 8) that allows veterans an additional 24-hour period, at minimum, to notify the VA when receiving care at a non-VA facility; Golden (No. 9) that ensures that mental health services and counseling are included when providing hospital services to give holistic care for affected veterans; Gottheimer (No. 10) that requires a study by the Department of Veterans Affairs to examine the possible relationship between toxic exposures experienced during service in the Armed Forces and mental health outcomes; Gottheimer (No. 11) that defines outreach materials on illnesses that may be related to toxic exposure as fact sheets under the Veterans and Family Information Act; Hartzler (No. 12) that enhances VA hiring competitiveness by allowing VA to release physicians from non-compete agreements after committing to VA service for at least one year, authorizes VA to make job offers up to 2 years prior to completion of residency and updates statutory minimum requirements for VA physicians to include medical residency; Jackson Lee (No. 13) that adds a study on whether data collection established under this bill should include data on the toxic exposure of National Guard service personnel when deployed in connection with a natural disaster in the United States or its territories; Levin (MI) (No. 14) that amends the definition of ''illnesses'' to include both mental and physical health; Levin (CA) (No. 15) that adds a new section similar to the Commitment to Veteran Support and Outreach Act, which authorizes VA to award grants to expand outreach and claims assistance carried out through County Veterans Service Officers (CVSOs); Newman (No. 16) that requires the Department of Defense (DOD) to conduct a study on the exposure of members of the Armed Forces to herbicide agents, including Agent Orange and Agent Purple, in the Panama Canal Zone during the period beginning on January 1, 1958, and ending on December 31, 1999; Pappas (No. 17) that requires coordination between the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs to establish guidelines used for training active duty personnel to provide awareness of potential risks of toxic exposure, as well as ways to prevent such exposures during combat; Plaskett (No. 18) that requires a GAO study and report on access and barriers to veterans benefits and services for veterans in territories of the United States; Porter (No. 19) that directs the Department of Veterans Affairs to establish a public website, housed within the War Related Illness and Injury Study Center of the Department, to be a clearinghouse for the publication of all Federally funded research on toxic exposure; Ruiz (No. 21) that requires the Department of Defense (DOD) to provide budget information regarding incinerators and waste-to-energy waste disposal alternatives to burn pits; Scanlon (No. 24) that authorizes $150,000,000 for fiscal year 2023 to expand capacity of the Veterans Benefits Management System of the

Department of Veterans Affairs to accommodate expected increased claims processing for newly eligible veterans; Slotkin (No. 25) that creates an interagency working group to (1) Identify collaborative research activities and resources, (2) Establish a 5-year strategic plan for coordination/planning for research surrounding toxic exposure, and (3) Submit a report to the VA Secretary with milestones/goals as part of the implementation; Spanberger (No. 26) that requires the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit a publicly available report to Congress that includes (1) a discussion of the effect of various different types of jet fuels used by the Armed Forces on the health of individuals by length of exposure; (2) an identification of the immediate symptoms of jet fuel exposure that may indicate future health risks; (3) a chronology of health safeguards implemented by the Armed Forces intended to reduce the exposure of members of the Armed Forces to jet fuel; and (4) an identification of any areas relating to jet fuel exposure about which new research needs to be conducted; Torres (CA) (No. 27) that requires the publication of the list of resources provided by the VA to toxic-exposed veterans be made available in English, Spanish, Chinese, and the 7 other most commonly spoken languages in the United States; and Torres (CA) (No. 28) that revises Section 505 to include language about the feasibility and advisability of VA looking at available early detection diagnostics and how they might be incorporated into veterans' care (by a yea-and-nay vote of 331 yeas to 96 nays, Roll No. 52); and

Pages H1237–42, H1255

Brownley amendment (No. 6 printed in part B of H. Rept. 117–253) that ensures toxic exposed veterans have access to mammography screenings (by a yea-and-nay vote of 425 yeas with none voting "nay", Roll No. 54). **Pages H1245–46, H1256–57**

Rejected:

Miller Meeks amendment (No. 5 printed in part B of H. Rept. 117–253) that sought to replace the text of the bill with the Health Care for Burn Pit Veterans Act, which expands healthcare eligibility for certain combat veterans exposed to toxic substances to last for ten years after separation instead of five years, requires toxic exposure-related education and training for VA personnel, and requires screenings and studies to better identify potential associations between veteran medical conditions and toxic exposure (by a yea-and-nay vote of 203 yeas to 223 nays, Roll No. 53). **Pages H1242–45, H1255–56**

H. Res. 950, providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3967) was agreed to yesterday, March 1st.

Suspensions: The House agreed to suspend the rules and agreed to the following measure:

Supporting the people of Ukraine: H. Res. 956, supporting the people of Ukraine, by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 426 yeas to 3 nays, Roll No. 51.

Pages H1247–55

Presidential Message: Read a message from the President wherein he notified Congress that the national emergency with respect to Ukraine that was declared in Executive Order 13660 of March 6, 2014 is to continue in effect beyond March 6, 2022—referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed (H. Doc. 117–96). **Page H1246**

Senate Referral: S. 3600 was held at the desk.

Page H1246

Senate Message: Message received from the Senate today appears on page H1246.

Quorum Calls Votes: Four yea-and-nay votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H1254, H1255, H1255–56, and H1256–57.

Adjournment: The House met at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 7:42 p.m.

Committee Meetings

ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAMS

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Military Personnel held a hearing entitled "Assessing the Effectiveness of Suicide Prevention Programs". Testimony was heard from Karen Orvis, Director, Defense Suicide Prevention Office, Department of Defense; Richard Mooney, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, Health Services Policy and Oversight, Department of Defense; and public witnesses.

INVESTING IN ECONOMIC MOBILITY: THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF HISPANIC SERVING INSTITUTIONS AND OTHER MINORITY SERVING INSTITUTIONS

Committee on Education and Labor: Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Investment held a hearing entitled "Investing in Economic Mobility: The Important Role of Hispanic Serving Institutions and Other Minority Serving Institutions". Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

LESSONS FROM THE FRONTLINE: COVID–19'S IMPACT ON AMERICAN HEALTH CARE

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a hearing entitled "Lessons from the Frontline: COVID–19's Impact on American Health Care". 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, Chair Pro Tempore, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System.

THE 2001 AUMF AND WAR POWERS: THE PATH FORWARD

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''The 2001 AUMF and War Powers: The Path Forward''. Testimony was heard from Wendy Sherman, Deputy Secretary of State, Department of State; Richard Visek, Acting Legal Advisor, Office of the Legal Advisor, Department of State; Christopher P. Maier, Assistant Secretary of Defense, Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict, Department of Defense; and Caroline Krass, General Counsel, Department of Defense.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on Homeland Security: Full Committee held a markup on H.R. 1540, the ''Reporting Efficiently to Proper Officials in Response to Terrorism Act of 2021''; H.R. 6387, the ''School and Daycare Protection Act''; H.R. 6824, the ''President's Cup Cybersecurity Competition Act''; H.R. 6825, the ''Nonprofit Security Grant Program Improvement Act of 2022''; H.R. 6826, the ''Customs Trade Partnership Against Terrorism Pilot Program Act''; H.R. 6827, the ''Securing the Check-point Property Screening System (S–PSS) Act of 2022''; H.R. 6856, the ''Securing Air Travel Act''; H.R. 6873, the ''Bombing Prevention Act of 2022''; H.R. 6868, the ''Cybersecurity Grants for Schools Act of 2022''; H.R. 6871, the ''DHS Acquisition Reform Act''; H.R. 6861, the ''Reducing Costs of DHS Acquisitions Act''; and H.R. 6837, the ''No TikTok on Department of Homeland Security Devices Act''. H.R. 6826, H.R. 6827, H.R. 6837, H.R. 6861, and H.R. 6871 were ordered reported, without amendment. H.R. 6824, H.R. 6868, H.R. 6873, H.R. 1540, H.R. 6387, H.R. 6825, and H.R. 6856 were ordered reported, as amended.

EXAMINING THE COURT-ORDERED REIMPLEMENTATION OF THE REMAIN IN MEXICO POLICY

Committee on Homeland Security: Subcommittee on Border Security, Facilitation, and Operations held a hearing entitled ''Examining the Court-Ordered Reimplementation of the Remain in Mexico Policy''. Testimony was heard from Blas Nuñez-Neto, Acting Assistant Secretary, Border and Immigration Policy, Department of Homeland Security; Benjamine Huffman, Acting Chief Operating Officer, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security; Emily Mendrala, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Western Hemisphere Affairs, Department of State; and Tim Roemer, Director, Arizona Department of Homeland Security.

OVERSIGHT OF SECTION 220 OF THE CONGRESSIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY ACT: IMPLEMENTING THE RIGHTS OF CONGRESSIONAL STAFF TO COLLECTIVELY BARGAIN

Committee on House Administration: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''Oversight of Section 220 of the Congressional Accountability Act: Implementing the Rights of Congressional Staff to Collectively Bargain''. Testimony was heard from John D. Uelmen, General Counsel, Office of Congressional Workplace Rights; and a public witness.

COVID CHILD CARE CHALLENGES: SUPPORTING FAMILIES AND CAREGIVERS

Committee on Oversight and Reform: Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis held a hearing entitled ''COVID Child Care Challenges: Supporting Families and Caregivers''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

FROM GRAY TO GREEN: ADVANCING THE SCIENCE OF NATURE-BASED INFRASTRUCTURE

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology: Subcommittee on Environment held a hearing entitled ''From Gray to Green: Advancing the Science of Nature-Based Infrastructure''. Testimony was heard from Steven Thur, Director, National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Department of Commerce; Sherry Hunt, Supervisory Civil Engineer, Agriculture Research Service, Department of Agriculture; and Todd Bridges, Senior Research Scientist, Environmental Science, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

THE 8(A) PROGRAM: OVERVIEW AND NEXT STEPS TO PROMOTE SMALL BUSINESS SUCCESS

Committee on Small Business: Subcommittee on Contracting and Infrastructure held a hearing entitled ''The 8(a) Program: Overview and Next Steps to Promote Small Business Success''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure: Full Committee held a markup on H.R. 6865, the ''Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2022''; and H. Con. Res. 74, authorizing the use of the Capitol Grounds for the National Peace Officers Memorial Service and

the National Honor Guard and Pipe Band Exhibition. H.R. 6865 was ordered reported, as amended. H. Con. Res. 74 was ordered reported, without amendment.

SUBSTANCE USE, SUICIDE RISK, AND THE AMERICAN HEALTH SYSTEM

Committee on Ways and Means: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''Substance Use, Suicide Risk, and the American Health System''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

Joint Meetings

VSO LEGISLATIVE PRESENTATIONS

Joint Hearing: Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs concluded a joint hearing with the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs to examine the legislative presentation of multiple veterans service organizations, after receiving testimony from Matthew Mihelcic, Patrick Murray, Ryan Gallucci, and Jay Hoffman, all of Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; Jeremy Butler, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America; Lieutenant General Michael S. Linnington, USA (Ret.), Wounded Warrior Project; Jack McManus, Vietnam Veterans of America; Greg Heun, AMVETS; Kathryn Monet, National Coalition for Homeless Veterans; Lory Manning, Service Women's Action Network; Joseph D. McNeil, Sr., Blinded Veterans Association; Victor LaGroon, Black Veterans Empowerment Council; and Thomas Palladino, Texas Veterans Commission, on behalf of the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR THURSDAY, MARCH 3, 2022

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: to hold hearings to examine the Semiannual Monetary Policy Report to the Congress, 10 a.m., SD–538/VTC.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: business meeting to consider the nominations of Arun Venkataraman, of the District of Columbia, to be Assistant Secretary and Director General of the United States and Foreign Commercial Service, Laurie E. Locascio, of Maryland, to be Under Secretary for Standards and Technology, and Grant T. Harris, of California, to be an Assistant Secretary, all of the Department of Commerce, Gigi B. Sohn, of the District of Columbia, to be a Member of the Federal Communications Commission, Alvaro M. Bedoya, of Maryland, to be a Federal Trade Commissioner, Mary T. Boyle, of Maryland, to be a Commissioner of the Consumer Product Safety Commission, and Mohsin Raza Syed, of Virginia, Christopher A. Coes, of Georgia, and Carol Annette Petsonk, of the District of Columbia, each to be an Assistant Secretary of Transportation, 10 a.m., SR–253.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: to hold hearings to examine recent actions of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission relating to permitting construction and operation of interstate natural gas pipelines and other natural gas infrastructure projects, 10 a.m., SD–366.

Committee on Foreign Relations: to hold hearings to examine the nominations of Alina L. Romanowski, of Illinois, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Iraq, Douglas T. Hickey, of Idaho, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Finland, and Steven H. Fagin, of New Jersey, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Yemen, all of the Department of State, and Erin Elizabeth McKee, of California, to be an Assistant Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, 10:30 a.m., SD–106/VTC.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: to hold hearings to examine the Senate confirmation process and Federal vacancies, 10:15 a.m., SD–342/VTC.

House

Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Seapower and Projection Forces; and Subcommittee on Readiness, joint hearing entitled ''State of the Surface Navy'', 10 a.m., 2118 Rayburn and Webex.

Committee on Oversight and Reform, Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, hearing entitled ''The Neglected Epidemic of Missing BIPOC Women and Girls'', 10 a.m., 2154 Rayburn and Zoom.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

10 a.m., Thursday, March 3

Senate Chamber

Program for Thursday: Senate will continue consideration of H.R. 3076, Postal Service Reform Act. The filing deadline for first-degree amendments to the bill is at 1 p.m.

At 11 a.m., Senate will begin consideration of S.J. Res. 38, relating to a national emergency declared by the President on March 13, 2020, and vote on passage of the joint resolution at approximately 2 p.m.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

9 a.m., Thursday, March 3

House Chamber

Program for Thursday: Complete consideration of H.R. 3967—Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act.

Extensions of Remarks, as inserted in this issue

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