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House of Representatives

The House met at noon and was called to order by the Speaker.

PRAYER

Reverend Dr. William J. Barber, II, Greenleaf Christian Church, Goldsboro, North Carolina, offered the following prayer:

Merciful God, help us submit ourselves to the truth of Your word, knowing that what we do only matters and lasts if it is rooted in love for Your glory.

Remind us that You are the God who can melt clouds of sin and sadness away. And You, O God, can bring down rulers from temporal and finite thrones. We are thankful that You are also the same God who lifts the humble. Remind and strengthen us to do the same with whatever power we have.

By Your spirit, don't let us forget that Your mercy for all those who fear You is real. Remind us that to fear You is to align our public deeds with Jesus, the one who declares, ''The Spirit of the Lord is upon me to preach good news to the poor''; the incarnate one who said to feed the hungry, heal the sick, care for the least of these, welcome the immigrant.

To fear You is to align with the prophets who taught us to never rob the poor of their rights, and to ensure that workers get their just pay.

Help us to live out Your vision of love, joy, and justice until we can truly sing as though we believe that You, O God, rule the world with truth and grace, and You, O God, make the nations prove the glories of Your righteousness, the glory of Your justice as far as the curse is found.

Help us, O God, and hear our prayer, O Lord.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the Chamber her approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1 of rule I, the Journal of the last day's proceedings is approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. TAKANO 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.

WELCOMING REVEREND DR. WILLIAM J. BARBER II

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUTTERFIELD) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Madam Speaker, the House is honored today to welcome a great theologian and humanitarian, my friend and constituent, the distinguished William J. Barber, II.

I have known Bishop Barber since he was a college student. A native of Roper, North Carolina, Bishop Barber has dedicated his life to preaching God's word of salvation and embracing the least of these in civil society.

Bishop Barber's trajectory to national prominence began when he organized a multiracial, multigenerational social justice movement in Raleigh, North Carolina, to expose the racial and economic inequities facing our Nation.

The Moral Monday protests catapulted Bishop Barber to a place where he is now a nationally recognized voice for the poor. As the founder of Repairers of the Breach, Bishop Barber leads a movement that challenges systemic racism, systemic poverty, ecological devastation, and what he calls the distorted narrative of religious nationalism. Bishop Barber seeks to build an agenda rooted in love, justice, and morality.

Bishop Barber is the senior pastor of the Greenleaf Christian Church in Goldsboro, North Carolina. He and his wife, Rebecca, have five very accomplished children who have distinguished themselves in their respective fields.

We are honored today, Madam Speaker, to have Bishop Barber with us today to pray over this sacred institution that we call the House of Representatives.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

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

PACT ACT

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

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, earlier this year, President Biden called on Congress to comprehensively address the effects of toxic exposure in our veterans.

My bipartisan Honoring our PACT Act is the largest expansion of VA benefits in a generation.

Now that it is the law, the United States is finally recognizing toxic exposure as a cost of war.

Earlier this year, VA announced that it will immediately begin processing PACT Act benefits claims for eligible terminally ill veterans.

These developments would not have been possible without the work between Congress, House Democrats, and the Biden-Harris administration, and for our commitment to follow through on our promise to deliver healthcare

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and benefits to America's toxic-exposed veterans.

I encourage veterans to visit VA.gov/PACT for more information on PACT Act benefits.

Madam Speaker, and may I add that Bishop Barber, our guest chaplain today, along with our Speaker, were instrumental in including Camp Lejeune as part of the PACT Act, and I know that America is grateful for this justice to be done.

HONORING THE LIFE AND SERVICE OF SENATOR PAT ENGEL

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

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Madam Speaker, today, I join Representative MIKE FLOOD to honor the life and service of former Nebraska State Senator Pat Engel, whom we served alongside during our time in the Nebraska Legislature.

Born in South Sioux City, Nebraska, Pat was a man of faith who applied his sharp mind to a life of service to his community and never stopped serving.

After his early military career concluded with Active Duty as an Air Force intelligence officer stationed in Germany, he chose to return with his young family to South Sioux City. There, as a prolific volunteer, he earned a reputation for his good nature and compassion for others as he served on two local school boards, numerous volunteer organizations, and as Dakota County commissioner.

In his 16 years in the legislature, Pat defined what it is to be a public servant. He was well liked. He had a special gift to work and connect with anyone, and I will always remember his cheerful way, even when issues were difficult. He was known for bringing people together.

Pat and his wife, Dee, were married for almost 68 years and had five children. Family, community, and love for his home State meant the world to Pat. He will be missed.

POOR PEOPLE'S CAMPAIGN CALIFORNIA STATEWIDE

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

Ms. LEE of California. Madam Speaker, I first thank Bishop Barber for that very powerful prayer for our Nation.

Today, the Poor People's Campaign's California Statewide Convening will uplift the launch of the California-led campaign for the Third Reconstruction resolution called Close the Wealth Gap, California.

Extreme poverty affects over 20 million people in California. This is a moral disgrace.

As written in House Resolution 438, the Third Reconstruction, we need the moral resolve to pass laws and policies that fully address interlocking injustices, which have only deepened during the COVID–19 pandemic.

This country was founded on the moral commitment to ensure domestic tranquility, promote general welfare, and secure liberty and justice for all.

It is time we realize a Third Reconstruction to build an equitable, thriving, and resilient economy from the bottom up.

That is why I am calling on my colleagues to have the political will to make permanent the child tax credit. The most recent poverty data show that policy decisions like the temporary CTC, income support, and nutrition assistance cut the national child poverty rate nearly in half in 2021. This demonstrates that poverty is a policy choice and there is no excuse for poverty in America.

Madam Speaker, everyone deserves to live a life free from socioeconomic policies that are punitive and destructive to their families.

MEDICARE PHYSICIAN FEE SCHEDULE

(Mr. MURPHY of North Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MURPHY of North Carolina. Madam Speaker, I rise to address an impending disaster that is about to face patient care in this country.

Not just 2 years ago in this country, physicians were hailed as heroes for risking their lives to save others during the pandemic. Now, when other professions are being given large raises, doctors are facing double digit Medicare cuts beginning in January.

As a surgeon of 30 years, I can say without a doubt that these cuts will either force practices to close or severely restrict the number of Medicare patients who will be seen. The constant attack on physicians who see Medicare patients has to stop.

At present, the cost of seeing a Medicare patient exceeds its reimbursement. That is why most internal medicine practices will not see new Medicare patients.

The constant threat to Medicare needs to stop. We have a growing and aging population. We need to provide some certainty to doctors and hospitals if they are going to be able to plan to take care of these Medicare patients.

Madam Speaker, we cannot end this session without a Medicare fix.

CELEBRATING GALENA PARK INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

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

Ms. GARCIA of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise to celebrate Galena Park Independent School District's very own North Shore High School football team for their second trip in a row to the Texas State Championship.

Located in my district, the North Shore Senior High School is home to a group of standout athletes and students, both academically and athletically.

Through their hard work and preservation, our local stars will now play against Duncanville High School for a chance to defend their State championship.

I am truly so proud of all their accomplishments both on and off the field. They embody Texas' spirit of excellence and go-get-'em spirit.

Stay focused and play strong, Mustangs, because all of Galena Park in the Houston region is rooting for you this Saturday.

Best wishes and God bless.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF CROWE PEELE

(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 to celebrate the life of Crowe Peele, an NCAA boxing champion at LSU.

Born in Fayetteville, North Carolina, in 1934, Crowe made a name for himself in the Golden Gloves program where he was a four-time champion. He boxed twice in the National Golden Gloves Tournament in New York City and while in New York, Crowe lost two matches. Out of 64 pre-college bouts, these were his only two losses.

Crowe boxed for 2 years at LSU, winning Southeastern Conference and Sugar Bowl titles as a freshman in 1954 before repeating as conference champ in 1955.

During his sophomore year at LSU, Crowe won the top title in collegiate boxing, the NCAA Championship. This made him college boxing's premier heavyweight champion.

After winning the title, Crowe decided to leave amateur boxing and enter the professional arena. As a professional, Crowe had a record of 16–5, with wins in his first 14 fights and knockouts in his first 10. He fought on cards with Sugar Ray Robinson and Archie Moore.

After his retirement from boxing, Crowe settled in Baton Rouge with his wife, Betty, and started a family while operating service stations around the city.

He is survived by four children, including his daughter, Nancy, who proudly continued her father's legacy of service, professionalism, and dedication here in the House of Representatives.

□ 0915

RECOGNIZING STAFF DIRECTOR RUSSELL ANELLO

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

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Madam Speaker and my dear friend, NYDIA VELÁZQUEZ, from the great State of New York, I rise today to recognize the outgoing staff director of the House Committee on Oversight and Reform, Russell Anello.

Russ became my trusted adviser and leader of our committee staff in May 2021. Before his promotion to staff director, Russ served under three of our distinguished colleagues: Chairman Henry Waxman, Chairman JIM CLYBURN, and Chairman Elijah Cummings.

Russ is a tireless leader who defended democracy when democracy needed defending the most. Under his leadership, the committee passed landmark legislation, held high-profile hearings, and skillfully navigated complex investigations to hold government and private actors to account.

Russ' sharp legal skills and political instincts have helped to make our government more effective and efficient and have improved the lives of Americans.

On behalf of the members of the House Committee on Oversight and Reform, and on behalf of the American people, I thank Russ for his selfless, dedicated service to our Nation.

RECOGNIZING JUDGE STEVE FLOYD

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

Mr. PFLUGER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Tom Green County Judge Steve Floyd, a faithful leader of our community who is retiring from elected office at the end of this year.

Judge Floyd has dedicated his life to our community with more than 30 years of service as justice of the peace, county commissioner, and now as county judge.

Whether he was leading the county, handing down justice, or just mowing the courthouse lawn, he led with wisdom and kindness.

Judge Floyd had a monumental impact on the partnership between San Angelo and Goodfellow Air Force Base, where his community leadership and visionary ideas strengthened the bond and paved the way for San Angelo to receive three unprecedented Altus Award trophies for exceptional community partnership, more than any other base has received.

Judge Floyd's retirement is bittersweet today. If you are watching this morning, Judge, please know that we are not just saying farewell to a good friend and a good leader but someone who has been an incredible public servant for over 30 years.

We are grateful for the decades of service to our community, and we wish you the very best in your upcoming retirement. Congratulations on a job well done, Judge Floyd.

CELEBRATING KOONTZ ELECTRIC SIGNING DAY

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

Mr. HILL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate Koontz Electric signing day for students committing to the Koontz Promise.

The Koontz Promise provides Arkansas River Valley High School students with an immediate career following graduation from a Koontz-operated skilled trade program.

Trade programs available for students include construction technology, industrial mechanics, maintenance technology, and welding.

The Koontz Electric Company of Morrilton, Arkansas, is a diversified heavy industrial electrical contractor that has noticed a skills gap between the generations. Immediately, they saw an opportunity to set up and train the next generation of young leaders to lessen the skills gap and highlight the opportunities of skilled trades immediately upon high school graduation.

On top of guaranteeing prospective students a career, the Koontz Promise also guarantees coverage of all expenses not covered by another funding source.

To celebrate and welcome the students who committed to the Koontz Promise, a signing day was held this past September.

I applaud Koontz Electric for their initiative in educating the next generation of leaders in the skilled trades, and I look forward to seeing these students achieve great careers in the future.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 8393, PUERTO RICO STATUS ACT

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 1519 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 1519

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 8393) to enable the people of Puerto Rico to choose a permanent, nonterritorial, fully self-governing political status for Puerto Rico and to provide for a transition to and the implementation of that permanent, nonterritorial, fully self-governing political status, and for other purposes. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. In lieu of the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Natural Resources now printed in the bill, an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 117-74 shall be considered as adopted. The bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended, are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill, as amended, and on any further amendment thereto, to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Natural Resources or their respective designees; and (2) one motion to recommit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ). The gentleman from Massachusetts is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. RESCHENTHALER), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, yesterday, the Rules Committee met and reported a rule, House Resolution 1519, providing for consideration of H.R. 8393, the Puerto Rico Status Act, under a closed rule. The rule provides 1 hour of general debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking member of the Committee on Natural Resources and provides one motion to recommit.

Madam Speaker, Puerto Ricans have been U.S. citizens since the Jones-Shafroth Act of 1917. That is over 100 years the Puerto Rican people have been Americans. Yet, for those 100 years and more—in fact, going all the way back to the United States' annexation of the island in 1898—the U.S. Government has not guaranteed our fellow citizens on Puerto Rico the full and equal rights of citizens on the mainland.

Puerto Rico has faced multilayered crises rooted in this century-long policy, crises that have been compounded in recent years by natural disasters, the COVID–19 pandemic, and migration.

Puerto Rico's current status prevents the island from enjoying full democracy at the national level. Puerto Rico's Delegate to Congress has limited voting rights, and the Puerto Rican people cannot vote in U.S. Presidential elections, even though the U.S. Government enacts and enforces their national laws and residents pay Federal taxes.

Puerto Rico also cannot set its own monetary trade or immigration policy. They are unable to join international organizations or enter into international agreements, highlighting the complicated implications of the island's current status as a territory.

Puerto Rico's status also limits the island economically. For example, in

granting Puerto Rico the ability to restructure its debt in 2016, Congress established an oversight and management board that had the power to override decisions of the Governor and legislature of Puerto Rico.

Look, it is time Congress recognizes that Puerto Rico has no interest in being a colony, just as we in the United States should have no interest in being a colonizing power in the year 2022.

We are here today to consider a rule that would bring H.R. 8393, the Puerto Rico Status Act, to the floor.

This bill details the transition to and the implementation of a nonterritory status for Puerto Rico, finally giving the people of Puerto Rico a choice to determine their own status. It tasks the Puerto Rico State Elections Commission to carry out a nonpartisan campaign to educate and inform voters before holding a referendum for Puerto Ricans to decide between statehood, independence, or independence followed by free association with the United States.

I am proud to represent a vibrant Puerto Rican community in central Massachusetts, and many of my Puerto Rican constituents have family members still living on the island. Their family members, just like Americans on the mainland, deserve the right to self-determination. They ought to have an opportunity to carve their own path and build the future that they want.

The Puerto Rico Status Act is the result of serious negotiation and careful compromise to clarify available status options and ensure a productive process.

I am grateful to Chairman GRIJALVA, Chairwoman VELÁZQUEZ, and Congresswoman GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN, the Resident Commissioner from Puerto Rico, for all the work that they have done to get us to this point.

Ultimately, the people of Puerto Rico must decide on the island status, and it is up to us in Congress to help facilitate that process.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this rule and the underlying bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Madam Speaker, I thank the distinguished chairman and my good friend from Massachusetts for yielding me the customary 30 minutes, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, the rule before us today provides for consideration of H.R. 8393, the Puerto Rico Status Act. This is a bill that received an emergency Rules hearing yesterday with just 3 hours' notice, 3 hours for an issue that deserves to be heard through regular order.

H.R. 8393 would authorize a federally sponsored, taxpayer-funded election to be held in Puerto Rico on 5 November 2023. This election would require the voters of Puerto Rico to choose between three status options: independence, sovereignty and free association, or U.S. statehood.

You might notice something missing here. This bill doesn't even give Puerto Ricans the option to preserve their current status as a territory of the United States. So not only do House Democrats want to control how the States run their elections, they now want to control how Puerto Rico runs their elections.

H.R. 8393 even takes things a step further than that. If Puerto Ricans vote to become a sovereign or independent nation, this legislation tells them what they have to include in their new constitution, how they have to ratify their constitution, and how elections for government officers should take place.

My friends across the aisle want to talk about colonial power. What does that sound like?

Further, this bill would completely circumvent congressional authority by not allowing Congress to ratify the option that Puerto Rico ultimately chooses.

The question of Puerto Rico's statehood is a serious topic, one that I am not necessarily opposed to, but it is a topic that deserves a deliberative process with careful consideration and expert input.

There have been numerous hearings on this issue, but there were no hearings on this specific bill. There has been no vetting of legal implications of using this unprecedented, self-executing process to statehood.

This is not a question that should be run through a lameduck Congress on the last day of a scheduled session with less than 24 hours' notice. That is unacceptable.

Again, I am not debating the merits of Puerto Rican statehood, but I am pointing out the glaring problems in this ill-conceived, half-baked legislation that leaves too many questions unanswered.

House Democrats are doing nothing more today than using Puerto Ricans as pawns to score cheap political points with a bill that has zero chance of becoming law.

Let's just be frank and honest about that. This bill has zero chance of becoming law this session of Congress. It is a joke that we are even considering it today.

We owe it to the voters of Puerto Rico to do better than this. They deserve more.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to oppose this rule, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

This shouldn't be controversial. We are not deciding the fate of Puerto Rico. We are setting a process in place so that the people who live on the island can make that decision.

Listening to my colleague's speech, as he mentions Democrat, Democrat, Democrat, Democrat, you would never know that this compromise was actually written in conjunction with the Republican—let me repeat that—with the Republican Delegate from Puerto Rico.

□ 0930

So I don't understand what the big fuss is about.

But if my friend believes that the people of Puerto Rico should decide their future, then he should support this bill which will set in place a process so they can determine their future. If the gentleman doesn't, if he continues to believe that we should act like a colonizer, then vote ''no'' on the bill. But this is the commonsense thing to do.

One other thing we heard him say, they are taxpayer-funded elections. All of our elections proceed with the support of taxpayer funds. I don't understand what that is all about. But the bottom line is that people of Puerto Rico do pay taxes.

In any event, this really is about self-determination, and it is that simple. I hope that my colleagues will not only support the rule but also the underlying bill.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Madam Speaker, I would like to inquire as to whether my friend has any additional speakers.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I will close.

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Madam Speaker, I am prepared to close, I have no further speakers, and I yield myself the balance of my time.

Madam Speaker, I have already talked about the fact that this bill did not go through regular order. It is even questionable whether the committee that heard this hearing has jurisdiction to consider this bill.

I haven't even touched on the fact that the status options that are called for don't give Puerto Rico the chance to keep its current status. The status quo is totally off limits.

We have also talked about dictating to a sovereign nation what is in their constitution. It also, as I said before, abrogates constitutional authority. This has never been done before.

Also, there is no CBO score on this. We have zero idea how much this is going to cost. This also doesn't take into consideration PROMESA which is the financial oversight and management board that helps Puerto Rico.

A big glaring issue here is citizenship. We haven't had a single hearing on how this would affect citizenship.

So you are in Puerto Rico and born to two U.S. citizens, what happens to your status?

Are you a U.S. citizen or not?

That is not considered in this bill.

So, again, this bill is half-baked. It didn't go through regular order, and it didn't go through proper committees of jurisdiction, yet here we are considering it in a lameduck session.

I am incredibly disappointed by this. I am here just 1 day after this bill was

considered in a hearing that was held in the Rules Committee debating legislation scheduled on, again, the last day of the 117th Congress. Again, this bill has zero chance of becoming law. We are wasting the time of the American people.

I have said it repeatedly, but it requires saying again: we have real crises that this Nation is facing. Our southern border is one great example.

At no time has our southern border been more dangerous and more unstable than right now. This past fiscal year set the record for encounters of illegal immigrants, also a record for migrant deaths, a record for apprehension of suspected terrorists, and a record for seizure of fentanyl at the southern border.

The seizure of fentanyl might sound as if we are doing something good, but we only interdict less than 10 percent of the fentanyl. So if our fentanyl seizures are up, then the amount of fentanyl coming into the United States is, of course, up. Yet with all that, congressional Democrats won't even acknowledge that there is a problem at our southern border. Even the Biden administration won't admit the gravity of the situation.

Vice President KAMALA HARRIS, the so-called border czar, has said: ''Our border is secure.''

That is gaslighting. That is gaslighting the American people. President Biden himself has said: ''There are more important things going on.''

He refuses to even visit the southern border. That is gaslighting, and that is also dereliction of duty.

Further, House Democrats failed to meet the fundamental duty of funding the government, despite spending most of last year passing trillions of dollars in wasteful spending that has done nothing but driven up inflation, driven up our national debt, and has seen real wages decrease for working Americans.

So now we are letting two Senators who won't even be in office next year ram through a massive omnibus spending bill that was written behind closed doors and without the input of House Republicans.

So with today's rule, House Democrats are, once again, refusing to put forward solid legislation that has an actual chance of moving forward and bringing relief to the American people.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on the rule, 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 or the Vice President.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I don't even know where to start in response to all of that.

Let me, first of all, inform Members about what the legislative history of the bill that we want to bring to the floor is because if you listen to the gentleman, Madam Speaker, you would think that it just came out of nowhere.

On July 15, 2022, Chairman GRIJALVA introduced H.R. 8393, the Puerto Rico Status Act, with original cosponsors Chairwoman VELÁZQUEZ, Resident Commissioner JENNIFFER GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN—I will remind my friend, again, that she is a Republican Resident Commissioner from Puerto Rico—and Representative DARREN SOTO of Florida.

The Natural Resources Committee held a hearing on April 14, 2021, titled: ''Insular Affairs Legislative Hearing on Puerto Rico Political Status,'' and a hearing on June 16, 2021, titled: ''Office of Insular Affairs Legislative Hearing.''

On July 20, 2022, the full committee met and held a markup of the bill and favorably reported it with an amendment in the nature of a substitute by a vote of 25–20 with Resident Commissioner GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN joining the majority. So the idea that somehow nobody has been talking about this doesn't reflect what the legislative history is.

Madam Speaker, I include in the RECORD an AP article from June 4, 2022, titled: ''Puerto Ricans speak out on U.S. territory's political status.''

PUERTO RICANS SPEAK OUT ON US TERRITORY'S POLITICAL STATUS

(By Danica Coto)

SAN JUAN, PR (AP).—Hundreds of Puerto Ricans crowded into a convention center Saturday where federal legislators held a public hearing to decide the future of the island's political status as the U.S. territory struggles to recover from hurricanes, earthquakes and a deep economic crisis.

One by one, dozens of people ranging from politicians to retirees to young people leaned into a microphone and spoke against the island's current territorial status, which recognizes its people as U.S. citizens but does not allow them to vote in presidential elections, denies them certain federal benefits and allows them one representative in Congress with limited voting powers.

The hearing comes two weeks after a group of Democratic congress members including the House majority leader and one Republican proposed what would be the first-ever binding plebiscite that would offer voters in Puerto Rico three options: statehood, independence or independence with free association, whose terms would be defined following negotiations.

Congress would have to accept Puerto Rico as the 51st state if voters so choose it, but the proposal is not expected to survive in the Senate, where Republicans have long opposed statehood.

''Everyone, even congress people themselves, know that the possibilities of this becoming law are minimal and maybe non-existent, but it doesn't stop being important,'' former Puerto Rico governor Anibal Acevedo Vilá told The Associated Press.

About an hour into the hearing, a small group of people including a former gubernatorial candidate who supports independence burst into the ballroom, pointed fingers at the panel of U.S. legislators and yelled, ''120 years of colonialism!''

The majority of the audience booed the group and yelled at them to leave as U.S. lawmakers called for calm. ''Democracy is not always pretty, but it's necessary,'' said Rep. Raul Grijalva of Arizona, chairman of the U.S. House of Natural Resources Committee, which oversees affairs in U.S. territories.

The proposal of a binding plebiscite—a measure that has not yet been introduced in committee—has frustrated some on an island that already has held seven unilateral, nonbinding referendums on its political status, with no overwhelming majority emerging. The last referendum was held in November 2020, with 53 percent of votes for statehood and 47 percent against, with only a little more than half of registered voters participating.

Luis Herrero, a political consultant, said during the hearing that even if enough people support statehood, there are not enough votes in the Senate to make Puerto Rico a state: ''Not today, not yesterday, not tomorrow. Since 1898, Puerto Rican statehood has been a mirage, lip service to score cheap political points or to raise a few dollars for a campaign.''

Saturday's hearing comes amid ongoing discontent with Puerto Rico's current political status, with the U.S. Supreme Court further angering many in April after upholding the differential treatment of residents of Puerto Rico. In an 8–1 vote, the court ruled that making Puerto Ricans ineligible for the Supplemental Security Income program, which offers benefits to blind, disabled and older Americans, did not unconstitutionally discriminate against them.

As a result, many of those who spoke at Saturday's public hearing welcomed the proposed binding plebiscite.

''We finally see the light at the end of the tunnel,'' said Víctor Pérez, a U.S. military veteran who lamented the current political status. ''Even after all our service and sacrifice, we come back home and we are denied full voting rights and equality. . . . We cannot vote for our president, our commander in chief,

(but) they send us to war.''

Grijalva said the testimonies given Saturday will help him and other legislators revise the proposed measure, which he said is a way to make amends. He said he hopes it will go to the House floor by August. If eventually approved, it would be held on Nov. 5, 2023.

Acevedo, the former governor, said he hasn't lost hope despite numerous attempts throughout the decades to change the political status of Puerto Rico, which became a U.S. territory in 1898 following the SpanishAmerican War.

''A solution to this problem of more than 120 years has to happen at some point,'' he said. ''When will conditions allow for it? That's unpredictable.''

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, it is clear something needs to change. Puerto Ricans don't want to continue under the island's territorial status for many reasons—namely because while the status recognizes its people as U.S. citizens, it doesn't allow them to vote in Presidential elections, denies them certain crucial Federal benefits, and limits their congressional Representative's voting power.

The Puerto Rico Status Act is a good solution that will allow Puerto Ricans to decide themselves what the next steps should be. We should give them that opportunity.

The gentleman talked about process in terms of how this House is being operated. Let me remind the gentleman—and let me remind all my colleagues—that the last time the Republicans were in charge of the House, the Senate, and the White House—they controlled everything, and I mean everything—the last time they did that, do you know what they did?

They shut the government down and walked away. That is not responsible governing. That was unconscionable.

And leading up to that government shutdown in the Rules Committee we had an emergency meeting, on what?

Cheese.

Don't even ask me to explain that, but that is what they did. They had an emergency meeting in the Rules Committee, and it was a meeting on cheese.

Madam Speaker, I include in the RECORD a HuffPost article titled: ''House Republicans Called Emergency Meeting On Cheese As Shutdown Approached.''

[From HuffPost, Dec. 22, 2018]

HOUSE REPUBLICANS CALLED EMERGENCY MEETING ON CHEESE AS SHUTDOWN APPROACHED

(By Amy Russo)

As the federal government was heading for a shutdown Friday night, House Republicans called an emergency meeting.

Plot twist: it was about cheese.

During her broadcast that evening, MSNBC's Rachel Maddow appeared astonished while reporting on the gathering, which was arranged so that lawmakers could discuss the Curd Act, a proposal to allow some cheeses to be advertised as ''natural'' despite having artificial ingredients.

Rep. Jim McGovern (D–Mass.) was clearly irked, feeling the timing was pretty inconvenient.

''This is an emergency meeting that we're having here and I've seen some surreal things around this place, but this is really something,'' McGovern said. ''Vital parts of our government are about to shut down in just a few hours, and the Republicans have called an emergency meeting on cheese.''

Venting his frustration with Republicans in the room, McGovern wondered whether his colleagues had thought about how the meeting would look to the public, which would soon be faced with the third shutdown of the year.

''I mean, has anybody considered how ridiculous this is or how bad the optics are as the American people are watching what's going on here?'' he asked. ''By all means, if you think the most important thing we have to discuss right now is cheese, I'll let you have at it.''

Rep. Pete Sessions (R–Texas) eventually jumped in to defend the meeting, calling the cheese bill ''important to small business,'' then eventually segueing into the issue of funding for the southern border wall, the key matter that prompted the shutdown.

''We are being overrun on our southern border,'' Sessions declared.

That's when McGovern piped up, appearing confused, asking, ''There's no wall in this bill, right?''

''It is important,'' Sessions argued back, clarifying that he was ''not talking about the wall of cheese.''

Mr. McGOVERN. Madam Speaker, my Republican colleagues seem to be confused about why we are moving quickly here.

Let me explain that simply in the last few hours that they were in charge, as I said, they called an emergency meeting on cheese. Don't get me wrong. I love cheese just as much as everybody else in this Chamber does. But I think the systematic disenfranchisement of millions of American citizens is a little bit more important than cheese. Maybe my Republican colleagues disagree.

I also point out that this is not the last day of this Congress. We will be here to complete our business on an omnibus appropriations bill. But I want the American people to understand how my Republican friends have acted in these last few days. We are still trying to work out the details of this government spending bill. We are working with Republicans and trying to come up with some sort of an accommodation. We need a little bit more time.

What we voted on yesterday was a continuing resolution to keep the government running a few more days so we don't have a shutdown and to work out the details. It is not the final package. Lots of stuff still remains to be figured out.

But what we said is that we need to pass a short-term continuing resolution for a few days so that we can work out those details and so we don't shut the government down and cause all kinds of chaos because we know what government shutdowns do.

I think it is really interesting for people to understand that 201 Republicans voted to shut the government down. If they succeeded, then the government would shut down tomorrow. They voted to shut the government down—

Who does that?

What are they thinking?

All because there is a small group of people here in the House whose allegiance to Trump and the hard-line rightwing fringe of the Republican Party say they don't want to have any kind of deal. They don't want to govern. They would rather shut the government down costing the economy billions and billions of dollars, causing all kinds of uncertainty, and hurting the American people.

They did that before. If they had their way, then the government would be shut down tomorrow. Talk about irresponsible.

So I also should point out that every Democrat—215 Democrats—who voted yesterday voted to keep the government running. So apparently, Members of the Republican Party do not think they are responsible for governing. They vote ''no'' on everything—on everything—and they criticize us for the way we do the job that they won't do.

We heard the gentleman criticize President Biden for dealing with the drug crisis at the border, for actually seizing fentanyl. He is getting criticized because we are seizing it at the border.

Really?

Madam Speaker, this is simple. The legislation that this rule will bring to the floor gives the people of Puerto Rico a choice—one that they deserve—to determine their status. It is past time we provide them this opportunity to decide for themselves what kind of relationship they want with the United States moving forward.

So that is what this rule will do. It will bring that bill to the floor.

Before I close, Madam Speaker, I would just, again, urge my Republican friends: stand up to the Freedom Caucus, stand up to the hard-line rightwing in your conference who says ''no'' to everything. Put the American people first. Put people over politics.

That is something that I think is not an unreasonable request.

The idea that over 200 of my friends voted to shut the government down yesterday?

Give me a break.

So we are going to do our work, and we are going to pass this bill today. We are going to get to an agreement on an omnibus bill that will help the American people. That will be next week. And we are going to do our job because we believe our job is to govern. That is the responsible thing to do, not shut the government down. Madam Speaker, I urge a ''yes'' vote on the rule.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the previous question is ordered.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the resolution.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 217, nays 201, not voting 12, as follows:

[Roll No. 527]

YEAS—217

Adams
Aguilar
Allred
Auchincloss
Axne
Barragán
Beatty
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Bourdeaux
Bowman
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brown (MD)
Brown (OH)
Brownley
Bush
Bustos
Butterfield
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
Crow
Cuellar
Davids (KS)
Davis, Danny K.
Dean
DeFazio
DeGette
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
DeSaulnier
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Escobar
Eshoo
Espaillat
Evans
Fletcher
Foster
Frankel, Lois
Gallego
Garamendi
Garcia (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
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
Peltola
Perlmutter
Peters
Phillips
Pingree
Pocan
Porter
Pressley
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Rice (NY)
Ross
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (NY)
Ryan (OH)
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
Velázquez
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wexton
Wild
Williams (GA)
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NAYS—201

Aderholt
Allen
Amodei
Armstrong
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Baird
Balderson
Banks
Barr
Bentz
Bergman
Bice (OK)
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (NC)
Boebert
Bost
Brady
Brooks
Buchanan
Bucshon
Budd
Burchett
Burgess
Calvert
Cammack
Carey
Carl
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Cawthorn
Chabot
Cline
Cloud
Clyde
Cole
Comer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Curtis
Davidson
Diaz-Balart
Donalds
Duncan
Dunn
Ellzey
Emmer
Estes
Fallon
Feenstra
Ferguson
Finstad
Fischbach
Fitzgerald
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flood
Flores
Foxx
Franklin, C. Scott
Fulcher
Gaetz
Gallagher
Garbarino
Garcia (CA)
Gibbs
Gimenez
Gohmert
Gonzales, Tony
Good (VA)
Gooden (TX)
Gosar
Granger
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Green (TN)
Greene (GA)
Griffith
Grothman
Guest
Guthrie
Harris
Harshbarger
Hern
Herrell
Herrera Beutler
Hice (GA)
Higgins (LA)
Hill
Hollingsworth
Hudson
Huizenga
Issa
Jackson
Jacobs (NY)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson (SD)
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Joyce (PA)
Katko
Keller
Kelly (PA)
Kim (CA)
Kustoff
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Latta
LaTurner
Lesko
Letlow
Loudermilk
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Mace
Malliotakis
Mann
Massie
Mast
McCarthy
McCaul
McClain
McClintock
McHenry
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
Reschenthaler
Rice (SC)
Rodgers (WA)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rose
Rosendale
Rouzer
Roy
Rutherford
Salazar
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sempolinski
Sessions
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smucker
Spartz
Stauber
Steel
Stefanik
Steil
Steube
Stewart
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (PA)
Tiffany
Timmons
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Van Drew
Van Duyne
Wagner
Walberg
Waltz
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams (TX)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Yakym
Zeldin

NOT VOTING—12

Buck
Cheney
Conway
Davis, Rodney
DesJarlais
Gonzalez (OH)
Hartzler
Hinson
Kelly (MS)
Kinzinger
Long
McKinley

□ 1023

Mr. HUIZENGA changed his vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

So the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MEMBERS RECORDED PURSUANT TO HOUSE RESOLUTION 8, 117TH CONGRESS

Auchincloss (Beyer)
Axne (Pappas)
Beatty (Neguse)
Boebert (Gaetz)
Brooks (Moore (AL))
Brown (MD) (Evans)
Bustos (Schneider)
Carter (LA) (Horsford)
Cawthorn (Gaetz)
Cherfilus-McCormick (Brown (OH))
Cicilline (Jayapal)
Cleaver (Davids (KS))
Cuellar (Correa)
DeFazio (Pallone)
DelBene (Schneider)
Dingell (Pappas)
Doyle, Michael F. (Evans)
Duncan (Williams (TX))
Dunn (Salazar)
Escobar (Garcia (TX))
Espaillat (Correa)
Ferguson (Gonzales, Tony (TX))
Gibbs (Smucker)
Gosar (Weber (TX))
Herrera Beutler (Valadao)
Issa (Calvert)
Jacobs (NY) (Sempolinski)
Johnson (TX) (Pallone)
Kelly (IL) (Horsford)
Khanna (Pappas)
Kim (NJ) (Pallone)
Kirkpatrick (Pallone)
Krishnamoorthi (Pappas)
LaHood (Kustoff)
Larson (CT) (Pappas)
Lawrence (Garcia (TX))
Lawson (FL) (Evans)
Letlow (Moore (UT))
Levin (CA) (Huffman)
Malliotakis (Armstrong)
Maloney, Sean P. (Beyer)
Mfume (Evans)
Moulton (Trone)
Newman (Correa)
Norcross (Pallone)
O'Halleran (Pappas)
Omar (Beyer)
Palazzo (Fleischmann)
Pascrell (Pallone)
Payne (Pallone)
Porter (Beyer)
Pressley (Neguse)
Rice (SC) (Weber (TX))
Rush (Beyer)
Sewell (Schneider)
Sherrill (Beyer)
Simpson (Fulcher)
Sires (Pallone)
Speier (Garcia (TX))
Stevens (Craig)
Stewart (Owens)
Strickland (Correa)
Suozzi (Correa)
Tiffany (Fitzgerald)
Titus (Pallone)
Trahan (Lynch)
Welch (Pallone)
Wilson (FL) (Evans)

VA EMPLOYEE FAIRNESS ACT OF 2021

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 1518, I call up the bill (H.R. 1948) to amend title 38, United States Code, to modify authorities relating to the collective bargaining of employees in the Veterans Health Administration, 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 1518, an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 117–71 is adopted, and the bill, as amended, is considered read.

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

H.R. 1948

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''VA Employee Fairness Act of 2021''.

SEC. 2. MODIFICATION OF AUTHORITIES ON COLLECTIVE BARGAINING OF EMPLOYEES OF THE VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 7422 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking subsections (b), (c), and (d); and

(2) by redesignating subsection (e) as subsection (b).

(b) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—The amendments made by subsection (a) may not be construed to affect the authorities of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs regarding incentive pay and expedited hiring under section 706 of title 38, United States Code, or other similar provisions of law.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The bill, as amended, shall be 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 gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TAKANO. Madam 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. 1948, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of my bill, H.R. 1948, as amended, the bipartisan VA Employee Fairness Act. This legislation ensures important collective bargaining rights for all frontline healthcare workers who care for our veterans.

As chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I have made veterans' healthcare one of my top priorities. I know my colleagues on both sides of the aisle strongly support our veterans and the benefits they earn.

This bill presents an opportunity to match words with action. The VA Employee Fairness Act will ensure critical protections for the healthcare workers serving our veterans.

As a Nation, we must invest in these frontline workers at VA hospitals. Our veterans need modern, well-designed hospital and clinical buildings equipped with the latest, most advanced medical devices and equipment and stocked with adequate medical supplies.

□ 1030

However, all this means little without a well-trained workforce ready to serve our veterans. That is why collective bargaining is vital.

Frontline healthcare workers deserve the right to organize themselves. They deserve to have a voice. VA nurses or technicians should be able to point out wrongdoing without fear of losing their job or other forms of retaliation.

All of this sounds like common sense, and it is, and this is what collective bargaining is all about.

My bill will bring parity to the Federal workforce by ensuring full collective bargaining rights for all VA employees.

Under current law, almost all Federal employees have basic worker protections through collective bargaining. They can become members of a labor union. They have a way to raise grievances and seek redress. They are allowed to have the support of union representatives. This has long been part of the fabric of the Federal workforce.

But there is one glaring exception. Many of the frontline healthcare workers within VA hospitals and clinics are barred from collective bargaining.

Title 38 healthcare professionals, such as registered nurses, physicians, dentists, and physician assistants, do not have the same rights as the psychologists, social workers, pharmacists, and licensed practical nurses who work side by side with them.

I will note that the same professionals at Department of Defense hospitals have collective bargaining rights. You heard that right. A registered nurse has collective bargaining rights at DOD but not a registered nurse at VA. This is the kind of legal contortion that should be fixed.

This probably sounds arbitrary, and it is. A list was written up by Congress years ago and depending on your specialty of nursing care or other occupation, someone taking care of veterans is either able to have full rights as an employee or not, and this only happens at VA healthcare facilities.

The bill is cosponsored by 218 of our congressional colleagues, and it has the support from those who represent frontline VA healthcare workers, including the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations, National Nurses United, National Federation of Federal Employees, National Association of Government Employees, Service Employees International Union, the National Veterans Affairs Council, and a dozen other national labor unions. Further, this bill has the endorsement of Vietnam Veterans of America and The American Legion.

I wish to point out what VA said in its testimony when my committee held a legislative hearing on it last year. ''Secretary McDonough has stated publicly and to our workforce that a unionized workforce is a strong workforce. Collective bargaining is a powerful means for a strong workforce which is VA's number one asset as we work toward increasing access and outcomes for veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors. VA supports organized labor and values in the collective bargaining process with our labor partners.''

I agree. This is about building and maintaining a strong workforce, a workforce dedicated to serving our veterans. I will share a real-world example of the importance of collective bargaining at VA.

In an issue that rose to U.S. District Court, the Central Texas VA Healthcare System failed to pay nurse practitioners and physician assistants overtime. When the healthcare workers demanded what was due to them, VA resisted.

The case was arbitrated in favor of the employees, but VA then used its authority under title 38 to argue that the grievance should not be addressed.

There is nothing fair about that.

This outdated provision in Federal law has become an excuse for VA to deny workers the benefits they have rightfully earned. Stories like these hardly represent an incentive for nurses to remain in the Department.

H.R. 1948, as amended, will ensure that VA employees have the ability to seek redress when VA does not follow its own rules and policies.

Some of my colleagues will argue that this means labor unions will start making veteran healthcare decisions, but this is, quite simply, not the case. Under Federal law, VA healthcare workers do not have this power. No Federal healthcare worker with collective bargaining rights has this power. Nor do their labor unions.

In fact, the current law stipulates that Federal employees with collective bargaining rights are limited in what they can bargain for.

Unlike in the private sector, Federal workers who have collective bargaining rights cannot strike, and they cannot bargain over their level of pay. Pay levels are set by the civil service pay grades each year and are not subject to collective bargaining.

Title 38 employees should have the same rights as those governed by title 5. Title 38 employees should have the same rights as their colleagues with whom they work side by side serving our veterans. H.R. 1948, as amended, is all about fairness for VA's frontline workers.

VA is going to be ramping up hiring over the next 5 years as it welcomes 3.5 million more veterans into the VA healthcare system after the passage of the Honoring our PACT Act. In order to attract the most qualified workforce to serve our veterans, we need to ensure that VA is a great place to work.

The employees who are on the front lines of our Nation's veterans' healthcare deserve and need basic worker protections. A VA nurse needs to be able to ask that their pay errors will be resolved. A doctor must feel empowered to raise medical safety concerns without fear of reprisal or retaliation. Without these protections, VA will continue to struggle to recruit and retain the best and brightest medical professionals that our country has to offer, and I fear that veterans' health and well-being will suffer as a result.

This is about fairness, and I am pleased that the administration agrees and has issued a statement in support of this legislation.

Madam Speaker, I include in the RECORD the Statement of Administration Policy.

STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY

H.R. 1948—VA EMPLOYEE FAIRNESS ACT OF 2022—REP. TAKANO, D–CA, AND 218 COSPONSORS

The Administration supports House passage of H.R. 1948, the VA Employee Fairness, Act of 2022, to expand collective bargaining opportunities for covered Federal employees.

The Biden-Harris Administration supports worker organizing and empowerment as critical tools to grow the middle class and build an inclusive economy. The Federal government, consistent with its obligations to serve the public, can be a model employer in this regard.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is responsible for the delivery of safe, effective, and timely patient care for our veterans, and dedicated VA employees work tirelessly to support our veterans' health needs, including in combating COVID–19.

The Administration is committed to continuing to work with Congress to support hard-working employees while protecting veterans' access to the care and services that they have earned through service to the Nation.

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, in closing, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1948, as amended, the VA Employee Fairness Act. It represents the right thing to do for those who care about our Nation's veterans. I wholeheartedly support this bill, and I urge my colleagues to vote for its passage. I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 1948 and the VA Employee Fairness Act.

First, I really think that we need to take a moment to clear up some very confusing things on what this bill does.

Some have said that the VA medical staff are not allowed to unionize. That is not true. That is not true. Today, VA doctors, nurses, and dentists are allowed to collective bargain. Hundreds of thousands of medical staff are unionized.

But they are not specifically allowed to use union grievances procedures for matters of, and I will quote the law, direct patient care, clinical competence, peer review, and pay. These very specific exceptions were made for a reason.

The Secretary is responsible for ensuring veterans receive high-quality and timely healthcare. To do that, he or she must have the authority to make difficult decisions to keep hospitals running safely and to put veterans first. That is the Secretary's first mission, and he or she must continue to provide care even in the worst of times.

However, H.R. 1948 will tie the Secretary's hands, and I worry enactment of this legislation would put patients at risk. Let me say that again. Put patients at risk. The main goal of the VA is to take care of our veterans.

Now, for example, the Secretary may remove a provider from direct patient care because the care they are performing is substandard. I fear this bill would allow a third-party arbitrator to second guess—to second guess from a position that they are not trained in

the field that they are trying to second guess—the Secretary's decision to remove that provider from direct patient care.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle will argue that this is not going to happen, yet not one of them can say with 100 percent confidence that that is not the case. In fact, it may happen. Unfortunately, bad actors and subpar providers do exist, and when they harm veterans or pose a risk, they need to be removed from patient care quickly.

It is also not hard to believe that the expanded grievance process envisioned by this bill could paralyze hospitals over the issue of patient care, clinical competence, and pay.

In that scenario, care would be delayed; wait times would increase; critical illnesses would go undiagnosed; costs would go up; most importantly, veterans would suffer.

And the Secretary would fail to carry out the VA's first mission and responsibility to our veterans.

This is exactly why medical staff at major healthcare systems like Mayo Clinic, Kaiser, Intermountain Healthcare, and the Cleveland Clinic are generally not unionized and do not allow arbitration to be used over patient care.

Neither should VA. The care of my fellow veterans must come before everything else.

Now, I am going to tell you this because you need to know. I, myself, was a union firefighter, and I come from a union family, so I believe in our unions, and my concerns about H.R. 1948 do not mean I am blind to issues raised by unions at the VA.

Allegations that the Secretary is abusing his authority are something that I take very seriously. It is the job of this committee to conduct aggressive oversight to ensure veterans get the care that they need, and the VA workforce is treated fairly.

Unfortunately, my friends on the other side of the aisle did not take a critical look at the Secretary's use of his authority; there was no oversight hearing, there were no public investigations, no work to address the allegations made by the unions. Instead, my colleagues have moved forward to pass sweeping legislation to turn over Congress' responsibility to arbitrators. I can't support that.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to put veterans first and oppose this legislation. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. Before I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN), I would like to rebut some of the points that the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST), my good friend, has made.

I believe that the gentleman from Illinois is misreading the law. H.R. 1948 will not allow the types of impacts that he has described. H.R. 1948 amends section 7422 of title 38. This is true. However, it is title 5 statutes overall that define the scope of collective bargaining for Federal workers.

Most importantly, title 5 states that collective bargaining does not include policies, practices, and matters ''to the extent that such matters are specifically provided by Federal statute.''

There are many laws which define the scope of collective bargaining. For example, if H.R. 1948 were enacted, title 38 section 7464 of the United States Code is still on the books. This law controls disciplinary appeals boards. I remind my colleagues that H.R. 1948 would only allow unions to grieve items under its contract with the department, and if it is not in the contract, a grievance cannot occur.

Furthermore, my colleague from Illinois (Mr. BOST) has made the assertion that doctors and nurses don't have collective bargaining rights outside of VA, or he pointed out a specific example of the Mayo Clinic. There are many, many wonderful, great, effective medical organizations that do have employee unions as part of their workforce, and so what he is stating is simply not true.

Hundreds of thousands of registered nurses and advanced practice registered nurses, including nurse practitioners, are represented by labor unions and have full collective bargaining rights. Full collective bargaining rights. We are not talking about full collective bargaining rights in this particular instance of H.R. 1948.

There are whole unions for physicians and dentists that have existed for more than 50 years, and this includes many hospitals in New York and California. At UC San Francisco, over 5,000 nurses are represented by National Nurses United, and doctors are represented by Committee of Interns and Residents, which is part of SEIU.

□ 1045

Furthermore, DOD healthcare clinicians have collective bargaining rights, including nurses and physicians.

Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN), my good friend and cosponsor of H.R. 1948, a member of the Committee on Financial Services, chairman of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations. He also serves on the Homeland Security Committee.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, I greatly appreciate the gentleman according me the time. I thank the ranking member for being here, a dear friend, as well.

Madam Speaker, and still I rise. I rise today as the Representative of those persons who work in the VA hospital in Houston, Texas, known as the Michael E. DeBakey hospital, one of the finest, in my opinion, because it is in my Congressional district, the finest VA hospital in the world.

I go there quite regularly. In fact, annually, we go into that hospital and we deliver flags to every veteran that is in the hospital. We will order a thousand flags this year to deliver to the hospital.

We give them a copy of the Constitution. We work with not only the administration but also the nurses and the doctors at the hospital. We are there for celebrations. We are actively involved with the VA.

This is one of the reasons why I believe I have some insight as to H.R. 1948. I support it fully, and I do so because it is the thing that every employee here has in our offices.

I shouldn't say every. If you are in management, I think you may be excluded.

But I voted for that to give them the right to organize, and I am talking about here in Congress. I also am a member of a labor union, Local 1550. I am a dues checkoff member. So it would be completely anathema to my philosophy for me to conclude that these nurses and these physicians should be denied rights that I have, when I'm a part of a labor union, or others do—and right here in Congress we have people with these rights—it would just be out of character for me.

That is just not all of it. I understand the importance and the value of the right to organize and to bring to the attention of people who can make a difference some of the issues that are impacting patients that the administration won't be aware of. And there are many people who won't want to speak up simply because they fear retribution.

The right to organize is the right to speak up and understand that you can do so without retribution.

I would also add that this right to organize does not accord the workers the right to strike. They are not going to go on strike. They are not going to shut down a VA hospital. They are not going to have the ability to cause the management to have to take some extreme measures. This is just to give people the opportunity to talk about the things that are important to the patients.

We are really doing something for the patients today. We are giving them more power by allowing the workers to organize.

Madam Speaker, I stand by what I have said, and I support H.R. 1948.

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

Madam Speaker, in response, as we have talked about the concerns we have heard from the employees, how do we really know the bill is needed? Because the Democrats have never, in nearly 2 years of working on this bill, they did not hold one oversight hearing. Not one.

They did not call the Secretary and answer the allegations that the group pushing for this legislation is asking for. They didn't conduct public investigations into those allegations. They simply passed a bill out of committee, on a party-line vote, over a year ago.

Madam Speaker, it is our committee's job to hold the Secretary accountable, and all of the administration,

over these employees. I would have gladly worked with the Democrats to do that. Sadly, that is not what happened.

Now, we are coming out here on the 11th hour of our last week or two of being here, and we are jamming through an 11th-hour bill with no clear idea that it does what my colleague says it does.

How can we support legislation like this in the last hour? That is why they call this lameduck. It is because we try to shove things through right at the last.

This has not been vetted. It did not have more hearings. We did not do our job when it came to what our job is on oversight. We could have handled this a different way.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I would remind my colleague from the State of Illinois that this bill more than adequately went through regular order.

We held a legislative hearing in April of 2021. The bill has garnered 218 cosponsors of our colleagues, each of whom has presumably reviewed the bill before they joined as cosponsors. We put the bill through a regular markup, and I have been in regular consultation with the Secretary of the VA about this bill. And most recently, the White House has issued a Statement of Administration Policy in support of the bill.

So to say that this bill is being rammed through at the 11th hour is patently untrue and not accurate.

Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. HIGGINS), my good friend and cosponsor of this bill. He serves on the Budget Committee and is a member of the House Committee on Ways and Means.

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of the VA Employee Fairness Act. We rely on the work of dedicated healthcare professionals to care for our veterans who risk their lives for our country. Yet, our laws do not provide an adequate voice for those workers to ensure care is of the highest quality.

The COVID–19 pandemic showed us why that voice is necessary.

This bill changes that by granting all VA healthcare providers the same collective bargaining rights. It means that healthcare workers can have a greater say in protecting patients, ensuring clinical competence, and setting wages and benefits.

It would provide rights for over 100,000 VA doctors, nurses, dentists, and chiropractors, including more than 350 nurses at the Buffalo VA Medical Center.

I am proud to be one of 218 cosponsors of this bill on the floor today, and I urge my colleagues to please support it.

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

Madam Speaker, in closing, there are several things I will say about this bill. One of the most important things to realize is that these employees have something that other medical employees around this Nation don't have. They have the Committee on Veterans' Affairs to argue on their behalf, if problems occur; that we would give oversight and give guidance and direction to our Secretary.

Now, there are far too many questions that remain unanswered about H.R. 1948:

We can't say for certain this bill won't jeopardize veterans' care—the primary mission of the VA.

We can't say the Secretary is abusing his authority because the Democrats did not have an oversight hearing on this issue.

We can't say that the bill will really do what my colleagues say it will do.

If Congress can't answer those questions, we are not doing our job. We can't in good faith pass H.R. 1948 without knowing these answers. We owe our veterans and taxpayers that much.

Madam Speaker, I encourage all my colleagues to oppose H.R. 1948, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Madam Speaker, I just remind the gentleman from Illinois that I did cite an egregious example of the VA ignoring the conclusions of an arbitrator in a patently unfair way.

Giving our title 38 employees the right to organize and the right to be represented by unions in such cases where a very legitimate grievance arises, I think is a basic principle of fairness, in fairness.

Let us think about what our veterans sacrificed. Let us think about what they put the uniform of their country on to fight for. They fought for our freedoms. They fought for our rights. They fought for basic fairness.

I have often said on this floor, that supporting our veterans is neither about being red or blue, but red, white, and blue. And I say to you that it is red, white, and blue to support the very principles that our veterans fought for. They fought for fairness. They fought for dignity. If you look at authoritarian countries around the world, they not only close the churches down, they not only close civil society down, but they close down real, independent unions, as well.

So if we are faithful to the principles of our Republic, we will stand up not only for religious institutions, not only for civil society, not only for your right and my right to say what is on our mind, but we will also fight for the right and defend the right of employees to organize and to unionize.

In this case, it is a very limited circumscribed form of collective bargaining, far more circumscribed than the very union that my colleague, who is a firefighter, I am willing to bet that his union had a far more robust ability to exercise collective bargaining than the very employees that we are trying to empower today.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1948, and I stand squarely behind it.

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

Mr. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1948, the VA Employee Fairness Act of 2021. Throughout my career in Congress, I have always supported our veterans as well as those at the VA who serve, assist, and treat our veterans, especially those who have health care needs, so that they can optimally enjoy their post-service life.

Thus, I strongly support the VA Employee Fairness Act, which would repeal provisions that exclude matters concerning professional conduct or competence, peer review, or adjustment of employee compensation from the applicability of collective bargaining rights for Veterans Health Administration employees.

Specifically, H.R. 1948 restores full collective bargaining rights to VA healthcare professionals including nurses, physicians, dentists, and physician assistants.

This long overdue legislation grants millions of VA hospital employees the same collective bargaining rights that are already afforded to all other federal healthcare workers.

The ability to negotiate better working conditions and better wages is a fundamental right to all Americans in the workforce.

When this bill passes, it will give a voice to the nurses and doctors who work long and treacherous hours to treat and care for our veterans when they return home from service.

Millions of veterans will live the rest of their lives with disabilities due to service-incurred injuries and physical impairments that resulted after they made the decision to protect our nation and safeguard our freedom.

Our courageous service members have pledged that, on the battlefield, they will leave no soldier behind. In carrying out this sacred obligation, we must not forget those who treat them when they return from service.

I urge all of my colleagues to vote in favor of H.R. 1948, and resolve together that just as we will always support our veterans, so too, we must and will always support those who compassionately treat, serve, and restore them so that they can rejoin civilian life as fully as possible.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 1518, the previous question is ordered on the bill, as amended.

The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on passage of the bill.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

□ 1100

PUERTO RICO STATUS ACT

Mr. GRIJALVA. Madam Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 1519, I call up the bill (H.R. 8393) to enable the people of Puerto Rico to choose a permanent, nonterritorial, fully self-governing political status for Puerto Rico and to provide for a transition to and the implementation of that permanent, nonterritorial, fully self-governing political status, 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 (Mrs. FLETCHER). Pursuant to House Resolution 1519, in lieu of the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Natural Resources printed in the bill, an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 117–74 is agreed to and the bill, as amended, is considered read.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 8393

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 ''Puerto Rico Status Act''.

SEC. 2. TABLE OF CONTENTS.

The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title.
Sec. 2. Table of contents.
Sec. 3. Findings.
Sec. 4. Definitions.
Sec. 5. Plebiscite.
Sec. 6. Nonpartisan voter education campaign.
Sec. 7. Oversight.
Sec. 8. Funds for voter education; plebiscites.
Sec. 9. Bilingual voter educational materials and ballots.
Sec. 10. Puerto Rico Oversight, Management, and Economic Stability Act.
Sec. 11. Severability.

TITLE I—TRANSITION AND IMPLEMENTATION — INDEPENDENCE

Sec. 101. Constitutional convention.
Sec. 102. Character of the constitution.
Sec. 103. Submission; ratification.
Sec. 104. Election of officers.
Sec. 105. Conforming amendments to existing law.
Sec. 106. Joint Transition Commission.
Sec. 107. Proclamations by President of the United States; Head of State of Puerto Rico.
Sec. 108. Legal and constitutional provisions.
Sec. 109. Judicial pronouncements.
Sec. 110. Citizenship and immigration laws after Puerto Rican independence.
Sec. 111. Individual rights to economic benefits and grants.

TITLE II—TRANSITION AND IMPLEMENTATION — SOVEREIGNTY IN FREE ASSOCIATION WITH THE UNITED STATES

Sec. 201. Constitutional convention.
Sec. 202. Character of the constitution.
Sec. 203. Submission; ratification.
Sec. 204. Election of officers.
Sec. 205. Proclamations by President of the United States; Head of State of Puerto Rico.
Sec. 206. Legal and constitutional provisions.
Sec. 207. Judicial pronouncements.
Sec. 208. Citizenship and immigration laws after sovereignty through free association.
Sec. 209. Conforming amendments to existing law.
Sec. 210. Bilateral Negotiating Commission.
Sec. 211. Articles of Free Association approval and effective date.
Sec. 212. Termination.
Sec. 213. Individual rights to economic benefits and grants.

TITLE III—TRANSITION AND IMPLEMENTATION — STATEHOOD

Sec. 301. Presidential proclamation; Admission into the Union.
Sec. 302. Conforming amendments to existing law.
Sec. 303. Territory and boundaries.
Sec. 304. Constitution.
Sec. 305. Elections of Senators and Representatives, certification, and legal disputes.
Sec. 306. State title to land and property.
Sec. 307. Continuity of laws, government, and obligations.
Sec. 308. Judicial pronouncements.

SEC. 3. FINDINGS.

In recognition of the inherent limitations of Puerto Rico's territorial status, and the responsibility of the Federal Government to enable the people of the territory to freely express their wishes regarding political status and achieve full self-government, Congress seeks to enable the eligible voters of Puerto Rico to choose a permanent, non-territorial, fully self-governing political status for Puerto Rico and to provide for a transition to and the implementation of said permanent, nonterritorial, fully self-governing status.

SEC. 4. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) BILATERAL NEGOTIATING COMMISSION.—The term ''Bilateral Negotiating Commission'' means the Bilateral Negotiating Commission established under section 209(a).

(2) ELECTIONS COMMISSION.—The term ''Elections Commission'' means the Puerto Rico State Elections Commission (Comisión Estatal de Elecciones de Puerto Rico, in Spanish).

(3) ELIGIBLE VOTERS.—The term ''eligible voters'' means bona fide residents of Puerto Rico who are otherwise qualified to vote in general elections in Puerto Rico.

(4) INITIAL PLEBISCITE.—The term ''initial plebiscite'' means the plebiscite required by section 5(a)(1).

(5) MAJORITY.—The term ''majority'' means more than 50 percent.

(6) RUNOFF PLEBISCITE.—The term ''runoff plebiscite'' means the plebiscite required by section 5(a)(4).

SEC. 5. PLEBISCITE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—

(1) INITIAL PLEBISCITE.—A plebiscite to resolve Puerto Rico's political status shall be held on November 5, 2023.

(2) OPTIONS.—The plebiscite held under paragraph (1) shall offer eligible voters a choice of one of the three options which shall be presented on the ballot as follows:

(A) Independence.

(B) Sovereignty in Free Association with the United States.

(C) Statehood.

(3) MAJORITY VOTE REQUIRED.—Approval of a status option must be by a majority of the valid votes cast.

(4) RUNOFF PLEBISCITE.—If there is not a majority in favor of one of the three options defined in this Act, then a runoff plebiscite shall be held on March 3, 2024, which shall offer eligible voters a choice of the two options that received the most votes in the plebiscite held under paragraph (1).

(b) BALLOT LANGUAGE.—A ballot for a plebiscite required by subsection (a) shall include the following language, except that the ballot for the runoff plebiscite shall omit the option that received the fewest votes in the initial plebiscite:

(1) INSTRUCTIONS.—Mark the status option you choose as each is defined below. A ballot with more than 1 option marked will not be counted. A ballot with no option marked will not be counted.

(2) INDEPENDENCE.—If you agree, mark here _____.

(A) Puerto Rico is a sovereign nation that has full authority and responsibility over its territory and population under a constitution of its own adoption which shall be the supreme law of the nation.

(B) Puerto Rico is vested with full powers and responsibilities consistent with the rights and responsibilities that devolve upon a sovereign nation under international law, including its own fiscal and monetary policy, immigration, trade, and the conduct in its own name and right of relations with other nations and international organizations.

(C) Puerto Rico has full authority and responsibility over its citizenship and immigration laws, and birth in Puerto Rico or relationship to persons with statutory United States citizenship by birth in the former territory shall cease to be a basis for United States nationality or citizenship, except that persons who have such United States citizenship have a right to retain United States nationality and citizenship for life, by entitlement or election as provided by Federal law.

(D) Puerto Rico will no longer be a possession of the United States for purposes of the Internal Revenue Code. In general, United States citizens and United States businesses in the nation of Puerto Rico will be subject to United States Federal tax laws (as is the case with any other United States citizen or United States business abroad) and to Puerto Rican tax laws. Puerto Rico's status as an independent, sovereign nation will be the controlling factor in the taxation of Puerto Rican taxpayers.

(E) The Constitution and laws of the United States no longer apply in Puerto Rico and United States sovereignty in Puerto Rico is ended.

(3) SOVEREIGNTY IN FREE ASSOCIATION WITH THE UNITED STATES.—If you agree, mark here _____.

(A) Puerto Rico is a sovereign nation that has full authority and responsibility over its territory and population under a constitution of its own adoption which shall be the supreme law of the nation.

(B) Puerto Rico is vested with full powers and responsibilities consistent with the rights and responsibilities that devolve upon a sovereign nation under international law, including its own fiscal and monetary policy, immigration, trade, and the conduct in its own name and right of relations with other nations and international organizations, except as otherwise provided for in the Articles of Free Association to be negotiated by Puerto Rico and the United States.

(C) Puerto Rico has full authority and responsibility over its citizenship and immigration laws, and persons who have United States citizenship have a right to retain United States nationality and citizenship for life by entitlement or election as provided by Federal law.

(D) Birth in Puerto Rico shall cease to be a basis for United States nationality or citizenship. Individuals born in Puerto Rico to at least one parent who is a citizen of the United States shall be United States citizens at birth, consistent with the immigration laws of the United States, for the duration of the first agreement of the Articles of Free Association.

(E) Puerto Rico enters into Articles of Free Association with the United States, with such devolution and reservation of governmental functions and other bilateral arrangements as

may be agreed to by both Parties under the Articles, which shall be terminable at will by either the United States or Puerto Rico at any time.

(F) Puerto Rico will no longer be a possession of the United States for purposes of the Internal Revenue Code. In general, United States citizens and United States businesses in the nation of Puerto Rico will be subject to United States Federal tax laws (as is the case with any other United States citizen or United States business abroad) and to Puerto Rican tax laws. Puerto Rico's status as an independent, sovereign nation will be the controlling factor in the taxation of Puerto Rican taxpayers. In addition, Puerto Rico will enter into an agreement with the United States to provide for ''Sovereignty in Free Association'' between the two nations. This agreement may modify the otherwise applicable tax rules, subject to negotiation and ratification by the two nations.

(G) The Constitution of the United States no longer applies in Puerto Rico, the laws of the United States no longer apply in Puerto Rico except as otherwise provided in the Articles of Free Association, and United States sovereignty in Puerto Rico is ended.

(H) All matters pertaining to the government-to-government relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States, which may include foreign affairs, trade, finance, taxation, currency, economic assistance, security and defense, dispute resolution and termination, shall be provided for in the Articles of Free Association.

(4) STATEHOOD.—If you agree, mark here _____.

(A) The State of Puerto Rico is admitted into the Union on an equal footing with the other States in all respects whatever and is a part of the permanent union of the United States of America, subject to the United States Constitution, with powers not prohibited by the Constitution to the States and reserved to the State of Puerto Rico or to its residents.

(B) The residents of Puerto Rico are fully self-governing with their rights secured under the United States Constitution, which shall be fully applicable in Puerto Rico and which, with the laws and treaties of the United States, is the supreme law and has the same force and effect in Puerto Rico as in the other States of the Union.

(C) United States citizenship of those born in Puerto Rico is recognized, protected, and secured under the United States Constitution in the same way such citizenship is for all United States citizens born in the other States.

(D) Puerto Rico will no longer be a possession of the United States for purposes of the Internal Revenue Code. Instead, the State of Puerto Rico will become a State on equal footing with each of the current 50 States in the United States of America. Individuals and businesses resident in the State of Puerto Rico will be subject to United States Federal tax laws as well as applicable State tax laws.

(c) IMPLEMENTATION OF PLEBISCITE.—The plebiscites authorized by this section shall be implemented by the Elections Commission, consistent with the laws of Puerto Rico and Federal law.

(d) RESULTS.—The Elections Commission shall inform the President of the United States, the President pro tempore of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, and the House Committee on Natural Resources of—

(1) the results of the initial plebiscite not later than 30 calendar days after the initial plebiscite is held; and

(2) the results of the runoff plebiscite, if held, not later than 30 calendar days after the runoff plebiscite is held.

(e) JURISDICTION OF DISTRICT COURT.—The United States District Court for the District of Puerto Rico shall have original and exclusive jurisdiction of any civil action alleging a dispute or controversy pertaining to electoral processes conducted under this section.

SEC. 6. NONPARTISAN VOTER EDUCATION CAMPAIGN.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Elections Commission shall carry out a nonpartisan voter education campaign through traditional paid media and make available at all voting locations voter education materials related to the plebiscites authorized under this Act consistent with Department of Justice approval under section 7.

(b) VOTER EDUCATION MATERIALS.—At a minimum, the voter education materials shall address for each option—

(1) international representation;

(2) citizenship and immigration; and

(3) access and treatment under Federal law and programs.

SEC. 7. OVERSIGHT.

(a) SUBMISSION OF MATERIALS.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Elections Commission shall submit the ballot design and voter education materials for the plebiscites authorized under this Act to the United States Attorney General for review and the Elections Commission shall make not more than one submission of the ballot design and voter education materials to the Attorney General for review.

(b) EFFECT OF FAILURE TO COMPLY.—If the Attorney General fails to comply with subsection (c) within the 45-day period, the ballot design and voter education materials shall be considered approved.

(c) REVIEW.—Not later than 45 days after receiving the ballot design and voter education materials under subsection (a), the Attorney General shall review the ballot design and voter education materials to ensure consistency with this Act and to ensure that the three options defined in this Act are represented fairly, especially in the event that any of the three options are not represented on the Elections Commission by a member of a political party that supports such option, and—

(1) return the materials to the Elections Commission with comments and instructions for changes; or

(2) before the expiration of the 45-day period, inform the Elections Commission that no instructions or requests for changes shall be made under paragraph (1), but that the Attorney General reserves the right to submit instructions for changes in accordance with this section if additional information comes to the attention of the Attorney General during the remainder of the 45-day period.

(d) REVISION.—Not later than 45 days after receiving comments and instructions for changes from the Attorney General under subsection (c), the Elections Commission shall revise the ballot design and voter education materials as requested by the Attorney General.

(e) ELECTION OBSERVERS.—The Elections Commission shall invite national and international election observers to ensure transparency and confidence in the electoral process. Observers shall be present during the initial plebiscite vote and during the runoff plebiscite vote.

SEC. 8. FUNDS FOR VOTER EDUCATION; PLEBISCITES.

(a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated such sums as are necessary for the Elections Commission to carry out a nonpartisan voter education campaign and an initial plebiscite and, if necessary, a runoff plebiscite under this Act.

(b) EXISTING FUNDS.—Notwithstanding any provision of Public Law 113–76, funds made available under such Act to carry out a plebiscite on Puerto Rico's status shall be made available to carry out this Act.

SEC. 9. BILINGUAL VOTER EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS AND BALLOTS.

All voter educational materials and ballots used to carry out this Act shall be made available in English and Spanish.

SEC. 10. PUERTO RICO OVERSIGHT, MANAGEMENT, AND ECONOMIC STABILITY ACT.

Upon the admission of the State of Puerto Rico into the Union or on the date that the Government of the nation of Puerto Rico initially takes office:

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Puerto Rico Oversight, Management, and Economic Stability Act (48 U.S.C. 2101 et seq.) shall no longer apply to the State of Puerto Rico or the nation of Puerto Rico, as the case may be.

(2) OVERSIGHT BOARD.—The Financial Oversight and Management Board for Puerto Rico established under section 101(b)(1) of the Puerto Rico Oversight, Management, and Economic Stability Act (48 U.S.C. 2121(b)(1)) is terminated and all duties and responsibilities assigned to the Oversight Board shall return to the State of Puerto Rico or the nation of Puerto Rico, as the case may be.

(3) TRANSFER.—All funds, property, and assets of the board described in subparagraph (B) shall be transferred to the State of Puerto Rico or the nation of Puerto Rico, as the case may be.

SEC. 11. SEVERABILITY.

If any provision of this Act, or any section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrase, or individual word, or the application thereof to any person or circumstance is held invalid by a court of jurisdiction, the validity of the remainder of the Act and of the application of any such provision, section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrase, or individual word to other persons and circumstances shall not be affected thereby.

TITLE I—TRANSITION AND IMPLEMENTATION — INDEPENDENCE

SEC. 101. CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION.

(a) ELECTION OF DELEGATES.— Not later than 6 months after the effective date of certification of a plebiscite result under this Act in favor of independence, the legislature of Puerto Rico shall provide for the election of delegates to a constitutional Convention to formulate and draft a Constitution for the nation of Puerto Rico.

(b) ELIGIBLE VOTERS.—All eligible voters may vote in the election of delegates to the constitutional Convention.

(c) GENERAL APPLICABILITY OF ELECTORAL LAW.—The laws of the territory of Puerto Rico relating to the electoral process shall apply to a special election held under this Act.

(d) INITIAL MEETING.—Not later than 3 months after the election of delegates to the constitutional Convention, the elected delegates shall meet at such time and place as the legislature of Puerto Rico shall determine. The initial meeting shall constitute the establishment of the constitutional Convention.

SEC. 102. CHARACTER OF THE CONSTITUTION.

The constitutional Convention under section 101 shall formulate and draft a Constitution for Puerto Rico that guarantees the protection of fundamental human rights, including—

(1) due process and equal protection under the law;

(2) freedom of speech, press, assembly, association, and religion;

(3) the rights of the accused;

(4) any other economic, social, and cultural rights as the constitutional Convention may deem appropriate and necessary; and

(5) provisions to ensure that no individual born in the nation of Puerto Rico shall be stateless at birth.

SEC. 103. SUBMISSION; RATIFICATION.

(a) SUBMISSION.—Not later than one year after the establishment of the constitutional Convention, the Constitution formulated and drafted by the constitutional Convention shall be submitted to the eligible voters of Puerto Rico for ratification or rejection in a special election.

(b) MANNER OF ELECTION.—The special election held under this subsection shall be held in the manner prescribed by the legislature of Puerto Rico.

SEC. 104. ELECTION OF OFFICERS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one month after the ratification of the Constitution under section 103, the Governor of the territory of Puerto Rico shall issue a proclamation calling for the election of such officers of the nation of Puerto Rico as may be required by the ratified Constitution.

(b) REJECTION.—If the special election results in rejection of the Constitution, the process provided for in sections 101 through 103 shall be repeated, except that section 101(a) shall be applied by substituting—

(1) ''the special election'' for ''a plebiscite''; and

(2) ''rejecting of the Constitution'' for ''in favor of independence''.

(c) DEADLINE; PROCEDURES.—The election under subsection (a) shall be held—

(1) not later than 6 months after the date of ratification of the Constitution; and

(2) in accordance with the procedures and requirements established in the Constitution of the nation of Puerto Rico.

(d) CERTIFICATION OF RESULTS.—Not later than 10 days after the election of officers under subsection (a), the Elections Commission shall certify the results of the election. The Governor of the territory of Puerto Rico shall inform the results of the election to the President of the United States, the President pro tempore of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate, and the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives.

SEC. 105. CONFORMING AMENDMENTS TO EXISTING LAW.

(a) REVIEW.—Not later than 30 days after the initial meeting of a constitutional Convention under section 101(d), the President shall initiate a review of Federal law with respect to Puerto Rico, including those regarding—

(1) taxation of persons and businesses;

(2) health care;

(3) housing;

(4) transportation;

(5) education; and

(6) entitlement programs.

(b) RECOMMENDATIONS.—Not later than one year after the date on which the President initiates a review under subsection (a), the President shall submit recommendations to Congress for changes to Federal law identified during such review, as the President deems appropriate.

SEC. 106. JOINT TRANSITION COMMISSION.

(a) APPOINTMENT.—Not later than 3 months after the establishment of a constitutional Convention under section 101(d), a Joint Transition Commission shall be appointed in equal numbers by the President of the United States and the presiding officer of the Constitutional Convention of Puerto Rico.

(b) DUTIES.—The Joint Transition Commission shall be responsible for expediting the orderly transfer of all functions currently exercised by the Federal Government in Puerto Rico, or in relation to Puerto Rico to the nation of Puerto Rico, and shall recommend to Congress any appropriate legislation to carry out such transfer.

(c) COLLABORATION.—The Government of the territory of Puerto Rico and the agencies of the Government of the United States shall collaborate with the Joint Transition Commission and subsequently the officers of the nation of Puerto Rico, to provide for the orderly transfer of the functions under subsection (b).

SEC. 107. PROCLAMATIONS BY PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES; HEAD OF STATE OF PUERTO RICO.

(a) PROCLAMATION.—Not later than one month after the official certification of the elected officers of the nation of Puerto Rico under section 104(d), the President of the United States shall by proclamation—

(1) withdraw and surrender all rights of possession, supervision, jurisdiction, control, or sovereignty then existing and exercised by the United States over the territory and residents of Puerto Rico;

(2) recognize, on behalf of the United States of America, the independence of the nation of Puerto Rico and the authority of the government instituted by eligible voters of Puerto Rico under the Constitution of their own adoption; and

(3) state that the effective date of withdrawal of the sovereignty of the United States and recognition of independence shall be the same as the date of the proclamation.

(b) COPY OF PROCLAMATION FORWARDED.—The President of the United States shall forward a copy of the proclamation issued under subsection (a) not later than one week after signature to the presiding officer of the Constitutional Convention of Puerto Rico, the officer elected as head of state of the nation, the President pro tempore of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, and the House Committee on Natural Resources.

(c) DATE GOVERNMENT TO TAKE OFFICE.—Not later than one week after the date of receipt of the Presidential proclamation and with the advice of the officer elected as head of state of the nation, the presiding officer of the constitutional Convention shall determine the date on which the Government of the nation shall take office, and shall so notify the Governor of the territory of Puerto Rico, the President of the United States, the President pro tempore of the United States Senate, and the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives.

SEC. 108. LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS.

Upon the proclamation of independence as provided in this title, and except as otherwise provided in this title or in any separate agreements thereafter concluded between the United States and the nation of Puerto Rico—

(1) all property, rights and interests which the United States may have acquired over Puerto Rico by virtue of the Treaty of Paris of 1898, and thereafter by cession, purchase, or eminent domain, with the exception of such land and other property, rights, or interests as may have been sold or otherwise legally disposed of prior to the proclamation of Independence, shall vest ipso facto in the nation of Puerto Rico; and

(2) except as provided in section 110, all laws of the United States applicable to the territory of Puerto Rico immediately prior to the proclamation of Independence shall no longer apply in the nation of Puerto Rico.

SEC. 109. JUDICIAL PRONOUNCEMENTS.

(a) JUDGMENTS BEFORE PROCLAMATION.—The nation of Puerto Rico shall recognize and give effect to all orders and judgments rendered by United States or territorial courts before the date of the proclamation of independence pursuant to the laws of the United States then applicable to the territory of Puerto Rico.

(b) CONTINUITY OF PENDING PROCEEDINGS.—All judicial proceedings pending in the courts of the territory of Puerto Rico on the day of the proclamation of independence shall be continued in the corresponding courts under the Constitution of the nation of Puerto Rico.

(c) TRANSFER OF JUDICIAL POWER.—Upon the proclamation of independence, the judicial power of the United States shall no longer extend to Puerto Rico. All proceedings pending in the United States District Court for the District of Puerto Rico shall be transferred to the corresponding Puerto Rican courts of competence or other competent judicial authority under the Constitution of the nation of Puerto Rico for disposition in conformity with laws applicable at the time when the controversy in process arose. All proceedings pending in the United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit, or in the Supreme Court of the United States, that initiated in, or that could have been initiated in, the courts of the territory or in the United States District Court for the District of Puerto Rico shall continue until their final disposition and shall be submitted to the competent authority of the nation of Puerto Rico for proper execution: Provided, That neither the United States nor any of its officers is a party, in which case any final judgment shall be properly executed by the competent authority of the United States.

SEC. 110. CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION LAWS AFTER PUERTO RICAN INDEPENDENCE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—

(1) PUERTO RICAN NATIONALITY.—After the effective date of independence, the citizenship status of each individual born in Puerto Rico shall be determined in accordance with the Constitution and laws of the nation of Puerto Rico.

(2) UNITED STATES IMMIGRATION LAWS.—Except as described in this section, after the effective date of independence citizens of Puerto Rico seeking to enter into the United States or obtain citizenship in the United States shall be subject to the immigration laws of the United States (as such term is defined in section 101 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101)).

(b) EFFECT OF PUERTO RICAN CITIZENSHIP.—Nothing in this Act precludes or limits the applicability of section 349 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1481), except that the provision of citizenship by the laws of Puerto Rico shall not constitute or otherwise serve as the basis of loss, or relinquishment of United States citizenship under such section.

(c) CITIZENSHIP AT BIRTH AFTER INDEPENDENCE.—An individual born in Puerto Rico after the effective date of independence to at least one parent who became a United States citizen under section 302 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1402) is not a United States citizen at birth under subsections (c), (d), or (g) of section 301 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1401(c), (d) or (g)).

(d) TRAVEL AND WORK AUTHORIZATION.—

(1) Any person in the following categories may enter, lawfully engage in occupations, and establish residence as a nonimmigrant in the United States and its territories and possessions without regard to paragraphs (5)(A) and (7) of section 212(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1182(a); (5)(A) and (7))—

(A) a person who acquires the citizenship of Puerto Rico, at birth, on or after the effective date of independence; or

(B) a naturalized citizen of Puerto Rico, who has been an actual resident there for not less than five years after attaining such naturalization and who holds a proof of such residence.

Such persons shall be considered to have the permission of the Secretary of Homeland Security to accept employment in the United States.

(2) The right of such persons to establish habitual residence in a territory or possession of the United States may, however, be subjected to nondiscriminatory limitations provided for—

(A) in statutes or regulations of the United States; or

(B) in those statutes or regulations of the territory or possession concerned which are authorized by the laws of the United States.

(3) This subsection shall expire 25 years after the date of independence.

(e) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 101 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101) is amended by striking ''Puerto Rico,'' in subsection (a) paragraph (36) and in subsection (a) paragraph (38).

(2) PRIOR TO INDEPENDENCE.—Puerto Rico shall be considered to be in the United States, as such term is defined in section 101(a)(38) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(38)) prior to the effective date of independence.

(f) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section shall limit the power and authority of the United States to change policy requirements for United States citizenship.

SEC. 111. INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS TO ECONOMIC BENEFITS AND GRANTS.

(a) RIGHTS AND BENEFITS.—All vested rights and benefits which accrue to residents of the territory of Puerto Rico under the laws of the United States from past services or contributions, such as rights and benefits for veterans or relatives of veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States, retired Government employees, or beneficiaries of old age, disability, or survivors' insurance benefits under the Social Security Act, shall not be interrupted after the proclamation of independence but will continue until such time as said rights and benefits are completely extinguished according to the applicable laws of the United States. All services which must be rendered as part of these rights and benefits shall be made available through the Government of the nation of Puerto Rico in accordance with agreements reached by the two nations.

(b) SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM.—Notwithstanding the provisions in subsection (a), all contributions made by employees and employers in Puerto Rico to the Social Security system with respect to persons who, upon the proclamation of independence, are residents of the nation of Puerto Rico and are not yet eligible for old age, disability, or survivors' insurance benefits under the system, shall be transferred to the Government of the nation of Puerto Rico once said Government establishes its own social security system. The Government of the nation of Puerto Rico may not use these funds for any purpose other than the establishment and operation of a social security system. Upon the transfer described herein, the obligations of the United States Government under the Social Security Act with respect to such residents of the nation of Puerto Rico shall cease.

(c) OTHER FEDERAL TRANSFER PAYMENTS.—

(1) BLOCK GRANTS.—All other Federal transfer payments to individuals and to the Government of the territory of Puerto Rico shall be maintained in the form of annual block grants to be used discretionally by the Government of the nation of Puerto Rico.

(2) ANNUAL AGGREGATE FUNDING.—During the ten fiscal years following the proclamation of independence, the annual block grants shall amount to the annual aggregate funding of all programs which currently extend to the territory of Puerto Rico, or of all programs which shall have been extended to the territory of Puerto Rico during the fiscal year immediately prior to the proclamation of independence, whichever shall be greater.

(3) DECREASE IN AMOUNT.—The annual block grants shall decrease thereafter on a straight-line basis, at the rate of ten percent each year, beginning on the eleventh fiscal year after the proclamation of independence. At any time during the aforementioned transition period the terms of this subsection may be modified by agreement between the United States and the nation of Puerto Rico.

TITLE II—TRANSITION AND IMPLEMENTATION — SOVEREIGNTY IN FREE ASSOCIATION WITH THE UNITED STATES

SEC. 201. CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION.

(a) ELECTION OF DELEGATES.—Not later than 6 months after the effective date of certification of a plebiscite result under this Act in favor of Sovereignty in Free Association with the United States, the legislature of Puerto Rico shall provide for the election of delegates to a constitutional Convention to formulate and draft a Constitution for the nation of Puerto Rico.

(b) ELIGIBLE VOTERS.—All eligible voters may vote in the election of delegates to the constitutional Convention.

(c) GENERAL APPLICABILITY OF ELECTORAL LAW.—The laws of the territory of Puerto Rico relating to the electoral process shall apply to a special election held under this Act.

(d) INITIAL MEETING.—Not later than 3 months after the election of delegates to the constitutional Convention, the elected delegates shall meet at such time and place as the legislature of Puerto Rico shall determine. The initial meeting shall constitute the establishment of the constitutional Convention.

SEC. 202. CHARACTER OF THE CONSTITUTION.

The constitutional Convention under section 201 shall formulate and draft a Constitution for Puerto Rico that guarantees the protection of fundamental human rights, including—

(1) due process and equal protection under the law;

(2) freedom of speech, press, assembly, association, and religion;

(3) the rights of the accused;

(4) any other economic, social, and cultural rights as the constitutional Convention may deem appropriate and necessary; and

(5) provisions to ensure that no individual born in the nation of Puerto Rico shall be stateless at birth.

SEC. 203. SUBMISSION; RATIFICATION.

(a) SUBMISSION.—Not later than 2 years after the establishment of the constitutional Convention, the Constitution formulated and drafted by the constitutional Convention shall be submitted to the eligible voters of Puerto Rico for ratification or rejection in a special election.

(b) MANNER OF ELECTION.—The special election held under this subsection shall be held in the manner prescribed by the legislature of Puerto Rico.

SEC. 204. ELECTION OF OFFICERS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one month after the ratification of the Constitution under section 203, the Governor of the territory of Puerto Rico shall issue a proclamation calling for the election of such officers of the nation of Puerto Rico as may be required by the ratified Constitution.

(b) REJECTION.—If the special election results in rejection of the Constitution, the process provided for in sections 201 through 203 shall be repeated, except that section 201(a) shall be applied by substituting—

(1) ''the special election'' for ''a plebiscite''; and

(2) ''rejecting the Constitution'' for ''in favor of sovereignty in free association with the United States''.

(c) DEADLINE; PROCEDURES.—The election under subsection (a) shall be held—

(1) not later than 6 months after the date of ratification of the Constitution; and

(2) in accordance with the procedures and requirements established in the Constitution of the nation of Puerto Rico.

(d) CERTIFICATION OF RESULTS.—Not later than 10 days after the election of officers under subsection (a), the Elections Commission shall certify the results of the election. The Governor of the territory of Puerto Rico shall inform the results of the election to the President of the United States, the President pro tempore of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate, and the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives.

SEC. 205. PROCLAMATIONS BY PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES; HEAD OF STATE OF PUERTO RICO.

(a) PROCLAMATION.—Not later than one month after the official certification of the elected officers of the nation of Puerto Rico under section 204, the President of the United States shall by proclamation—

(1) withdraw and surrender all rights of possession, supervision, jurisdiction, control, or sovereignty then existing and exercised by the United States over the territory and residents of Puerto Rico;

(2) recognize, on behalf of the United States of America, the international sovereignty through free association of the nation of Puerto Rico and the authority of the government instituted by eligible voters of Puerto Rico under the Constitution of their own adoption; and

(3) state that the effective date of withdrawal of the sovereignty of the United States and recognition of international sovereignty through free association shall be the same as the date of the proclamation.

(b) COPY OF PROCLAMATION FORWARDED.—The President of the United States shall forward a copy of the proclamation issued under subsection (a) not later than one week after signature to the presiding officer of the Constitutional Convention of Puerto Rico, the officer elected as head of state of the nation, the President pro tempore of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, and the House Committee on Natural Resources.

(c) DATE GOVERNMENT TO TAKE OFFICE.—Not later than one week after the date of receipt of the Presidential proclamation and with the advice of the officer elected as head of state of the nation, the presiding officer of the constitutional Convention shall determine the date on which the Government of the nation shall take office, and shall so notify the Governor of the territory of Puerto Rico, the President of the United States, the President pro tempore of the United States Senate, and the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives.

SEC. 206. LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS.

Upon the proclamation of international sovereignty through free association as provided in this title, and except as otherwise provided in this title or in any separate agreements thereafter concluded between the United States and the nation of Puerto Rico—

(1) all property, rights and interests which the United States may have acquired over Puerto Rico by virtue of the Treaty of Paris of 1898, and thereafter by cession, purchase, or eminent domain, with the exception of such land and other property, rights, or interests as may have been sold or otherwise legally disposed of prior to the proclamation of international sovereignty through free association, shall vest ipso facto in the nation of Puerto Rico; and

(2) except as provided in section 209, all laws of the United States applicable to the territory of Puerto Rico immediately prior to the proclamation of international sovereignty through free association shall no longer apply in the nation of Puerto Rico.

SEC. 207. JUDICIAL PRONOUNCEMENTS.

(a) JUDGMENTS BEFORE PROCLAMATION.—The nation of Puerto Rico shall recognize and give effect to all orders and judgments rendered by United States or territorial courts before the date of the proclamation of international sovereignty through free association pursuant to the laws of the United States then applicable to the territory of Puerto Rico.

(b) CONTINUITY OF PENDING PROCEEDINGS.—All judicial proceedings pending in the courts of the territory of Puerto Rico on the day of the proclamation of international sovereignty through free association shall be continued in the corresponding courts under the Constitution of the nation of Puerto Rico.

(c) TRANSFER OF JUDICIAL POWER.—Upon the proclamation of international sovereignty through free association, the judicial power of the United States shall no longer extend to Puerto Rico. All proceedings pending in the United States District Court for the District of Puerto Rico shall be transferred to the corresponding Puerto Rican courts of competence or other competent judicial authority under the Constitution of the nation of Puerto Rico for disposition in conformity with laws applicable at the time when the controversy in process arose. All proceedings pending in the United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit, or in the Supreme Court of the United States, that initiated in, or that could have been initiated in, the courts of the territory or in the United States District Court for the District of Puerto

Rico shall continue until their final disposition and shall be submitted to the competent authority of the nation of Puerto Rico for proper execution: Provided, That neither the United States nor any of its officers is a party, in which case any final judgment shall be properly executed by the competent authority of the United States.

SEC. 208. CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION LAWS AFTER SOVEREIGNTY THROUGH FREE ASSOCIATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—

(1) PUERTO RICAN NATIONALITY.—After the proclamation of international sovereignty through free association, the citizenship status of each individual born in Puerto Rico shall be determined in accordance with the Constitution and laws of the nation of Puerto Rico.

(2) UNITED STATES IMMIGRATION LAWS.—Except as described in this section, after the proclamation of international sovereignty through free association, citizens of Puerto Rico seeking to enter into the United States or obtain citizenship in the United States shall be subject to the immigration laws of the United States (as such term is defined in section 101 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101)).

(b) EFFECT OF PUERTO RICAN CITIZENSHIP.—Nothing in this Act precludes or limits the applicability of section 349 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1481), except that the provision of citizenship by the laws of Puerto Rico shall not constitute or otherwise serve as the basis of loss, or relinquishment of United States citizenship under such section.

(c) CITIZENSHIP AT BIRTH AFTER SOVEREIGNTY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as described in paragraph (2), an individual born in Puerto Rico after the proclamation of international sovereignty through free association to at least one parent who became a United States citizen under section 302 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1402) is not a United States citizen at birth under subsections (c), (d), or (g) of section 301 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1401 (c), (d) or (g)).

(2) TRANSITION PERIOD.—During the implementation of the first Articles of Free Association, an individual born in Puerto Rico to at least one parent who is a citizen of the United States shall be a United States citizen at birth under section 301 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1401) if otherwise eligible.

(d) TRAVEL AND WORK AUTHORIZATION.—

(1) Any person in the following categories may enter, lawfully engage in occupations, and establish residence as a nonimmigrant in the United States and its territories and possessions without regard to paragraphs (5)(A) and (7) of section 212(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1182(a); (5)(A) and (7)):

(A) a person who acquires the citizenship of Puerto Rico, at birth, on or after the effective date of international sovereignty through free association; or

(B) a naturalized citizen of Puerto Rico, who has been an actual resident there for not less than five years after attaining such naturalization and who holds a proof of such residence.

Such persons shall be considered to have the permission of the Secretary of Homeland Security to accept employment in the United States.

(2) The right of such persons to establish habitual residence in a territory or possession of the United States may, however, be subjected to nondiscriminatory limitations provided for—

(A) in statutes or regulations of the United States; or

(B) in those statutes or regulations of the territory or possession concerned which are authorized by the laws of the United States.

(3) This subsection shall expire upon the termination of the Articles of Free Association in accordance with section 211.

(e) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 101 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101) is amended by striking ''Puerto Rico,'' in subsection (a) paragraph (36) and in subsection (a) paragraph (38).

(2) PRIOR TO SOVEREIGNTY.—Puerto Rico shall be considered to be in the United States, as such term is defined in section 101(a)(38) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(38)) prior to the date of international sovereignty through free association.

(f) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section shall limit the power and authority of the United States to change policy requirements for United States citizenship.

SEC. 209. CONFORMING AMENDMENTS TO EXISTING LAW.

(a) REVIEW.—Not later than 30 days after the initial meeting of a constitutional Convention under section 201(d), the President shall initiate a review of Federal law with respect to Puerto Rico, including those regarding—

(1) taxation of persons and businesses;

(2) health care;

(3) housing;

(4) transportation;

(5) education; and

(6) entitlement programs.

(b) RECOMMENDATIONS.—Not later than one year after the date on which the President initiates a review under subsection (a), the President shall submit recommendations to Congress for changes to Federal law identified during such review, as the President deems appropriate.

SEC. 210. BILATERAL NEGOTIATING COMMISSION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—If a plebiscite held under this Act results in a majority vote for sovereignty in free association with the United States, there shall be a Bilateral Negotiating Commission which shall conduct negotiations on Articles of Free Association with the United States.

(b) MEMBERS.—Not later than 3 months after the establishment of the constitutional Convention under section 201—

(1) the Convention shall elect, by majority vote, 5 members from among its delegates to join the Bilateral Negotiating Commission on behalf of Puerto Rico; and

(2) the President of the United States shall designate 5 members to the Bilateral Negotiating Commission, one of whom shall also be nominated for the rank of Ambassador, to negotiate on behalf of the United States.

(c) INITIAL MEETING.—Not later than 3 months after the election and designation of members to the Bilateral Negotiating Commission, members shall meet at such time and place as the legislature of Puerto Rico shall determine. Such meeting shall constitute the establishment of the Bilateral Negotiating Commission.

(d) DUTIES.—The Bilateral Negotiating Commission shall—

(1) be responsible for expediting the orderly transfer of all functions currently exercised by the Government of the United States in Puerto Rico, to Puerto Rico, and shall recommend to Congress any appropriate legislation to carry into effect such transfer, including any appropriate enabling legislation as may be required by the Articles of Free Association;

(2) negotiate all matters pertaining to the government-to-government relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States through the development of the Articles of Free Association, including foreign affairs, trade, finance, taxation, currency, economic assistance, security and defense, dispute resolution, immigration, economic benefits (including grants), and termination of the free association status; and

(3) endeavor to complete the Articles of Free Association not later than 2 years after the commencement of the constitutional Convention.

(e) COLLABORATION.—The Government of the territory of Puerto Rico and the agencies of the Government of the United States shall collaborate with the Bilateral Negotiating Commission to provide for the orderly transfer of the functions of government as required by the Articles of Free Association.

SEC. 211. ARTICLES OF FREE ASSOCIATION APPROVAL AND EFFECTIVE DATE.

(a) APPROVAL.—The Articles of Free Association shall come into effect upon mutual agreement between the Government of the United States and the Government of Puerto Rico after completion of approval by—

(1) a separate ratification vote on the Articles by the eligible voters in the special election held under section 203; and

(2) the Government of the United States in accordance with its constitutional processes.

(b) REJECTION.—If the special election under subsection (a)(1) results in rejection of the Articles of Free Association, the process provided for in section 210 and subsection (a) shall be repeated.

SEC. 212. TERMINATION.

The Articles of Free Association between the United States and Puerto Rico may be terminated at will by either party at any time.

SEC. 213. INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS TO ECONOMIC BENEFITS AND GRANTS.

(a) RIGHTS AND BENEFITS.—All vested rights and benefits which accrue to residents of the territory of Puerto Rico under the laws of the United States from past services or contributions, such as rights and benefits for veterans or relatives of veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States, retired Government employees, or beneficiaries of old age, disability, or survivors' insurance benefits under the Social Security Act, shall not be interrupted after the proclamation of international sovereignty through free association but will continue until such time as said rights and benefits are completely extinguished according to the applicable laws of the United States. All services which must be rendered as part of these rights and benefits shall be made available through the Government of the nation of Puerto Rico in accordance with agreements reached by the two nations.

(b) SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM.—Notwithstanding subsection (a), all contributions made by employees and employers in Puerto Rico to the Social Security system with respect to persons who, upon the proclamation of international sovereignty through free association, are residents of the nation of Puerto Rico and are not yet eligible for old age, disability, or survivors' insurance benefits under the system, shall be transferred to the Government of the nation of Puerto Rico once said Government establishes its own social security system. The Government of the nation of Puerto Rico may not use these funds for any purpose other than the establishment and operation of a social security system. Upon the transfer described herein, the obligations of the United States Government under the Social Security Act with respect to such residents of the nation of Puerto Rico shall cease.

(c) OTHER FEDERAL TRANSFER PAYMENTS.—All other Federal transfer payments to individuals and to the Government of the territory of Puerto Rico shall be maintained in the form of annual block grants to be used discretionally by the Government of the nation of Puerto Rico—

(1) during the 10 fiscal years following the proclamation of international sovereignty through free association, the annual block grants shall amount to the annual aggregate funding of all programs which currently extend to the territory of Puerto Rico, or of all programs which shall have been extended to the territory of Puerto Rico during the fiscal year immediately prior to the proclamation of international sovereignty through free association, whichever shall be greater; and

(2) the annual block grants shall decrease thereafter on a straight-line basis, at the rate of ten percent each year, beginning on the eleventh fiscal year after the proclamation of international sovereignty through free association. At any time during the aforementioned transition period the terms of this subsection may be modified by agreement between the United States and the nation of Puerto Rico.

(d) REVISION.—The terms and conditions of this subsection may be revised as part of an agreement under the Articles of Free Association.

TITLE III—TRANSITION AND IMPLEMENTATION — STATEHOOD

SEC. 301. PRESIDENTIAL PROCLAMATION; ADMISSION INTO THE UNION.

If a plebiscite held under this Act results in a majority vote for statehood:

(1) PRESIDENTIAL PROCLAMATION; DATE OF ADMISSION.—Upon receipt of the Elections Commission's certification of the plebiscite results pursuant to section 5(d), the President shall issue a proclamation declaring the date that Puerto Rico is admitted as a State of the Union on an equal footing with all other States, which shall be a date not later than one year after the effective date of the plebiscite results.

(2) SUBMISSION OF PROCLAMATION.—The President shall cause such proclamation to be submitted to the Governor of Puerto Rico, the legislature of Puerto Rico, the President pro tempore of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, and the House Committee on Natural Resources.

(3) ADMISSION INTO THE UNION.—Subject to the provisions of this Act, and upon the date declared by the President for admission of Puerto Rico as a State under the proclamation under paragraph (1), the territory of Puerto Rico shall be a State of the United States of America and as such admitted into the Union on an equal footing with the other States in all respects. Upon admission, Puerto Rico shall be known as the State of Puerto Rico.

(4) INCORPORATION.—Puerto Rico shall remain unincorporated until its admission as a State of the Union under paragraph (3).

SEC. 302. CONFORMING AMENDMENTS TO EXISTING LAW.

(a) REVIEW.—Not later than 30 days after the certification of a plebiscite result under this Act in favor of statehood, the President shall initiate a review of Federal law with respect to Puerto Rico, including those regarding—

(1) taxation of persons and businesses;
(2) health care;
(3) housing;
(4) transportation;
(5) education; and
(6) entitlement programs.

(b) RECOMMENDATIONS.—Not later than one year after the date on which the President initiates a review under subsection (a), the President shall submit any recommendations to Congress for changes to Federal law identified during such review, as the President deems appropriate.

SEC. 303. TERRITORY AND BOUNDARIES.

The State of Puerto Rico shall consist of all of the islands, together with their appurtenant reefs, seafloor, submerged lands, and territorial waters in the seaward boundary, presently under the jurisdiction of the territory of Puerto Rico.

SEC. 304. CONSTITUTION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Constitution of the territory of Puerto Rico, as approved by Public Law 82–447 and subsequently amended as of the date of enactment of this Act is hereby found to be republican in form and in conformity with the Constitution of the United States and the principles of the Declaration of Independence, and is hereby accepted, ratified, and confirmed as the Constitution of the State of Puerto Rico.

(b) FUTURE CONSTITUTIONS.—The Constitution of the State of Puerto Rico—

(1) shall always be republican in form; and

(2) shall not be repugnant to the Constitution of the United States and the principles of the Declaration of Independence.

SEC. 305. ELECTIONS OF SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES, CERTIFICATION, AND LEGAL DISPUTES.

(a) ELECTIONS OF SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES.—Not more than one month after the proclamation under section 301, the Governor of Puerto Rico shall issue a declaration that shall designate and announce the dates and other requirements for primary and general elections under applicable Federal and local law for representation in the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United States upon admission of Puerto Rico as a State.

(b) RESIDENT COMMISSIONER.—The office of Resident Commissioner of Puerto Rico shall cease to exist upon the swearing in of the first Representative from the State of Puerto Rico to the House of Representatives.

(c) SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Upon its admission into the Union, the State of Puerto Rico shall be entitled to Senators and Representatives who shall be entitled to be admitted to seats in the Congress of the United States and to all the rights and privileges of Senators and Representatives of the other States in the Congress of the United States.

(2) FIRST ELECTION OF SENATORS.—In the first election of Senators, the two senatorial offices shall be separately identified and designated, and no person may be a candidate for both offices. Nothing in this section shall impair the privilege of the Senate to determine the class and term to which each of the Senators elected shall be assigned, with the exception that the Senators shall not be in the same class.

(3) FIRST ELECTION OF REPRESENTATIVES.—In the first election of Representatives, and subsequent elections until the next Census-based reapportionment cycle, the State of Puerto Rico shall be entitled to the same number of Representatives as the State whose most recent Census population was closest to, but less than, that of Puerto Rico, and such Representatives shall be in addition to the membership of the House of Representatives as now prescribed by law. Any such increase in the membership shall not operate to either increase or decrease the permanent membership of the House of Representatives as prescribed in the Act of August 8, 1911 (37 Stat. 13), nor shall such temporary increase affect the basis of apportionment established by the Act of November 15, 1941 (55 Stat. 761), for the 83d Congress and each Congress thereafter, unless Congress acts to increase the total number of Members of the House of Representatives. Thereafter, the State of Puerto Rico shall be entitled to such number of Representatives as provided for by applicable law based on the next reapportionment. The apportionment of congressional districts for the first election and subsequent election of Representatives shall be conducted as provided for by the Constitution and laws of the State of Puerto Rico for state legislative districts.

(d) CERTIFICATION OF RESULTS.—The Elections Commission shall certify the results of primary and general elections for representation in the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United States to the Governor. Not later than 10 days after the date of each certification, the Governor shall declare the results of the primary and general elections, and transmit the results of each election to the President of the United States, the President pro tempore of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

(e) JURISDICTION OF DISTRICT COURT.—The United States District Court for the District of Puerto Rico shall have original and exclusive jurisdiction of any civil action alleging a dispute or controversy pertaining to electoral processes conducted under this section.

SEC. 306. STATE TITLE TO LAND AND PROPERTY.

(a) STATE TITLE.—The State of Puerto Rico and its political subdivisions and dependencies shall have and retain title to all property, real and personal, held by the territory of Puerto Rico and its political subdivisions and dependencies on the date of the admission of Puerto Rico into the Union.

(b) FEDERAL TITLE.—Any lands and other properties that, as of the date of admission of Puerto Rico into the Union, are set aside pursuant to law for the use of the United States under any—

(1) Act of Congress;
(2) Executive order;
(3) proclamation of the President; or
(4) proclamation of the Governor of the territory of Puerto Rico,

shall remain the property of the United States.

(c) CONTINENTAL SHELF.—The State of Puerto Rico shall have the exclusive right to explore, exploit, lease, possess, and use all seabed, natural, and mineral resources lying within three marine leagues (nine nautical miles) from its shore, as granted under section 8 of the Act of March 2, 1917 (48 U.S.C. 749; 39 Stat. 954). All other rights of sovereignty in regards to the continental shelf and waters, shall belong to the United States, except those already vested in Puerto Rico.

SEC. 307. CONTINUITY OF LAWS, GOVERNMENT, AND OBLIGATIONS.

Upon the admission of the State of Puerto Rico into the Union:

(1) CONTINUITY OF LAWS.—All of the territorial laws in force in Puerto Rico on the date of issuance of the proclamation described in section 301(1) not inconsistent with this Act or the Constitution of the State of Puerto Rico shall be and continue in force and effect throughout the State, until amended, modified, or repealed by the State. All of the laws of the United States shall have the same force and effect within the State as in the other several States.

(2) CONTINUITY OF GOVERNMENT.—The individuals holding legislative, executive, and judicial offices of Puerto Rico shall continue to discharge the duties of their respective offices when Puerto Rico becomes a State of the Union in, under, or by authority of the government of the State, as provided by the constitution and laws of the State.

(3) CONTINUITY OF OBLIGATIONS.—All contracts, obligations, liabilities, debts, and claims of the territory of Puerto Rico and its instrumentalities at the moment of admission shall continue in full force and effect as the contracts, obligations, liabilities, debts, and claims of the State of Puerto Rico and its instrumentalities when Puerto Rico becomes a State of the Union.

(4) USE AND ENJOYMENT OF PROPERTY.—All laws of the United States reserving to the United States the free use or enjoyment of property which vests in or is conveyed to the State of Puerto Rico or its political subdivisions pursuant to this section or reserving the right to alter, amend, or repeal laws relating thereto, shall cease to be effective.

SEC. 308. JUDICIAL PRONOUNCEMENTS.

(a) PENDING.—No writ, action, indictment, cause, or proceeding pending in any court of the territory of Puerto Rico, shall abate by reason of the admission of the State of Puerto Rico into the Union, but shall proceed within such appropriate State courts as shall be established under the Constitution of the State of Puerto Rico, or shall continue in the United States District Court for the District of Puerto Rico, as the nature of the case may require.

(b) NOT YET PENDING.—All civil causes of action and all criminal offenses, which shall have arisen or been committed before the admission of the State, but as to which no writ, action, indictment, or proceeding shall be pending at the date of such admission, shall be subject to prosecution in the appropriate State courts or in the United States District Court for the District of Puerto Rico in like manner, to the same extent, and with like right of appellate review, as if such State had been created and such State courts had been established prior to the accrual of such causes of action or the commission of such offenses. The admission of the State shall effect no change in the procedural or substantive laws governing causes of action and criminal offenses which shall have arisen or

been committed, and any such criminal offenses as shall have been committed against the laws of the territory of Puerto Rico, shall be tried and punished by the appropriate courts of the State, and any such criminal offenses as shall have been committed against the laws of the United States shall be tried and punished in the United States District Court for the District of Puerto Rico.

(c) APPEALS.—Parties shall have the same rights of judicial review of final decisions of the United States District Court for the District of Puerto Rico or the Supreme Court of Puerto Rico, in any case finally decided prior to the admission of the State of Puerto Rico into the Union, whether or not an appeal therefrom shall have been perfected prior to such admission. The United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit and the Supreme Court of the United States, shall have the same jurisdiction in such cases as by law provided prior to the admission of the State into the Union. Any mandate issued subsequent to the admission of the State, shall be to the United States District Court for the District of Puerto Rico or a court of the State, as appropriate. Parties shall have the same rights of appeal from and appellate review of all orders, judgments, and decrees of the United States District Court for the District of Puerto Rico and of the Supreme Court of Puerto Rico, in any case pending at the time of admission of the State into the Union, and the Supreme Court of Puerto Rico and the Supreme Court of the United States shall have the same jurisdiction therein, as by law provided in any case arising subsequent to the admission of the State into the Union.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The bill shall be debatable for 1 hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Natural Resources or their respective designees.

The gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA) and the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GRIJALVA. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 8393.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 8393, legislation I was proud to introduce along with my colleagues, Representatives NYDIA VÉLAZQUEZ and DARREN SOTO, Resident Commissioner JENNIFFER GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN, and Majority Leader STENY HOYER, to resolve Puerto Rico's territorial status.

This bill being on the floor today was far from assured. There were many times over the past several weeks when it appeared there wasn't any hope of ever bringing this bill to the floor. In fact, my colleagues and I were negotiating final changes as recently as 24 hours ago.

But with the prodding of Leader HOYER, we persevered. In spite of opposition to the historic nature of what we are about to accomplish, we persevered.

I commend and congratulate my colleagues who put aside their philosophical differences and worked to arrive at a compromise that we can all support.

Last year, the Natural Resources Committee held two legislative hearings where Puerto Rican-elected government officials, legal and human rights experts, and residents offered testimony and feedback to the committee on the details of those bills.

Those bills that we were discussing were two bills, one dealing primarily with statehood status and the other one seeking a self-determination path. Those two bills were diametrically opposed, and until the negotiations began, little progress was seen moving the question of status forward.

The Puerto Rico Status Act combines important elements of these two bills to present a compromise that also incorporates input from the full range of voices among Puerto Rico's status debate and that would be supported by a majority of Members of Congress. That is the bill that we bring forward today.

We had in-person public hearings, including with over 100 individuals who shared comments and suggestions on the text with the delegation at our public forum in Puerto Rico. In addition to these in-person opportunities for public input, we also published the draft text on POPVOX, an online submission tool that members of the public used to share more than 100 comments, all of which were reviewed and considered while developing the final language.

The Puerto Rico Status Act is, therefore, the product of a participatory and informed process. It incorporates expertise and knowledge from a wide range of stakeholders who have grappled with the dilemma of Puerto Rico's second-class political status for many years.

Finding a resolution to Puerto Rico's political status has been elusive and difficult, and it has been that way for a long time. Recent efforts to resolve the issue began in 1991 with competing bills introduced in the House and Senate, followed by legislation sponsored by our former colleague Don Young in 1998, and finally the Puerto Rico Democracy Act in 2010, sponsored by then-Puerto Rico Resident Commissioner and current Governor Pierluisi.

While each of those previous bills passed the House, as we hope our bill will today, as well, they ultimately failed because they did not possess the necessary elements to end the colonial status of the island through a fair and informed process.

In becoming chair of the Natural Resources Committee, I made the issue of resolving Puerto Rico's political status a priority. It is crucial to me that any proposal from Congress to decolonize Puerto Rico be informed and led by Puerto Ricans.

As a non-Puerto Rican, I cannot claim the experience of Puerto Ricans who have fought for equality and autonomy for their island for so many years. However, as someone of Mexican descent and indigenous ancestry, I feel a sense of solidarity with the people of Puerto Rico in that enduring struggle. We continue to strive for equality and preserve our traditions, as we all do that, and that struggle is a shared experience among marginalized and disenfranchised people in this country and in Puerto Rico.

I am proud to be discussing a piece of legislation, a proposal, today that assists the people of Puerto Rico to directly be involved in determining their political future.

In recent years, we have seen all too painfully that the current colonial territory status is no longer viable and is incapable of providing either adequate political or economic benefits to the people of Puerto Rico.

Puerto Rico's current status is what impedes its economic development. PROMESA and its financial oversight and management board, the shortcomings of the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority, or PREPA, and the inadequate Federal response under the previous administration to disasters like Hurricane Maria and the COVID–19 pandemic, these are all products of the current territorial status.

Recent Supreme Court rulings have only further clarified that, as a territory, Puerto Rico lacks the same constitutional protections and rights as in the 50 States.

This bill would finally stop offering the problem as a continued solution and would let the people of Puerto Rico choose a nonterritory, noncolonial status for themselves.

I am extremely grateful to all the political and community leaders, residents, and staff who worked to produce this compromise and contributed to this bill.

I thank House Majority Leader STENY HOYER; the Governor of Puerto Rico, Pedro Pierluisi; Representatives VELÁZQUEZ, SOTO, and OCASIO-CORTEZ; and Resident Commissioner GONZÁLEZ-COLON for their leadership and dedication throughout a difficult but very necessary process.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, introduced in July 2022, H.R. 8393, the Puerto Rico Status Act, would authorize a federally sponsored plebiscite to occur on November 5, 2023, and it would dictate to the voters of Puerto Rico three and only three choices: independence, sovereignty and free association, or statehood. If no one option receives a majority vote, there will be a runoff on March 3, 2024.

I cannot support this measure because of process concerns and wide-ranging policy changes that involve the jurisdiction of the Natural Resources Committee, along with several

other House committees that haven't even seen this bill.

The Committee on Natural Resources has not held a hearing on this bill, nor have the other committees with expertise on complex issues of U.S. citizenship, taxation and entitlement programs, foreign policy, and many other matters. None of them have been given an opportunity to openly consider, debate, and amend this bill.

The question of Puerto Rico's political status is a life-altering decision for the people of Puerto Rico. Just as we would expect the people of Puerto Rico to deliberate its questions, understand its consequences, and accept responsibility for the choice, so should Congress.

These issues are far too important for this body to act without proper deliberation. Because of the hasty and secretive process that was used to develop this bill, it contains many concerning and unresolved issues.

The bill contradicts itself, offering Puerto Rico the promise of independence while prescribing actions that should be taken by the newly sovereign nation. How can you be independent yet have another nation dictate what your actions will be?

It promises the trappings of U.S. citizenship without the responsibilities of being a part of the United States.

It is unfortunate that we are here considering this legislation on the House floor after the majority has held backroom negotiations instead of open, transparent hearings and markups. A regular and open legislative process would have allowed Members of this body and the people of Puerto Rico—more than 3 million United States citizens—to fully assess what this bill proposes and what it means for this and future generations.

In fact, the majority made changes to the bill that had even less consideration than the version ordered to be reported by the Committee on Natural Resources in July, cutting backroom deals as recently as this week.

We learned this bill would be on the floor even before we had the text from the Rules Committee. We didn't even know what we would be debating when we learned this bill would be on the floor.

Madam Speaker, there is a favorite Latin expression of mine. It is lux et veritas. It means light and truth. This body, this Congress, and this Federal Government could use a lot more light and truth.

You see, without light, when you are in the darkness, you don't know what truth is. If you don't know what truth is, then you make bad policy decisions.

Unfortunately, the lack of transparency seems to be par for the course in Congress anymore. This bill should have been debated. It should have had light shone on it.

This is just bad policy. I don't see how anybody could read this bill and think that there are not problems with it, that there is not a lack of logic. There is incoherence in the text of the bill, and it is taking us to a position where we would make bad decisions.

Here we are, just a week after this Chamber was left guessing what would be in the final NDAA and while we are currently guessing what will be in a last-minute omnibus spending bill that will, no doubt, be rolled out in the dark of night. This is another example of what is so broken about this process, what is so broken about the way this majority has led.

If this majority were interested in helping Puerto Rico, we would be advancing legislation to address the reliability of the island's energy grid, ensure its fiscal solvency, repair its infrastructure, or meet any of the other tangible needs for the people of Puerto Rico.

We should be treating these U.S. citizens with respect and letting a full and robust legislative process in the light of day take place to address the status question and the many implications for the people of Puerto Rico and for all Americans.

Madam Speaker, I urge a ''no'' vote on H.R. 8393, and I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1115

Mr. GRIJALVA. Madam Speaker, the only point of darkness that I can see is the greatest democracy on Earth, the United States of America, and what this bill does is provides some light and consistency to that great democracy by saying you must rid yourself of this colonial legacy. Our great Nation should not be a colonial holder of other countries and other futures. This is an opportunity to break from that and to encourage democracy.

Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ). As I indicated earlier, my thanks go to her for her work, as well.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Madam Speaker, for 124 years Puerto Rico, the nation where I was born and raised, has been a colony of the United States.

Invaded by the United States during the 1898 Spanish-American War, Puerto Rico has remained in a state of colonial limbo that flies in the face of the anticolonial values upon which the American Republic was founded.

Congress' unlimited plenary powers over Puerto Rico are reminiscent of the monarchical powers enjoyed by King George III against which the Founders of the American Republic so bravely fought.

If Hamilton and Madison were alive today, they would be shocked to see how the anticolonial Constitution they drafted in 1787 is currently used to legitimize colonialism in Puerto Rico over 300 years later. Advocating now for the continuation of the status quo on the island is the height of hypocrisy.

Colonialism has destroyed the Puerto Rican economy.

Colonialism has divided the Puerto Rican people.

Colonialism has eaten away our people's sense of dignity and self-worth.

Colonialism has made the people of Puerto Rico both psychologically and economically dependent on the United States.

Colonialism is not only humiliating for Puerto Rico, but it is an embarrassment to the United States—the United States that holds itself out as a leader of the free world and that stands up to imperialist tyrants abroad while keeping colonies in the Caribbean and the Pacific.

Puerto Rico's colonial crisis is not a simple domestic issue as some erroneously believe. Make no mistake, Madam Speaker, this is an international issue that directly affects America's standing and image around the world, which is why this doubletalk must come to an end.

The time has come to fully decolonize Puerto Rico. It has been 100 years since the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in Balzac—the last Insular Case—and 70 years after the ratification of the territorial constitution of 1952. History calls upon us to put politics aside and do right by the people of Puerto Rico.

For the last 2 years, I have been tirelessly fighting to craft a bill for Puerto Rico that is anticolonial, fair, and transparent. A bill that will, first and foremost, put the people of Puerto Rico who—since the days of the 1898 invasion—have remained on the sideline front and center.

From Puerto Rico to Florida, and, yes, to the barrios of New York—the ones I am proud to represent—the voices of Boricuas are now finally being heard. Let us not forget that it is thanks to the vibrant Puerto Rican diaspora from Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx that my colleague, ALEXANDRIA OCASIO-CORTEZ, and I are able to walk these Halls of Congress today.

Today, I stand on the shoulders of millions of Puerto Ricans who had to flee Puerto Rico because its colonial condition has not allowed them to live on the island where they were born.

But Puerto Ricans are strong. They have been kicked out of their home and yet have managed to succeed and flourish in cold and foreign places and have graced us with the likes of Lola Rodriguez de Tio, Maria Libertad Gomez, Nilita Vientos Gaston, Justice Sonia Sotomayor, Rita Moreno, Julia de Burgos, and Mari Carmen Aponte, among many others. I feel so honored to be here standing today on the shoulders of all these women and many others who have paved the way.

More importantly, we are here today for the people on the island: those who suffer every day because the prices they pay for necessities like electricity and food are sky-high thanks to the Jones Act.

We are here for those who have lost all their appliances time and time again because we have failed in helping the island to keep the lights on.

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

Mr. GRIJALVA. Madam Speaker, I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentlewoman from New York.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Madam Speaker, we are here for those who have lost loved ones after Maria, the earthquakes, COVID–19, and, most recently, Fiona.

We are here today because we must move towards decolonization. The current status is unsustainable, fundamentally unfair, and un-American.

The process that has led us to this moment has been contentious, complex, and full of debate. It is no secret that Members advocating for this bill, including myself, hold differing opinions on which noncolonial option is the best for the people of Puerto Rico.

The consensus bill before us today clearly defines Puerto Rico's non-territorial status options; namely, free association, independence, and statehood. It is the first time Congress recognizes free association as a separate decolonizing formula.

More importantly, this bill includes dual citizenship rights under both the independence and free association options like we have in the Marshall Islands or Palau.

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

Mr. GRIJALVA. Madam Speaker, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentlewoman from New York.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Madam Speaker, I fought hard for the incorporation of these provisions because Congress has the moral obligation to offer Puerto Rico the necessary tools to transition to a new postcolonial order. And, yes, that includes financial resources to make Puerto Rico whole after 124 years of exploitation of natural resources and environmental degradation.

Madam Speaker, I want to take this time to thank Chairman GRIJALVA; the Resident Commissioner of Puerto Rico (Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN); ALEXANDRIA OCASIO-CORTEZ, who has made incredible contributions to make this bill better and transparent; Congressman SOTO; and the staff who worked day in and day out.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to support this bill.

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

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

Madam Speaker, I want to be as crystal clear as I can. I think this is not only my position, but I believe it is the position of everyone in the minority—the whole Republican Conference and I would hope it would be the position of all of the Democratic Caucus—that America is not a symbol of darkness.

America is still a shining city on a hill. America offers more hope and more protections for freedom than anybody in the history of the world has offered and will continue to offer that. A country that is founded on the protection of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness cannot be considered a country that is a symbol of darkness.

I heard a lot of talk about colonialism. But passing a bill that tells a sovereign nation what its laws should be sounds a lot like colonialism to me.

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

Mr. BENTZ. Madam Speaker, let me ask this question: Will the United States be the better for adding Puerto Rico as a State?

The answer is perhaps.

The answer also is that we need to address the issue, and we need to address the issue correctly.

I had the privilege of sitting through a discussion of this bill 6 months ago. I was surprised when it abruptly appeared this morning, because back then I pointed out that as a practicing attorney, I have had many occasions to put together large business deals, and we used incredible care to bring those deals together.

Yet, when I see something that is dealing with not only the 3.2 million people in Puerto Rico but also the 340 million people in the United States being treated with such a cavalier nature, then I have to ask:

Why do such a disservice not only to the United States but also Puerto Rico?

I asked that question in committee.

The bill fails to talk about and address U.S. sovereignty, U.S. elections, government benefits, taxation, immigration, and a myriad of other important issues, all of which need to be addressed. This is not to suggest that Puerto Rico at some point shouldn't be a State.

The question is: How do we go about doing it?

Because if we are going to add two more Senators and a number of other Representatives, if we are going to upset the structure of our Nation with this addition, then why aren't we doing the proper study to get it right?

Because there is no reason for us to jump into something like this and upset the rest of our Nation.

Why would we do such a thing?

It makes no sense.

I was sad to see this bill appear here today because I don't like getting up and talking this aggressively about hard work that has been done by the people of Puerto Rico and my good friends in the delegation. But the truth has to be called out. If we are going to add another State to this Nation, then let's do it right.

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

Mr. GRIJALVA. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER).

(Mr. HOYER asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HOYER. Madam Speaker, I have been working on this issue almost all of my career in the Congress of the United States.

The previous gentleman said: Let's do it right.

This does it right. This does it after years and years and years and years and years of consideration.

I hesitate because I agree, I think, almost in whole with the remarks that Mr. WESTERMAN has made. Mr. WESTERMAN is a Member of the Congress that I respect. He and I work on things that we think are very important to mankind, here in this country and around the world, in terms of our global environment.

America is a great nation. It is a generous nation. I have said throughout the world that America is the least acquisitive great power that has existed in the world.

What do I mean by acquisitive?

We did not fight wars to take property and to acquire countries, to do what Putin criminally does today. In fact, what we did in those wars in which we have participated in was to build up countries, and they are now democracies: Germany, Japan, Italy, and other nations which we have occupied for a temporary period of time to make sure they were free and help them be free. This bill is about the Puerto Rican people and their island.

□ 1130

And to redeem a premise that we have argued to all the world ought to be central to their policies. That is the right of peoples to self-determination. The right of peoples to say: This is who I am, and this is the political environment in which I want to live—by free votes, not arms, not force, but by the choice of the people. That is what this legislation does.

Puerto Ricans and people of Puerto Rican descent have had an important place in the American family for over a century. They contribute to American culture. They help protect America's national security. They support the American economy and our shared prosperity.

They are American citizens. We made that decision because that was our decision to make whether we were going to allow them to be American citizens or not. Frankly, whether they have any relationship with us or not is our American Congress' decision. They are today American citizens like all of us.

For far too long, however, the people of Puerto Rico have been excluded from the full promise of American democracy and self-determination that our Nation has always championed. We owe it to our own values, and we owe it to the Puerto Rican people to bring an end to their island's 124-year-old status as a U.S. territory.

Less than us. Less than Maryland. Less than Virginia or Oregon or Texas or Maine or Washington State. Yes, they are citizens but less—3½ million people are less. We hold these truths to be self-evident that all are created equal. Now, not all people ought to be U.S. citizens because of that comment, but all citizens ought to be equal. That

is why I am for D.C. statehood—700,000-plus people. Citizens. Our people.

They are franchised if they move to Maryland and disenfranchised if they move from Maryland to D.C. That is not right. We passed a bill to say that was not right. This is another opportunity to give the people of Puerto Rico the ability to set it right, and we make that decision.

The gentleman is correct. We don't have to give that right to Puerto Ricans, we make that decision, and we ought to make it. That is what this bill is about—making that decision to give our fellow citizens a choice—their choice, not our choice.

The gentlewoman from New York, a wonderful, dear, close friend of mine, she and I have disagreed through the years as to what that choice ought to be. But what we agree on is it is not our choice; it is Puerto Rico's choice. That is why I am proud to bring the Puerto Rico Status Act to the floor today.

This bipartisan legislation would organize and fund a binding, island-wide plebiscite that would allow the people of Puerto Rico to vote among these three options:

Statehood. That would be my option. If I were a Puerto Rican and I were living in Port-au-Prince or wherever I was living, I would vote to be a State. That is not my choice, I don't live there, I am not in Puerto Rico. San Juan—I said Port-au-Prince. San Juan. It ought to be their choice, and that is what this bill does—statehood.

Independence. They have a right to do that. They are either going to be a State or they will have a right to determine their own destiny, their own status, or as the bill also gives them an option to do, be a sovereign State with an association with our country.

Now, that has to be done through agreement because we have to make that decision as well as the Puerto Ricans. That would have to be an agreement between us, and both sides would have to be willing partners to that agreement.

Additionally, it would implement comprehensive, nonpartisan public-education campaigns to help voters understand the implications of each option long before any ballots are cast.

The gentlewoman from New York has made it an essential part of her argument that the people of Puerto Rico have to know what they are voting on and what the consequences of that vote will be. Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ has made that same point correctly.

This bipartisan bill also includes a variety of oversight measures to ensure that the election is secure, transparent, and fair.

I have long-believed that Puerto Ricans deserve the right to determine their political destiny. This is not a new concept for me. I don't think it is a new concept for any of us in this Congress. We believe in self-determination of peoples. We believe that dictators cannot impose upon people a government they do not choose. That is bedrock belief for us. That is what this bill is about.

A group of House Members and senior Puerto Rican officials—I am honored that my former colleague and my dear friend is on the floor with us today, Pedro Pierluisi. The Governor has been selected by the people of Puerto Rico.

I am honored to be the friend of and ally of the gentlewoman from Puerto Rico who is the Resident Commissioner from Puerto Rico, who has worked tirelessly with NYDIA VELÁZQUEZ, with the rest of us, in ensuring that the people of Puerto Rico have an honest, fair choice available to them to affect their status, and to reach the long-sought consensus on a path forward for self-determination.

Madam Speaker, I thank Chairman GRIJALVA. This has been a long and torturous path because the disagreements about how we get to where we want to get are so difficult. Chairman GRIJALVA deserves great praise from all of us for his patience, for his knowledge, for his wisdom, for his role that he played in trying to bring this to a head. He has done it, it is here on this floor, and he is responsible for that.

Madam Speaker, I thank the members of the Natural Resources Committee on both sides of the aisle, and I thank the staff for the work that they have done—tireless hours and difficult discussions, debates, and so much disharmony from all those, both the diaspora and those in Puerto Rico—strong feelings that had to be brought to bear to reach this consensus.

Madam Speaker, I thank Chairwoman NYDIA VELÁZQUEZ; Representative DARREN SOTO, who is on the floor and perhaps is going to speak after me; Representative ALEXANDRIA OCASIO-CORTEZ; the Puerto Rican Resident Commissioner that I have spoken of, JENNIFFER GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN; and you, Governor.

Madam Speaker, the Governor and I have had the opportunity to work together when you were a Member of this House. We passed a bill that this House passed saying that the Puerto Rican people ought to have a choice, so this is not new. The previous gentleman wasn't here in Congress then—I don't know that, but I don't think he was. This is not new. This has not been done haphazardly. This has been done carefully with difficult efforts made by all parties.

All of the people that I mentioned, I thank for their efforts to reach this historic consensus and action on behalf of the people of Puerto Rico. We are all in agreement that the decision must belong to the people of Puerto Rico alone. Their destiny ought to be up to them.

The Puerto Rican Status Act, of which we will consider in just a few minutes, will give them that choice. They will have that choice only if we vote ''yes.'' If we do not vote ''yes'' today, I fear we may not vote ''yes'' for a very long time. The people of Puerto Rico would be held in a status that I believe the majority of them do not want to be in.

Madam Speaker, I, therefore, ask all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to represent the values of America in this vote. The values that say to us that people have the inherent right to self-determination, not to have it imposed upon them by force or by dictate of the Congress of the United States, but to choose a status of their choosing, of their desire, of their vision. Vote for this status bill, it represents the best of American values. We have a moral responsibility to do so.

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

I thank the distinguished gentleman, the leader of the Democratic Party, for his remarks. I agree with many things that he said. I think all of us would agree with many of the things that he stated. I was with him right up there until the part about using D.C. statehood as a metaphor with Puerto Rican statehood. If the gentleman wanted to talk about the residents of D.C., we can talk about taking those residential neighborhoods and commercial neighborhoods in D.C. and putting them back with the State of Maryland if that is an issue. D.C. statehood is totally different from Puerto Rican statehood, and it shouldn't even be brought into this discussion.

The gentleman talked about the inherent right to self-determination. He said it is something that shouldn't be dictated by the Congress of the U.S. to the people of Puerto Rico. He said the decision belongs to the people of Puerto Rico. Their destiny belongs to them. I think we would all agree with that in principle, but that is not what this bill says.

Section 102 talking about the independence option. I am reading directly from the bill: ''The constitutional convention under section 101 shall formulate and draft a constitution for Puerto Rico that guarantees the protection of fundamental human rights . . . ''

We all agree that should happen, but if they are an independent nation, what right do we have to tell them that? It says it shall include: ''Due process and equal protection under the law; freedom of speech, press, assembly, association, and religion; the rights of the accused; any other economic, social, and cultural rights as the constitutional convention may deem appropriate and necessary; and provisions to ensure that no individual born in the nation of Puerto Rico shall be stateless at birth.''

I don't disagree with that, but if they vote for independence, what right do we have to dictate to them how they write their constitution and what is included in it?

The other option of free association, section 202 of the bill: ''The constitutional convention under section 201 shall formulate and draft a constitution for Puerto Rico that guarantees

the protection of fundamental human rights . . . ''

Again, if they have the sovereignty under a free association, what right does Congress have to dictate what their constitution will say? The leader's words that their destiny shouldn't be dictated by the U.S. Congress. Their destiny belongs to them. Yet, this bill tells them what they shall do if they vote for either of those options.

Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Puerto Rico (Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN).

□ 1145

Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN. Madam Speaker, today is a truly historic day for Puerto Rico. Ironically, it is also a perfect example of the island's colonial reality.

I am Puerto Rico's only voice in Congress. I represent 3.2 million American citizens living back home, more constituents than anyone in this Chamber. Yet, while we consider a bill I helped write, a bill that will directly impact the life of every citizen I represent, I still must rely and depend on everybody here because I cannot vote on the floor. This is the best example of why this bill is so important for Puerto Rico.

Today, Congress takes a step toward finally assuming its responsibility under Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2 of our Constitution to provide the people of Puerto Rico with an opportunity, a federally binding choice to democratically decide our future among three nonterritorial, constitutionally viable options: statehood, independence, and independence in association with the United States.

For the first time in history, we are considering legislation that would authorize a self-executing plebiscite on the island. With the adoption of this bill, this Chamber is also recognizing and making clear that Puerto Rico's century-old territorial status is the problem and cannot be part of the solution.

The territorial condition constrains the island's ability to prosper and has relegated the island to an indefinite second-class status when compared to the 50 States.

This is the main reason behind social, economic, and physical challenges we have faced, forcing a mass exodus of millions of Puerto Ricans to the mainland in search of that equality.

Congress has perpetuated by its inaction this dysfunctional political-economic condition, one that at its core is, as President Ronald Reagan once characterized it, ''historically unnatural.''

Because we are a territory, the people of Puerto Rico lack full voting representation in the House and Senate and cannot vote for the President, who sends our sons and daughters to war.

Because we are a territory, the Federal Government can, and often does, treat us unequally under Federal laws and programs.

Because we are a territory, we are treated as second-class citizens.

Because we are a territory, I am here today discussing a bill related to one of our most critical issues, yet I cannot vote on this bill. This is the reason this discussion is so important.

I support statehood for the island, and our people have voted not once, not twice, but three times already supporting statehood.

In response, I introduced H.R. 1522, which, following the most recent precedents of Alaska and Hawaii, would have established a process to admit the island as a State of the Union in a simple yes or no vote. However, given the political realities in this Congress, and in the interest of advancing the status issue, I led negotiations on this bill before us.

This bill would make an offer to the people of Puerto Rico to choose. I prefer statehood, but this bill would allow the people to choose between statehood, independence, or independence in association with the United States, and spell out the consequences of each option.

Of course, this bill is not perfect, but at least it will advance the issue.

Today, I remember the late Congressman Don Young of Alaska, who understood better than anyone else the inequities that come with being a territory and always championed statehood for Puerto Rico.

Madam Speaker, never has a U.S. territory had to wait longer than Puerto Rico to become an independent nation or to become a State, and we have voted three times for that. We have more than earned the right to do so.

Today, as the sole representative of the people of the island, I urge my colleagues to vote for this bill, H.R. 8393, and allow us to finally put an end to our shameful territorial status.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SOTO), someone who, with other colleagues, worked through this difficult process and produced the consensus today.

Mr. SOTO. Madam Speaker, it is time to set our people free. After 124 years, it is past time for Americans in Puerto Rico to decide their own form of government.

The Puerto Rico Status Act will finally allow Puerto Ricans to throw off their colonial bonds, finally end their territorial status and choose for themselves: statehood, independence, and sovereignty with free association. What a historic day today is in the U.S. House of Representatives.

With the option of statehood, which is my preference, it is simple. Puerto Rico would become the 51st State in our Nation, with all the representation rights of our States.

With independence, they would become an independent nation, a sovereign free to decide their own future.

With sovereignty with free association, they would be an independent nation and would have the right to enter into a compact, a contract between the United States and Puerto Rico that would provide for citizenship for a limited time, foreign policy agreements, among other matters.

The history of this bill this term is really important to discuss. We had two hearings that lasted a day each. We had bipartisan negotiations with the great leader on the Republican side, JENNIFFER GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN, the very voice of the island of Puerto Rico, along with my colleagues NYDIA VELÁZQUEZ, ALEXANDRIA OCASIO-CORTEZ, our great chairman here, and, of course, our leader.

It is bipartisan. Just to make sure, we had another nearly daylong hearing, meeting with stakeholders on the island after the draft was released.

Then, of course, we had a markup. That lasted all day. In fact, I can't think of a single bill that we have gotten out of the Natural Resources Committee that we spent more time on this term than this bill.

Of course, we see a long history of discrimination against territories, or excuses for why territories shouldn't become States.

With Texas, they said, ''Could a nation become a State?'' But they got in.

With New Mexico, they talked about a majority Hispanic native State. It took them nearly 70 years. They got in.

In Utah, there was religious discrimination. In Hawaii, it was a nation and a predominantly native island—Alaska, as well.

One by one, we admitted these territories as States based upon their desire to join the Union.

At this moment, I can't help but well up with emotion. I think about the brave, Borinqueneers, who fought in World War I, World War II, Korea. Puerto Ricans serve in our armed services to this day in greater numbers, in many instances, than States. Many died fighting for a country that organized them into segregated units, sent them there on orders of a Commander in Chief for whom they could not vote under our laws. Yet, as Puerto Ricans, as Americans, they did so proudly, sacrificing their lives for our freedom.

I think about my trips to Iraq and Afghanistan during the global war on terror. I can never forget traveling through the vast desert of Kuwait and, upon landing at an isolated base, there was the Puerto Rican flag flying in the middle of the desert. You have to wonder, what were they doing there? It is out of love of this country that they were there.

I was similarly welcomed by a Puerto Rican medical unit proudly serving in Afghanistan under constant threat of danger.

I think about those families I met after Hurricane Maria and the devastation caused there, the most deadly disaster in modern history. That was a watershed moment for so many of us. It just showed how fragile the rights of those on the island were, recovering from Puerto Rico's worst disaster, with Hurricane Maria.

I also think of my bisabuela, Altagracia Casanova. Born just after the turn of the 20th century, I met her for the first time when she was in her late eighties during my first trip to the island. I was only 3 years old. We developed a close relationship, and she ultimately lived to 96 years old.

Her life spanned nearly a century. All the while, she lived in a colonial territory as a second-class citizen in the greatest democracy in the world. What a tragedy. What an irony.

I think about my abuela, Sara Casanova, who would come to the mainland every summer to spend time with us, teach us the language and history, enjoy our native food and music, and familiarize us with our family's native culture.

She died right before my first successful primary to the Florida House of Representatives back in 2007. But before she passed, even with a fading memory, she read about the campaign in La Prensa and cried. She understood it was a historic moment for our family, a passing of the torch to the next generation.

I carry that torch into this Chamber, and I ask you all to support freedom for our family back on the island, just like we expect for every other American.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SMUCKER).

Mr. SMUCKER. Madam Speaker, I am especially grateful to the ranking member for allowing me 2 minutes because he knows I am rising in support of this bill.

I understand and completely agree with my friend, Mr. WESTERMAN, who is a dear friend and who does a wonderful job as ranking member on this committee. I understand his frustration with this process because this did come up quickly. There are a lot of unanswered questions about what this will mean, depending on what the Puerto Rican people will choose.

I agree with him when he said that America is a beacon of hope to the world, and it is a light to the world. I think that makes the case for why we should allow the Puerto Rican people to make their choice about their own future.

I have heard concerns on our side about economic issues, taking on debt. I think this bill will specifically address that. Puerto Rico, if it chooses to be a State, would keep the debt. I would argue the opposite. Puerto Rico has been a territory since 1898, with 3.2 million American citizens. We have not provided them every tool we possibly can to ensure they can be prosperous.

I have visited Puerto Rico. I have a large community in my district from Puerto Rico, who have family. I visited after the hurricane. I was grateful for the support that we were able to provide.

But let's give every tool that we possibly can, including full citizenship in the United States of America, if that is what they choose, to be prosperous, to contribute to the American economy.

I think we can look at this as a net positive. It will be a net positive if, indeed, Puerto Rico chooses to become the 51st State.

Again, I am grateful for the work of the ranking member and the committee on this. It is not taken lightly to disagree with him on a particular issue. There will be other steps in this process.

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

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Mr. SMUCKER. There will be other steps in this process during which I hope some of those real, legitimate questions can be answered.

We should allow the Puerto Rican people to make their choice about their future. I know, certainly, the Puerto Rican population, who have families back in the community, this is what they are looking for. I am proud to stand with them and their family members if they have the opportunity to freely determine the future of their beloved island.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ), one of the principals that worked on this consensus.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Madam Speaker, before I begin today, I would like to express and begin my remarks by expressing solidarity with other U.S. colonies, colonized people, indigenous communities, and descendants of the enslaved.

Today represents a historic moment. While Puerto Rico is not the United States' only colony, it is its oldest. Today, for the first time in our Nation's history, the United States will acknowledge its role as a colonizing force and Puerto Rico's status as an extended colony.

The Puerto Rico Status Act begins a process for Boricuas to decide their own future.

In this bill, we have made historic and unprecedented gains. Never before have terms for independence and free association been so clearly defined, including ramifications for citizenship.

This bill excludes the current unsustainable colonial status. It clarifies that U.S. birthright citizenship and transmission of citizenship remain the same in any event of status selection.

□ 1200

It provides 10 years of compensatory finance in the event of free association, and it also includes an agreement to international election observers over the course of a plebiscite.

This bill has also achieved historic and unprecedented multiparty agreement on the island, including representatives from the Independence, Statehood, and Movimiento Victoria Parties. These gains are critically important to codify in precedent here in this House.

I also want to acknowledge, rightfully, some of the criticisms of what is not in this bill. It is not perfect. But we have fought tirelessly to expand the transparency where previously there was less, and there is still more to go. It does not address reparations. It does not address the issues of Act 20, PROMESA, and LUMA, but I am confident that in solidarity with movements on the island, we will solve these issues and achieve those victories, as well.

I also want to note that decolonization is more than a vote. It doesn't happen just with a vote. It is a social, political, cultural, economic, and psychological process that extends far beyond the floor of this House. That being said, the gains that are made here are a watershed moment.

I thank, first and foremost, my incredible mentor, Representative NYDIA VELÁZQUEZ, who has fought for the people of Puerto Rico for her entire career and her entire life.

I thank our other colleagues: Chairman GRIJALVA for elevating this issue, Leader HOYER for making this a priority, as well as Resident Commissioner GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN.

I also thank grassroots advocacy organizations as well as our partners in the Independence, Free Association, and Statehood Parties. These gains are incredibly important, and they are a waypoint and a stepping stone for the future of our island. I think it sends a very strong message to all. For there to be any vote, prior to any vote, we hope that the energy of people both in the diaspora and on the island are here.

Lastly, but certainly not least, as we ring out a refrain that is said among people across the world and Puerto Ricans across the world: ''Yo si soy boricua, pa'que tu lo sepas,'' ''I am Puerto Rican, so you know.''

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, may I inquire as to how much time is remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Arkansas has 12 minutes remaining.

The gentleman from Arizona has 6½ minutes remaining.

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

If there is one thing that I think has come out in this discussion is that there are problems with this bill. It is not a ''perfect piece of legislation.'' It needs work done on it.

But we have to look at what the bill says. The way this bill is written, if it were to pass today, if it passes out of this House and it went through the process in the Senate, signed by the President, then we have abrogated all of our responsibilities and authority, because it doesn't come back to Congress for any kind of approval.

So both sides have agreed, in a bipartisan manner, that this bill has problems, yet we are voting on it today to

say, with problems, that is okay; we are just going to go ahead and move it through the process, even though we have all recognized that there are problems with the bill.

Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCLINTOCK).

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Madam Speaker, we have heard a lot about self-determination today, but let's put that to the smell test.

The options that the Democrats are presenting to the Puerto Rican people don't include the most obvious choice, to remain as a commonwealth. So if you prefer the status quo, you are completely out of luck. The Democrats have already decided you are not allowed to vote for that. That is not self-determination. That is rigging an election.

Now, if none of the three options the Democrats have chosen for you gets 50 percent, then there is a runoff, even if the option dropped was the clear second choice of voters. And a narrow, transient majority seems to be most likely, since the November 2020 plebiscite scored just 52.5 percent in favor of statehood, 47.5 percent opposed, with just 53 percent turning out to vote. Completely ignored is the right of all the American people to discuss and decide so momentous and irreversible a question as this.

Statehood would mean that in the next reapportionment, other States will lose a total of four seats in the House of Representatives in order to accommodate the Puerto Rican delegation.

Only about 20 percent of the population is fluent in English, which means that we would be admitting a State whose vast majority is isolated from the national political debate that is central to our democracy.

Nor will statehood solve Puerto Rico's economic problems. Residents would now have to pay all Federal income taxes from which they are currently exempt. The GAO estimates that would cost Puerto Rico 70 percent of its existing manufacturing base. There is not even a CBO estimate of the cost to American taxpayers of admitting a chronically mismanaged and utterly bankrupt State government.

The economy of Puerto Rico is expected to underperform the national economy, which is itself a disaster. For American taxpayers, it would mean a new State that has the lowest per capita income in the country and the largest per capita debt. Its labor participation rate is 40 percent, compared to 62 percent nationally. Forty-three percent of the population lives below the poverty line. Its academic performance would be the worst in the Nation.

So how does it benefit America to admit a State that would be the most indebted, uneducated, poorest, and least employed State in the Nation?

We don't get to consider that question, because under this bill, Congress gets no further say in the matter once Puerto Rico has voted. That makes it a blanket abrogation of the responsibility of Congress to make these decisions in the best interest of all of the people of the United States.

Whichever of the three options is chosen would be automatically enacted without any further debate or decision by Congress. It hands the constitutional authority reserved for the welfare of the entire Nation to the hands of what would be a narrow and transient majority in Puerto Rico.

The only debate in Congress on Puerto Rican statehood is the debate that we are having right now, when the Nation is oblivious to the legislation or its implications. Our constituents will awaken across the country to the realization of a fait accompli that was quickly rushed through the very last days of session with no opportunity for national debate on the implications of making such a profound and permanent change in the fabric of our Nation. This is as cynical as it gets.

If the motion to recommit is adopted, I will introduce an amendment that will require the question to be returned to the House for a full national debate on such a momentous issue and require a two-thirds vote to assure a broad, bipartisan consensus.

Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert the text of the amendment in the RECORD immediately prior to the vote on the motion to recommit.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Madam Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CASTOR).

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Madam Speaker, the people of Puerto Rico deserve to live in dignity with the freedom to determine their future. That is why I rise in support of the Puerto Rico Status Act.

The act simply provides Puerto Ricans the opportunity to determine their future and choose whether statehood, independence, or sovereignty and free association makes the most sense for them.

Colleagues, I hope we can all agree that we all value basic human rights, and that means, like every American citizen, our Puerto Rican neighbors deserve true representation, equal rights, and everything that flows from that.

After Hurricane Maria devastated the island in 2017, boricuas in the Tampa Bay area came together to advocate for resources to rebuild the island. The disparate treatment became so plain at that time, but it has existed for decades, even as Puerto Ricans have given their life in service of America's freedom.

So it is time that the territorial status of Puerto Rico be reexamined. It is unsustainable and cannot continue. Puerto Ricans deserve the opportunity to have their say.

I thank Representatives VELÁZQUEZ, SOTO, OCASIO-CORTEZ, GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN, Leader HOYER, and Chair GRIJALVA for crafting this landmark legislation for self-determination per the democratic values that we hold dear.

Vote for self-determination and freedom and democracy for everyone. I urge you to adopt this bill.

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

Our neighbors in Puerto Rico are American citizens. They are afforded the protections under the Constitution of the United States. I am from Arkansas. Arkansas was a territory at one time. There is a process for becoming a State.

The American citizens in Puerto Rico deserve the respect to have a process that has actually been thought out, that has been debated, and that gives them an opportunity to enter statehood in a way that is more common to the way other States have entered. This bill is not that. This bill has serious problems with it.

We are right here at the end of Congress. To me, this just looks like a political ploy as we are waiting to pass a massive spending bill before we go home for Christmas and start the new Congress.

Madam Speaker, in closing, it is obvious there is bipartisan support for Puerto Rican self-determination. That is not the issue. The issue is the process, and this is a bad process.

If this is so important to the majority, then I ask: Why today? Why today?

Less than 20 days before this Congress ends and Democrats transition to the minority, why bring this bill today?

Was there not time in the past 4 years to have hearings on this bill, to have other committees look at this bill?

But yesterday, we get notice of an emergency Rules Committee meeting to consider this bill that all of a sudden is so important, but it wasn't important, certainly not in this Congress. We didn't have a hearing on this bill. We had a markup, a markup without a hearing.

The committee spent more time talking about big cats. We had hearings on big cats, then we talked about Puerto Rican status. There are 10,000 big cats in the United States, and there are over 3 million Puerto Rican citizens.

That is why we are not supporting this bill today, and that is why it is disingenuous to bring it to the House less than 20 days before the end of this Congress when both sides have agreed that there are problems with the bill, problems that need to be worked out, but there is no recourse in this bill for Congress to have a second look at it.

We can't control the Senate, but I doubt very seriously the Senate is going to be taking up this bill. So that leads me to conclude that what we are doing here at the end of December, discussing Puerto Rican status, is simply just a political ploy on the backs of the

Puerto Rican citizens of the United States.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote ''no,'' and I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1215

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

This has been a typical debate on Puerto Rico because the question of status and the question of decolonizing our relationship with the people of the island is a question that causes spirited debate. That is okay, but spirited debate with misinformation and hastily drawn conclusions is not the way to debate. We will leave that for another day.

The important point today is that this did not get parachuted at the last minute. This has been a difficult process for all involved, and, I might add, a bipartisan process, to bring one final resolution regardless of where the clock is in terms of this session. This is the time that this was completed.

Madam Speaker, I am proud of this, and I am urging a ''yes'' vote on the legislation.

There are two fundamental differences between ourselves and the minority on this. The intent of the bill is simple: that there be three options, all requiring a deliberate and informed decision by the people of the island.

The current status is not one of those three options. Why? Because the intent of this legislation is to allow the Puerto Rican people not to be colonized and be a colony. That is the decolonization part of the legislation.

The other part, although it has been the habit lately of people wanting not only to predict outcomes of elections but to guarantee outcomes of elections, contrary to that philosophy, this directs that the people of Puerto Rico make the decision and respect that decision.

Our identity as a Nation is built on the values that we are all here to support and respect. It is built on the rule of law. The people of Puerto Rico, as citizens of this Nation, must be extended the respect and the consideration that, since 1898, we have been the overseer of a colony in this country. We must extend them the opportunity to choose their path forward.

That is all it is. It is democratic; it is fair; and it is overdue.

Madam Speaker, I thank all the Members who worked on this—in particular, Representatives VELÁZQUEZ, SOTO, GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN, and OCASIO-CORTEZ—for the difficult periods and times they went through in this process, and obviously Majority Leader HOYER for his insistence, his prodding, and, on occasion, his calmness to get us to this point.

I thank the staff on our committee: chief counsel, Luis Urbina; deputy chief counsel, Margarita Varela; policy aide, Ivan Robles; staff director, David Watkins; and director of our Office of Insular Affairs, Brian Modeste.

I also thank each and every one on Leader HOYER's staff: Trent Bauserman and Chris Bowman; also Renata Beca-Barragan on Ms. VELÁZQUEZ's staff; Gabriella Boffelli on Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN's staff; and Andrea Valdes on Mr. SOTO's staff for their hard work and dedication to getting us to this point today. Sometimes that kind of work is underappreciated. I acknowledge their work and thank them.

Madam Speaker, I urge a ''yes'' vote, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 8393—Puerto Rico Status Act, to provide a plebiscite to be held on November 5th, 2023, to resolve Puerto Rico's political status.

Throughout my decades of service in Congress, I have been an ardent and consistent supporter of the Puerto Rican peoples' right to self-determination.

I have stood alongside our Puerto Rican brothers and sisters on many legislative efforts that would empower them to choose the governance status of their preference, as is their right, both as American citizens and in accordance with their basic human rights.

The population of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico is 3.19 million.

Puerto Ricans are the largest group of U.S. citizens with Hispanic heritage, and yet, are treated with only 2nd-class citizenship.

In fact, Puerto Ricans have been the largest body of U.S. citizens which do not enjoy the privileges usually accorded to citizenship, including voting representation in Congress and the right to vote in Presidential elections.

It is a widely held belief in Puerto Rico that the residents of the Commonwealth should be empowered to decide their own political status. The Commonwealth's status is an internal matter among the people of Puerto Rico.

Puerto Rico has hosted 6 referendums on the topic of statehood, with the most recent being in November 2020. The results of that referendum were that 52.5 percent of the electorate voted for statehood.

It is obvious that the people of Puerto Rico want to change the way they are represented in their own governance and that of the United States Government.

During the referendum in 2012, 54 percent of voters agreed that they did not want to maintain their current method of governance.

The majority of those that did not want to maintain the status quo chose statehood as the alternative that they preferred.

While many of these referendums have been held and have told us what the people of Puerto Rico think, nothing has materialized as a result.

This is why it is essential that Congress allow a plebiscite to Puerto Rico to resolve it's political status.

Voters in Puerto Rico should be provided with the opportunity to choose independence, sovereignty in free association with the United States, or statehood.

It is imperative that this voting process be fair and free of any disinformation, propaganda, or wrongdoing.

All voters should be provided with voting materials in both English and Spanish, and all voting campaigns should be dedicated to providing voters with educational materials related to the plebiscites and potential outcomes.

The Puerto Rico State Elections Commission shall ensure that any educational campaigns are non-partisan in nature and provide voters with accurate information that allow them to vote according to their best interests.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 8393—Puerto Rico Status Act, so that the Commonwealth can decide what is best for its people.

All Americans deserve representation, and this bill provides Puerto Ricans the right to make that decision for themselves.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 1519, the previous question is ordered on the bill, as amended.

The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

MOTION TO RECOMMIT

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Madam Speaker, I have a motion to recommit at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion to recommit.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. McClintock of California moves to recommit the bill H.R. 8393 to the Committee on Natural Resources.

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

After section 11, insert the following:

SEC. 12. CONGRESSIONAL RATIFICATION REQUIRED.

The result of a plebiscite under section 4 may not be certified before the date on which the House of Representatives and the Senate approve, by a two-thirds majority vote, the result of the plebiscite.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XIX, the previous question is ordered on the motion to recommit.

The question is on the motion to recommit.

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, this 15-minute vote on the motion to recommit will be followed by 5-minute votes on passage of H.R. 8393, if ordered, and passage of H.R. 1948.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 209, nays 217, not voting 4, as follows:

[Roll No. 528]

YEAS—209

Aderholt	Bilirakis	Carl
Allen	Bishop (NC)	Carter (GA)
Amodei	Boebert	Carter (TX)
Armstrong	Bost	Cawthorn
Arrington	Brady	Chabot
Babin	Brooks	Cline
Bacon	Buchanan	Cloud
Baird	Buck	Clyde
Balderson	Bucshon	Cole
Banks	Budd	Comer
Barr	Burchett	Conway
Bentz	Burgess	Crawford
Bergman	Calvert	Crenshaw
Bice (OK)	Cammack	Curtis
Biggs	Carey	Davidson

Davis, Rodney
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Donalds
Duncan
Dunn
Ellzey
Emmer
Estes
Fallon
Feenstra
Ferguson
Finstad
Fischbach
Fitzgerald
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flood
Flores
Foxx
Franklin, C. Scott
Fulcher
Gaetz
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
Hollingsworth
Hudson
Huizenga
Issa
Jackson
Jacobs (NY)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson (SD)
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Joyce (PA)
Katko
Keller
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
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
Reschenthaler
Rice (SC)
Rodgers (WA)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rose
Rosendale
Rouzer
Roy
Rutherford
Salazar
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sempolinski
Sessions
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smucker
Spartz
Stauber
Steel
Stefanik
Steil
Steube
Stewart
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (PA)
Tiffany
Timmons
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Van Drew
Van Duyne
Wagner
Walberg
Waltz
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams (TX)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Yakym
Zeldin

NAYS—217

Adams
Aguilar
Allred
Auchincloss
Axne
Barragán
Beatty
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Bourdeaux
Bowman
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brown (MD)
Brown (OH)
Brownley
Bush
Bustos
Butterfield
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson
Carter (LA)
Cartwright
Case
Casten
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Cheney
Cherfilus-McCormick
Chu
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Courtney
Craig
Crow
Cuellar
Davids (KS)
Davis, Danny K.
Dean
DeFazio
DeGette
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
DeSaulnier
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Escobar
Eshoo
Espaillat
Evans
Fletcher
Foster
Frankel, Lois
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
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
Peltola
Perlmutter
Peters
Phillips
Pingree
Pocan
Porter
Pressley
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Rice (NY)
Ross
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (NY)
Ryan (OH)
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
Velázquez
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wild
Williams (GA)
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—4

Hinson
Kelly (MS)
McKinley
Wexton

□ 1258

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Messrs. CLEAVER, COURTNEY, Ms. STANSBURY, Messrs. PAYNE, BISHOP of Georgia, PANETTA, Ms. CRAIG, Messrs. CLYBURN, VEASEY, BOWMAN, Mses. CLARK of Massachusetts, SEWELL, DelBENE, Mrs. BUSTOS, Messrs. QUIGLEY, HIMES, Mrs. PELTOLA, Mses. TLAIB, and JACKSON LEE changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay''.

Messrs. MULLIN, CLINE, JOHNSON of Ohio, FITZGERALD, BUCSHON, CRENSHAW, Ms. SALAZAR, Messrs. LAMALFA, STEUBE, and Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS changed their vote from ''nay'' to ''yea''.

So the motion to recommit was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

MEMBERS RECORDED PURSUANT TO HOUSE RESOLUTION 8, 117TH CONGRESS

Auchincloss (Beyer)
Axne (Pappas)
Beatty (Neguse)
Bishop (NC) (Hice (GA))
Boebert (Donalds)
Brooks (Moore (AL))
Brown (MD) (Evans)
Bustos (Schneider)
Butterfield (Beyer)
Carter (LA) (Horsford)
Cawthorn (Donalds)
Cherfilus-McCormick (Brown (OH))
Cicilline (Jayapal)
Cuellar (Correa)
DeFazio (Pallone)
DelBene (Schneider)
DesJarlais (Fleischmann)
Dingell (Pappas)
Doyle, Michael F. (Evans)
Duncan (Williams (TX))
Dunn (Salazar)
Escobar (Garcia (TX))
Espaillat (Correa)
Ferguson (Gonzales, Tony (TX))
Gaetz (Donalds)
Gallego (Beyer)
Gibbs (Smucker)
Gosar (Weber (TX))
Hartzler (Weber (TX))
Herrera Beutler (Valadao)
Issa (Calvert)
Jackson (Van Duyne)
Jacobs (NY) (Sempolinski)
Johnson (TX) (Pallone)
Kelly (IL) (Horsford)
Khanna (Pappas)
Kim (NJ) (Pallone)
Kirkpatrick (Pallone)
Krishnamoorthi (Pappas)
LaHood (Kustoff)
Larson (CT) (Pappas)
Lawrence (Garcia (TX))
Lawson (FL) (Evans)
Letlow (Moore (UT))
Levin (CA) (Huffman)
Long (Fleischmann)
Malliotakis (Armstrong)
Maloney, Sean P. (Beyer)
Meeks (Horsford)
Moulton (Trone)
Newman (Correa)
Norcross (Pallone)
O'Halleran (Pappas)
Omar (Beyer)
Palazzo (Fleischmann)
Pascrell (Pallone)
Phillips (Craig)
Pingree (Beyer)
Porter (Beyer)
Pressley (Neguse)
Quigley (Schneider)
Rice (SC) (Weber (TX))
Rush (Beyer)
Sewell (Schneider)
Sherrill (Beyer)
Simpson (Fulcher)
Sires (Pallone)
Spartz (Harshbarger)
Speier (Garcia (TX))
Stevens (Craig)
Stewart (Owens)
Strickland (Correa)
Suozzi (Correa)
Tiffany (Fitzgerald)
Titus (Pallone)
Trahan (Lynch)
Welch (Pallone)
Wilson (FL) (Evans)
Wilson (SC) (Timmons)

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ). The question is on the passage of the bill.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Ms. CONWAY. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 233, nays 191, not voting 6, as follows:

[Roll No. 529]

YEAS—233

Adams
Aguilar
Allred
Auchincloss
Axne
Bacon
Barragán
Beatty
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Bourdeaux
Bowman
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brown (MD)
Brown (OH)
Brownley
Bush
Bustos
Butterfield
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson
Carter (LA)
Cartwright
Case
Casten
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Cheney
Cherfilus-McCormick
Chu
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Courtney
Craig
Crow
Cuellar
Davids (KS)
Davis, Danny K.
Davis, Rodney
Dean
DeFazio
DeGette
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
DeSaulnier
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Escobar
Eshoo
Espaillat
Evans
Fitzpatrick
Fletcher
Flores
Foster
Frankel, Lois
Gallego
Garamendi
Garbarino
García (IL)
Garcia (TX)
Golden
Gomez
Gonzalez (OH)
Gonzalez, Vicente
Gottheimer
Green, Al (TX)
Grijalva
Harder (CA)
Hayes
Herrera Beutler
Higgins (NY)
Himes
Horsford
Houlahan
Hoyer
Huffman
Huizenga
Jackson Lee
Jacobs (CA)
Jayapal
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (TX)
Jones
Joyce (OH)
Kahele
Kaptur
Katko
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
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Mfume
Moore (WI)
Morelle
Moulton
Mrvan
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Neguse
Newhouse
Newman
Norcross
O'Halleran
Ocasio-Cortez
Omar
Pallone
Panetta
Pappas
Pascrell
Payne
Peltola
Perlmutter
Peters
Phillips
Pingree
Pocan
Porter
Posey
Pressley
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Rice (NY)
Ross
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (NY)
Ryan (OH)
Salazar
Sánchez
Sarbanes
Scanlon

Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Schrier
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Sewell
Sherman
Sherrill
Sires
Slotkin
Smith (WA)
Smucker
Soto
Spanberger
Speier
Stansbury
Stanton
Stevens
Strickland
Suozzi
Swalwell
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tlaib
Tonko
Torres (CA)
Torres (NY)
Trahan
Trone
Underwood
Upton
Vargas
Veasey
Velázquez
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wexton
Wild
Williams (GA)
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NAYS—191

Aderholt
Allen
Amodei
Armstrong
Arrington
Babin
Balderson
Banks
Barr
Bentz
Bergman
Bice (OK)
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (NC)
Boebert
Bost
Brady
Brooks
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burchett
Burgess
Calvert
Cammack
Carey
Carl
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Cawthorn
Chabot
Cline
Cloud
Clyde
Cole
Comer
Conway
Crawford
Crenshaw
Curtis
Davidson
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Donalds
Duncan
Dunn
Ellzey
Emmer
Estes
Fallon
Feenstra
Ferguson
Finstad
Fischbach
Fitzgerald
Fleischmann
Flood
Franklin, C. Scott
Fulcher
Gaetz
Gallagher
Garcia (CA)
Gibbs
Gimenez
Gohmert
Gonzales, Tony
Good (VA)
Gooden (TX)
Gosar
Granger
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Green (TN)
Greene (GA)
Griffith
Grothman
Guest
Guthrie
Harris
Harshbarger
Hartzler
Hern
Herrell
Hice (GA)
Higgins (LA)
Hill
Hollingsworth
Hudson
Issa
Jackson
Jacobs (NY)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson (SD)
Jordan
Joyce (PA)
Keller
Kelly (PA)
Kim (CA)
Kinzinger
Kustoff
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Latta
LaTurner
Lesko
Letlow
Long
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Mace
Malliotakis
Mann
Massie
Mast
McCarthy
McCaul
McClain
McClintock
McHenry
Meijer
Meuser
Miller (IL)
Miller (WV)
Miller-Meeks
Moolenaar
Mooney
Moore (AL)
Moore (UT)
Mullin
Murphy (NC)
Nehls
Norman
Obernolte
Owens
Palazzo
Palmer
Pence
Perry
Pfluger
Reschenthaler
Rice (SC)
Rodgers (WA)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rose
Rosendale
Rouzer
Roy
Rutherford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sempolinski
Sessions
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Spartz
Stauber
Steel
Stefanik
Steil
Steube
Stewart
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (PA)
Tiffany
Timmons
Turner
Valadao
Van Drew
Van Duyne
Wagner
Walberg
Waltz
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams (TX)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Yakym
Zeldin

NOT VOTING—6

Baird
Foxx
Hinson
Kelly (MS)
Loudermilk
McKinley

□ 1312

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MEMBERS RECORDED PURSUANT TO HOUSE RESOLUTION 8, 117TH CONGRESS

Auchincloss (Beyer)
Axne (Pappas)
Beatty (Neguse)
Bishop (NC) (Hice (GA))
Boebert (Donalds)
Brooks (Moore (AL))
Brown (MD) (Evans)
Bustos (Schneider)
Butterfield (Beyer)
Carter (LA) (Horsford)
Cawthorn (Donalds)
Cherfilus-McCormick (Brown (OH))
Cicilline (Jayapal)
Cuellar (Correa)
DeFazio (Pallone)
DelBene (Schneider)
DesJarlais (Fleischmann)
Dingell (Pappas)
Doyle, Michael F. (Evans)
Duncan (Williams (TX))
Dunn (Salazar)
Escobar (Garcia (TX))
Espaillat (Correa)
Ferguson (Gonzales, Tony (TX))
Gaetz (Donalds)
Gallego (Beyer)
Gibbs (Smucker)
Gosar (Weber (TX))
Hartzler (Weber (TX))
Herrera Beutler (Valadao)
Issa (Calvert)
Jackson (Van Duyne)
Jacobs (NY) (Sempolinski)
Johnson (TX) (Pallone)
Kelly (IL) (Horsford)
Khanna (Pappas)
Kim (NJ) (Pallone)
Kirkpatrick (Pallone)
Krishnamoorthi (Pappas)
LaHood (Kustoff)
Larson (CT) (Pappas)
Lawrence (Garcia (TX))
Lawson (FL) (Evans)
Letlow (Moore (UT))
Levin (CA) (Huffman)
Long (Fleischmann)
Malliotakis (Armstrong)
Maloney, Sean P. (Beyer)
Meeks (Horsford)
Moulton (Trone)
Newman (Correa)
Norcross (Pallone)
O'Halleran (Pappas)
Omar (Beyer)
Palazzo (Fleischmann)
Pascrell (Pallone)
Phillips (Craig)
Pingree (Beyer)
Porter (Beyer)
Pressley (Neguse)
Quigley (Schneider)
Rice (SC) (Weber (TX))
Rush (Beyer)
Sewell (Schneider)
Sherrill (Beyer)
Simpson (Fulcher)
Sires (Pallone)
Spartz (Harshbarger)
Speier (Garcia (TX))
Stevens (Craig)
Stewart (Owens)
Strickland (Correa)
Suozzi (Correa)
Tiffany (Fitzgerald)
Titus (Pallone)
Trahan (Lynch)
Welch (Pallone)
Wexton (Correa)
Wilson (FL) (Evans)
Wilson (SC) (Timmons)

TENTATIVE HOUSE SCHEDULE

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

Mr. HOYER. Madam Speaker, to my colleagues, based upon the present information on the Senate timeline for passing the omnibus, the earliest the House is expected to meet is Wednesday with votes at 6:30 p.m.—that is the earliest—with the votes of the week postponed until 6:30 p.m.

The House is also expected to meet on Thursday, December 22, and will stay in session until the omnibus is completed.

If the Senate acts on the omnibus earlier in the week, Members will be given 24 hours—not the normal 72 hours—24 hours' notice to return to D.C. Members should expect the House to be in session for at least 2 legislative days next week.

The House will consider bills under suspension of the rules, and additional legislative items are possible. We all understand Christmas is Sunday and none of us want to be here, but all of us have a responsibility, obviously, to complete the business of funding the government of the United States of America, so we will be here.

We will not be here unless the Senate acts more quickly than we anticipate before Wednesday at 6:30 p.m., which will be the first votes. If it is later than that, you will also get notice. If it is earlier than that, you will get notice.

VA EMPLOYEE FAIRNESS ACT OF 2021

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the unfinished business is the vote on passage of the bill (H.R. 1948) to amend title 38, United States Code, to modify authorities relating to the collective bargaining of employees in the Veterans Health Administration, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the bill.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 219, nays 201, not voting 10, as follows:

[Roll No. 530]

YEAS—219

Adams
Aguilar
Allred
Auchincloss
Axne
Bacon
Barragán
Beatty
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Bourdeaux
Bowman
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brown (MD)
Brown (OH)
Brownley
Bush
Bustos
Butterfield
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson
Carter (LA)
Cartwright
Case
Casten
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Cherfilus-McCormick
Chu
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Cleaver
Clyburn
Connolly
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Courtney
Craig
Crow
Cuellar
Davids (KS)
Davis, Danny K.
Dean
DeFazio
DeGette
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
DeSaulnier
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Escobar
Eshoo
Espaillat
Evans
Fitzpatrick
Fletcher
Foster
Frankel, Lois
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
Katko
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
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
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Rice (NY)
Ross
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (NY)
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sarbanes
Scanlon
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Schrier
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Sewell
Sherman
Sherrill
Sires
Slotkin
Smith (NJ)
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
Velázquez

Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wexton
Wild
Williams (GA)
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NAYS—201

Aderholt
Allen
Amodei
Armstrong
Arrington
Babin
Balderson
Banks
Barr
Bentz
Bergman
Bice (OK)
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (NC)
Boebert
Bost
Brady
Brooks
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burchett
Burgess
Calvert
Cammack
Carey
Carl
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Cawthorn
Chabot
Cheney
Cline
Cloud
Clyde
Cole
Conway
Crawford
Crenshaw
Curtis
Davidson
Davis, Rodney
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Donalds
Duncan
Dunn
Ellzey
Emmer
Estes
Fallon
Feenstra
Ferguson
Finstad
Fischbach
Fitzgerald
Fleischmann
Flood
Flores
Franklin, C. Scott
Fulcher
Gaetz
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
Hollingsworth
Hudson
Huizenga
Issa
Jackson
Jacobs (NY)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Joyce (PA)
Keller
Kelly (PA)
Kim (CA)
Kinzinger
Kustoff
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Latta
LaTurner
Lesko
Letlow
Long
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Mace
Malliotakis
Mann
Massie
Mast
McCarthy
McCaul
McClain
McClintock
McHenry
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
Reschenthaler
Rice (SC)
Rodgers (WA)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rose
Rosendale
Rouzer
Roy
Rutherford
Salazar
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sempolinski
Sessions
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smucker
Spartz
Stauber
Steel
Stefanik
Steil
Steube
Stewart
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (PA)
Tiffany
Timmons
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Van Drew
Van Duyne
Wagner
Walberg
Waltz
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams (TX)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Yakym
Zeldin

NOT VOTING—10

Baird
Cohen
Comer
Foxx
Hinson
Johnson (SD)
Kelly (MS)
Loudermilk
McKinley
Peltola

□ 1330

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MEMBERS RECORDED PURSUANT TO HOUSE RESOLUTION 8, 117TH CONGRESS

Auchincloss (Beyer)
Axne (Pappas)
Beatty (Neguse)
Bishop (NC) (Hice (GA))
Boebert (Donalds)
Brooks (Moore (AL))
Brown (MD) (Evans)
Bustos (Schneider)
Butterfield (Beyer)
Carter (LA) (Horsford)
Cawthorn (Donalds)
Cherfilus-McCormick (Brown (OH))
Cicilline (Jayapal)
Cuellar (Correa)
DeFazio (Pallone)
DelBene (Schneider)
DesJarlais (Fleischmann)
Dingell (Pappas)
Doyle, Michael F. (Evans)
Duncan (Williams (TX))
Dunn (Salazar)
Escobar (Garcia (TX))
Espaillat (Correa)
Ferguson (Gonzales, Tony (TX))
Gaetz (Donalds)
Gallego (Beyer)
Gibbs (Smucker)
Gosar (Weber (TX))
Hartzler (Weber (TX))
Herrera Beutler (Valadao)
Issa (Calvert)
Jackson (Van Duyne)
Jacobs (NY) (Sempolinski)
Johnson (TX) (Pallone)
Kelly (IL) (Horsford)
Khanna (Pappas)
Kim (NJ) (Pallone)
Kirkpatrick (Pallone)
Krishnamoorthi (Pappas)
LaHood (Kustoff)
Larson (CT) (Pappas)
Lawrence (Garcia (TX))
Lawson (FL) (Evans)
Letlow (Moore (UT))
Levin (CA) (Huffman)
Long (Fleischmann)
Malliotakis (Armstrong)
Maloney, Sean P. (Beyer)
Meeks (Horsford)
Moulton (Trone)
Newman (Correa)
Norcross (Pallone)
O'Halleran (Pappas)
Omar (Beyer)
Palazzo (Fleischmann)
Pascrell (Pallone)
Phillips (Craig)
Pingree (Beyer)
Porter (Beyer)
Pressley (Neguse)
Quigley (Schneider)
Rice (SC) (Weber (TX))
Rush (Beyer)
Sewell (Schneider)
Sherrill (Beyer)
Simpson (Fulcher)
Sires (Pallone)
Spartz (Harshbarger)
Speier (Garcia (TX))
Stevens (Craig)
Stewart (Owens)
Strickland (Correa)
Suozzi (Correa)
Tiffany (Fitzgerald)
Titus (Pallone)
Trahan (Lynch)
Welch (Pallone)
Wexton (Correa)
Wilson (FL) (Evans)
Wilson (SC) (Timmons)

DISAPPOINTED BUT NOT DEFEATED

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

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because the Republican Party has once again chosen to stand against civil rights.

Yesterday, Senator CORY BOOKER brought the CROWN Act to the Senate floor. This bill would ban hair discrimination, including the practice of discriminating against people, Black people, because of the way their hair naturally grows out of their heads. Republicans stopped the bill in its tracks.

The CROWN Act should never ever have been a controversial bill. It simply protects our right to exist as our authentic selves. Apparently, that was just too much for today's Republican Party.

Mr. Speaker, I stand here disappointed but not defeated. I will never stop fighting for all Americans' right to exist as their authentic selves. I pray that my Republican colleagues set petty party politics aside and choose to stand for justice when the next opportunity arises.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA DAY

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a very special tradition taking place this Saturday, December 17.

Every year, thousands of volunteers set out across the country and the world in a coordinated wreath-laying ceremony. This ceremony is known as National Wreaths Across America Day.

In 1992, Morrill Worcester, from Harrington, Maine, noticed that he had an abundance of holiday wreaths and decided to take the opportunity to honor our country's veterans. After contacting his Senator, arrangements were made for wreaths to be placed at Arlington in an older section of the cemetery.

This tradition would quietly continue until 2005 when a photo of the tombstones decorated with wreaths and covered with snow went viral. From there, this quiet annual tribute to remember those who have made the ultimate sacrifice turned into a mission to remember, honor, and teach.

Since the viral photo, Wreaths Across America has continued to grow. This Saturday, volunteers will lay wreaths at more than 2,500 locations in the United States, abroad, and at sea. This simple gesture is a way for all of us to express our appreciation during the holiday season.

If you are interested in volunteering, please visit wreathsacrossamerica.org.

ENHANCING SAFETY FOR RIDESHARE PASSENGERS

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

Mr. GOTTHEIMER. Mr. Speaker, the House voted this week on the bipartisan Sami's Law, which I am proud to have co-led, to enhance safety for rideshare passengers.

Sami's Law has been named to honor Samantha Josephson, a senior at the University of South Carolina, originally from New Jersey, who was kidnapped and brutally murdered by a man pretending to be her Uber driver.

Under Sami's Law, all rideshare services will be required to adopt digital systems that allow passengers to verify the vehicle before they get into the car, make it illegal to sell ridesharing signs without authorization, and create a U.S. Department of Transportation council to ensure safety measures stay current.

The bill also mandates State-issued front license plates for rideshare vehicles and illuminated windshield signs visible day and night. It will examine the prevalence of assault and abuse perpetrated by rideshare drivers and passengers.

We must ensure our residents in New Jersey's Fifth District and nationwide are safe when using rideshare.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support commonsense measures like these to ensure the terrible tragedy that befell Samantha Josephson never happens again.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF BRIAN O'HARA

(Mr. HERN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HERN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Brian O'Hara in appreciation for his outstanding public service to the people of Oklahoma's First Congressional District and wish him well as he enters retirement.

Brian has spent nearly 10 years serving constituents in our district office as a congressional staffer, first with my predecessor, Jim Bridenstine, and then in our office. He has a lifetime of knowledge and experience that our office will dearly miss as he leaves his post.

Prior to his congressional staff career, Brian served as a councilman for the city of Jenks. He had a robust business career, as well.

In his private life, Brian contributes much of his time, money, and efforts to benefit several good causes. However, no cause has meant more to Brian than fighting against cancer, and I don't know anyone who has been a better ambassador for this profound effort.

Brian, thank you for serving our constituents in the great State of Oklahoma like every day is Christmas. Merry Christmas to you and your wife, Karen, and happy retirement.

WHAT AMERICA MAKES AND GROWS, MAKES AND GROWS AMERICA

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise to share a good news story from Ohio's Ninth Congressional District.

During this holiday season, I humbly ask all Americans to do what they can to buy goods made right here in the USA. What America makes and grows, makes and grows America.

Recently, I had the pleasure of patronizing two longstanding Toledo businesses, Fulkerson Jewelers and Clock Shop and Keystone Press. Both are small legacy businesses in the heart of our community. Together, they have existed for well over 160 years.

Both establishments and their able, friendly staff embody American ingenuity, craftsmanship, hard work, and perseverance.

At Fulkerson, a friendly young repairman replaced the battery in my watch in the blink of an eye. He even does laser welding.

At Keystone, I dropped off materials to print for our office holiday mailings. This printing shop has been in business for over 100 years.

Small family businesses embody all the charm, diversity, and creativity of America. So may I urge all Americans this holiday season to buy local, buy American, and support your hometown businesses that build and grow America.

HONORING THE EXEMPLARY CAREER OF DR. THOMAS ZACHARIA

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

Mr. FLEISCHMANN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Oak Ridge National Laboratory Director Dr. Thomas Zacharia, who will retire at the end of this year, concluding an exemplary career.

Throughout his 35 years at ORNL, Dr. Zacharia has delivered groundbreaking scientific and technical accomplishments for energy, national security, and economic benefit to the Nation. Through the 1980s and 1990s, his extraordinary vision served as the guide for establishing a world-leading computing institution at Oak Ridge.

His visionary leadership has resulted in the deployment of four number one computers in the world since 2009, with the Frontier supercomputer breaking the exascale barrier in May 2022. As laboratory director, Dr. Zacharia has expanded ORNL's scientific impact in national security, isotopes, biology and environmental systems science, and energy technologies.

Dr. Zacharia's extraordinary journey from postdoctoral researcher in 1987 to lab director from 2017 to 2022 is well recognized. I thank him for his service, and I wish him well in his future endeavors.

DECOLONIZING THE PEOPLE OF PUERTO RICO

(Mr. TORRES of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. TORRES of New York. Mr. Speaker, as a Puertorriqueno, I am proud to have voted for the Puerto Rico Status Act, which, if enacted, would begin to break the cycle of colonialism that, for more than a century, has relegated Puerto Rico to second-class status.

The landmark legislation would empower Puerto Rico to be in command of its own political destiny.

What matters above all is not the particular status that the people will ultimately choose. What matters is the right of the people to choose the status that best expresses their will and the right of the people to have their will given the binding power it has long deserved.

If enacted, the Puerto Rico Status Act would not only restore democracy on the island, but it would also reinforce democracy here on the mainland United States because it would mean no longer depriving 3 million of our fellow citizens of their fundamental right to self-determination.

I call on the Senate to join the people's House in decolonizing the people of Puerto Rico.

□ 1345

MAKING DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME PERMANENT

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

Mr. MOONEY. Mr. Speaker, today, the Sun will set in Washington, D.C., at 4:47 p.m. Washington is known as a partisan place and labeled the capital of gridlock. However, there is one issue most Members of Congress agree on: Making daylight savings time permanent.

Earlier this year, Senator MARCO RUBIO introduced this legislation to help boost economic activity and improve physical and mental health. The bill passed the U.S. Senate unanimously.

My colleague, VERN BUCHANAN from Florida, introduced companion legislation in this Chamber that also has strong bipartisan support. Unfortunately, however, it has never been reported out of committee.

Today, I initiated a discharge petition to bring this legislation up for immediate consideration. In the last 5 years, 19 States have enacted similar legislation. The time to make daylight savings time permanent is now.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to sign this discharge petition and never reset your clocks again.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF JUDGE JAMES ORTEGA PEREZ

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

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, this is a great country. I rise to honor the life and legacy of Judge James Ortega Perez. Part of the Greatest Generation, Judge Ortega Perez grew up in my district, in a segregated community, a farmworker. When World War II started, he answered the call of duty and joined the Army where he served as a sergeant with the Army Corps of Engineers.

After fighting for this great country, he came back and finished his high school graduation at Santa Ana High School, but he wasn't done. Then he enrolled at the University of Southern California, where he got a bachelor's degree and then went on to USC Law School. He then became the first Latino attorney in Orange County, California. Then he was appointed as the first Latino judge in Orange County, California.

It is a great country. Judge Ortega Perez went from being a farmworker to the halls of justice in Orange County. Today, we honor the life and legacy of Judge Ortega Perez.

TIME TO END THE COVID–19 EMERGENCY

(Mr. LAMALFA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, not that long ago, the President declared COVID to be pretty much over with. So I rise today in support of H.J. Res. 46, which would basically end the fantasy that our current understanding of COVID–19 and its present spread in the United States requires Congress to still give extraordinary powers to the President. It is time to end the emergency.

Similar resolutions have passed the Senate twice. Here in the House, they have been blocked twice by the Democrats.

Mr. Speaker, this is no longer a new virus or a new pandemic. It is well past time for the House to follow the Senate's lead and bring a joint resolution to the floor to end this charade.

With the President wanting to end title 42, so that tens of thousands of illegal immigrants can come across our border with little to no health check, why in the world are we still painted into a corner as American citizens with emergency powers granted to the executive? It is time to pass H.J. Res. 46.

RECOGNIZING AMY WORTH

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

Mr. DESAULNIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the service of Amy Worth, a wonderful constituent and friend.

It has been my pleasure to have worked alongside Amy through her many contributions to the bay area and her community. From library commissioner to city council member to mayor to chair of the Bay Area Metropolitan Transportation Commission, Amy has selflessly served the city of Orinda and the bay area for the last 24 years and has served as mayor of Orinda for 5 years.

As a member of the Contra Costa Transportation Authority, her leadership was critical in a major transportation improvement, the expansion of the Caldecott Tunnel in the east bay, which improved traffic congestion throughout the bay area. She also helped pass Measure J, a transportation sales tax.

Her passion and commitment to her family and community are extraordinary. Amy has always been a dear friend and a tenacious force for good in our community and in my life.

Please join me in congratulating Amy on her well-deserved retirement and honoring her for her many years of dedicated public service to her community.

CONGRATULATING JACK CAMPBELL

(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 congratulate University of Iowa's Jack Campbell for being named to the All-American Football Team and being recognized as this year's Butkus Award winner, the first in the university's history.

This is not Jack's first accolade. He was also named the Butkus-Fitzgerald Big Ten Linebacker of the Year award recipient as well as the Nagurski-Wooden Big Ten Defensive Player of the Year, and he received the William V. Campbell Trophy throughout his 4 years with the Hawkeyes.

This season, Jack had 118 tackles, two interceptions, one recovered fumble, and one forced fumble. Jack was pivotal in leading the defensive lineup to be named one of the best in the country, making him very deserving of these awards.

Jack is another example of the University of Iowa students excelling inside and outside of the classroom.

Congratulations to Jack on an outstanding 4 years, and I wish you the very best in your future endeavors.

Go Hawkeyes.

CRISIS AT THE SOUTHERN BORDER

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

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, just a few minutes ago on this floor, we were admonished for not wrapping up our budget in time. That is a fair thing. We are supposed to take care of our budget.

Another thing we are not taking care of, and the American public ought to be appalled until we do, is the new news on the border. I talked to a prior expert down there and got even more terrifying information.

Now, first of all, in November, we had 73,000 what they call got-aways, people not even touched by the Border Patrol, breaking the previous all-time high by 24 percent in one month.

Isn't that something we ought to come back next week to take care of?

Not only that. I had suspected this, but apparently the Border Patrol is concerned about where the unaccompanied minors are winding up. These are minors who come here without their parents. All they have is an address. We don't confirm—or they believe we don't confirm—that parents or aunts or uncles or somebody is at that address or if they show up at a house and maybe there are 10 single males in the house, a young woman—we don't even know.

It is time this place began to do some committee hearings on where the unaccompanied children, who should be spun back around to their home country, wind up.

PROUD TO VOTE FOR PUERTO RICO

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

Mr. BOWMAN. Madam Speaker, today, I was proud to vote for the Puerto Rico Status Act and supporting its passage in the House of Representatives. Now, it is time for the Senate to do its job and free the Puerto Rico community and the Puerto Rican island to chart its own path toward self-determination.

Puerto Rico has been a U.S. territory since 1898 without proper representation in the United States Government. That is unacceptable.

Now, finally, if the Senate does its job, the people of Puerto Rico can chart their own path forward and decide for themselves what is best for them.

I was proud to take that vote today in support of my constituents, as well as my family, as I am married to a Puerto Rican woman and my children are Puerto Rican, as well.

Let's continue to support the self-determination of the people on the island and the self-determination of people all over the world.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Byrd, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment bills of the House of the following titles:

H.R. 5943. An act to designate the outpatient clinic of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Greenville, South Carolina, as the ''Lance Corporal Dana Cornell Darnell VA Clinic''.

H.R. 5973. An act to reauthorize the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act of 1990, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed with amendments in which the concurrence of the House is requested, bills of the House of the following titles:

H.R. 1917. An act to modify eligibility requirements for certain hazard mitigation assistance programs, and for other purposes.

H.R. 5343. An act to direct the Comptroller General of the United States to submit a report to Congress on case management personnel turnover of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed bills of the following titles in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 1143. An act to prohibit certain individuals from downloading or using TikTok on any device issued by the United States or a government corporation.

S. 2135. An act to amend title 31, United States Code, to require the Chief Operating Officer of each agency to compile a list of unnecessary programs, and for other purposes.

S. 3429. An act to establish an Alaska Salmon Research Task Force.

S. 4460. An act to require the Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection to regularly review and update policies and manuals related to inspections at ports of entry.

S. 4893. An act to amend the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 to require certain disclosures by registrants regarding exemptions

under the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938, as amended.

The message also announced that the Senate agrees to the amendment of the House to the bill (S. 1687) entitled ''An Act to amend section 21 of the Small Business Act to require cyber certification for small business development center counselors, and for other purposes.''.

The message also announced that the Senate agrees to the amendment of the House to the bill (S. 3846) entitled ''An Act to reauthorize the Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Program, and for other purposes.''.

CELEBRATING DEPARTING MEMBERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. BUSH). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2021, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. LEVIN of Michigan. Madam Speaker, this is an hour to celebrate Members who are departing this Congress, including myself, and I have some remarks to share. I will also be joined later by the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY), but first we are going to hear from the chairman of the Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch of the Committee on Appropriations of the U.S. House of Representatives, one of our cardinals, a great public servant from the State of Ohio, Representative TIM RYAN.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN).

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Michigan for putting this together. You can see that Ohio and Michigan can periodically get along with each other.

I am honored to rise for a few minutes here, Mr. Speaker, to address this House for the final time as a sitting Member of Congress. I think it is appropriate to begin with the preamble to the United States Constitution.

''We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.''

''We the people.'' This is the people's House. There have been 12,421 Members of Congress who have sat here in this Capitol. Of almost 700 million people, who at one point or another were citizens of the United States, 700 million, and a little over 12,000 were sent here to govern this country, to meet the obligations that the Founding Fathers put in the preamble of the United States Constitution.

I will tell you, there have been some great Americans, some of the best, who have served in this Chamber. But there also have been scoundrels, crooks, and liars. This is the people's House. This is the people's House, so it has reflected over, in a few years, 250 years, the world's oldest republic.

If there is one thing I hope that all Members and all citizens can grasp and touch, it is gratitude. I know I feel tremendously grateful to come from a working-class family in Ohio and end up here for 20 years serving the communities that I grew up in, that I played sports in, that I raised my family in. It is an honor to be a citizen of the United States.

This country has fed more people, clothed more people, cured more people, and liberated more people than all the other countries in the world combined.

I think to get out of this mess that we are in, the polarization, the hate, the anger, the fear, the first step out of that is with gratitude. If we all start from a place of gratitude, we will have a much different opinion of the country, of each other, and of what is possible for us, because this country has always done great things. But we do great things when we are together, when we embrace normalcy, when we embrace decency, when we embrace compassion.

When you walk through these doors, you are a leader, and you are charged with making the tough decisions, the hard decisions, not the easy decisions, not the ones that are going to make your next election a little easier. But the challenge today is to be called to lead and lead vigorously, lead boldly, because that is what the world needs us to do right now.

This country has always been innovative. We need to enter an era of reform, of reconciliation, and of innovation across the board.

The systems are all broken. The economic system is broken, the immigration system is broken, the welfare system is broken, the education system is broken, and we are not going to fix these if we are not decent to each other, if we don't talk to each other.

□ 1400

Some of the solutions will be conservative, some will be liberal and progressive, but it is through that conflict, those arguments and debates that this very Chamber was set up to do that we come to the best possible solution, and that, ultimately, is what we are talking about.

We the people have got to come together. As we approach the 250th anniversary of this country, let us renew our commitment to each other so that we can meet President Lincoln's charge ''that this Nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the Earth.''

Mr. LEVIN of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. RYAN for his wonderful public service here not only for the people of Ohio, but really for all the people of this country.

What does it mean to run for Congress, to serve in Congress? Why do it?

Personally, I didn't run for Congress until I was 58 years old, after a career as a union organizer, a human rights activist, running Michigan's workforce system, and creating innovative new programs under then-Governor Jennifer Granholm, our Energy Secretary today, and then starting my own statewide clean energy finance market as a green energy entrepreneur. But a Trump Presidency put these priorities, each and every one of them, and indeed our very democracy in grave danger, and I was inspired to run to replace my father after his retirement.

Coming into Congress with the historic freshman class of House Democrats in the 116th Congress, we started in the middle of a record-breaking government shutdown. Our very first action as an office was gathering impacted workers together alongside my Michigan colleagues at the Detroit airport. We had workers reflecting the full range of Federal duties: From transportation professionals to environmental stewards who worked for the EPA.

Gathering this coalition would serve as a model for the work we would do over the next 4 years. When our staff met at UAW Region One a few months later for our first retreat, we would define our priorities, and it was really three overarching priorities for our office: First, raising the standard of living for working people; second, protecting our one precious Earth; and third, fighting for human rights at home and abroad. We have organized our work around these priorities ever since.

Let's start with raising the standard of living for working people. Certainly, making education affordable is a key part of that. After the Speaker appointed me to the Education and Labor Committee, I was honored to be elected vice chair of the committee by my fellow Democrats.

And then Chairman BOBBY SCOTT asked me to lead the America's College Promise Act to provide 2 years of tuition-and-fee-free community college and also 2 years of virtually free study at historically Black colleges and universities and other minority-serving institutions.

We introduced the bill, and we debated it. But can you imagine how amazing it was when Joe Biden was moving toward the nomination to be the Democratic candidate for President and he adopted my bill, and then he made it part of his Build Back Better plan?

I had the privilege of welcoming First Lady Jill Biden to a community college in my district once and Education Secretary Miguel Cardona to two different community colleges to celebrate the inclusion of this bill in the President's Build Back Better plan and fight for its passage. We didn't get it across the finish line due to the intransigence of one person, JOE MANCHIN, but we are not about to give up until we make free community college and accessibility of HBCUs for everyone a reality.

Probably the biggest area of my advocacy for workers and their families came in labor and employment policy.

I served as a whip to push the Raise the Wage Act through the House, and we fended off efforts to water it down with things like regional minimum wages that would consign poor areas of this country to permanent, structural poverty. We had to fight hard to keep the one fair wage aspect in the bill, to make sure we end subminimum wages for tipped workers, who are mostly women and disproportionately of color.

I helped write the PRO Act and was so honored to play a special role in shepherding it through the Education and Labor Committee and the floor of the House.

I led a small band of labor stalwarts in opposition to Trump's new NAFTA, which is called the USMCA. While I fervently hope the legislation succeeds, and I have worked with the Biden administration to ensure that Mexico and Canada meet their obligations, I fear too much of our trade policy discards the views of workers here at home and also abroad in the name of furthering the interests of multinational corporations. That has to end, and we have to put workers' interests and the planet's interests first.

One core part of my belief about how to be a Congressman is that it is not all about passing legislation and overseeing the administration. When it comes to labor issues, I believe you have got to get out there and support workers' organizing and bargaining campaigns directly. We did this many, many times. Let me give you just a few examples.

We organized a major solidarity action when the UAW struck General Motors, and I walked the picket line regularly and welcomed many colleagues, including Senator ELIZABETH WARREN.

When the RWDSU helped Amazon workers in Bessemer, Alabama, organize to join the union, I organized a delegation of Congresspeople to go down there with me, and I went a second time by myself to join current AFL–CIO president Liz Shuler to encourage the workers to keep fighting after they lost their first election, which was marred by many unfair labor practices by the corporation.

I organized almost all of my fellow Harvard alums in the House to support Harvard grad employees when they were campaigning to win a first contract, and that was ultimately successful under pressure from us and many others.

More recently, when Senate cafeteria workers who are members of UNITE HERE Local 23 were fighting for a long overdue, just contract, I got arrested with many of them to push the issue. Happily, Mr. Speaker, they won a good contract soon thereafter.

Just recently, I participated in campaigns to support railroaders who desperately need paid sick days and the demand for full funding for the National Labor Relations Board so it can fulfill its function to support private sector workers' rights to organize and bargain collectively.

I can tell you, I am going to continue not only my own efforts to support workers, but I am going to continue organizing Members of Congress to be involved.

There is so much more we can and must do to lift up working families and help them live dignified lives. We did preserve the pensions of millions of American workers. I am so proud we got that done.

I was proud to fight with my brothers and sisters in the Progressive Caucus to include affordable childcare, universal preschool for 3- and 4-year-olds, paid sick leave for all, and the child tax credit in the House version of Build Back Better. Congress needs to keep fighting to get these things done.

Our team was super active on our second priority as well, protecting our one precious Earth. Let's start with clean air, water, and land. I joined the bipartisan PFAS task force right away, and I passed legislation twice to prevent the harmful incineration of PFAS chemicals, especially on military bases. We have so much more work to do on PFAS, that is for sure. It is truly the DDT of our times, and we have got to deal with it.

Around Christmas of 2019 green ooze began to leak out onto I–696, the interstate highway through my district in the town of Madison Heights. My staff and I led an effort to help ensure the cleanup of toxic waste, in coordination with the EPA and State and local governments, and it was really everybody working together that got it done.

There were many such efforts, but of course my biggest focus was climate change. I supported the original Green New Deal resolution from day one. I remember being out on the lawn when we introduced it. I am one of only 27 Senators and Representatives out of 535, Mr. Speaker, to support all 12 Green New Deal bills. Even more importantly, I helped put meat on the bones personally in several ways.

Senator ELIZABETH WARREN and I authored the BUILD Green Act to invest $500 billion over 10 years to jump-start the transition to all-electric public vehicles, mass transit, rail, and help modernize the Nation's crumbling infrastructure.

Senator SHERROD BROWN and I introduced the American Energy Worker Opportunity Act to support fossil fuel and coal workers and their families impacted by the transition we need to make as soon as possible to clean energy. Simply stated, workers who, over generations, built up wonderful pay and benefit packages; if they work on a pipeline or a refinery or a coal mine, it is not their fault that we have to change, and they shouldn't suffer, and that bill would take care of that issue.

I introduced the EV Freedom Act with Representative ALEXANDRIA OCASIO-CORTEZ to build a nationwide network of high-speed EV chargers to transform our transportation sector and end our reliance on fossil fuels.

And I am still going, right up to my last days in Congress. Today, this very day, I partnered with the chair of the Speaker's Select Committee on Climate Crisis, KATHY CASTOR from Tampa, to introduce the CLEANER Buildings Act, my bill, alongside her bill, the LOWER Energy Bills Act. These pieces of legislation will ensure we can meet President Biden's goal to reduce economy-wide emissions and transform our Nation's buildings to be energy efficient and climate resilient.

Mr. Speaker, people count the amount of emissions, greenhouse gas emissions, in different ways, but if you add up the energy we use to heat and cool and light our buildings, it is 42 percent of all the emissions in this country, all the electricity and natural gas. So we really have to deal with that.

These measures are collaborations between my amazing staff and many advocacy groups fighting for environmental justice and to save life on Earth as we know it in a way that actually advances racial and economic justice.

In terms of my priorities, the third is peace and human rights for all people everywhere, and we have been equally active in that area as well.

First, though, let me say that while I have worked super hard on peace, this is probably Congress' and the Democratic Party's greatest weakness. Our business is largely unfinished on these. For example, authorizations for use of military force, or AUMF.

The Constitution says this body, the Congress, the Article I body, is responsible for deciding when to send our young people into harm's way, and then the President is the Commander in Chief. We have fallen down in this duty, and we are still falling down.

We are relying on decades-old authorizations for use of military force. We ought to have the guts to end every one of them and work with the administration when we need a new one to put it into place. Every time we do it, it should have a sunset so that we force ourselves to make the hard decisions about war and peace.

Secondly, nuclear nonproliferation. I don't need to talk long about this. Almost nothing is happening. We are down to having one agreement with Russia left. We are really nowhere with China. We have an increasing number of nuclear states. We are, hopefully, battling hard to keep Iran from joining them. But we need to get back to the business that was really bipartisan.

Who can forget Ronald Reagan taking on ending the use of nuclear weapons? So we have really got a long way to go there.

Also, Mr. Speaker, reducing military spending. My goodness. Just the increase in the Pentagon budget that we passed through this House in the NDAA recently, the other day, just the increase above what the Pentagon asked

for that Congress stuffed in there would have paid for my whole America's College Promise Act, plus some other big needs of the American people. I am for the U.S. absolutely being the strongest military in the world, but we shouldn't be spending more than the next 8 to 10 countries combined.

We have got to have a diplomacy first, a peace first, a human rights first foreign policy and take care of the needs of our people and the poor and working people around the world.

□ 1415

As a lifelong human rights advocate, I feel I can say that we had more success in the human rights area. Although, the situation is certainly dire in so many parts of the world. Let me mention just a few highlights.

The House passed my bipartisan resolution condemning the coup in Burma, and we have continued oversight of the very troubling human rights situation there, as well as the inspiring efforts of the Burmese people to resist repression.

Indeed, my first foreign trip as a Congressman was to Bangladesh to visit Rohingya refugees just over the border from Burma there.

I have been a vocal advocate for human rights in places like India, which is in danger of becoming a Hindu nationalist state rather than a secular democracy; the world's largest democracy.

I am a lover of Hinduism, a lover of Jainism, Buddhism, other religions that were born in India, but we need to protect the rights of all people there, whether they are Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Jews, Christians, Jains—whatever.

I have been active about human rights in Egypt, where thousands of political prisoners languish in jail. Israel and Palestine have been a particular focus of mine. I am proud to have written the Two-State Solution Act, the most forward-leaning U.S. bill in many years to try to hold Israeli and Palestinian leaders alike accountable to take steps to advance a two-state solution.

Now, with a far-right government filled with troubling racist and homophobic leaders taking over in Israel, all of us who love that country's democratic ideals and seek justice for Palestinians as well will have to redouble our efforts. Perhaps my biggest focus in this area has been Haiti.

I founded the first House Haiti Caucus in Congress in decades and recruited three dynamic Congresswomen who represent large Haitian-American constituencies to co-chair with me: VAL DEMINGS of Florida, YVETTE CLARKE of New York, and AYANNA PRESSLEY of Massachusetts.

With the support of our great Committee on Foreign Affairs chairman, GREG MEEKS, we greatly increased Congressional oversight of U.S. policy on Haiti, including two standalone hearings with witnesses representing diverse perspectives and a Department of Homeland Security review of its policies after the humanitarian disaster in Del Rio.

We have pointed out that the status quo is untenable, and we have demanded inclusion of the breadth of Haitian civil society in dealing with the ongoing crisis there.

Whether on our three overarching priority areas that I have just discussed or other vital matters, like reducing the epidemic of gun violence, one thing I want to emphasize is that working in Congress is all about teamwork. We have got a tremendous amount done in these last 4 years, and it is all due to an amazing team of individuals who brought tremendous idealism, passion, professionalism, hard work, and love to make life better for working families.

I am going to share the names of everyone who has worked on Team Levin these last 4 years. Let's start with the District Office in alphabetical order: Jenny Byer; Robert Charara; Will Cochran; Eleanor Gamalski; Jolie Habashy; Walt Herzig; Zeenath Hussain; Dan Klein; Kyle Pollet; Lauren Schandevel; Amairris Simmons; Justin Walters; Sean Wolski; America Yahya; Stephanie Yaldo-Sheena.

And here in the Washington, D.C. office:

Abbas Alawieh; Mez Araya; Taryn Brown; Don Chen; Erica Fein; Ben Gerstein; Julia Kalusniak; Courtney Laudick; Austin Laufersweiler; MaryGrace Menner; Ven Neralla; Colton Puckett; Catherine Rowland; Jamari Torrence; Alex Schmitt; Sabrina Steel; Derrick Utley; Janae Washington, who is sitting here with me now; and Jacob Wilson.

And what did we get done, this amazing group of people?

In the 116th Congress, speaking of legislation, we introduced 59 pieces of legislation: 22 bills, 30 amendments, and 7 resolutions.

We passed 40 pieces of legislation through the House of Representatives: 10 bills and 30 amendments.

And we got 6 pieces of legislation all the way through the process and signed into law by that previous President.

In the 117th Congress, as of earlier this week, we introduced 50 pieces of legislation: 32 bills, 13 amendments, and 5 resolutions. And we are introducing three more pieces of legislation yet this week, one of which I mentioned.

We passed 21 pieces of legislation through the House so far: 6 bills, 2 resolutions, and 13 amendments; and we saw three pieces of legislation signed into law.

Mr. Speaker, we are still hoping for two more: Renaming the post offices in Bloomfield Township and Hazel Park, two Michigan communities in my district.

Passing legislation is just one part of our work. Serving all of our constituents, regardless of their political views or their circumstances, is another big part.

The bottom line, being a good Member of Congress is about taking care of people, whether their problems relate to immigration, Social Security, veteran benefits—whatever. And rather than get into numbers here, let me focus on just a few stories.

We led a bipartisan push to prevent the deportation of Iraqi nationals, and we secured the return of Jimmy Aldaoud's remains to the U.S. after he was deported, and he died of diabetic shock just weeks later. That man had never set foot in Iraq, he spoke no Arabic. He was obviously American. I won't go into all the upset about that, but his tragic story helped awaken society to these senseless deportations.

Together, we helped our residents navigate a once-in-a-century pandemic. We worked with State partners to help constituents obtain expanded pandemic unemployment benefits that this House created, and we worked with the State Department to help constituents stuck overseas during the early global COVID shutdown. We helped them make it home. And we helped countless small businesses, of course, obtain PPE and the EIDL loans.

We fought successfully for the release of a Black high school student who was put in juvenile detention for not completing her homework, Mr. Speaker, during remote learning; put in, essentially, jail for young people.

Remember the story of Grace, as she was called? It made national news. And the fact that it happened speaks to structural racism in educational and criminal justice systems. And the need to fight it both case-by-case, like we did with Grace, and systemically to end it as a future of our country.

We helped a Royal Oak couple overcome incredible odds to be able to complete their fertility treatment overseas during the height of the pandemic.

Just last month, my wife Mary and I visited with this wonderful couple and the son who was born as a result of these efforts, who is today a healthy toddler.

And what to say about the case of Danny Fenster, a journalist who attended the same high school as me who was held as a political prisoner for 5½ months in the horrible, insane prison in Burma.

His incredibly tenacious family and I were in constant contact, and I spoke to ambassadors across the globe working to bring him home.

My staff and I were so honored to join the family to welcome him home to the U.S. when he touched down in New York, and to follow his continued advocacy for press freedom in Burma and everywhere. And today, he is a journalism fellow at one of our most prestigious universities.

One of the things I think is most important for an effective Congressional operation is breaking down barriers and creating great collaboration between the D.C. and district offices. It is not that easy.

Let me share a few stories that illustrate why I think this is so important. In a virtual outreach event with sexual assault survivors and advocates, we met Carmen Wargel of Royal Oak and heard about significant problems for survivors seeking to prosecute those who abused them.

Because of that activity in the district, we authored an amendment that passed the House in the Violence Against Women Act to promote better outcomes and care through vertical integration in prosecution of sexual assault.

Okay, let me put this straight. I had never heard of virtual integration in prosecution. I am a lawyer. I know what virtual integration is in business. I had never heard of it.

When we put together what had happened to this person—I think she had five different prosecutors on her case, one after the other—it was because of our discussions with constituents in the district that we wrote legislation that passed the House.

Another big deal for us was introducing a resolution recognizing Abortion Provider Appreciation Day. It was the first time this had ever been done in Congressional history. But we didn't just do this in D.C. It was inspired by abortion care providers at home in the district, and we marked it with an event at the Northland Family Planning Clinic with Renee and Lara Chelian in Sterling Heights, Michigan.

Certainly, our Community Project Funding projects are another great example of D.C.-district collaboration. We worked with community leaders to put forward projects for Federal funding in line with our shared priorities; nearly $28 million when you combine fiscal years 2022 and 2023. In March of this year, 2022, all 10 of our projects for the fiscal year were signed into law by President Joe Biden.

To give just a few examples of this, we are providing 3.5 million gallons of additional storage at the Chapaton Retention Basin to reduce combined sewage overflows, alleviate residential basement flooding during heavy rain events, and improve the water quality of Lake St. Clair, which serves as a source of drinking water for much of Southeast Michigan.

We are creating a community space to serve as a heating and cooling center for residents of Hazel Park and neighboring Ferndale, a gallery for local artists, and a location for job fairs and educational seminars.

We are establishing an Individual Development Account program at Macomb Community College for workforce development and certification courses, offering direct services to individuals to enhance employment opportunities and regional prosperity.

We have done a lot, and I am so proud of all that this team has accomplished, and especially the way we have done it, not just working hard but supporting each other. Building the beloved community from the inside out, even as we fight for justice in our local communities and in far-flung areas all across this planet.

So I suppose there is no better place to conclude than one of our signal achievements: Passing a resolution to allow the staff of this very House of Representatives to organize unions and bargain collectively.

Amazingly, Congress passed legislation in 1995 to apply Federal employment regulations including collective bargaining to Capitol Hill. But when they implemented the legislation in 1996 the next year, they included the Capitol Police and the Library of Congress and the Architect of the Capitol, and so forth. But they left out the people who work with us most directly—our own staff in the district offices, in our D.C. offices, and on our committees.

That was 26 years ago, and that wrong was never corrected until this year when House employees came to introduce a resolution to extend these basic rights of democracy to our staff, and together, we passed it through this House of Representatives.

I was so moved when my own staff were the very first to organize a union with a Congressional Workers Union, and now they are the very first to bargain a contract.

Mr. Speaker, already 14 offices have voted to unionize with CWU, so the precedent is set, and I believe more offices will organize and more contracts will be bargained in the 118th Congress.

That is why I came to Congress, to expand human rights, to expand the voice and power of workers and justice for their families, whether they are in the halls of Congress or on farms or in factories or offices across this land and beyond our shores.

I don't believe in the great person theory of history, Mr. Speaker. This has never been about me as a person or a leader. It is about building a team that wants to fight for justice. It is about partnering with activists doing the same. It is about learning from each other, falling down, and getting up to fight on another day.

I am so grateful to the people of Michigan's Ninth District for giving me the opportunity to serve you in this way. I have learned so much from you in our union halls, our veterans' lodges, our school buildings, and our workplaces.

As I leave Congress, I believe just as strongly as I did when I started helping workers organize unions with SEIU in 1983, that it is for the working people to set the direction of this country. That is our hope to tackle climate change. That is our hope to create a world of racial and economic justice. Onward we go.

□ 1430

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY), one of my amazing colleagues, the chairwoman of the House Committee on Oversight and Reform, and a fearless champion for New Yorkers and Americans from all over this country.

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Madam Speaker, to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, it has been a privilege to have had this extraordinary opportunity to serve with you for the past 30 years in the House of Representatives.

A special thank you to our tremendous Democratic House leadership. Thank you, Majority Leader STENY HOYER, for being a great strategist, mentor, and friend; and, Majority Whip JIM CLYBURN, for what you have taught me and all that you have done for this great Nation.

Thank you to Speaker NANCY PELOSI, a trailblazer who was the first female Speaker of the House in history and is rightfully being called the most effective Speaker in modern times. A very special mention to the new minority leader, HAKEEM JEFFRIES. New York is so proud of you.

Like Speaker PELOSI, my career has been a series of firsts. I was the first woman to represent my district on the city council and to represent my district in Congress and the first in history to give birth while on the city council. Many men became fathers, but I was the first one to become a mother while serving on the city council.

I was also the first woman to serve as chair of the Joint Economic Committee, as well as the House Committee on Oversight and Reform.

I remember almost as if it were yesterday, walking toward the Capitol as a newly elected Member. I had just defeated a 14-year incumbent Republican, who outspent me 4 to 1. No one thought I could win. Yet, I did, and I had such a feeling of hope and optimism for what could be done to help people.

I will never forget walking down the aisle, not to get married but to be sworn into the United States Congress. I said it then, and it is still true today, that serving in the United States Congress is the thrill, honor, and extraordinary opportunity of a lifetime.

The first time I ever walked onto the floor of this historic Chamber was 1992. It was called the Year of the Woman.

I announced my run for Congress on the day of the Planned Parenthood v. Casey Supreme Court decision, which placed restrictions on Roe to a woman's right to choose.

Along with great New York leaders like Bella Abzug, Geraldine Ferraro, and Elizabeth Holtzman, they expressed their outrage, and I announced my run for Congress to fight to reverse this situation and to bring other changes.

It is really hard to believe that, years later, in 2022, the Supreme Court didn't just chip away at abortion. They bulldozed our rights into the ground, depriving 33 million American women of access to abortion.

When I first entered Congress, about 10 percent of Congress were women. Back then, the entire Women's Caucus

could meet in an elevator. Our numbers have now moved to 149, or nearly 28 percent.

As the great New Yorker Shirley Chisholm once said: ''You don't make progress by standing on the sidelines, whimpering and complaining. You make progress by implementing ideas.''

There is no better place in the world to implement new ideas than the United States Congress, and that is just what I did.

In the last 30 years, I have authored and passed more than 80 bills and had 12 Presidential bill signings with five of our Presidents, which are usually reserved for transformational legislation.

President Clinton signed my Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act and the Standby Guardianship Act for children. President Bush signed my Debbie Smith Act, which has been called the most important antirape legislation ever passed, as well as many sex trafficking prevention laws, and CFIUS, the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States, to protect our infrastructure and country.

In 2009, President Obama signed my Credit Card Bill of Rights, which, according to the CFPB, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, has saved consumers over $16 billion each year since 2009.

Even President Trump signed my Never Again Education Act to support Holocaust education, as well as the 9/11 Health and Compensation Act, which is part of the reason why my coat is hanging here.

I wore this coat for well over a year, every single day, until we approved the necessary funding for this vital program to help our heroes and heroines.

They were there for us. We need to be there for them, and they still need more help. More legislation needs to be passed this year to help them.

Just this past April, President Biden signed my bipartisan Postal Service Reform Act. Thanks to Oversight Committee Ranking Member JAMES COMER, we proved that bipartisanship can prevail over partisan bickering in the best interests of America.

All of these achievements would not have been possible without my fellow Members of Congress, who have proven to me that if you work hard enough, our government can provide for the people.

I truly believe that the best legislation is always bipartisan, and I hope our Congress can come together more for more meaningful legislation as we did after 9/11, as we did after natural and financial disasters, as we came together during the COVID–19 pandemic, and as we came together in our bipartisan infrastructure bill and so much more.

Believe me, there is no Nation that is better, stronger, or more innovative than the United States when we work together.

I also recognize those who have worked in my office over the years, including my district office staff, my D.C. staff, and the staff of the Oversight Committee and the Joint Economic Committee.

Our work truly would not have been possible without your hours of dedication, your intelligence, and your selfless dedication to public service.

To each and every one of my friends and constituents, thank you for your continued support and inspiration. It has been the honor of my life to represent the people of New York's 12th Congressional District.

I also thank my wonderful family, my two amazing daughters, Christina and Virginia; my son-in-law, Peter; and baby Leland. You are the joy and meaning of my life.

Thank you to the love of my life, Cliff Maloney, who is with me in spirit and whose support always meant the world to me.

As I speak today, I am thinking of the important work that lies ahead. Rest assured, I will continue to keep fighting for the issues that are near and dear to my heart, including the Equal Rights Amendment. Let's get it ratified and in our Constitution.

There can be no time limit on equal rights, and the ERA is needed now more than ever to stop any more bulldozing over women's rights.

We need Senator SCHUMER, and over 150 of my colleagues have joined me in writing to him and requesting him to put the time limit bill on the floor for a vote so that the American people can see who is for equal rights and who is against it.

Infrastructure is in my DNA, especially in these times when modernization and new systems for transportation are so vital to our future.

I am proud that the two largest federally funded construction projects—not in New York City, not in New York State, but in the entire country—are in the district I am privileged to represent, the Second Avenue Subway and the East Side Connector.

I am proud to have brought more than $10 billion in infrastructure funding to my district alone, and as I part, I will continue to work toward building high-speed rail between New York and Boston. Nothing would build our economy stronger or better.

My dear colleagues, together we have bent the moral arc of this Nation in the direction of justice and fairness, but we mustn't rest until equal means just that—equal.

Finally, I have always regarded public service as a loan, one that I must repay each and every day I am in office. Thanks to your tireless efforts, wisdom, and support, I feel like I leave office debt-free.

The best is yet to come.

It has been an honor to work and serve with all of my colleagues.

Mr. LEVIN of Michigan. Representative MALONEY, your account is overflowing with the work of justice that you did for the people of New York and, indeed, the American people. We all know it, so thank you so much.

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. It has been a privilege to be inspired and to work with you, and thank you for being arrested with me—

Mr. LEVIN of Michigan. That was quite an honor.

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York.—as we protested for the rights of women to make decisions about their own bodies. I would say there is no democracy if you cannot make your own healthcare decisions.

Mr. LEVIN of Michigan. That sounds right to me.

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. It was an honor to work with you. I will miss all of my colleagues.

Mr. LEVIN of Michigan. It was a big honor to be arrested with you.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my wife, Mary Freeman, and my kids, Koby, Saul, Ben, and Molly.

It has been a real honor to serve in this body, and I promise to keep the fire under your feet to do the work of justice.

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

MATH REALITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOWMAN). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2021, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. SCHWEIKERT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Mr. Speaker, we are going to continue sort of a theme that we have been working on, and it is fairly simple, yet the solutions are really complex.

First is trying to get a reality on what is going on with the math. I am a broken record. I absolutely am, but we are going to walk through this again.

Doing this a week ago, we actually did a whole bunch of technology disruptions that would crash the price of healthcare, that would clean the environment, that would make bureaucracy much smaller, make us much more productive and wealthy as a society, help the poor, help the working poor, help the working middle class.

It is fascinating. Sometimes we all make the mistake of reading the responses, trying to understand, saying are we getting the message through. A number of our brothers and sisters out there are kind enough to comment, kind enough to help us, but also kind enough to say: ''Hey, I didn't understand this. I don't understand what this number really means.''

We are going to delve into a couple of those because the crisis is here, and it is not Democrat or Republican. I am going to argue it is much more difficult. It is demographics.

There is a whole bunch of mess that I believe our Republican majority next year is going to have to clean up, and God willing, we will have the fortitude to do it. But the fact of the matter is, over the next 30 years, there are some really ugly numbers, and it has to do

with the fact that we got old as a society.

Our baby boomers are retiring, and almost no one is comfortable telling the truth. So, we are going to rapidly go through a number of these.

Look, this is a board I show over and over just to try to help people get their heads around it. See this red here? We are not even going to talk about 1965. We are going to stick with 2022, so last year's budget cycle.

Remember, we are running on continuing resolutions, so there is all sorts of other budgetary malfeasance going on around here, but here is where we are at.

Do you see this red here? That is for last year's budget cycle, 71 percent of all the spending, and it is on autopilot because this is: Hey, I turned 65. I get a health benefit. I worked so many quarters, and I turned 65 or 70, wherever you choose, and you get Medicare or Social Security, or you served in the military.

You have to understand. The vast majority of your government is on autopilot.

This blue here, that is defense. So, 13 percent of the 2022 budget was defense.

The other 16 percent was what we call nondefense discretionary. That is the EPA. That is the FBI. That is the Park Service. That is everything you actually think of as government. It is functionally only 16 percent of the spending.

There are a number of us who keep looking at different ideas and different numbers, and we keep trying to say: What would happen if we actually took all the outlays and rolled them back to 2019 before the pandemic?

□ 1445

But some of the math—forgive me, but we were working on this as we were walking over here to the floor—you have a math problem. First off, the discretionary has shrunk from—let's see, it is $52 billion bigger in 2022 than it was in 2019. So that is real money.

But what has exploded are two things, the mandatory Social Security, Medicare and all these other things that are formula and interest. In 2019 we spent basically $376 billion in interest. We are functionally heading towards doubling that in the coming budget cycle.

So we have got to decide, if I could adopt the 2019 budget, we would actually, with the really substantial increases we have had in tax receipts, tax revenues, tax collections, whatever you want to call it, if we adopted the full 2019 budget then we would be even.

How many Members of Congress are ready to get up here and say we are going to cut Medicare, we are going to cut Social Security, we are going to cut veterans benefits, and we are going to actually somehow pay less interest on our debt?

The point I am trying to make is the vast majority of what is government is autopilot. And what we actually debate, the theater around here—so in 2019, 50 percent was what we will call discretionary, 50 percent was defense, the other 50 percent of that $1 trillion 33 billion, half of it was true discretionary. I'm trying to make the point, if you are going to save us, it has got to be an actual discussion, mostly about healthcare costs.

I am going to show you some boards here. This is another one I bring back and forth. I am shocked how many of my brothers and sisters actually—hopefully, watching parts of this, or their staff are watching parts of this on their televisions, there are a few hundred televisions around this campus—will digest—and for some of my brothers and sisters on the left, they actually get really upset with me on this, you can't tell people that.

But it is the math.

Over the next 30 years, so starting today, 30 years from now—I am getting tired of hearing myself say this, but I can't seem to get my brothers and sisters around here to digest the number—we are functionally going to borrow $114 trillion in today's dollars, and $38 trillion of that is the shortfall in Social Security.

When we add up here is our shortfall and here are our financing costs, $80.5 trillion is the shortfall in Medicare, so about 75/25.

How many politicians do you hear, Mr. Speaker, how many accountants, how many smart people do you see talking on financial television saying, Hey, we are heading toward a debt crisis, and it is healthcare costs.

Oh, by the way, the rest of the Federal budget actually has about $1 trillion, a $1.9 trillion positive balance. You have to understand, Mr. Speaker, it is autopilot.

These are earned benefits. Your society, your government, and your country made a deal with you, if you work this many quarters and you reach this certain age, if you are part of a certain Tribal group or other things, then you get these certain benefits. Fine.

Do you think back 20 years ago if we had taken a little sliver of Social Security and allowed the individual to put it in private accounts, the accounts would have been so much more robust?

The Democrats absolutely demagogued that, oh, it is the end of the world.

And now here we are 20 years later, and we are a decade away from the Social Security trust fund being gone.

How many Members here get behind these microphones and are willing to tell their constituents the truth, that you are headed toward a 25 to 27 percent cut in Social Security unless we come up with some big, bold solution?

The problem is the Congress says, Oh, let's just raise taxes.

Except the problem is that that is just the Social Security portion. Medicare is three-quarters of all the coming debt, and the amount of taxes you have to raise—are you prepared for the amount that that actually starts to slow down the economy?

So there is another board. I haven't shown this one in about a year. This is actually 2020 data. The numbers are actually much worse today because of healthcare inflation. I live in a place that has about 12 percent inflation, the Phoenix-Scottsdale area is the highest in the continental United States. But base inflation, healthcare inflation, is up around 16 percent. So these numbers are much uglier today.

This is really uncomfortable, and this makes people upset. But it is the math.

A typical couple retiring—so let's say you are retiring right now. You functionally are going to receive 3 bucks for every dollar you put in. It is the math.

Now, on Social Security, basically you get what you put back in. You get a little bit of a spiff, but if you had actually been able to put those dollars into the markets or into some bond, you would be much better. But on Social Security you basically get back what you put in.

The problem is for that couple on Medicare taxes, you will have paid about $161,000 in taxes, and you are going to get about $522,000 in benefits. It is this gap right here that bankrupts our country. It is healthcare costs. It is the math.

I know it upsets people. If you want to read the actuarial reports, Mr. Speaker, we will be happy to send them to you. But it is the truth.

At some point, the political class needs to start treating the public like adults and tell us the truth even when it is not what the political class here has said, It is waste and fraud; we don't tax rich people enough.

All that is a fraud.

And going on right now, you have got to understand, the numbers are rolling on us. All the trillions and trillions of dollars of stimulus that were pumped into the economy has set off inflation that has made almost every American poorer. You have to understand that inflation is higher than wage growth. You are poorer today than you were 1 year ago.

How many of my brothers and sisters on the other side do you see get behind the microphones and show like they give a damn that America's workers and poor people are poorer today?

Well, let's subsidize them more instead of blowing up the economy.

And now you start to look at what is going on. At this moment, we are already at one-quarter trillion dollars in debt. Remember, our fiscal year began October 1, and our spending is still exploding.

The Federal Government spent $500 billion last month, and we are supposed to be out of the COVID spending craze, and we are not.

I bring this chart just as a simple, simple get our heads around the projection. So these two lines here are the 2021 COVID. You see, there just huge amounts of government spending.

But what is important here is, do you see this line right here?

That is just if you go back to normal life, get rid of these 2 years, just a normal life, the debt is going just where everyone has modeled it.

This isn't new. This has been talked about for one-quarter of a century.

Does anyone remember when one of the senior commanders of the U.S. military came here to Congress and testified and said, I believe the greatest threat to the United States in the long run is our debt?

The spenders around here said, no, you can't talk about that.

One of the reasons I believe the public should be just livid with us is our unwillingness to treat them like adults.

The other thing that is going on—back to telling the truth again—the 1980s, does anyone remember the 1980s?

Apparently, if you did the mean of the interest on U.S. sovereign bonds at that time, we were financing around 10 percent interest rates. But we had this artificially low interest. Now it would have killed you if you were a saver. It killed you if you were trying to save for retirement. It was great if you wanted to go into debt.

I need you to look at something here, Mr. Speaker. During 2020 we had an average of 2.2 percent which was the CBO calculation. They even project that when we go off into the future we are going to double that. And it is already doubled today.

So do we go back to the magic times where we are saying, Hey, we are around 2 percent, 2010, 2 percent for the decade? Or do we double it?

What happens if we double U.S. interest rates?

If we go up 2 percent, 30 years from now we are at 280 percent of debt to GDP.

Do you know, Mr. Speaker, if you go up—I think it was, what was the math long term—I think it is like 25 years of 2 percent increase on here basically consumes every projected dollar of tax receipts?

It is all our money.

How many of us plan to live another 25 years?

How many of us really believe we are going back to the age of 2 percent or less interest on U.S. sovereign debt?

How many of us agree with the Congressional Budget Office that because we are going to be borrowing so much of the world's capital to finance our debt that we are going to push up interest rates for ourselves and the world, and by doing that we drive ourselves into bankruptcy even faster?

Now, you don't actually go bankrupt. What happens is the economy slows down, you live in this flat-lined economy, and there is almost no prosperity. There is no growth, jobs become scarce, and every day you fall further behind. But that is the future. The crap around here is heading there. But we will do some great virtue-signaling bills. Maybe we will ban plastic straws or do something really useful.

And you sit down with our progressive friends and say, okay, let's walk through your math. Your math, not mine, your math. And understand, if I take your wish list, free college, the climate proposal, jobs guarantee, the Medicare for All, and then add them already on in the 15.7 baseline deficit, which is already higher today because of the growth in interest rates, and then I turn around and say, okay, we are going to tax all unearned income over $1 million. So if you own rental houses, we are taking every dollar. If you make more than $1 million, we take every dollar. And we will add into that we are just going to take all the wealth of billionaires; every dime of it.

Hey, why don't we take basically the entire defense budget, and we will just wipe out all defense protecting the country, even though that is constitutional?

It doesn't get you anywhere.

This is the wish list on top of the fact we are already upside down.

Do you understand how loony this place is?

If you go over and over the math, the roster, the tax hikes, if we do all the tax hikes, hey, a 50 percent income rate for anyone making $200,000 or more, then you start to say we will eliminate all deductions. We are going to take payroll tax, so your FICA tax, and we are unlimiting it, so it just goes through the ceiling. Hey, you make $1 million, you pay 15.3 percent on that, Social Security, Medicare, unemployment. You take all those corporate taxes and put them back up to 35 percent. And then live in a fantasy world that you didn't slow the economy down.

Do you know you only get two-thirds of the way to covering the structural deficit that is already built in?

That is assuming the fantasy world of hey, I just taxed the crap out of my country, took all of the available investment capital out of the country and consumed it in taxes and government spending, but the economy will still maintain the same GDP growth and there will never be another recession or another virus.

The inability to have adult conversations around here about the proposals are lunacy. They are great politicking. You go home, stand up in front of the town hall, you tell them these things—you are lying to them—and everyone applauds and says, oh, I really want free stuff.

Then you take the best estimate—understand, this number, the 2021, is probably double last year than it will be in the future years because this has huge amounts of COVID fraud. Many of us believe COVID unemployment may be the single biggest fraud maybe in world history. We have seen some underlying reports that it could be a couple hundred billion dollars.

But let's pretend that the fraud and waste of 2021 was something we could capture and that we can get every damn dollar. That is $662 billion. That is amazing.

□ 1500

Now, it is a one-time thing. You get it back. We were able to collect every dollar and stop all the waste and fraud. Great. Except that we are heading toward $2 trillion deficits at the end of the decade. So we took care of about a quarter of it.

Now, we need to work our heinies off to get every dollar of waste and fraud out of the system. We need to stop designing insane systems where we hand out money and we are going to figure out if you should have gotten it a year or 2 years or 3 years later. We have got to stop the fantasy that there are simple solutions.

Last week, I stood here, and I showed the board, saying, do you know, if we got rid of every single dollar of foreign aid, the $38 billion of foreign aid, it paid for about 11 days of borrowing—not spending—borrowing.

I know we have been told over and over, Hey, there are simple solutions: Tax the rich; get rid of foreign aid; waste and fraud. There are rounding errors in the scale of what is hitting us. But there are solutions, and dammit, I need us all—whether you be on the left or the right or the public that is trying to understand—be willing to think differently. Be willing to stop this insanity of, oh, we will just do an entitlement reform. Like that is ever going to happen.

How many Members of Congress are going to come here and say, I cut Social Security and Medicare. It is never going to happen. Nor should we. Those are promises we have a moral obligation to keep.

Another moral obligation is: How do you finance them? How do you keep them? And every Member who refuses to tell you the truth about the math is also putting them at peril.

You can't lie, my brothers and sisters on the left, you got to tell the truth. Playing this game—oh, the 2017 tax reform, oh, it crashed revenues. Do you understand we are a trillion dollars higher in receipts—for those of us on the Ways and Means Committee—than we were when we did the 2017 tax reform?

It is a spending problem. If I had come to you in 2017 and said, Hey, 4 years from now we are going to be taking in $1 trillion additional revenue, you would have laughed your heinie off—but we did. How can we still be so upside down? How, in this year, when we are still not doing the crazy level of COVID spending, are we still a quarter of a trillion dollars—and we are only, what, into our second or third month of this fiscal year?

I beg of us—you look at charts like this and you understand, it really is a spending, it is a structural spending problem. As I was just showing you the really uncomfortable slide, over the next 30 years it is Medicare and Social Security. It is what it is.

You look at the projections. This slide is incredibly important for all my junior economists out there. We have

times since the 1960s until today, we have had very high marginal tax rates, we have had low marginal tax rates. And guess what, we always seem to come in with high tax rates, low tax rates; good economy, poor economy. We always seem to ultimately come in right about 19 percent of the size of the economy in revenues, in receipts, in taxes. I need you to think about that.

If I want more revenue, I need an economy that grows the size of the Nation, the wealth of this Nation, the prosperity. The poor get less poor, the working middle class get rewarded for their work. Do policies that grow. And the benefit of that is how you get more tax receipts. Because you have got to look here—understand that our spending is heading toward 30 percent of the entire size of the economy.

I know these are geeky numbers, but those are stunning numbers. Yet, the number of times—I showed you before all the projections—well, we will just raise taxes. Then you look at our history when we have done that. The growth—the size of the economy have flatlined or they shrank. The total dollars in aren't what you prayed for.

I want to do a little bit of hope, and I also want to talk about a couple opportunities. When we get back—I don't know when we come back to basically do this horrible omnibus and all these things whether I will get some floor time to go into more depth.

Mr. Speaker, can you share with me my time remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Arizona has 36 minutes remaining.

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Mr. Speaker, I am going to finish this up in 6 minutes and yield back to you.

I need us all to come back and think creatively. If I came to my brothers and sister here who are elected, our staff who are all freaky smart—a lot of them institutionalized, but they are smart. The public, who, if they knew the underlining numbers, their creativity could break us through on the crap we are doing.

If I came to you tomorrow, and said, I need ideas that crash the price of healthcare. That for the 5 percent of our brothers and sisters who have multiple chronic conditions that are well over 50 percent of our healthcare spending, what do we do to make them less sick—maybe even cure them?

What do you do to deal with environmental issues but do it in a way where the economy still grows instead of this model the Democrats have brought us—we are just going to subsidize everyone—and then wonder why the math ultimately blows up on us.

There is one opportunity that specifically interests me. I never want to hear another Member basically come behind the microphone and say, We need to regulate this more—or on my side—we need to deregulate this more. Can I beg of us to use the language—why don't we try some smart regulation. Why don't we join this century and use the technology we all walk around with. We all walk around with supercomputers in our pocket.

We had the Supreme Court case, it was West Virginia v. EPA, that basically says Congress has been derelict in its duties for years—decades. Hey, EPA, wink, wink, nod, nod, we want you to do this, but we are not willing to tell our voters what we are willing to do because we are getting lobbied over here, so we are just going to hand over all of our congressional authority, our constitutional authority to a bureaucracy. The Supreme Court said we got to stop doing that.

We do it with the EPA, we do it with securities regulations, we do it with everything. Guess what it means? We are going to have to start acting like adults in this body and actually start reading our bills, working on the details, coming up with rational ways to make society safe, healthy, but prosperous.

I have a little video out there if someone wants to go look at it, it is Schweikert environmental crowdsourcing on YouTube. It is just the simple concept of—you know there are things that you can attach to this that actually would calculate air quality, you know, PM10 or organics and other things.

What would happen if you had a couple thousands of those floating around your community? You would always know what is going on. If you had someone painting cars behind your house, you would catch them immediately. If you had a model like that, do you need the same 1938 command and control system?

So I am the motorcycle paint shop—do they really need to file paperwork and fill up file cabinets full of paper because we all know file cabinets full of paper make the air quality cleaner. If you had a crowdsource model of data, the government could say, screw it, we are going to leave you alone and we are just going to get the bad actors. If you are playing by the rules and you are using your scrubbers and playing by the rules, you get left alone; you don't need the permitting model.

You can crowdsource the data. You can do this with sound and water and transportation and smart cities. It would crash the size of the bureaucracy—and I know a lot of folks would say, What about all the government unionized workers? This is about getting a productivity bump and then holding that bump long term because even if we can use technology to crash the price of healthcare and we don't get enough growth, I can't make the numbers work.

I have a 5-month little boy we are adopting, when he is 25 years old his tax rate will be double all of ours. It is already baked in the cake. It is done. We have already done this to our kids.

Corporate tax rates. I don't know why corporations don't have to disclose that their taxes are doubling over the next 25 years. We make them disclose things about potential environmental impairments, why didn't they have to disclose the fact that we are going to be doubling their taxes? It is baked into the cake. Because the whole baseline services that we have promised with our population getting older, everyone's taxes are about to be doubled over the next 25 years unless, of course, you use technology to crash the price and dramatically increase the productivity.

This one borders on silly, but it is making a point. The left is absolutely fixated on methane. Okay. Methane is a huge greenhouse gas—okay, we will give them that. You know, a couple years ago we had to recalculate its half-life. It is down to, what, 8 or 9 years, for those of us who actually geek out on this stuff. And, oh, we need to start shutting down the use of hydrocarbons. We need to start calculating the methane load for any barrel of oil or any Btu of gas.

Then there are articles out there saying, you know, there is actually a real cheap, cheap, cheap solution—I am going to be a little silly—I believe it is copper oxidized clay. It is kitty litter. Do you know you can take a well or some other methane production source and it absorbs like a sponge, and it is dirt cheap. You know why? Because it is dirt.

How many Members of Congress have you seen here saying, We need to bring the researchers who did this—and their academic studies—bring them here because we want to understand this. Is there a way we could actually be making the environment cleaner, better, faster, and still keep the economy growing?

No. They are hell-bent on shutting down the use of hydrocarbons even though there are solutions. Why wouldn't this place expand its intellect and be willing to at least bring in the scientists saying: Wow, you did this study, and it really works.

Last week—and I got a little crap for this, and I want to make the point again—we calculate over half a trillion dollars a year in spending for people who don't take their pharmaceuticals properly. I agree. You know, being someone with hypertension, I am working really hard to work out and eat better and see if I can bend it and never have to take a calcium inhibitor or even a statin—that is cholesterol.

We know for a fact that if a population were to take their prescriptions—and some of this is true for diabetes and everything else—it is 16 percent of all healthcare spending. What if you could get half that? Right now we estimate the number is probably $520, $530 billion a year in healthcare costs because grandma didn't take her pill, or someone stroked out or those sorts of things—where the pill is pennies.

So a pill bottle cap that beeps at you in the morning that costs 99 cents and reminds you to take it has hundreds of billions of dollars of potential impact. Is that difficult? Well, apparently

around here that idea is difficult—the lack of science, the lack of math, the lack of basic creativity.

And then there is my holy grail. This is truly the holy grail. Truly, I pray to the dear Lord, let what I am reading be true: 33 percent of all America's healthcare spending is diabetes; 31 percent of all Medicare spending is diabetes. Most of that is type 2, it is not type 1. Type 2 in many ways has a lot to it and it is ultimately an autoimmune, but it is partially self-inflicted.

Is this body willing to have one of the most difficult political debates and conversations it has ever considered in modern times? Are we willing to change the farm bill? Are we willing to change the incentives of what we incentivize our brothers and sisters to eat? Are we willing to incentivize our brothers and sisters to be healthy?

You all saw the numbers of the misery this place brought to the Nation with the shutdowns and how many of the ZIP Codes around this country have doubled their obesity numbers. Why this is important is apparently we have been on the cusp—we have had a handful of people who look like they have been cured of type 1 diabetes—it is less than a year, maybe it ultimately doesn't work, but this is a big deal.

□ 1515

Why aren't we working on it? Why aren't we? Because if it is 31 percent of all Medicare spending, and we were able to help our brothers and sisters who are getting their feet cut off and going blind, wouldn't that be the compassionate thing? Wouldn't that be the moral thing instead of this damn conversation we have here? ''Well, let's build more clinics so people can manage their misery.''

I beg of you, if we are on the edge of a cure for—you saw last week it finally got approved—hemophilia, got a single-shot cure, really expensive. Work out the financing.

Cystic fibrosis, we may be on the cusp.

Sickle cell anemia—why doesn't this place seem to give a damn about people's misery and suffering?

By the way, they are part of the 50 percent that is also really good economics.

I ask anyone that is watching this, think differently. Curing our brothers and sisters, fixating on economic growth, crashing the price of technology by legalizing technology, is the only path I can come up with that saves us from the crushing debt.

The fact of the matter is, if you look at the models, it means the next couple of decades could be really prosperous. I just need this place to act very differently.

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

THE GOHMERT RULE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2021, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for the remainder of the hour as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, how much time is remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman has 25 minutes remaining.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, there was a quote from John Adams, as a follow-up to what my friend from Arizona (Mr. SCHWEIKERT) was saying. He had great exchanges with his friend, then his enemy, and then his friend again for the rest of their lives, Thomas Jefferson.

John Adams said there are two ways to conquer and enslave a country. One is by the sword; the other is by debt.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my friend for yielding. This will likely be the last speech that I will be able to give from the House floor. I can imagine there are people clapping all over that are watching C-Span.

It has been a tremendous honor to serve in this hallowed body. It just has.

This was not something that I aspired to from my earlier days, and in fact, I really didn't want to be a judge. After my mother got over the disappointment of my choosing not to apply to med school, and then got used to the idea of having an attorney, she ended up, through the eighties, she knew she had a brain tumor that was going to ultimately take her life. They had done what they could at Mayo Clinic in surgery. They could do no more.

She was brilliant. She put herself through Baylor in 2½ years, while she was working full-time, most of that in the registrar's office.

My brilliant mom taught school as an eighth-grade English teacher for so many years and taught Sunday school for most of her years.

She would say: Louie, you would make a great judge.

I would go: Mother, I don't want to be a judge. There are some lawyers I would hate to sit there and listen to all day. Besides, I make more money than a judge does. I have no interest.

We lost her in January 1991, and after that, I had been thinking about what my brilliant mother used to say. A few months later, I had a judge call me and ask if my female client would go out with him before her trial. It was a civil trial on a breach of contract. I told him, basically, that I couldn't help him, but I knew we needed a new judge.

I tried for months to find somebody that would run against him and talked to all kinds of Republican lawyers that I thought had been considering it. Nobody would step up.

By Thanksgiving—I had to file around the 1st of December—my wife and I both just had this peace that this is what I was supposed to do, is run for judge. So, I did.

As the most politically astute person in our county—Republican, that is—told me the night before the primary election, he said: Nobody gave you a snowball's chance of winning because this guy was the first Republican elected in the county.

In fact, I had Republican leaders that said: Look, we know it is not great, and there are some issues there, but he was the first Republican elected in our county. We just feel like we owe him the job.

Well, nobody is owed a public service job. By Thanksgiving, we had this peace that this is what I am supposed to do, win or lose. I ran and ended up not just squeaking by, as was predicted the day before in a 50/50 chance of winning. I won with 70 percent of the vote.

After years on the bench, I just had this feeling—I applied the law as it was, whether I liked it or not—but that I need to go change some of these laws, try to change some of them.

Then, I had the invitation from Governor Perry to an appointment to be chief justice of the court of appeals there. I thought, well, perhaps this is a way to finish my career on the bench. My wife thought so after we prayed about it, contemplated.

Then, when I finished that term, Governor Perry wanted to provide another appointment to the appellate bench. I said no, I think I am supposed to run for Congress. I did and got elected. I won with 70 to 80 percent of the vote ever since.

What I thought was, this country is in trouble, and maybe I can go help get this country on track. Maybe I can make a difference.

After one term, Newt Gingrich—we lost the majority, November 2006, after I had been here 2 years. I was talking to Newt Gingrich about it. He said: I have heard you. You ought to be on the floor every day talking about these issues. We have 2 hours of Special Orders every day.

I thought, maybe so, and I took it to heart. Since then, yes, I have given a lot of Special Orders, talking about the issues that I think are critically important.

When the Democrats took the majority back, my Democrat friend—I hope that doesn't hurt his re-elect,—JOHN GARAMENDI said: Louie, we just voted on the new rules of the House and passed the Gohmert resolution.

I said: What does that mean, JOHN?

He said: It means you can no longer have multiple Special Orders in 1 week. You can only have one. That is the new Gohmert rule. Informally, that is what some of us call it because we don't want to hear you every night.

I had told the Cloakroom years ago, look, if nobody is going to take our time to talk about these issues—there is usually not much of anybody around here on the House floor, but as Newt said, you may have 200,000 to 4 million people watch C-Span at different times. You never know how many are going to watch, but you can make a difference if you talk about what is important.

I told the Cloakroom years ago, look, if somebody is not going to take our time, I will get my tie back on and

come back over there and take it. So, that is what I have done.

Eighteen years later, this country is in deeper trouble than it was when I got here. I know, having gotten my degree in history, and having never stopped studying history, so many great stories, profound stories, about our history.

I know my daughters have suffered abuse from people because they were my daughters, not that they agreed with me on everything. In fact, we have disagreements. I love them, and I never meant for them to suffer.

Recently, I read a sermon that was prepared by Pastor Tommy Nelson in Texas. There was a Governor, Thomas Nelson, of Virginia, who was a commander back during the Revolution. In 1781, Yorktown is surrounded. General Lafayette comes over and says: General, Governor, where should we fire first with our cannons?

Governor Nelson, General Nelson, he knew that the British command was in his home. They had taken his home. They made it their command center. He told Lafayette: Right there at my house.

There were some, reportedly, that said: We don't want to fire at that. It is your house.

He said: That is where the enemy is. That is where you have to fire.

Cannonball after cannonball went through his home.

The Founders suffered so much, gave so much, many with their lives. You look at the 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence, they suffered immeasurably. Many of them forfeited their lives for the cause of freedom.

But John Adams, in one of his letters to Jefferson, toward the end of his life, he said: ''The general principles on which the Fathers''—talking about the Founding Fathers—''achieved independence'' were ''the general principles of Christianity. . . . I will avow that I then believed, and now believe, that those general principles of Christianity are as eternal and immutable as the existence and attributes of God.''

John Jay himself, one of the authors of the Federalist Papers, a Supreme Court Justice, our Nation's first Chief Justice, he wrote in his own handwriting: ''The Bible is the best of all books for it is the Word of God and teaches us the way to be happy in this world and in the next. Continue, therefore, to read it and to regulate your life by its precepts.''

Back to John Adams. He said: ''The jaws of power are always open to devour, and her arm is always stretched out, if possible, to destroy the freedom of thinking, speaking, and writing.''

Boy, he was so astute and wise.

He said: ''Democracy will soon degenerate into an anarchy, such an anarchy that every man will do what is right in his own eyes, and no man's life or property or reputation or liberty will be secure.''

It is so true. He saw what happens even in the few democracies or republics that have ever existed. I think ours is not just a republic, but a form of democratic republic where we elect our representatives instead of like ancient Greece, Athens, where they actually had everybody participate in the big decisions.

I do have a heavy heart. I see what is going on. We had a hearing today regarding mass shootings, witnesses from Sandy Hook, from Uvalde, and they are saying we have to get rid of the guns, like getting rid of spoons would get rid of obesity.

The problem is not with our Second Amendment right. It is exactly what John Adams pointed out. He said: ''We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion. Avarice, ambition, revenge, or gallantry would break the strongest cords of our Constitution as a whale goes through a net.''

Then he said: ''Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.''

□ 1530

Our problem is very clear to me. It is not with weapons. It is with the lack of morality. It is exactly what President Adams said over 200 years ago. He saw it. If you are not teaching children that there is absolute right and wrong—there may be gray areas. There are, as every lawyer would tell you. But there are some absolutes that are right or wrong.

Those of us who believe the Bible, God made clear that the children of Israel were to teach their children: Keep the verses of scripture all around all the time, put them on your doorposts. And I knew that; I had seen the scripture.

But the first time I was at the King David Hotel in Jerusalem, I said, What are these little tubes on the door?

Well, they were verses of scripture. They took it literally.

You need to have those verses everywhere. Teach your children. And we have not done that.

So after people like Bill Ayers, Weather Underground, violent hippies, after they had tried to push us into a Marxist country or make us one and they had no success whatsoever, the violence didn't help, they realized the way to go is to go into the universities, get tenure, and in the meantime be teaching future teachers that Marxism is a good idea. Whether you call it socialism, progressivism—not change the name, call it progressivism. It is still Marxism.

But as Dostoevsky said in response to this nut named Marx in the 1800s, The problem with Marxism is not economic. We know that is a huge problem. It is always going to fail. But the problem with Marxism is atheism because the government has to become God. That is what he was meaning. That has, for so many people, become God.

I came here thinking, gosh, if we could just get enough Members of Congress to stand up for what is right and preserve our freedom—I ultimately have realized, Congress—as upset as people are at Congress, and we rate very poorly in the polls—Congress is a reflection of this country. You don't like what is going on in Congress, well, it is a reflection of what is going on in the country.

This House is the only elected body that I am aware of in the whole country where you can only get there by being elected. If a Senator leaves or dies, they can be appointed or elected, either one, but normally appointed to fill until the election. This body, you can't get in here as a Member unless you have been elected.

Adams said, ''Cities may be rebuilt and a people reduced to poverty may acquire fresh property, but a constitution of government, once changed from freedom, can never be restored. Liberty once lost is lost forever. When the people once surrender their share in the legislature and their right of defending the limitations on government and of resisting every encroachment upon them, they can never regain it.''

If we want Congress to be better, the country has got to become better, because we are headed toward Marxism. Many realize that. If you looked at the original Black Lives Matter—and it was never about Black lives. It was about moving toward Marxism. One of their tenets—they took it off. One of their goals was eliminating western-style marriage.

Western-style marriage? We don't have western-style marriage.

Moses said God told him a man shall leave his father and mother, a woman leave her home, and the two will become one. That is marriage. It was for procreation of the Nation of Israel and for the people. And civilizations that lasted have based their growth on that societal building block, the family.

Then you had Jesus. When asked about marriage, and particularly divorce, He quoted Moses verbatim: A man shall leave his father and mother, a woman leave her home, the two will become one flesh. And He is the one who added, and let what God has joined together, let no one put asunder, or separate.

But this body, just this month, we come in here, now that we have a majority that is much wiser—it is a bipartisan majority that is wiser than Moses and Jesus—said no, no, no, we will tell you what marriage is.

So churches that supported that, they are going to find out you either become woke or the United States Government is going to come destroy your entity, church, or school. That is where we are heading. Perhaps the Supreme Court will protect us. Maybe it won't.

But I still hear Justice Scalia. We were having lunch, and he said, you guys have the ultimate power. You can stop anything. You have got the power of the purse. You don't like something;

you can kill it. Just cut off all the funding. So don't come running over across the street to us just because you don't have the nerve to do what you think should be done. Come run to us? You didn't do what you have got the power to do.

We haven't done that. Easier to hope maybe the Supreme Court will take care of it.

Adams also said, Remember, democracy never lasts long. It soon wastes, exhausts, and murders itself. There was never democracy or a democratic republic yet that did not commit suicide.

He said, Be not intimidated nor suffer yourselves to be wheedled out of your liberties by any pretense of politeness, delicacy, or decency. These, as they are often used, are but three different names for hypocrisy, chicanery, and cowardice. I mentioned this when I was reading Tommy Nelson's sermon.

But Alexis de Tocqueville in the 1830s and 1840s, he said: ''Upon my arrival in the United States, the religious aspect of the country was the first thing that struck my attention; and the longer I stayed there the more did I perceive the great political consequences resulting from this state of things, to which I was unaccustomed. In France, I had almost always seen the spirit of religion and the spirit of freedom pursuing courses diametrically opposed to each other; but in America I found that they were intimately united, and that they reigned in common over the same country.''

He talked about our Founders. Forget 1619 or whatever. He says—he is talking about the Founders. They brought with them a form of Christianity. Yes, some people pushed slavery. But Thomas Jefferson, in that original Declaration of Independence, one of the grievances was against King George for ever allowing slavery to get started, because he saw the damage it was doing to America and to the people that were involved.

But Alexis de Tocqueville said about our Founders: ''They brought with them . . . a form of Christianity which I cannot better describe than by styling it a democratic and republican religion. . . . from the earliest settlement of the immigrants, politics and religion contracted an alliance which has never been dissolved''—until recent history. He didn't live to see what is going on now.

Look, some of us get beat up. We do believe a woman has every right and should make all the decisions concerning her body. She does. She should. That is the way it should be. She has every right to make decisions for that unborn child that she is carrying. But if a decision is made to kill that other body, that is normally when government gets involved, because we are supposed to protect the most vulnerable among us.

Some people continue to try to say, gee, we didn't see Christianity mentioned in the Constitution. Of course, the Declaration of Independence mentions our Creator and also nature's God. But actually if you look at the way the Constitution was signed, it was signed ''In the year of our Lord 1787.'' Yeah, that is the way they dated it. I mean, it is amazing. Some people say it is unconstitutional to sign anything with that date if it is government. Well, if it is signed like the Constitution is signed, I don't see how it could be unconstitutional.

But there was the First Presbytery of the Eastward, a group of clergy from Massachusetts and New Hampshire, and they wanted Christianity to be mentioned in the Constitution. They wrote a letter and they declared that as they see, because of Washington's piety and his support for Christian morality—which really is Judeo—but that morality that they see, means we are in good hands.

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

BANNING AMERICAN INVESTMENTS IN CRYPTOCURRENCY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2021, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN) for 30 minutes.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, for 5 years, I have been trying to ban American investments in cryptocurrency. I am the only Member of this House to get an F grade from the only crypto-promoting organization that rates Members of Congress.

My fear is that we will view Sam Bankman-Fried as just one big snake in the crypto garden of Eden. The fact is, crypto is a garden of snakes.

Now, from the outside, crypto just looks like a token, an electronic pet rock for the 21st century, something that might be good to invest in—though it has no apparent value—because you might get somebody else to buy it from you for more than you paid for it.

But in reality, crypto aspires to be a currency and compete with the U.S. dollar. It is not a currency yet, but if it has any long-term value, it is because its promoters are successful in turning it into a currency.

Now, the U.S. dollar is an excellent currency. It is a medium of exchange that will be used billions of times today for people to buy this or that. It is a medium of exchange. It is a measure of value.

So how can a cryptocurrency compete with the U.S. dollar and other established currencies?

Whenever you come up with a new product, you find an advantage that you think you have—at least for part of the market—of your product over the incumbent products, and then you name your product after that advantage.

□ 1545

The advantage that crypto hopes to be its ticket to become a currency is right there in the name: Cryptocurrency literally means hidden money.

Well, is there a big market for hidden money? Well, there are the drug dealers, the human traffickers, the sanctions evaders who will find that to be a good feature. As Sam Bankman-Fried would tell you today, there is a hell of a market for those who need a currency that will help them hide assets from the bankruptcy courts. But the true big market for a hidden currency is tax evasion.

Now, I know there are some on the other side who are kind of happy every time the IRS is defeated. It is said that anytime a billionaire successfully cheats on his taxes, a member of the Freedom Caucus earns his wings.

The other announced purpose of cryptocurrency design is not just to be a currency available to those who want hidden money, but to compete with the U.S. dollar as a world reserve currency. This would enrich the crypto oligarchs beyond measure and take thousands of dollars a year of advantage away from every American family because every American benefits from the fact that the U.S. dollar is the established world currency.

Now, Sam Bankman-Fried, or should I say inmate 14372, had one purpose in his efforts in Congress. And he was well known in Congress. The only one wearing shorts walking around. His one purpose was to keep the SEC, the Securities and Exchange Commission, out of the crypto world to provide a patina of regulation, baby regulation by assigning crypto to the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, an organization a little laxer and a lot smaller than the SEC.

I have one admonition for my colleagues. Don't trash Sam Bankman-Fried and then pass his bill. I fear this could happen because Sam was not the only crypto oligarch with PACs and lobbyists and all the pressure and all the money coming from the pro-crypto side. There is no PAC in Washington, there is no lobbyist here getting paid millions of dollars to work for efficient law enforcement or investor protection or sanctions enforcement.

Now, I have heard some criticize the SEC, and I will do a little bit of that later in this speech. In July, I chaired a hearing of our subcommittee, the Investor Protection, Entrepreneurship, and Capital Markets Subcommittee, and pushed the SEC's head of enforcement for not doing what should have been done, and that is to go after every crypto exchange because the SEC has taken the position in court that virtually every cryptocurrency is, in fact, an unregistered security. That means that every crypto exchange is an illegal exchange. But the SEC has been unwilling to act on that conclusion because they are under intense pressure from a few in Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a letter signed by 19 Members of Congress that was designed as a push-back

pitch, if you know baseball, to push the SEC out of enforcement of crypto.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
Washington, DC, July 15, 2022.

Hon. GARY GENSLER,
Chair, U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIR GENSLER: We are writing to you today to express our concerns regarding the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) staff's issuance of Staff Accounting Bulletin 121 (Bulletin or SAB 121). The Bulletin provides interpretive staff guidance from the Division of Corporation Finance and the Office of the Chief Accountant (OCA) regarding the accounting of, and associated disclosures relating to, entities holding digital assets on behalf of consumers. In this emerging market, consumer protection is important. However, if SAB 121 is applied as currently written it could have a chilling impact on all market participants that engage in custodial services of digital assets and ultimately harm consumers engaging in the market. We further believe that adherence to a transparent process that allows for public input would be beneficial to ensure complete understanding of the guidance's impact to the industry.

As written, the Bulletin could be read to broadly obligate entities, including banks, engaged in digital asset products or services to adjust their accounting treatment of these assets from off-balance sheet to on-balance sheet. This potential interpretation would significantly alter, or perhaps distort the accounting treatment of custodied digital assets.

For example, custody of consumer assets is a core banking function. As pointedly stated by Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell, ''Custody assets are off balance sheet, have always been''. This function has an existing regulatory infrastructure that keeps these consumer assets off the bank's balance sheet and ensures consumers remain whole in the event of bankruptcy or other activities that might harm the consumer. Further, in 2021, the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC) issued its Interpretive Letter 1170, which provided banks guidance on the custody of digital assets. Subsequently, the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, and OCC engaged in a crypto-asset policy sprint initiative, which identified custody as a key area where they intend to provide greater clarity.

These efforts provided the opportunity for banks to confidently be involved in the digital asset ecosystem provided that the banks engage in a safe and sound manner. Such confidence from clear guidance promotes banks to engage in innovative digital asset use cases that leverage the existing regulatory and accounting treatment of custodied assets which will help bring the regulatory oversight and controls desired by so many to the digital asset space.

Without amendment or clarification to the Bulletin, the implication of digital assets held by custodial service providers including banks, on-balance sheet would make custody of digital assets economically infeasible.

We are also concerned about the SEC's approach to emerging crypto activities and the broader market. Particularly, we believe the SEC has not adhered to a proper process, transparency, or public engagement. On the contrary, the SEC has taken an enforcement-first approach and relied on staff guidance, citing purported ''increased risks'' presented by digital assets. Due to the emerging nature of digital assets in the financial services ecosystem, the Bulletin functions as de facto rulemaking to the industry that creates enforceable obligations for firms. The creation of enforceable obligations is beyond the remit of staff guidance, and therefore should have been issued pursuant to a formal notice of proposed rulemaking from the SEC in concert with other agencies.

In closing, we request that you withdraw SAB 121 as written and permit a comment period for such a significant accounting change. Further, it is our belief that the SEC should recognize the importance and benefit of the regulatory environment that exists for industry participants that choose to hold digital assets in their custody, as well as the precedent in accounting treatment for traditionally custodied assets.

Sincerely,

Trey Hollingsworth, Bill Huizenga, Warren Davidson, Ted Budd, Andy Barr, William R. Timmons IV, Roger Williams, Ann Wagner, Alexander X. Mooney, Lance Gooden, Tom Emmer, Anthony Gonzales, Pete Sessions, J. French Hill, John W. Rose, Ralph Norman, Van Taylor, Lee Zeldin, Bryan Steil.

Mr. SHERMAN. Now, this letter tells the SEC to back off, and here is the quoted language, from dealing with the ''purported risk of digital assets.''

Well, it is a few months after that letter was written, and there are a lot of people who sent their money to the Bahamas who do not think that the risk of digital assets is merely purported.

I would also include in the RECORD, there hopefully being no objection, statements from eight members of the Financial Services Committee on the Republican side that were designed to attack the SEC from even trying to get involved in the regulation of cryptocurrency.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair cannot entertain that request.

Mr. SHERMAN. Now, the crypto industry knows that their arguments are bad, and the advice given to anyone who has a bad public policy is when you come to Washington, you better bring a lot of money. It is being said that Sam Bankman-Fried showered money on Democrats, but what actually happened is exemplified by his statements just last month. He said he gave equal amounts to Democrats and Republicans. He gave the money to Democrats above the table, and he gave the money to Republicans to dark money organizations, super-secret super-PACs.

He explained his reasoning, and it actually makes sense. He says the press is liberal. I know my colleagues on the Republican side agree with that, and that the press would vilify him if he was giving money to Republicans. So he gave the money to Democrats above the table, to Republicans under the table, and according to him kept it about equal.

But, of course, Sam Bankman-Fried wasn't the only one involved in FTX. We have also his co-CEO of one of the FTX organizations, Ryan Salame, who gave many tens of millions of dollars exclusively to Republicans.

Now, I want to discuss the role that crypto plays in light of our capital markets. Our capital markets are designed to get people with savings to be willing to take risks to use, what economists have called for over a century, animal spirits, and to take the risk and invest as equity capital, sometimes debt capital, in businesses that make America great, that provide jobs, that create products, or invest in municipal bonds and build a school, build a hospital, build a road.

And especially that risk capital, that equity capital, we encourage by spending hundreds of billions of dollars a year through our tax system to provide a capital gains allowance, a much lower tax for those who make money by taking risks and investing their capital.

But what role does crypto play in this? It takes those animal spirits, that limited supply of capital that people are willing to put at risk, and diverts them into betting on crypto tokens, where the investment does nothing to provide jobs or to build plants.

I think, though, I may have overstated because the crypto world does create some jobs: Jobs in crypto mining, which is to say jobs in coal mining. You see, the way you get crypto is you get a whole bank of computers to do literally trillions of calculations, and if you do those calculations, with a little luck you get a bitcoin. And so the big cost is not the computers, believe it or not, it is the electricity. So we have coal miners mining coal to fuel coal plants that were previously mothballed and have been taken out of mothballs to create the electricity to allow people to mine bitcoin.

Now, it has not always done with coal. Iran is subject to our sanctions, as well they should be. In fact, I got involved in looking at crypto by seeing what role crypto might play in undermining our sanctions of Iran, which is working right now to develop a nuclear weapon.

Iran, due to these sanctions, can't export all its oil. What do they do with the oil? They burn it, create electricity, mine crypto, and then they have a hidden currency that they can use to fund Hamas, Hezbollah, the Houthi, and those are just the terrorist organizations whose names begin with H that are funded by the Government of Iran, which is engaged in crypto mining right now.

So one of the issues is, will crypto succeed? Not if we are successful in imposing the Know Your Customer anti-money laundering laws to the entire crypto ecosphere because if you take the hidden away from the cryptocurrency, it has no advantage over the dollar as a currency.

But we in Washington may fail to act. After all, the money and the power is in the hands of the crypto billionaires. But the bigger threat to crypto is crypto. I will explain that by talking a little bit about the theory of currency.

How is it that any currency acquires value? Well, many millenia ago, our species in various places all decided that gold was valuable. Hire an anthropologist, maybe they can explain why,

but gold has had value as far back as history goes.

The U.S. Government then created a paper dollar tied to gold, redeemable in gold, a fixed amount of gold, and then centuries later, because people were used to the dollar itself being valuable—they had forgotten how tied to gold it was—the currency was valuable in and of itself, and the tie to gold was eliminated.

Now, of course, you don't even deal with paper dollars all that often. It is an electronic representation of a paper dollar that used to be a representation of solid gold.

So some smart guys who knew a lot about computer programming, et cetera, decided, Well, why can't we do that? If the U.S. Government is able to print money, why can't we print money? And since money isn't actually printed on paper, but is electronic, why can't we create electronic money? And so they did.

They argued one thing, that the amount of bitcoin, or whatever cryptocurrency it was, was finite. Only a certain amount could be mined. Now, they assured us there is no back door that would allow the creators to create an unlimited amount of bitcoin and, after all, if you can't trust the people in the crypto industry, who can you trust?

But even if there is a finite amount of this or that cryptocurrency, there is an infinite number of cryptocurrencies. Compare that to fiat currencies, to governmental currencies. There are a couple hundred countries in the world. That is it. Those are the ones that can create governmental currencies. But every day somebody creates a new cryptocurrency, and we have a plethora of coins, so while there is a finite number of each coin, there is an infinite number of coins.

Furthermore, there is no particular reason to think that one cryptocurrency is more valuable than the other. Is bitcoin more valuable than ethereum? Why? Why not? What about dogecoin? What about hamster coin?

I asked this question in a hearing almost a year ago. One of my nice staffers, I was about to say pesky staffers, tapped me on the shoulder and said: Boss, there already is a hamster coin. So I said, well, gee, what about cobra? There is already a cobra coin.

So I went into the next hearing and said there might be a mongoose coin, and think of what a mongoose could do to a cobra. You know mongooses are able to kill any cobras, and of course a mongoose could really devour a hamster. I put that forward as a joke, identified it as a joke, and 4 hours later somebody created mongoose coin, and a few hours after that it allegedly had a value of hundreds of millions of dollars.

This self-mocking competition for some coins by other coins demonstrating there is an infinite number of coins, and any one of those coins could be more valuable than the other coin, ultimately will mean that crypto does not emerge as a currency. Compare that to governmental currencies. I mean, certain cryptocurrencies, including mongoose coin, today could be worth absolutely zero, whereas ethereum could be more valuable than bitcoin or not. Could be zero. Whereas the Uruguayan peso will always have a value because there will always be a Uruguay.

The capitalized value of all outstanding Uruguayan pesos will always be considerably less than the U.S. dollar because the United States will always be more important than Uruguay. So you know what the different currencies are tied to. You know the pecking order. You know the size of the United States economy, you know the size of the Uruguayan economy, and if you make up a country and print a currency, it is going to be worthless. You make up a cryptocurrency, could be as valuable as mongoose coin.

So crypto has no apparent value, and yet one cryptocoin competes with the other. I think this is a house of cards that collapses, but not right away. FTX was not the end of the story.

But let's say you are looking for a crypto exchange, God forbid. If you saw FTX, they had no audit at all, and I speak as I believe the only Democratic CPA returning to the next Congress.

□ 1600

I am an old auditor. No audit. You go to a Binance, which right now has had $3 billion withdrawn in the last 24 hours, and they have no audit, but they did have a proof of reserves done by an auditing firm, but a proof of reserves is not an audit.

Or you could go to Coinbase. They have an audit, but no internal control report on the audit. And if you listen to the testimony of John Ray before the Committee on Financial Services, he is the bankruptcy trustee for what's left of FTX, the focus of his problem or the problem he identified was no internal control.

So you look at the major exchanges, you don't have a true audit with an internal control audit on any of the ones I identified. You have to wonder, why would you want to play in that world.

Now, as I said, the SEC is acting way too slowly. And they need to be aggressive and go after every crypto exchange, if any of the crypto assets being exchanged is a security, and most of them in the opinion of the SEC, is a security.

I wish I could tell you it was cut and dry which cryptocurrencies were securities and which were not. Believe it or not, it all depends upon a statute passed in the 1930s and a court case decided in the 1940s; the Howey case.

And so it is probable but not certain that the vast majority but perhaps not all cryptocurrencies are subject to SEC jurisdiction. That is why Sam Bankman-Fried was here in Washington to try to get us to pass a statute that would reduce or eliminate the likelihood of success that the SEC would have in courts to show that cryptocurrencies are a security, and the crypto exchanges are securities exchanges.

I would hope that emboldened by recent events, that the SEC would shut down these exchanges. They are exchanging unregistered securities.

Now, I would hope that Congress would pass a law at least defining all cryptocurrencies as subject to SEC jurisdiction, but I think given the money and power of people who make money, literally—crypto billionaires, they make money by making money. They have a lot of it.

Now, I know that crypto is down about 60 percent from earlier this year. It is still a lot of money. In every other business, in order to make money, you have to make a product, provide a service. They have made money without doing any of that. It is a very profitable business. And so they will continue to press Congress, I fear successfully, into not passing legislation that undermines the SEC. But for God's sake, I don't think we will be able to pass this legislation making clear that the SEC has jurisdiction. They are going to have to win that one in the courts; I think they will. But for God's sake, let's make sure that we don't pass legislation that undermines the likelihood of the SEC winning in the courts.

Now, I would like to address a cousin of cryptocurrency, stablecoin. Talk about an oxymoron. Some stablecoins have absolutely collapsed. But a well-regulated stablecoin tied to the dollar is really just a money market fund but hipper. Because your grandfather invested in money market funds, coin sounds like cryptocurrency, and your grandfather doesn't understand that. I am not sure anybody understands it.

So stablecoin, if well regulated, is simply a money market fund, but invariably, it is a money market fund tied to crypto investing. If you have an account with a stockbroker, you no doubt have a money market fund where your cash is stored until you decide which stocks to buy, or which bonds to buy. So the money in that money market fund is awaiting deployment in investments that build the American economy.

Stablecoin is just another name for money market fund, but it will be tied to an account with a crypto broker awaiting deployment in dogecoin or mongoose coin or bitcoin, or ethereum, or any one of the cryptocurrencies.

So you can put me down as a skeptic of cryptocurrency. I think I have covered the reasons why it will not succeed, why investment in it is subject to a very substantial risk of theft. And why if, God forbid, and in the unlikely event that it does succeed, it will undermine the power of the U.S. Government to enforce our fiscal and white-collar laws.

I look forward to working with my colleagues to at least make sure that

we do not undercut the possibility of effective regulation of cryptocurrency, that perhaps we provide for the regulation and tough regulation of cryptocurrency with the Know Your Customer and the anti-money laundering statutes and that at least we do no harm.

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

REFLECTION OF TIME SERVED IN CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2021, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. KINZINGER) for 30 minutes.

Mr. KINZINGER. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today and for the next few minutes, I would like to reflect on my 12 years serving in this body.

I knew from a young age that I wanted to serve our Nation. While I was still in college, I was elected to the McLean County Board, the youngest person ever to do so.

In 2003, I was commissioned in the Air Force, a responsibility that I took very seriously, and one I still serve to this day.

Returning from Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom, I ran for Congress, and I won.

Well, at the time I didn't have a family, I promised to myself to leave them a better country than the one that I inherited. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, I cannot in good conscience say that I have done that.

When preparing this speech, I knew that reflecting on our country's past would be the guiding light to our destiny.

What made the experiment of our great Nation so remarkable was that the American people put their faith in their fellow citizens to tell the truth and make difficult choices.

We have taken these ideals for granted for far too long. Instead of using our platform to advance the well-being of our Nation and our people, we have turned this institution into an echo chamber of lies.

Coming home from war, I truly believed that American democracy was infallible.

How could a Nation that fought a civil war for the freedom of all, a Nation that vanquished fascism and communism in Europe, how could it falter.

How could we stand atop Mount Everest only to decide that we prefer to fight in the mud.

I have sworn an oath, both in uniform and in this office, to protect this Nation and its Constitution. While overseas, I witnessed the dangers that radicalization of beliefs can have on people in Iraq and Afghanistan. Sadly, since coming to Congress, I have watched how Republicans and Democrats have weaponized fear in much the same way.

We must not abandon our values or our beliefs in the U.S. Constitution. We all swore an oath in this very Chamber to support and defend the Constitution of the United States, not a political party and not a single man. Let us renew this belief while casting out those who take the unprecedented call to abolish this sacred document.

Just as Lady Justice looks upon the Constitution and the Old Supreme Court one floor below us, we must remove the blindfold of politics and govern for all Americans when we are executing our duties.

Where Republicans once believed that limited government meant lower taxes and more autonomy, today, limited government means inciting violence against government officials.

Following the tragic Oklahoma City bombing, former President George H.W. Bush publicly refuted those who used fear to gain support. In stark contrast, our leaders today belittle, and in some cases, justify attacks on the U.S. Capitol as ''legitimate political discourse.''

The once great party of Lincoln, Roosevelt, and Reagan has turned its back on the ideals of liberty and self-governance. Instead, it has embraced lies and deceit.

The Republican Party used to believe in the big tent, which welcomed the tired, the poor, the huddled masses yearning to breathe free. Now, we shelter the ignorant, the racists, who only stoke anger and hatred to those who are different than us.

Our constituents voted us in based on our beliefs, but we cannot use our faith as a sword and a shield while ignoring the fact that we are all children of God, that we are all Americans.

To my Democratic colleagues, you must, too, bear the burden of our failures. Many of you have asked me, Where are all the good Republicans?

Over the past 2 years, Democratic leadership had the opportunity to stand above the fray. Instead, they poured millions of dollars into the campaigns of MAGA Republicans, the same candidates President Biden called a national security threat, to ensure these good Republicans did not make it out of their respective primaries.

This is no longer politics as usual. This is not a game. If you keep stoking the fire, you can't point the fingers when our great experiment goes up in flames.

Unfortunately, there are too few Republicans and Democrats that have the spines to stand up and put country over party. This is not how our Founding Fathers intended for our democracy to function, because, Mr. Speaker, our democracy is not functioning.

When one party's megaphone echoes calls for a civil war and the other tacitly, and in some cases, openly supports it, then we are clearly lost, Mr. Speaker.

Much like the Titanic on its maiden voyage, if Republicans and Democrats don't urgently course correct, I fear we will hit the iceberg right in front of us.

While our politics are more divided now than any time over the past 160 years, we are often reminded of the magic of America at its best.

Following tragedies like the Boston Marathon bombing, or Hurricanes Sandy and Harvey, Americans from all walks of life banded together to support their neighbor, regardless of their political affiliation. Through hardship, hope reigns.

With this in mind, we cannot allow the loudest voice in the room to become the voice of reason. While we in recent years have failed our constituents, there have been times when we have come together to find commonsense solutions to some of the pressing challenges of our times. As a Nation, we achieve more when we work together.

Americans deserve a democracy that values truthful leaders and real dialogue between our parties. It is my belief that we have to put aside our differences and remember that the Nation itself will only survive if the people have faith in one another.

Unfortunately, we now live in a world where lies trump truth, where democracy is being challenged by authoritarianism. If we, America's elected leaders, do not search within ourselves for a way out, I fear that this great experiment will fall into the ash heap of history.

To millions of Americans looking for solutions, not lies, it is up to us to ensure that this ship does not sink. We are being challenged at home and abroad. We must not crumble under the gravity of this moment.

So many men and women around the world would die and have died trying to achieve what we have in the United States. So many of America's sons and daughters, many of whom were my friends, have died protecting it.

As we continue to navigate a challenging and changing world, we must remember the past. Whenever the United States turns its back on humanity, we all suffer the consequences.

Western appeasement of Hitler not only led to the Second World War, but also the genocide of millions of Jews across Europe. Believing that we could leave Europe destroyed following the demise of Nazi Germany only emboldened Communist Russia to repress the Eastern Continent for nearly five decades. Only through continued American engagement did we defeat communism and liberate our European allies to enjoy their God-given freedoms.

Unfortunately, we once again retreated from the world thinking that no one would challenge the sole superpower. Our hubris left a window for 19 men armed with box cutters to murder 2,996 Americans here at home. History has proven that American isolation from world affairs is dangerous.

Over the years, I have been privileged to lead the effort on supporting American leadership in a world drowning in faux strongmen.

Advocating for the rights of Syrian men, women, and children to live without fear of Assad's death squads

shouldn't be political, it is just simply the right thing to do.

Advocating for a stronger American assistance in Ukraine to counter Putin's illegal invasion shouldn't be political, it is just the right thing to do.

By supporting those who believe in freedom, we advance the interests of the American people. Should this Congress or any future Congress decide to turn their back on our alliances and commitments, it will do nothing but embolden our adversaries. None more than the Chinese Communist Party.

□ 1615

It is all but certain that China is gauging their tolerance for pain based on our response to Ukraine. Should we fail to support our allies in Kyiv, China will unleash their own imperial aspiration across the region.

Had I known that standing up for truth would cost me my job, friendships, and even my personal security, I would, without hesitation, do it all over again.

I can rest easy at night knowing that I fulfilled my oath to the office. I know many in this institution cannot do the same.

Some of my most rewarding and memorable accomplishments in Congress have come from working to solve issues directly impacting the 16th District and Illinois as a whole.

Whether it was fighting the opioid epidemic or keeping nuclear power plants running and our bridges standing, to responding to more emergent events like flooding, tornadoes, and even a global pandemic, these projects always felt so personal to me, and I took them seriously.

Even though my time in Congress is coming to an end, I stand here renewing that promise I made over a decade ago to leave this country a far better place than the one I inherited, not only for my son, Christian, but also for future generations.

In closing, I need to first thank God Almighty for his blessings. Without his guidance and protection, I would not be where I am today.

I also thank the hundreds of thousands of Illinoisans who placed their trust in me to represent them in this Chamber. While we may not have always agreed on every issue, I always worked to best represent my constituents and my Nation.

I certainly would not be the man I am today without my family. For my parents, Rus and Jodi Kinzinger, to my wife and newborn son, Sofia and Christian, you have all lifted me in my time of need. While others fled, you stood your ground, and you supported me through thick and thin. For this, I am eternally grateful.

Last but not least, I need to thank my staff, both past and present. Over my 12 years in Congress, I had the privilege of having dedicated young men and women who sacrificed long hours, weekends, holidays, and special events in support of my goals.

Without them, legislating would have been impossible. They serve on the front lines every day, prosecuting casework for my countless constituents, advancing my legislation, and taking the brunt of the vitriol from angry and lost individuals. Their work was never easy, and they never wavered.

I especially thank my chief of staff, Austin Weatherford; my deputy chief of staff and district director, Bonnie Walsh; my legislative director, Sebastian De Luca; my deputy district director, Patrick Doggett; my policy adviser, Paul Laurie; my field representatives and caseworkers, Greg Ridenour, Casey Gross, Luke Phalen, and Leah Bohlmann; my communications director, Theresa Reed; my legislative correspondent, Luke Sandlin; my press assistant, Emily Hayes; and my staff assistant, Anna Brooks Reed.

I was truly blessed to have such a dedicated staff to advise me through this whole process. They have become like family, and I will never forget the work they have done in service to their Nation and me.

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

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

Cheryl L. Johnson. Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled bills of the House of the following titles, which were thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.R. 228. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 2141 Ferry Street in Anderson, California, as the ''Norma Comnick Post Office Building''.

H.R. 263. An act to amend the Lacey Act Amendments of 1981 to clarify provisions enacted by the Captive Wildlife Safety Act, to further the conservation of certain wildlife species, and for other purposes.

H.R. 310. An act to posthumously award the Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to Glen Doherty, Tyrone Woods, J. Christopher Stevens, and Sean Smith, in recognition of their contributions to the Nation.

H.R. 700. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 303 East Mississippi Avenue in Elwood, Illinois, as the ''Lawrence M. 'Larry' Walsh Sr. Post Office''.

H.R. 1193. An act to amend title IV of the Public Health Service Act to direct the Director of the National Institutes of Health, in consultation with the Director of the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, to establish a program under which the Director of the National Institutes of Health shall support or conduct research on valvular heart disease, and for other purposes.

H.R. 2220. An act to amend title 40, United States Code, to modify the treatment of certain bargain-price options to purchase at less than fair market value, and for other purposes.

H.R. 2930. An act to enhance protections of Native American tangible cultural heritage, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3175. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 135 Main Street in Biloxi, Mississippi, as the ''Robert S. McKeithen Post Office Building''.

H.R. 3462. An act to require an annual report on the cybersecurity of the Small Business Administration, and for other purposes.

H.R. 5481. An act to name the Department of Veterans Affairs community-based outpatient clinic in Forest City, North Carolina, as the ''Master Sergeant Jerry K. Crump VA Clinic''.

H.R. 5796. An act to amend title 35, United States Code, to establish a competition to award certificates that can be redeemed to accelerate certain matters at the Patent and Trademark Office, and for other purposes.

H.R. 6614. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 4744 Grand River Avenue in Detroit, Michigan, as the ''Rosa Louise McCauley Parks Post Office Building''.

H.R. 6722. An act to designate the Department of Veterans Affairs community-based outpatient clinic in French Camp, California, as the ''Richard A. Pittman VA Clinic''.

H.R. 6863. An act to designate the medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Memphis, Tennessee as the ''Lt. Col. Luke Weathers, Jr. VA Medical Center''.

H.R. 7077. An act to require the United States Fire Administration to conduct onsite investigations of major fires, and for other purposes.

H.R. 7535. An act to encourage the migration of Federal Government information technology systems to quantum-resistant cryptography, and for other purposes.

H.R. 7903. An act to designate the Department of Veterans Affairs community-based outpatient clinic located in Canton, Michigan, as the ''Major General Oliver W. Dillard VA Clinic.''

H.R. 7925. An act to designate the Department of Veterans Affairs community-based outpatient clinic located in Palm Desert, California, as the ''Sy Kaplan VA Clinic''.

SENATE ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

The Speaker announced her signature to enrolled bills of the Senate of the following titles:

S. 198.—An act to require the Federal Communications Commission to incorporate data on maternal health outcomes into its broadband health maps.

S. 231.—An act to direct the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to develop guidance for firefighters and other emergency response personnel on best practices to protect them from exposure to PFAS and to limit and prevent the release of PFAS into the environment, and for other purposes.

S. 314.—An act to repeal the Klamath Tribe Judgment Fund Act.

S. 1617.—An act to modify the requirements for the Administrator of the Small Business Administration relating to declaring a disaster in a rural area, and for other purposes.

S. 2796.—An act to amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to provide or the eligibility of rural community response pilot programs for funding under the Comprehensive Opioid Abuse Grant Program, and for other purposes.

S. 3092.—An act to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to improve the provision of certain disaster assistance, and for other purposes.

S. 3115.—An act to remove the 4-year sunset from the Pro bono Work to Empower and Represent Act of 2018.

S. 3499.—An act to amend the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act of 2006 to repeal certain obsolete requirements, and for other purposes.

S. 3662.—An act to temporarily increase the cost share authority for aqueous film

forming foam input-based testing equipment, and for other purposes.

S. 3825.—An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 3903 Melear Drive in Arlington, Texas, as the ''Ron Wright Post Office Building''.

S. 3875.—An act to require the President to develop and maintain products that show the risk of natural hazards across the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 4017.—An act to designate the United States courthouse located at 111 South Highland Avenue in Jackson, Tennessee, as the ''James D. Todd United States Courthouse'', and for other purposes.

S. 4052.—An act to reauthorize a program for early detection, diagnosis and treatment regarding deaf and hard-of-hearing newborns, infants, and young children, and for other purposes.

S. 4834.—An act to reauthorize the National Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force Program.

S. 5060.—An act to designate the Federal building located at 212 Third Avenue South in Minneapolis, Minnesota, as the ''Paul D. Wellstone Federal Building'', and for other purposes.

ADJOURNMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 1 of House Resolution 1230, the House stands adjourned until 9:30 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon (at 4 o'clock and 18 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Friday, December 16, 2022, at 9:30 a.m.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. GRIJALVA: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 2641. A bill to amend the Reclamation Project Act of 1939 to authorize pumped storage hydropower development utilizing multiple Bureau of Reclamation reservoirs (Rept. 117–644). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. GRIJALVA: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 2415. A bill to amend the Energy Policy Act of 2005 to require the Secretary of the Interior to establish a program to permanently plug, remediate, and reclaim orphaned wells and the surrounding lands and to provide funds to States and Tribal Governments to permanently plug, remediate, and reclaim orphaned wells and the surrounding lands, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 117–645). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. KILMER: Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress. Final Report Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress (Rept. 117–646). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. SMITH of Washington: Committee on Armed Services. House Resolution 1475. Resolution of inquiry requesting the President and directing the Secretary of Defense to transmit to the House of Representatives any record created on or after January 21, 2021, under the control of the President or the Secretary, respectively, that refers to the Department of Defense and includes certain terms and phrases relating to gender, adversely, with an amendment (Rept. 117–647). Referred to the House Calendar.

TIME LIMITATION OF REFERRED BILL

Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XII, the following action was taken by the Speaker:

H.R. 6102. Referral to the Committee on Ways and Means extended for a period ending not later than December 23, 2022.

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 Mr. CURTIS (for himself and Mrs. DINGELL):

H.R. 9567. A bill to allow additional individuals to enroll in standalone dental plans offered through Federal Exchanges; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. ARMSTRONG:

H.R. 9568. A bill to direct the Attorney General to establish a grant program for certain State and local forensic activities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio (for himself and Ms. SCHRIER):

H.R. 9569. A bill to direct the Federal Communications Commission to issue rules for the provision of emergency connectivity service, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. HUIZENGA (for himself and Mr. AUCHINCLOSS):

H.R. 9570. A bill to direct the Securities and Exchange Commission to promulgate rules with respect to the electronic delivery of certain required disclosures, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. BARR:

H.R. 9571. A bill to amend title II of the Public Health Services to provide clarity with respect to coverage of claims against health care practitioners providing health professional volunteer services at community health centers during declared emergencies; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mrs. BEATTY (for herself and Ms. BROWN of Ohio):

H.R. 9572. A bill to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to enter into an arrangement with the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine to conduct a comprehensive study on the health care impacts of the use of kinetic impact projectiles in the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. BEYER:

H.R. 9573. A bill to amend section 207 of title 18, United States Code, to prohibit former political appointees from investing in or serving in a managerial role in an investment fund in which a foreign principal owns shares within a certain time period if such investment or managerial role is based on conversations between such appointee and such foreign principal while such appointee was employed by the Federal Government, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BLUMENAUER (for himself, Mr. FITZPATRICK, and Mr. PHILLIPS):

H.R. 9574. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a partially refundable credit against payroll taxes for certain restaurants affected by the COVID-19 pandemic; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mrs. BOEBERT (for herself, Mr. DUNCAN, Mrs. MILLER of Illinois, Mr. GOSAR, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. BUCK, Mr. STEUBE, Mr. BOST, Mr. NORMAN, Mr. BIGGS, Mr. HICE of Georgia, Mr. CLYDE, Mr. HARRIS, Mr. JACKSON, and Mrs. HARSHBARGER):

H.R. 9575. A bill to prohibit any employee or contractor of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement or the Department of Health and Human Services from transporting any alien across State lines for the purpose of procuring an abortion for such alien; 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 Ms. CASTOR of Florida (for herself and Mr. LEVIN of Michigan):

H.R. 9576. A bill to require the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to develop and carry out a benchmarking and transparency initiative for commercial and multifamily properties to advance knowledge about building energy and water use and greenhouse gas emissions and inform efforts to reduce energy and water consumption and greenhouse gas emissions nationwide, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Ms. CHU (for herself, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. SMITH of Missouri, and Mr. MULLIN):

H.R. 9577. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to expand access to psychological and behavioral services; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on 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. CICILLINE (for himself, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. BOWMAN, Ms. BROWNLEY, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. CARSON, Mr. CASTEN, Ms. CHU, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. DESAULNIER, Mr. ESPAILLAT, Mr. EVANS, Mr. GOMEZ, Mr. GREEN of Texas, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. JONES, Mr. LAMB, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. LIEU, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. MCNERNEY, Ms. NEWMAN, Ms. NORTON, Mr. PAYNE, Ms. PINGREE, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. TAKANO, Ms. TLAIB, Mr. TORRES of New York, Mr. VARGAS, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Ms. WILLIAMS of Georgia, and Ms. WILSON of Florida):

H.R. 9578. A bill to provide that Donald J. Trump is ineligible to again hold the office of President of the United States or to hold any office, civil or military, under the United States; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CROW (for himself and Ms. WILSON of Florida):

H.R. 9579. A bill to allow Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Program assistance be used to reduce racial and ethnic disparities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and Labor.

By Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois:

H.R. 9580. A bill to improve the identification and support of children and families who experience trauma; to the Committee on Education and Labor, and in addition to the Committees on Energy and Commerce, and 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. DONALDS (for himself, Mr. NEHLS, Mr. GUEST, Mr. BOST, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, and Mr. FEENSTRA):

H.R. 9581. A bill to provide emergency relief for American short line railroads, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. FOSTER (for himself and Mr. FEENSTRA):

H.R. 9582. A bill to amend the National Windstorm Impact Reduction Act of 2004 to reauthorize the National Windstorm Impact Reduction Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, and in addition to the Committee on 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 Mr. GOHMERT:

H.R. 9583. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide protections for nonviolent political protesters, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Intelligence (Permanent Select), 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. HUDSON (for himself and Mr. CORREA):

H.R. 9584. A bill to improve patient access to health care services and provide improved medical care by reducing the excessive burden the liability system places on the health care delivery system; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. JACOBS of New York:

H.R. 9585. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to impose a tax on foreign-owned under-utilized residential real property; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. LEVIN of Michigan (for himself and Ms. CASTOR of Florida):

H.R. 9586. A bill to require the establishment of a national model building performance standards initiative, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on 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 Mr. LEVIN of Michigan:

H.R. 9587. A bill to promote the establishment of resident organizations and provide additional amounts for tenant organizations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committee on 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. LUETKEMEYER (for himself, Mr. HILL, Mr. TIMMONS, Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas, Mr. GOODEN of Texas, Mr. LUCAS, and Mr. DAVIDSON):

H.R. 9588. A bill to amend the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act to provide a national standard for financial institution data security and breach notification on behalf of all consumers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. MCHENRY (for himself and Mr. PANETTA):

H.R. 9589. A bill to ensure the successful development of the electronic Income Verification Express Service of the Internal Revenue Service by amending the Taxpayer First Act to clarify that taxpayer identity verification is the responsibility of users of the system rather than the taxpayer, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin (for herself and Mr. CARSON):

H.R. 9590. A bill to encourage, enhance, and integrate Green Alert plans throughout the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. MORELLE:

H.R. 9591. A bill to require the Secretary of Agriculture to initiate hearings to review Federal milk marketing orders relating to pricing of Class I skim milk, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Mr. NEHLS (for himself and Ms. HOULAHAN):

H.R. 9592. A bill to amend title 49, United States Code, with respect to restroom access for certain drivers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. PANETTA:

H.R. 9593. A bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to Everett Alvarez, Jr., in recognition of his service to the Nation; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. PANETTA (for himself and Ms. CONWAY):

H.R. 9594. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide benefits under the Medicare program for first responders at the age of 57; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. PAPPAS (for himself and Mr. NEWHOUSE):

H.R. 9595. A bill to extend the temporary order for fentanyl-related substances; 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. PFLUGER (for himself, Mr. ELLZEY, and Ms. SHERRILL):

H.R. 9596. A bill to require a determination of whether certain Chinese entities are responsible for human rights abuses that meet the criteria for the imposition of sanctions under the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act or the Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act of 2020; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, 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. PORTER (for herself, Mr. GRIJALVA, and Mr. LOWENTHAL):

H.R. 9597. A bill to create a coordinated domestic wildlife disease surveillance framework for State, Tribal, and local governments to monitor and respond to wildlife disease outbreaks to prevent pandemics, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committees on Agriculture, and Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. SMITH of New Jersey:

H.R. 9598. A bill to require a strategy for countering the People's Republic of China; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committees on Armed Services, Ways and Means, and Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. SMITH of New Jersey:

H.R. 9599. A bill to require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to revise the Mandatory Guidelines for Federal Workplace Drug Testing Programs to include testing for methadone use and to require the Secretary of Transportation to issue regulations to include testing for methadone use in Department of Transportation drug tests; to the Committee on Oversight and Reform, and in addition to the Committee on 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 Ms. SPEIER (for herself, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mr. KHANNA, Ms. ESHOO, Ms. BARRAGÁN, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Ms. BROWNLEY, Ms. LEE of California, and Mr. LEVIN of California):

H.R. 9600. A bill to designate the Range of Light National Monument in the State of California, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. TIFFANY (for himself and Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia):

H.R. 9601. A bill to ensure that homicides can be prosecuted under Federal law without regard to the time elapsed between the act or omission that caused the death of the victim and the death itself; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. UNDERWOOD:

H.R. 9602. A bill to improve the public health response to addressing maternal mortality and morbidity during the COVID-19 public health emergency; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committees on Education and Labor, and 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 Mrs. WAGNER:

H.R. 9603. A bill to improve the consideration by the Securities and Exchange Commission of the costs and benefits of its regulations and orders; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Ms. WILD (for herself and Mr. FITZPATRICK):

H.R. 9604. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to promote the matriculation, and increase in the graduation rates, of individuals with disabilities within higher education; to the Committee on Education and Labor.

By Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas:

H.R. 9605. A bill to amend the Securities Act of 1933 to expand the research report exception to include reports about any issuer that undertakes a proposed offering of public securities; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. WILSON of South Carolina (for himself, Mr. GOTTHEIMER, Ms. TENNEY, and Mr. VICENTE GONZALEZ of Texas):

H.R. 9606. A bill to direct the Secretary of State to review whether certain Iranian officials are eligible for entry into the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BARR (for himself, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. HUIZENGA, Mr. MURPHY of North Carolina, Mr. STEIL, Mr. HILL, and Mr. FINSTAD):

H.J. Res. 103. A joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of Labor relating to ''Prudence and Loyalty in Selecting

Plan Investments and Exercising Shareholder Rights''; to the Committee on Education and Labor.

By Mr. GOTTHEIMER (for himself, Ms. ADAMS, Ms. BONAMICI, Ms. BOURDEAUX, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. CARBAJAL, Mr. CICILLINE, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. COHEN, Mr. COSTA, Ms. CRAIG, Mr. CROW, Mr. CUELLAR, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Ms. DEGETTE, Mr. EVANS, Ms. LOIS FRANKEL of Florida, Mr. GARBARINO, Ms. GARCIA of Texas, Mr. GOLDEN, Mr. VICENTE GONZALEZ of Texas, Mr. GONZALEZ of Ohio, Mr. GREEN of Texas, Ms. JACOBS of California, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota, Mr. JONES, Mr. JOYCE of Ohio, Mr. KATKO, Mrs. KIM of California, Mr. KIM of New Jersey, Mr. LAHOOD, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mrs. LEE of Nevada, Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ, Mr. LIEU, Mrs. LURIA, Mr. MALINOWSKI, Ms. MALLIOTAKIS, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Mrs. MCBATH, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. MEIJER, Ms. MENG, Mr. MEUSER, Mr. MOULTON, Mrs. MURPHY of Florida, Mr. NEGUSE, Ms. NORTON, Ms. OMAR, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. PANETTA, Mr. PAPPAS, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. PETERS, Mr. PHILLIPS, Mr. RASKIN, Mr. RICE of South Carolina, Mr. RYAN of New York, Ms. SALAZAR, Mr. SCHNEIDER, Mr. SHERMAN, Ms. SHERRILL, Mr. SIRES, Ms. SLOTKIN, Ms. SPANBERGER, Ms. STEVENS, Mr. STEWART, Mr. SUOZZI, Mr. SWALWELL, Ms. TITUS, Mr. TORRES of New York, Mr. TRONE, Mr. UPTON, Mr. VALADAO, Mr. VAN DREW, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. WESTERMAN, Ms. WILD, Ms. WILLIAMS of Georgia, Mr. BACON, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Ms. MANNING, and Ms. BROWN of Ohio):

H. Res. 1525. A resolution condemning antisemitism by public figures; to the Committee on the Judiciary, 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. LEVIN of Michigan (for himself, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Ms. SLOTKIN, Mrs. SPARTZ, Ms. WILD, and Mrs. WAGNER):

H. Res. 1526. A resolution condemning the illegal abduction of children from Ukraine to the Russian Federation; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. TAKANO (for himself, Mr. CICILLINE, and Mr. COHEN):

H. Res. 1527. A resolution condemning former President Donald J. Trump's calls to terminate the Constitution on the basis of false allegations of widespread voter fraud in the 2020 Presidential election; 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 Mr. CURTIS:

H.R. 9567.

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

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3

By Mr. ARMSTRONG:

H.R. 9568.

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

Article 1, Section 8, Clauses 1, 3, and 18

By Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio:

H.R. 9569.

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

Article 1, Section 8 of the US Constitution

By Mr. HUIZENGA:

H.R. 9570.

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

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. BARR:

H.R. 9571.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18

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

By Mrs. BEATTY:

H.R. 9572.

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

Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution of the United States

By Mr. BEYER:

H.R. 9573.

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

The constitutional authority on which this bill rests is the power of Congress to make rules for the government and regulation of the land and naval force, as enumerated in Article I, Section 8, Clause 15 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. BLUMENAUER:

H.R. 9574.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the Constitution

By Mrs. BOEBERT:

H.R. 9575.

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

The Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States

By Ms. CASTOR of Florida:

H.R. 9576.

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

Article I, Section 8

By Ms. CHU:

H.R. 9577.

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

Clause 1, Section 8, Article 1 of the US Constitution

By Mr. CICILLINE:

H.R. 9578.

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

Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution of the United States

Section 3 of the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution of the United States

By Mr. CROW:

H.R. 9579.

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

Clause 18 of Section 8 of Article I of the Constitution

By Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois:

H.R. 9580.

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. DONALDS:

H.R. 9581.

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

Art. I, Sec. 8 of the U.S. Constitution

By Mr. FOSTER:

H.R. 9582.

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

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. GOHMERT:

H.R. 9583.

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

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. HUDSON:

H.R. 9584.

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

Article 1, Section 8 of the Constitution.

By Mr. JACOBS of New York:

H.R. 9585.

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

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. LEVIN of Michigan:

H.R. 9586.

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

Article 1, Section 1 of the Constitution.

By Mr. LEVIN of Michigan:

H.R. 9587.

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

Article 1, Section 1 of the Constitution.

By Mr. LUETKEMEYER:

H.R. 9588.

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

The constitutional authority on which this bill rests is the explicit power of Congress to regulate commerce in and among the states, as enumerate in Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3, the Commerce Clause, of the United States Constitution, and Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1, which grants Congress the ability to make laws necessary to carry out that power. Additionally, Article I, Section 7, Clause 2 of the Constitution allows for every bill passed by the House of Representatives and the Senate and signed by the President to be made law; and therefore it implicitly allows Congress to amend any bill that has been passed by both chambers and signed into law by the President.

By Mr. MCHENRY:

H.R. 9589.

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

The Congress shall have power to lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts and excises, to pay the debts and provide for the common defense and general welfare of the United States

By Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin:

H.R. 9590.

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

Article 1, Section 8

By Mr. MORELLE:

H.R. 9591.

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

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. NEHLS:

H.R. 9592.

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

Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. PANETTA:

H.R. 9593.

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

Article I, Section 8, clause 18

By Mr. PANETTA:

H.R. 9594.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18

By Mr. PAPPAS:

H.R. 9595.

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

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18 of the United States Constitution states that ''Congress shall have the authority to make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by the Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.''

By Mr. PFLUGER:

H.R. 9596.

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

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18 of the U.S. Constitution

By Ms. PORTER:

H.R. 9597.

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

Article 1, Section 8

By Mr. SMITH of New Jersey:

H.R. 9598.

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

Article I, Section 8 of the US Constitution

By Mr. SMITH of New Jersey:

H.R. 9599.

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

Article 1 Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution

By Ms. SPEIER:

H.R. 9600.

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

Article 1, Section 8: Congress shall have the power to regulate commerce among the states, and provide for the general welfare.

By Mr. TIFFANY:

H.R. 9601.

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

Article 1, Section 8, of the United States Constitution

By Ms. UNDERWOOD:

H.R. 9602.

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

Article 1, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution.

By Mrs. WAGNER:

H.R. 9603.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3

By Ms. WILD:

H.R. 9604.

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

Article I Section VIII

By Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas:

H.R. 9605.

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

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3:

To regulate commerce with states, other nations, and Native American tribes.

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18:

Authority to create laws that are necessary and proper to carry out the laws of the land (Necessary and Proper Clause)

By Mr. WILSON of South Carolina:

H.R. 9606.

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

Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. BARR:

H.J. Res. 103.

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

Section 8 of article I of the Constitution.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

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

H.R. 193: Mr. SESSIONS.

H.R. 1010: Mr. CROW.

H.R. 1255: Mr. MEIJER and Mr. DESJARLAIS.

H.R. 1661: Mr. LARSON of Connecticut.

H.R. 2143: Mr. QUIGLEY.

H.R. 2144: Mr. FLOOD.

H.R. 2163: Mr. STANTON, Mr. MRVAN, Mrs. DEMINGS, Mr. MOULTON, and Mr. CARSON.

H.R. 2213: Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 2252: Mrs. PELTOLA and Mr. PENCE.

H.R. 2489: Mr. LEVIN of California.

H.R. 2566: Mr. GROTHMAN.

H.R. 2717: Mr. PANETTA.

H.R. 2734: Mr. LEVIN of California.

H.R. 2820: Mr. LARSON of Connecticut.

H.R. 2840: Mr. RYAN of New York.

H.R. 3135: Mr. KIM of New Jersey.

H.R. 3530: Mr. SESSIONS.

H.R. 4146: Mr. LYNCH.

H.R. 4779: Mr. CARTWRIGHT.

H.R. 5030: Ms. PORTER, Mr. CROW, Mr. POCAN, and Mr. DESAULNIER.

H.R. 5989: Mr. VEASEY.

H.R. 6117: Mr. CLEAVER and Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois.

H.R. 7079: Mr. CUELLAR.

H.R. 7305: Mr. LEVIN of California.

H.R. 7506: Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois and Mr. CRENSHAW.

H.R. 7517: Mr. HARDER of California.

H.R. 7772: Mr. SESSIONS.

H.R. 8015: Mr. LEVIN of California.

H.R. 8190: Mr. DESAULNIER.

H.R. 8614: Mr. COHEN.

H.R. 8616: Mr. SMITH of Washington and Mr. FINSTAD.

H.R. 8685: Ms. ROSS.

H.R. 8709: Mr. SESSIONS.

H.R. 8710: Mr. SESSIONS.

H.R. 8832: Ms. KUSTER.

H.R. 9033: Mr. MAST and Mr. BURGESS.

H.R. 9044: Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, and Mr. VEASEY.

H.R. 9104: Ms. SÁNCHEZ.

H.R. 9208: Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. COHEN, and Mr. MCGOVERN.

H.R. 9260: Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. CALVERT, and Ms. CASTOR of Florida.

H.R. 9275: Mr. NEGUSE.

H.R. 9389: Mr. FINSTAD.

H.R. 9394: Mrs. FLORES.

H.R. 9419: Ms. JACKSON LEE and Mr. VEASEY.

H.R. 9460: Mr. COHEN and Mr. SHERMAN.

H.R. 9482: Mr. CARBAJAL and Mr. LOWENTHAL.

H.R. 9503: Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois and Ms. JAYAPAL.

H.R. 9527: Mr. JOYCE of Ohio and Mr. BURGESS.

H.R. 9555: Ms. CASTOR of Florida and Mr. BLUMENAUER.

H.R. 9558: Mr. ALLRED.

H.J. Res. 11: Mr. FINSTAD.

H.J. Res. 87: Mr. PAPPAS.

H. Res. 174: Mrs. AXNE, Ms. OMAR, Mr. PHILLIPS, and Ms. BUSH.

H. Res. 404: Mr. SCHIFF.

H. Res. 644: Mr. SESSIONS.

H. Res. 1069: Mr. RUIZ.

H. Res. 1294: Mr. PANETTA, Mrs. KIM of California, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, and Mr. KEATING.

H. Res. 1392: Mr. BLUMENAUER.

PETITIONS, ETC.

Under clause 3 of rule XII,

PT-157. The SPEAKER presented a petition of the City of Coral Gables, Florida, relative to Resolution No. 2022-261, urging the United States Congress to enact a Carbon Border Adjustment; which was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means.

United States of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 117th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 168 WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2022 No. 195

Senate

The Senate met at 10 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.

Eternal and ever blessed God, whose Name is love, put Your love in our hearts. Lord, teach us to love so that our primary aim in life will be to please You. Teach us to love so that our passion for You will provide the foundation of our obedience. Teach us to love so that worship will not be a duty but a delight. Teach us to love so that our greatest fear will be to disappoint You. Teach our lawmakers to love so that they will always be quick to help and to forgive. Lord, teach all of us to love so that justice will roll down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.

We pray in Your loving 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.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination, which the clerk will report:

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Musetta Tia Johnson, of Virginia, to be a Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces for a term of fifteen years to expire on the date prescribed by law.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KING). The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The majority leader is recognized.

CHINA

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, this morning, the Biden administration announced they are taking action to counter the Chinese Communist Party's threat to our national security. Just a few moments ago, the Department of Commerce said they would formally add Wuhan-based YMTC and 35 other Chinese companies to the so-called Entity List, blocking them from purchasing critical technology from American businesses.

I am glad this decision has finally arrived because I have long sounded the alarm on the economic and national security threats posed by YMTC and other CCP-backed technology companies, like CXMT and SMIC. YMTC poses an immediate threat to our national security so the Biden administration needed to act swiftly to prevent YMTC from gaining even an inch of military or economic advantage. I am glad that they are heeding our calls as well as calls from other Members on both sides of the aisle.

Of course, YMTC is a well-known chip supplier for Huawei, one of the biggest companies that pose a risk to U.S. security interests. Any supplier of Huawei is no friend of the United States because the risks are too great and the entanglements of these companies with CCP and Chinese military are too treacherous. This is a necessary and prudent step by the administration.

The administration's announcement also comes on the heels of my amendment with Senator CORNYN to the National Defense Act that would remove YMTC as well as SMIC and CXMT from our Federal supply chains entirely. It is a one-two punch: The administration blacklists these companies from doing business, and here in Congress we will shut them out even further from U.S. supply chains. Of course, this is about more than just a single group of businesses stretching their tentacles into our country. It is about holding firm against a CCP that has become more emboldened and oppressive over the recent years.

The 21st century will be largely shaped by our two giant economies. For decades, the Chinese Communist Party has cheated their way to the top by piggybacking off American technologies and American IP, with huge implications for our security and for our edge in AI, cyber security, telecom, and other major technologies. Whoever masters the technologies of tomorrow will be able to reshape the world in their image this century. And if the CCP gets there first, it will spell dark times for democracy, for freedom, and for American prosperity and American jobs.

Today's decision by the administration will provide one more firewall we

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

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all need to keep the CCP's authoritarian designs in check. I applaud the administration for taking this important step.

BUSINESS BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. President, on the CR, the omni, and NDAA, last night, the House of Representatives passed a 1-week continuing resolution that will keep the government open long enough for us to pass a bipartisan yearlong omnibus. Negotiations keep trending in the right direction, but we still have a lot of work left to do and not enough time to do it unless we extend government funding for another week.

Let me put it a different way. As of this morning, the Senate will now require consent from both parties if we want to pass a CR before funding runs out tomorrow at midnight. We should move quickly to avert a shutdown today, without any unwelcome brouhaha that has caused shutdowns in years past.

Democrats are ready together at a moment's notice, and I hope Republicans will stand ready too. Both sides are going to spend a day to work on an agreement to get the week-long CR done. We should have no drama, no gridlock, and no delay on passing a weeklong CR.

Just remember, those who demand something happen and risk shutting down the government almost always lose. Let me say that again: No drama, no gridlock, no delay. That is the recipe right now for avoiding a shutdown within the next 48 hours. I am very hopeful we will get that done with time to spare. For the last 2 years, the 117th Congress hasn't had a single government shutdown, not one, not even for a day. I hope we don't start now just as we approach the finish line. Recent history shows that those who risk shutdowns with hopes of scoring political points ultimately lose in the end.

Once we pass the CR, we can make progress toward an omnibus. I have said it time and time again, a yearlong omnibus is the best and most balanced option to fund our government. An omnibus is the best approach because it will ensure that our kids, our veterans, our small businesses, and our military continue to have full access to vital services and programs they depend on. An omnibus is the most balanced approach because it would contain priorities both sides want to see: funding for Ukraine; the ECA, Electoral Count Act; and full implementation of CHIPS and Science; the PACT Act; and more. We worked so hard together on these bills. Let's now work together again to implement them fully.

As we continue negotiating to pass a 1-week CR and an omni, both sides will keep working on an agreement to pass the NDAA, hopefully, today. We are trying to do it as soon as today. The NDAA has been a consistently bipartisan effort for every year for more than six decades. I do not expect this year to be any different, and I thank Chairman REED and all my colleagues for their good work on this bill.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Republican Leader is recognized.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. MCCONNELL. All year, Senate Republicans have urged Democrats to prioritize two basic governing duties, two tasks that are essential to keeping America safe, keeping us on track to remain the world's superpower, and doing right by our men and women in uniform.

No. 1 is the annual Defense bill, where we authorize the investments, tools, and training that our commanders, leaders, and servicemembers need.

No. 2 is passing government funding, where we back up the NDAA's ambitions with the actual dollars and cents that turn plans into reality.

Bipartisan negotiators are still working on the second item. I hope they are able to produce text of a bipartisan government funding bill that can pass the Senate before our hard deadline next Thursday. Otherwise, I will support pivoting next week to a short-term continuing resolution into the new year.

But I am glad that, in the very near future, the Senate will finally fulfill the first key duty and pass a strong NDAA named for our retiring ranking member, Senator INHOFE.

I have spent all week discussing ways this legislation will help our Armed Forces and national security professionals, safeguard our homeland, bolster our partnerships, and keep adversaries like Russia on their back feet. Today, I want to focus on what most Senators agree is the single greatest medium-term and long-term national security challenge that our Nation faces, and that is the Chinese Communist Party.

The legislation we will pass today includes provisions to extend our security assistance to Taiwan. It steps up our investments and capabilities that are essentially crucial to operations in the Indo-Pacific, from space assets to naval mines.

It reprioritizes countering China's nuclear breakout by curbing the Biden administration's naive efforts to retire critical elements of our nuclear arsenal.

It tightens security on our cutting-edge research and bolsters sea-launch strategic deterrent capabilities.

And that is not all.

This strong bipartisan bill puts new weight behind our long-term commitments to stand with both vulnerable countries in China's orbit and vulnerable people actually within its own borders.

It will authorize a new Joint Force Headquarters right there in the region and make sure that U.S. military installations are not commercial destinations for goods that have been produced with Uighur slave labor in the Xinjiang Province.

This bill will also help stiffen the spine of the liberal entertainment industry that apparently lacks the courage to cross Beijing without clearer incentives. This year's NDAA will prohibit the use of U.S. military assets, like ships or bases, in movies where the producers then turn around and allow Chinese censors to have final signoff. If Hollywood wants to trample on American principles of free expression in order to please the Communist Party, they won't get to use our Armed Forces as props in the process.

Of course, stepping up our competition with China and limiting the risks to America from the CCP does not mean walking away from the world stage more broadly—quite the contrary. Checking the CCP will take a coordinated effort with even stronger, deeper ties between the United States and our like-minded friends and partners.

That means everything from basing access to joint exercises and operations, to strengthening our own defense industrial base so that we can continue to score win-wins, in both security and economic terms, by selling our partners the defensive capabilities they need.

Protecting America and winning the future does not entail pulling up our drawbridge, turning inward, and pretending the world will leave us alone.

China is actively—actively—trying to undercut American interests and partnerships everywhere from Asia itself to the Middle East, to Africa and beyond.

This NDAA will strengthen our hand. It prioritizes crucial partnerships in the Indo-Pacific. It adds New Zealand to the National Technological Industrial Base. It expands our ability to share cyber capabilities with operational partners, and it preserves vital security cooperation efforts in the Middle East and invests in expanding partnerships in Africa, South America, and beyond.

The NDAA is only a first step toward the investments, modernization, and stronger strategies that we need to compete and to win against rivals who don't wish us well. But it is a crucial first step.

Therefore, I encourage every Senator on both sides to support this important legislation.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. 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.

TRIBUTE TO RICHARD C. SHELBY

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, yesterday afternoon, RICHARD SHELBY delivered his farewell address here in the U.S. Senate.

It is difficult to think of the Senate without some of our retiring Members; it is nearly impossible to think of it without RICHARD SHELBY.

Like JIM INHOFE, he is a Senate institution. He has proudly served the State of Alabama for six terms in the Senate. That is 36 years of tireless work to make life better for the people of Alabama and for the American people as a whole.

He is currently the longest serving Senator in Alabama's history, as well as the longest serving Member in the history of the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

Throughout his Senate career, RICHARD has always kept his eye on getting things done for the people of Alabama, whether that is supporting Alabama military installations or the work NASA does in his State. He is a longtime NASA advocate, and as chairman and ranking member of the Subcommittee on Defense at the Senate Appropriations Committee, he has worked to ensure robust funding for our national security priorities.

He has also been a champion of funding to support Ukraine in its fight for freedom.

He has been a supporter of scientific research at various government Agencies, as well as in partnership with research universities.

RICHARD is also notable for being one of the tallest United States Senators. And that is significant to me because, as a tall guy myself, I don't often run into people I can look up to, but I look up to RICHARD, both literally and figuratively.

RICHARD's record of service and his dedication to people of his State are an inspiration to me and to many others as we carry out our work here in the U.S. Senate.

And I will miss his presence and his example as well as his sense of humor, which has lightened the mood around here on many challenging days.

But if anyone has earned his retirement, it is RICHARD SHELBY. And I wish him and Annette, his wife of 62 years, some very well-deserved relaxation and the very best of everything in the years ahead.

TRIBUTE TO PATRICK J. TOOMEY

Mr. President, later today, Senator PAT TOOMEY, my longtime time colleague on the Senate Finance Committee, will deliver his farewell remarks.

PAT is known for, among other things, his steadfast commitment to pro-market policies—to fiscal responsibility, pro-growth tax policy, free trade, limited but efficient regulation—and, above all, for his command of these issues.

He has a tremendous grasp of finance, banking, and the economy and an equally tremendous understanding of what the ins and outs of the Tax Code mean for business, saving and investment, and entrepreneurship.

And he is able to break down these oftentimes Byzantine subjects and explain them in plain language. And that, around here, is a gift.

These attributes made PAT the indispensable man during tax reform 5 years ago. His expertise and commitment were key to passage of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act—the wide-ranging reform of our Tax Code to put more money in American families' pockets and made American businesses more competitive.

Beyond tax policy, PAT has consistently fought protectionism in its many forms.

He has pushed back on financial market regulations that restrict fair competition, and he has fiercely advocated for market-opening initiatives that benefit Pennsylvania families, workers, and businesses.

He is going to be missed in the Senate—and on the Senate Finance Committee in particular—for his knowledge and his experience and for his practical approach to getting things done for the American people.

I admire PAT for his economic expertise, but I especially admire him for his thoughtfulness, his decency, and the fact that he is very principled.

He stayed committed to the causes he believes in, from improving economic opportunity for American families to reducing government waste to protecting taxpayer dollars.

And while I don't know what he will do next, I am confident that whatever he does will continue his commitment to building an economy that works for the American people.

I want to wish PAT and his wife, Kris, the very best on his retirement. I hope they are able to enjoy some well-deserved rest in the coming months, and I look forward to seeing all that PAT will do in the future.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOKER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

COVID VACCINE

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, Winston Churchill said:

We sleep safely at night because rough men stand ready to visit violence on those who would harm us.

The men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces sign up for no small task. They join to serve their country; not for money, not for fame, not because it is glamorous in any way. They sign up because they understand that Winston Churchill was right—that the blessings of a free society are possible only if there are those willing to put the safety and well-being of their country ahead of their own safety and ahead of their own lives when necessary.

That solemn, sacred responsibility, the responsibility that every member of our Armed Forces has committed so nobly to upholding, deserves our utmost respect.

Regrettably, on August 9 of 2021, the Secretary of Defense issued a message to the force indicating his intent to require COVID–19 vaccination for all servicemembers. This mandate went into effect on August 24, 2021.

There were a lot of promises made at the time—promises suggesting that individual needs would be taken into account; individual needs including good-faith, sincerely held religious beliefs that might make it impossible for a servicemember to be vaccinated without violating his or her sincerely held convictions.

Unfortunately, it hasn't really panned out that way, as I will explain in a moment.

But in a nutshell, since the implementation of this vaccine mandate over almost the last year and a half, the United States military has dismissed 8,200 servicemembers for declining to receive the COVID–19 vaccine.

That is over 8,000—more than 8,200—individuals, and it is not just the individuals themselves. Many, if not most, of these individuals themselves are mothers or fathers. They have got mouths to feed, families to care for—all of whom are placed in a really unfair position as a result of this mandate. Serving our country shouldn't require you to surrender your fundamental right to make medical decisions that are right for you, no matter the reason, and yet that is precisely what the Department of Defense continues to do.

My office has received hundreds of accounts from brave members of our Armed Forces detailing the hardships and the retaliation they have experienced for declining to receive the COVID–19 vaccine. One first sergeant in the Air Force writes:

> I was involuntarily separated and my enlistment was curtailed. I was a First Sergeant with the U.S. Air Force Reserves at the time the COVID mandate was put into place. I did everything I could to be allowed to continue to serve my country. I filed my Religious AR, and when it got denied, I also filed an appeal, and that got denied.

She goes on:

> All I wanted to do was to continue to take care of the members of my squadron and continue to serve this great country.

Likewise, a Marine officer writes:

> My family was forced to move on very short notice back to the U.S. from Okinawa, Japan due to the loss of a job and the threat of travel restriction if we remained unvaccinated. . . . Many are far worse off than me.

Another lieutenant colonel with the Marine Corps Reserve was placed on ''inactive status'' with ''no warning or notice that this would happen'' and in the process lost TRICARE health insurance that his family relies on to

provide expensive medical supplies for his special needs daughter, even though his appeal for a religious exemption was and is—remains still today—pending.

It seems in this and other circumstances, the Department of Defense has issued something of a pocket veto, not acting on these requests for an exemption but instead refusing to act and therefore leaving the servicemember with few options.

This person writes:

> My entire family was—was without notice or warning—dropped from TriCare left scrambling to find health insurance.

These brave men and women represent just a tiny fraction of the servicemembers who have reached out to my office. Many are in desperation. They are pleading for someone to recognize the injustice they are experiencing. They deserve better, and we owe them more than this.

So, as we consider this year's National Defense Authorization Act, the blueprint for the defense budget that directs policy for our military, we should adopt this simple amendment that would: No. 1, immediately repeal the COVID vaccine mandate; No. 2, prohibit DOD from replacing the current COVID–19 vaccine mandate with a similar mandate absent express congressional approval; No. 3, provide remedies for any servicemember negatively impacted by the mandate, including the right to reinstatement, if desired, and to petition for a change in status if they received a negative discharge based on whether or not they were vaccinated, correcting for any loss of rank, pay or retirement benefits; and, No. 4, require the DOD to make every effort to retain unvaccinated servicemembers.

We, of course, can't take back the hardship that the military vaccine mandate has inflicted on countless servicemembers. We can't do that. That is in the past. But there are some things we can do. By adopting this amendment, we can recognize an injustice and take steps to restore the affected brave men and women who deserve our best.

We owe them that, and we owe them so much more. So I urge my colleagues to support this amendment and stand with those who themselves ''stand ready to visit violence on those who would harm us.''

It is the right thing to do.

LIEUTENANT RIDGE ALKONIS

Mr. President, while we are on the topic of actions taken by the Department of Defense that don't show adequate, appropriate, and necessary respect for those who stand in harm's way to protect us and defend us, I want to tell you the story of a brave young man, a U.S. Navy lieutenant named Ridge Alkonis.

Ridge Alkonis is one of the best and the brightest that our Navy has to offer, that America has to offer: a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, a decorated officer who served his country well, who goes above and beyond the call of duty by every account that I can find or that I have access to. Lieutenant Alkonis, who is also the father of three young children and a devoted husband to his wife Brittany, sits today languishing in a Japanese prison.

You may ask: What has he done? What put him there? Why is he in prison in Japan? Did he steal something? Did he harm someone?

No, none of the above. No, at the end of May—May 29, 2021—Lieutenant Alkonis and his wife Brittany, along with their three children, decided to take a brief road trip to go see Mount Fuji. While descending from Mount Fuji, he suffered a most unfortunate, most unforeseen and unforeseeable medical emergency, one that caused him to lose consciousness while driving.

His young daughter, seeing that he had lost consciousness, tried to wake him up. She kicked the seat. She yelled. She did everything she could to wake him up.

You see, he wasn't asleep. He lost consciousness. He suffered from a rare medical condition he didn't know he had. He couldn't have known that he had this medical condition that caused him to lose consciousness at that moment.

Tragically, while he was unconscious, the car he was driving was involved in an accident, one that took the lives of two Japanese nationals.

My heart breaks for them, for the family members of these individuals whose lives were lost on May 29, 2021, in Japan. I know that Lieutenant Alkonis, with whom I have spoken as I visited him in prison in Japan—his heart breaks for them as well.

Our entire country extends our thoughts, our prayers, and our well wishes to the family members of those victims.

This was not a criminal act. This was a medical emergency, one that resulted in a tragedy—and I am so sad that it did—and no one is more sad about this than Lieutenant Alkonis and his family.

You see, in Japan, they have a different system than ours. In the United States, this wouldn't result in someone going to prison. This wouldn't result in criminal charges of any kind. This would be regarded for what it is, which is a tragedy resulting from a medical emergency, an accident that wasn't foreseen or foreseeable. We wouldn't send someone to prison for that here in the United States.

We understand that different countries have different systems of law, and we do our very best to respect the laws of other countries. But that is why he is in prison today.

My purpose in raising this today is to talk about how our country handled it, not how Japan handled it. We can talk about that perhaps another day, but today I want to talk about how the U.S. military is handling this tragedy.

When a U.S. military officer or enlisted person isn't able to be present for duty, he or she will stop getting paid. They stop getting paid if they are absent from their work. It is not surprising. Pretty much any job works that way. Like most jobs, if you are absent from your work, your employer can make a decision about whether the absence was unavoidable and should therefore be excused.

An employer in the private sector might, for example, decide to continue to pay someone for a period of time if the circumstances warrant it. They might warrant it particularly if the absence was brought about as a result of the conditions in which the person was working on the job.

For example, imagine you were running a business and you had an employee whom you assigned to work somewhere in a foreign country for a period of time and something like this happened. I would imagine that many, if not most, if not all, sane employers would do everything they possibly could to take care of the family and of that particular employee and that employee's family if something like this happened in a country where they were present only as a result of their work assignment.

In fact, there is a statute that deals with this very thing for employees of the Department of Defense. That statute is codified at 37 U.S.C. 503. Here is what it says:

> A member of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Space Force, Coast Guard or National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, who is absent without leave or over leave, forfeits all pay and allowances for the period of that absence, unless it is excused as unavoidable.

''Unless it is excused as unavoidable.''

That is exactly what the Department of Defense should do right now, is excuse as unavoidable Lieutenant Alkonis's absence. It seems to me that if ever there were an instance perfectly tailored for this statute, if ever there were an absence that needed to be excused as unavoidable, it is that of Lieutenant Ridge Alkonis.

So, with that in mind, and with the needs of his wife Brittany and their three young children who are still in Japan, Lieutenant Alkonis filed the paperwork for an exception to the policy with the Department of Defense. Now, that application was filed many, many months ago, and we now find ourselves in a situation in which that application has not been granted.

They filed this, I believe, back in June. It was transferred from one office to another in July. It was transferred—sent over to the Office of the Under Secretary of the Department of Defense a few months later. It still hasn't been acted on formally.

I have spoken with more officials within the Department of Defense than I can even count at this moment. I have been on this pattern of making phone calls since just a few weeks after this was filed in June. I have spoken with officials within the Office of the

Secretary of the Navy, including the Secretary himself. I have spoken to Under Secretary Cisneros. I have spoken to even Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin. I appreciate their willingness to take my phone calls, but they still haven't acted. They still haven't granted those. It still hasn't happened.

Now, keep in mind this has been in the Office of the Secretary of Defense since September 3. So we are going on 3½ months since that was forwarded, and they still haven't acted.

I finally spoke with Under Secretary Cisneros. He was one of the last people I got through to. It took me 3 weeks to get through to the Under Secretary—3 weeks of calling. I finally got through to him. During that phone call, I appreciated the fact that he finally took it. He assured me that, whatever decision was made, it would be a decision that was made by the appropriate personnel and that it would be whatever was in the best interests of the Department of Defense.

I told him at the time I believed that what was best for the Alkonis family would itself be what was in the best interests of the Department of Defense, you see, because there are a lot of problems that our Department of Defense has right now. Recruiting is down. Morale is down. Threats to our national security are up. There are more demands on our military men and women than ever before.

Why would you want to take one of your best and your brightest, one of your smartest, one of these people—I have talked to so many people who have worked with him, in his chain of command, who have described him as the kind of guy who will do something that needs to be done even before anyone else realizes it needs to be done. He will go out on his own and proactively take steps to improve himself and to improve others around him. He is exactly what the Navy, what the Department of Defense, and what the United States of America need.

So why would you put him in a vulnerable position? You sent him to Japan. Look, I don't understand Japan's laws. They are very different than our own. It is Japan. It is their country. They are their laws. It is what they do. We may not within the U.S. Government be able to solve that particular issue. I wish we could, and I hope we can at some point. Those are conversations for a different day, but for today, we can deal with this. We can take care of this family.

So let's go back to November 2. I had that conversation with Under Secretary Cisneros. I told Under Secretary Cisneros that it was imperative that this be acted upon quickly because Ridge Alkonis's leave was going to be running out. You see, since he was actually put in prison in July of this year—between the accident that occurred at the end of May of 2021 to the time the criminal charges were filed and completed, it wasn't until July that he actually reported to prison—Lieutenant Alkonis and Brittany, his wife, and their three children have been relying on the fact that he had accumulated leave—leave accumulated over the years—that has lasted them this long.

I told Under Secretary Cisneros on November 2 that it was really important that this be acted upon quickly because the Alkonises need this. They need this right away. They need the certainty of it. They need to be able to plan their lives.

I then started seeking a call with Secretary Austin, the Secretary of Defense. It took me 3 weeks to get that one scheduled—3 weeks. I finally spoke to him on November 29.

Secretary Austin callously informed me on that day that the request for the exception to policy would not be granted. I asked him why. He believed that it wasn't appropriate for the Department to do that. It was a private conversation, so I am not going to go into all of the details of it. But I asked him at that moment: If that is your decision, will you at least formalize it and put it out so that it is in public; so that we can discuss it; so that its relative merits can be addressed; so that we as a Congress can figure out, once on public notice, what the action was and why it was taken; so we can decide how best to address it beyond my ability to comprehend as a lawyer and as a U.S. Senator?

If somehow the statutory text of 37 U.S.C., section 503 contains something saying, ''You may not grant an exception to policy in this circumstance, that of Lieutenant Alkonis's,'' then we could at least be on notice of that so that we as a Congress could figure out how to change the law so that it doesn't take that into account.

I have yet to tell this story to a single Member of the U.S. Congress—Democrat or Republican, House or Senate—who isn't moved by this story and who doesn't conclude: Well, of course, this is a no-brainer. Of course, we should take care of him and his family. Of course, they should be granted an exception to policy. But to do that, we have to be able to have the notice of what their decision is, of the actual decision itself, and why it came about.

I asked him when that would be coming, and he said: Soon.

I said: How soon?

I reminded him that we were just weeks away—in fact, we are now less than 2 weeks away before Lieutenant Alkonis's leave runs out and before Brittany, his wife, and his three children, who are still in Japan, will have no source of income. These are three very young children. The older kids are homeschooled by Brittany Alkonis. They are in Japan—not a cheap place to live—and their income stream is about to run out.

Now, the calloused, casual observer might respond by saying: OK. Well, then, she can just go back to the United States.

OK. And then what? Go back to the United States. Do you know what that means? That would mean that they don't ever get to see their husband and their father. In fact, because of the way the rules work in Japan, they can't even talk to him on the phone. There would be no interaction with Lieutenant Alkonis by his wife and their three children if they just left. So leaving is a problem. It still doesn't solve the problem of income for this very young, stay-at-home mom who homeschools her children. What is she supposed to do? She has got this Hobson's choice, this absolutely awful dilemma. Rather than the prisoner's dilemma, we will call it the prisoner's wife's dilemma.

This is inexcusable. The fact that they won't excuse as unavoidable Lieutenant Alkonis's absence is itself inexcusable, and we must act. It is more difficult for us to act because the Department of Defense hasn't even had the decency to issue a public pronouncement for this. I find this reprehensible.

Earlier today—in fact, just an hour or two ago—Mrs. Brittany Alkonis sent out a series of tweets, and one of them said the following:

> In 13 days, our pay and benefits will be turned off. I won't be able to support our children or Ridge—

—who is Lieutenant Alkonis—

> and I clearly won't be able to count on the U.S. Navy to do so either.

This is not a way to treat those who stand in harm's way so that we can live and be safe and be free. This isn't a way to treat anyone. None of us would treat our employees that way. I don't know anyone who would.

On top of everything else, it is not just the fact that they have now stated they are going to deny it; it is that they have waited so long to do so and that they still haven't had the decency to say so in public. Then, on top of all of that, they are going to have her kicked to the curb at Christmastime in a foreign land. This is just disgraceful.

Look, I get it. I know the Department of Defense is really big. I know that the burdens faced by Secretary Austin and Under Secretary Cisneros and by so many others I have spoken to and by those I haven't spoken to within the Department of Defense are immense. I am grateful to them and for the service they provide to our great country. I am grateful that they have taken the time to examine this issue. They have reached the wrong conclusion, and they have done it in the wrong way.

Fortunately, there is still time. The time is short, but there is still time for them to make right that which is wrong. They can still take care of Brittany Alkonis and the three children of Ridge and Brittany Alkonis. They can still do that. I urge them to do so.

If they don't do it, we will have no choice as a Congress but to act. The Department of Defense may or may not like whatever legislation we put in place in order to do it, but it will happen. It is hard for it to happen—perhaps impossible for it to happen—until

they issue their actual decision so that we know what it is we are correcting. They should at least have the decency to do that. But the United States must not allow this family to be treated this way.

In no other circumstance that I can find has anyone—going back many, many decades—serving in the U.S. Armed Forces in Japan or in any other place that I am aware of been placed in prison as a result of a medical emergency. So this truly is exceptional, and that is what makes the exception to policy so meritorious and so worthy. He did nothing wrong. This was not foreseeable. It was not avoidable. He was in Japan only because he was assigned to serve in Japan, where he has served faithfully.

We must correct this wrong, and I will be back to the Senate floor as often as it takes. Once we have the actual decision in hand, I will know what legislation to push for. I will know what office to reconfigure and what statutory language to strip out or add. They need to issue that right away. Even better, they need to issue their decision not to deny but to grant the exception to policy for LT Ridge Alkonis. The Alkonis family and the United States itself deserve nothing less.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 401

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, it is another time for me to be back on this floor again to talk about an issue I have talked about before, but it is a little bit different this time.

I have brought to this floor several times and have asked for unanimous consent for a very, very simple bill called the Conscience Protection Act. The Conscience Protection Act is a bill that would protect religious liberty and freedom and conscience benefits for healthcare workers across the country. It is really not that controversial. In fact, let me show you how noncontroversial this really is.

When the church amendments, years ago—decades ago, even—were put in by Congress to be able to protect the conscience rights of individuals and entities that object to performing or assisting an abortion or a sterilization in violation of their religious belief and conscience, that passed this body 92 to 1. So 92 to 1, this body voted and said: Of course, we want to protect the rights of individuals and not have to be compelled to perform an abortion if it is against their moral faith. That seems normal. In a normal conversation everywhere else, that would be straightforward and simple—until now.

Here is what is happening now: A nurse who had told her employer that she did not want to perform an abortion, that she had a moral objection to that, worked in this hospital. One day, the hospital was running short on staff, and so they called her in, didn't tell her what the procedure was, and when she walks into the surgery area, the doctor looks at her and says: Don't hate me—meaning, we know full well what your belief is—but we are short-staffed, and we need another nurse; you are going to do this. The hospital informed her: You will lose your job if you don't do this right now, when everyone knew what her moral conviction was.

Now, the way that the law is set up, it is set up to say, for that person who had an entity deliberately violate her moral conscience, then the government steps in and presses against the employer and says: You can't do that. That is the way it is supposed to work. In fact, that is the way it was working until Xavier Becerra came in to HHS, looked at the case, and dropped it and said: You get no recourse—because the administration is pro-abortion. It doesn't matter what your belief is; it is what the administration's belief is.

So the response to that is pretty straightforward: Allow an individual who has been harmed to have what is called a private right of action; that they don't have to wait for government to intervene on their behalf to have a private right of action so that an individual, if government doesn't intervene on their behalf, they can intervene.

I have brought that to this floor several times, and I have been told: That is controversial. That is divisive. Then this week, President Biden signed the Respect for Marriage Act on the White House lawn with a special feature in it called a private right of action. So if individuals who felt—and the language says—that they were harmed because of the disagreement of others on their same-sex marriage, they didn't have to wait on government to be able to intervene on their behalf; they could do it.

I was told this was belt-and-suspenders. I was told, of course, the government is going to step in on their behalf; but in case they don't, they need a private right of action so that they can stand up for their own beliefs.

It is fascinating to me that what I have asked for for people of conscience who don't want to perform abortions but are compelled to do so by their employer, that was a radical concept, that we couldn't have a private right of action for them, but it was required in the Respect for Marriage Act. In fact, I brought an amendment to take that out to say: This is going to lead to a lot of lawsuits. And my colleagues said: Oh, no. Oh, no. And voted against that.

So now I am going to ask a very simple question: Is this body going to give a private right of action to some people they philosophically believe in, but other people they philosophically don't believe in don't get that same right? Are we going to discriminate today against people of faith and say: You do not get this right; other people do? That is my simple question for today.

This is not a radical request. This is a real-life issue that is occurring right now, where this administration will not intervene on behalf of individuals who have a religious, longstanding moral objection to being compelled to perform an abortion.

Let's give them their private right of action so that employers don't feel like this administration can look the other way and they can do whatever they want to their employees or fire them, regardless of what their religious beliefs are.

This used to not be a radical concept. It was 92 to 1. This is not intended to be a radical concept today. It is a simple statement: Is this body going to discriminate against people of faith today? That is my question.

So, Mr. President, as in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be discharged from further consideration of S. 401, and that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration. I further ask 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 an objection?

The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, 6 months ago, the Supreme Court ripped away the right to abortion; and, since then, Republicans have enacted abortion bans in States across the country. The outcry against Republicans' cruelty has been loud and clear and overwhelming.

In every single State where abortion was on the ballot, voters backed abortion rights. They made their voices clear: Women must be able to control their own bodies. They want us to protect abortion access. They want us to stand up against the wave of extreme bans and bills and partisan attacks on abortions and on doctors from Republicans.

That is exactly what this bill is, another attack on abortion that will make it harder for women to get the care that they need.

If my colleague really wants to talk about protecting healthcare providers, let's talk about the sharp rise in threats and violence against abortion clinics and what we are doing about that. Let's talk about the providers back home in my home State of Washington who tell me they are worried they could be punished for providing an abortion to patients from out of State. In my State, it is legal.

Let's talk about how Republican State lawmakers have already discussed a bill to make it a crime to provide abortion care to a resident even in another State where it is legal.

Yet, if you are one of the many, many doctors and nurses who believe they have a duty to provide abortion care, this bill does nothing to protect you for doing your job, not even if your patient's life is in danger. It is silent on the legal threats that these providers are facing from Republican States, not to mention the increasing physical threats that they face. That

violence, that science speaks volumes about the real point of this bill.

By the way, if you are a patient, well, then, the message from this bill is even more clear and even more outrageous. This bill says the ideology of your boss, of your health insurance company, of your pharmacist, or your doctor is more important than your personal decision, your medical needs, or your well-being.

That is dangerous, it is wrong, and I will not stand for it. Therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. LANKFORD. Apparently, a woman has a right to control her own body unless her boss compels her to perform an abortion, and then she no longer has control over her own body—her boss does. And he can tell her: Perform this abortion against your faith, or I will fire you—and that is OK.

So choice seems to only go one way. If you choose to perform abortions, you are accepted in our culture. If you believe a child with 10 fingers and 10 toes and a beating heart and unique DNA and a functioning nervous system is actually a child, then you are an outlier, and your opinion doesn't count. The only thing that counts is you are compelled to take the life of more children and stand there and watch it. I think that is wrong.

No, this bill doesn't get into—as Senator MURPHY said, it doesn't get into speaking out about the violence against abortion clinics or, quite frankly, get into the violence on pregnancy resource centers that have been firebombed by pro-abortion folks, who have been spray-painted, who have threatened and attacked people who want to give sonograms to individuals who are pregnant. It doesn't deal with any of those because, quite frankly, that is a different committee. That is over in the Judiciary Committee.

This is a very narrow bill dealing with one simple topic. It doesn't deal with everything on abortion. It doesn't decrease abortions in America. It doesn't do anything like that. It is simple and straightforward. It says: Is this government going to compel people to violate their faith? Apparently, the answer today is yes from this body; we don't care what you believe. I think that is sad, and I think that shows how far we have moved as a nation when it used to be 92 to 1 that we would say: If you have a different opinion, that is OK in America. But now you can't have a different opinion. That is not right.

I would hope this body would speak out and say at some point that we respect all opinions in America and would speak out for the right of conscience for people of faith.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCHATZ). The majority whip.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the scheduled vote start immediately.

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

VOTE ON JOHNSON NOMINATION

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Johnson nomination?

Mr. DURBIN. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS).

The result was announced—yeas 76, nays 20, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 392 Ex.]

YEAS—76

Baldwin	Heinrich	Portman
Bennet	Hickenlooper	Reed
Blumenthal	Hirono	Romney
Booker	Hoeven	Rosen
Boozman	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Brown	Inhofe	Sanders
Burr	Kaine	Schatz
Cantwell	Kelly	Schumer
Capito	Kennedy	Shaheen
Cardin	King	Sinema
Carper	Klobuchar	Smith
Casey	Lankford	Stabenow
Collins	Leahy	Sullivan
Coons	Luján	Tester
Cornyn	Manchin	Thune
Cortez Masto	Markey	Toomey
Cramer	McConnell	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Menendez	Warner
Durbin	Merkley	Warnock
Ernst	Moran	Warren
Feinstein	Murkowski	Whitehouse
Fischer	Murphy	Wicker
Gillibrand	Murray	Wyden
Graham	Ossoff	Young
Grassley	Padilla	
Hassan	Peters	

NAYS—20

Blackburn	Hawley	Rubio
Braun	Johnson	Sasse
Cassidy	Lee	Scott (FL)
Cotton	Lummis	Scott (SC)
Crapo	Marshall	Shelby
Daines	Paul	Tuberville
Hagerty	Risch	

NOT VOTING—4

Barrasso	Cruz
Blunt	Tillis

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

JAMES M. INHOFE NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the pending business.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

House message to accompany a bill (H.R. 7776) to provide for improvements to the rivers and harbors of the United States, to provide for the conservation and development of water and related resources, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Schumer motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill.

Schumer motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill, with Schumer (for Manchin) amendment No. 6513 (to the House amendment to the Senate amendment), to provide for American energy security by improving the permitting process.

Schumer amendment No. 6515 (to amendment No. 6513), to add an effective date.

Schumer motion to refer the bill to the Committee on Armed Services, with instructions, Schumer amendment No. 6516, to add an effective date.

Schumer amendment No. 6517 (to (the instructions) amendment No. 6516), to modify the effective date.

Schumer Amendment No. 6518 (to amendment No. 6517), to modify the effective date.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

H.R. 7776

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I am glad that we, hopefully soon, will finally pass the National Defense Authorization Act and send this legislation to the President for his signature. Obviously, this has national, even global, implications, but I would like to spend just a moment to talk about what it means to my home State of Texas.

This year's NDAA supports a range of projects that will lead our military into the future, from nuclear modernization to next-generation weapons development.

It sends critical military assistance to Ukraine and makes a big investment in our national defense stockpile.

It focuses, appropriately, on long-term strategic competition with China, and it ensures our troops will have the tools, the training, and the resources they need to succeed in any conflict, and, of course, the ultimate goal is to make the United States military so strong that no country dares engage in a military conflict with us, and thus provides needed deterrents in order to maintain the peace.

The Defense Authorization Act shapes our military missions around the world, but it also is important for reasons that hit much closer to home.

The Defense Department is the largest employer in the United States, with 2.9 million employees, including both servicemembers and civilians. They are stationed in more than 160 different countries around the world, and on all seven continents. And, on any given day, they can be found providing life-saving medical care, maintaining aircraft, protecting communities in war zones, or carrying out various missions.

Texas is the proud home to 14 military installations which directly employ more than 235,000 people. When you add in construction, information technology, manufacturing, and the many other workers these facilities require, Texas military installations employ more than 620,000 people. The

Texas comptroller has estimated that military installations contributed about $114 billion to Texas' economy last year alone.

But, significantly, America's military is engrained in the very fabric of our State, and Texans have a profound respect for our servicemembers.

My father was a part of the Greatest Generation and served in World War II, as did my father-in-law.

My dad was a B–17 pilot, who, unfortunately, was shot down over Germany on a bombing mission on his 26th mission. Fortunately, although he was a POW the last 4 months of the war, he was liberated by General Patton and his army.

My father-in-law, who died recently at the age of 96, served at Normandy, where he landed on Utah Beach during part of that dramatic invasion of France, occupied by, of course, the German military.

But I lived for a while in San Antonio—many years, actually—and had the privilege of experiencing the incredible support for our military in that city. After all, San Antonio is known as ''Military City USA'' because of the strong and consistent military presence. And while it is unique, based on the sheer concentration of military bases in San Antonio, the strong support for our servicemembers can be seen across the State as well.

Whether you are in El Paso or Killeen or Abilene or any of the areas surrounding military installations, it is humbling to see so many men and women who have taken an oath to defend our country, along with their families, who serve as well.

As Members of the Senate, we have a responsibility to support our troops and make sure they have what they need to do the job we have asked them to do, and the Defense authorization act is one of the most important ways we do just that.

This bill provides the largest pay raise for our troops in two decades. Servicemembers and their families are facing the same inflation headwinds as everybody else in the United States, but starting next month, they will receive a greatly needed and well-deserved 4.6-percent pay raise.

This year's National Defense Authorization Act also takes big steps to support military families, and when you have an all-volunteer military like ours, supporting military families is an important component of our support for the military.

This Defense Authorization Act will also authorize additional funding to Texas school districts that serve military personnel.

It will authorize the extension of reimbursement authority for spouse relicensing to ensure that nurses, teachers, and other spouses whose jobs may require a State-specific license are not saddled with an additional expense.

This bill will also support programs in Texas independent school districts that help military-dependent children with severe disabilities.

And I am glad it includes bipartisan legislation that I introduced to improve the tools that military commanders will have at their disposal to prevent sexual assault and domestic violence within the Department of Defense.

In addition to supporting our servicemembers, this legislation will authorize $315 million for military construction projects in Texas alone. This includes $90 million for a dormitory for basic training recruits at Joint Base San Antonio; $55 million for the new power train facility at the Corpus Christi Army Depot; $31 million for power generation and microgrid operations at Fort Hood in Killeen; $15 million for a new fire station at Fort Bliss in El Paso; and the list goes on and on.

Now, these may sound like not all that exciting investments, but they are absolutely critical to the support for our military and our military families and to readiness, which is the ultimate goal—that our military is ready for any threat that comes our way.

In addition to providing needed investment at our military bases, the Defense authorization bill provides $4 billion in support to improve the production rate, modernization, and readiness of the F–35 fleet, which is built in Fort Worth.

The F–35 Joint Strike Fighter, the fifth generation fighter, is the most sophisticated airplane in our fleet, and it is important that we have an adequate number of them to maintain the readiness of that fleet.

This bill also authorizes $23 million in another critical defense asset that will be made in Fort Worth, which is the Future Long-Range Assault Aircraft. It authorizes $686 million in funding for F–16 Fighting Falcons which will be made in Texas, as well as $4.7 billion for B–21 Raiders, many of which will be based in Texas at Dyess Air Force Base in Abilene. These investments will support even more Texas jobs and strengthen our military in the process.

I am glad this year's Defense authorization bill includes legislation—strangely enough, we stick other unrelated bills into the Defense authorization bill. In this case, the Water Resources Development Act has been inserted also in the Defense authorization bill. But, specifically, this bill, as part of the WRDA bill, will develop the Texas Coastal Spine Project which will provide basic protections of infrastructure against future hurricanes along the Texas gulf coast.

In the Houston area alone, we have some of the largest concentration of refining capacity in the world, and the rest of the country depends on the fact that that jet fuel, diesel, and gasoline will be available. If another hurricane were to wipe out Houston like Hurricane Harvey tried to do, obviously, that is something that will have an impact not just locally, not just in my State, but across the Nation as a whole. So this Coastal Spine Project is very important. The Texas gulf coast is home to millions of people and industries that fuel our economy and national security.

Well, the war in Ukraine has highlighted another important aspect of energy, and that is energy security. The industries in and around the Texas gulf coast are critical to our security and for those of our allies. I believe that after years of hard work, the Texas Coastal Spine Project has begun the long, long road to final construction, and I am glad this project will be fully authorized in the Water Resources Development Act. The next step is to secure the funding to begin that lengthy construction process, and I am eager to work with our colleagues on both sides of the aisle to make that happen.

Given the threats our country is facing around the world, whether it is Russia, Iran, China, North Korea, the War on Terror, the National Defense Authorization Act could not be more urgent or more important. This legislation will make sure that our military is resourced, trained, and ready for action when called upon. It provides our men and women with the resources, training, and equipment they need to defend our country, our way of life, and our freedom. It restores our combat advantage by investing in modern aircraft, weapons, and facilities. It strengthens and builds our alliances around the world. And, above all, it sends the message to the world that our country is, and will remain, the global military leader.

There are a lot of friends and allies the United States has around the world and they are very important, but none of them is in a position to lead like the United States of America, and all of them depend on American leadership. And that is part of the message this bill will send about our intention to maintain that leadership role. That is why, for 61 years now, Congress has made passing the NDAA a priority, and I am eager to get this one done and do it for the 62nd time.

I want to especially thank Senators Reed and Inhofe, the chairman and ranking members of the Senate Armed Services Committee, for their tireless work on this legislation, as well as all of the members of the Armed Services Committee that voted this bill out of the committee on a strong bipartisan vote last July.

It is a long story for why we had to wait from July until today to vote on the bill, but the good news is we are where we are today and have a strong bill that will prepare our military for the threats of today and tomorrow. I look forward to supporting this legislation as soon as we have a chance to vote on it—hopefully, soon this afternoon.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KING). The Senator from Oklahoma.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I want to bring a date to this body to

think about. It is a day we have all known was coming for a very long time, but there seems to be no urgency about this day. The day is December 21.

If anybody is wondering: What is December 21; what is the big deal about this date? I would say: That is the problem. December 21 is the date that Title 42 authority ends on our southern border.

What is title 42 authority? Everybody in this body knows this, but title 42 is a temporary pandemic-related authority at our southern border to be able to deal with individuals that are coming across the border that they could be turned around. That authority was put in by the previous administration and has remained in this administration but has been chipped away, and as of December 21, that authority goes away.

So what happens on that day? Well, the best estimate we got initially from DHS is it would move from about 6,000 people a day illegally crossing the border to 18,000 a day illegally crossing the border at that time. But, realistically, now they won't give us an estimate at all.

So let me just put this in context where we are at our southwest border right now, because for a year and a half I have asked Secretary Mayorkas: What happens when title 42 authority goes away, because it is temporary? What is your plan? And for 2 years almost, I have gotten: We are working on it. We are very aware it is temporary, and it will go away at some point. We have a plan.

And then, months ago, they came out with their six-point plan. Let me read their six-point plan to you.

The six-point plan of what to do at the termination of title 42 is: Acquire and deploy resources to address increased volumes of migrants. In other words, be prepared to handle the number coming at them.

No. 2: Deliver more efficient and fair immigration processing.

No. 3: Use expedited removal to process and remove those who don't have a valid asylum claim.

No. 4: Work with other Western Hemisphere governments to address the root causes of migration.

No. 5: Bolster NGO capacity—that is to be able to handle the flow.

No. 6: Target and disrupt cartels.

All those are fine. My question is, Are they working?

When Alejandro Mayorkas was in front of the committee just a few weeks ago, I asked him: title 42 is going away December 21st; what is your plan? And he repeated this back. The problem is, they already implemented these six items and the flow continues to accelerate.

Again, let me put this in perspective, because it is hard to be able to wrap your head around the numbers. During the Obama administration, there was a massive surge in the number of people illegally crossing the border. That was the time many people in this body fully remember, when there were additional detention facilities that were opened up. There was a big push to be able to increase the capacity during that time period. That massive surge on the border during the Obama administration was in 2014, and it was 569,000 people a year. That was a crisis-level. Jeh Johnson came out and said: This is a crisis-level surge. It was 569,000 people that year who illegally crossed the border.

To put that in context, we have had that many people illegally cross the border in the last 2 months. What the Obama administration called ''a crisis'' over 12 months, we have had in the last 2. We have well over 2 million people a year that are illegally crossing the border now, and in the last 2 months since the nearing of Title 42 is coming, that number is rapidly increasing.

During the Obama administration, they called it a crisis if there were 1,500 people illegally crossing the border a day; we are now approaching 9,000 people illegally crossing the border a day.

And when I ask, ''What is the plan?'' I get: Well, we have this six-point plan.

Here is the problem: When I dig a little bit deeper—and we have been digging deeper to be able to find out how this is working—currently, there are no cooperative agreements with other countries to be able to return back individuals who are coming to our country where we don't have a relationship. I know it is on their plan to get it at some point. We don't have it, and December 21 is next week.

All the work to be done to increase NGO capacity and processing capacity? That is happening. How to move people into the country faster? That is actually true. In fact, newspaper reports even as recently as today have reported that ICE agents are being told to release lower-level prisoners that they are currently holding to be able to allow more surge capacity for processing individuals after the 21st of December.

That is today's news.

So they are gearing up to expedite processing people into the country. They are just not slowing down the number of people coming into the country or providing a deterrent.

Other than this one comment that was made to my staff this week when we asked point blank on the expedited removal process and they said: Yes, we are actually increasing the number of people that we use for expediting removal.

That sounds great until you check the facts on it. Here are the facts: This administration, in this year, the number of people that they have declared ''expedited removal'' they have actually removed, from those folks, 7 percent of the people—7 percent—that were declared expedited removal.

Again, let me go back to the Obama administration and set this in context. In 2015, in the Obama administration's expedited removal, they were removing 69 percent of the people in 1 year. That is not an anomaly year, that is typical of people that were declared expedited removal who they were actually removing.

This administration is using the term ''expedited removal'' so people will think, ''Oh, they are doing something,'' except only 7 percent have actually been removed.

Now, listen: We have a wide diversity of opinion in this body about what needs to happen in immigration.

I don't run into a lot of people that like what is happening on our southern border right now. It is chaos.

I personally asked the Secretary of Homeland Security: How many people who are crossing our border right now—of the 2 million-plus last year, how many of those individuals have we done a background check on from their home country?

His answer to me in the hearing was: Let me get back to you on that.

By the way, I already know the answer to that, and so does he. It is zero.

We do background checks on individuals when they cross our border to see if they have criminal records in the United States or if they are on a terror watch list, but we have no idea, as to the 2 million individuals who have crossed our border, if they were fleeing poverty or fleeing justice. We have no idea. We know they paid the cartels to be able to get through Mexico, and then we literally ushered them into the country. On the 21st of this December, the problem accelerates even more.

To this body, I say: We have four times as many people illegally crossing our border now than during the Obama administration when they called it a crisis. Right now, we have four times as many people coming. On December 21, the problem gets worse because we cannot as a body speak to this issue and say: Stop.

I don't know what it is going to take in our Nation because this is not a partisan issue across the country. It is just not. I run into people of all parties and all backgrounds who say: I am all in on legal immigration. I just think we should know who is coming through the door—is that so unfair?—or have some way of processing people to be able to know.

Again, I have had folks say to me: What happens to these folks?

Well, let me tell you the current process because the Biden administration continues to say: We are going to fight against all of the push-and-pull factors for these individuals who are coming.

Can I tell you what the pull factor is? This is not hard.

The pull factor is, right now, as for the vast majority of the folks who cross the border illegally, the Biden administration is processing them as fast as they can. The fastest way to process them is to give them what is called parole, and that is for the vast majority. Now, this is a different process from what previous Presidents have done—of all parties. They are processing individuals for speed to be able to give them parole. Parole gets them across

the border quickly. They hand them a document and give them a work permit that day. That day, they get a work permit. Then they are told to check in at ICE, but the next appointment at ICE, right now, is 5 years in the future. Once they check in with ICE 5 years from now, then they are put in the next line to get to a Federal court to make their asylum claims. That is currently 10 years out.

Can I explain to you what is happening? This is not hard.

We are handing out American work permits at the border to people we have done no vetting for, ushering them into the country, and saying: We will check your asylum claim 15 years from now. Then, for some reason, it is a mystery as to why we are getting 2 million people illegally crossing the border.

It is no mystery. We happen to live in the greatest country in the world, and everybody in the world wants to come here. This is not a mystery. This is why no President has done an asylum policy like this. This is why no President in the past has managed the border like this—because we would have a massive rush at the border. On December 21, a bad situation gets worse, and this body just yawns and says it is no big deal. It is. When this blows up in our country's face, all of us are going to have to answer for it.

Now, to be frank, the vast majority of the people who are coming across our border illegally are just trying to connect with family who are already here—also illegally present, but they are just trying to connect with family here.

They have got job opportunities and want to be able to come for the job opportunities. I completely respect that. They are individuals from around the world who can make 10 times as much money if they cross our border and come into the country. I understand the pull factor of that, but we do have a legal process whereby we manage that, in theory. But who cares about the legal process anymore when you can just pay a cartel and come into the country illegally?

The cartels on our southern border are some of the most ruthless cartels in the world. May I remind this body of what we all know full well: The State Department does a listing for every country in the world about Americans' ''travel and do not travel.'' A level 1 is Canada. A level 4 is Syria and Yemen: ''Don't go there. We can't get you out.'' We all know that ranking full well. May I remind you that the states just south of our border in Mexico have a level 4 rating from the State Department, warning Americans not to travel in that area just south of our border.

Why do they have that rating from the State Department? Because a ruthless set of cartels runs several of those states. The State Department is advising all Americans: ''Do not travel there because it is not safe for you, and we cannot get you out.'' Those are the cartels that are being paid by all of the trafficking coming in.

Last year, when I was there, I asked the Border Patrol: Have you been able to track how much the cartel just immediately to your south—this was in McAllen, TX. Can you track how much that particular cartel makes from trafficking people into the country?

Their response was: Yes, we do interviews with folks. We know how much they are making.

So what is the number?

They said: The cartel just in this area—not along the whole 2,000-mile border but just in this area south of McAllen, TX—makes $152 million a week from trafficking people into our country.

Our open immigration system is enriching some of the most ruthless cartels in the world, and we are currently doing nothing to stop it. Just wait until December 21 comes. Then let's see what happens.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

REMEMBERING STAFF SERGEANT HIROSHI ''HERSHEY'' MIYAMURA

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, I am truly honored to join my friend and colleague Senator LUJÁN to recognize the life of Congressional Medal of Honor recipient and Gallup's own staff sergeant, Hiroshi ''Hershey'' Miyamura, who passed away this past November.

The State of New Mexico ordered flags to be flown at half-staff in honor of one of our State's and, really, one of our entire Nation's greatest heroes.

A second-generation Japanese American, Hershey Miyamura first volunteered for the U.S. Army near the end of World War II. He did so at a time when many of his fellow Japanese Americans—and that includes his future wife—were detained in American internment camps. He served in the storied 442nd Infantry Regiment, which was composed of soldiers with Japanese ancestry and became one of the most decorated units in U.S. military history. Following the start of the Korean war in 1950, the Army recalled Miyamura, who had remained in the Army Reserves, into Active Duty.

The Korean war is often labeled the ''Forgotten War,'' and it is true that far too many Americans have forgotten the incredible sacrifices that were made by American servicemembers who fought alongside Korean as well as United Nations allies. More than 36,000 American servicemembers and more than 7,200 members of the Korean Augmentation to the U.S. Army gave their lives to defend a free and democratic South Korea. In the face of unthinkably harsh conditions, many servicemembers demonstrated the very best of what it means to be an American—none more so than Hershey Miyamura.

During an intense overnight firefight from April 24 to April 25, 1951, then-Corporal Miyamura ordered the men in his machine gun squad to fall back. Corporal Miyamura covered the withdrawal of his entire company from advancing enemy forces. He killed more than 50 enemy combatants in both hand-to-hand combat and with his machine gun. After he sustained severe wounds, enemy forces captured Corporal Miyamura as a prisoner of war but not until after he had allowed all 16 of the men in his machinegun squad to safely withdraw. In later years, Hershey was most proud of the fact that each and every one of the men who were under his charge that night survived the entire Korean war and returned home to his family.

After his capture, Corporal Miyamura marched hundreds of miles to a prisoner of war camp, where he would endure nearly 2½ years of captivity. During this time, he served as a source of strength and comfort to many of his fellow prisoners of war as they endured terrible conditions.

Nearly a month after an armistice agreement was reached, ending the hostilities on the Korean Peninsula, Corporal Miyamura was finally turned over to American authorities in Freedom Village. In a living history interview conducted years later with the Congressional Medal of Honor Society, Hershey remembered what it was like to see the American flag flying again for the very first time.

Hershey said:

> Until I saw that flag, the Star Spangled Banner, waving in the breeze, did I know that I had learned what it represents. That alone is what makes you feel so humble.

It was also only after his release that Hershey learned that his actions had earned him the Congressional Medal of Honor. Upon his return to the United States, President Dwight D. Eisenhower presented Corporal Miyamura with the Medal of Honor at a ceremony at the White House.

Hershey also received a Purple Heart, a Prisoner of War Medal, a Combat Infantryman Badge, and a Meritorious Service Medal, in addition to the service medals recognizing his service both in the Korean war as well as in World War II. He achieved a final ranking in the U.S. Army of staff sergeant.

Hershey Miyamura's lifelong dedication to his country never ceased. It continued long after his decorated military service ended. After he received his honorable discharge from the Army, Hershey opened up a service station along Route 66 in his hometown of Gallup, NM. He remained active in his community until his dying days in advocating for his fellow veterans and in inspiring young people with lectures on patriotism, faith, and service.

It was one of the greatest honors of my public service career to work alongside Hershey in opening the VA's community-based outpatient clinic in Gallup in 2015. In 2018, I was also proud to join Hershey for a tour of the site that is now the Gallup State Veterans Cemetery.

In recent years, Hershey touched the lives of countless young people in Gallup during his regular visits with students at the local high school that is

named in his honor. The Miyamura High School Patriots wear the colors purple and silver in honor of Hershey's Purple Heart; and a bronze statue of Hershey in his Army uniform and wearing his Medal of Honor stands at the main entrance of Hiroshi Miyamura High School.

I hope that none of us will ever forget the profound example of humility and patriotism that Hershey Miyamura left to each of us as his enduring legacy. Hershey Miyamura truly embodied the best of what our Nation stands for.

My thoughts are with Hershey's daughter Kelly; his sons, Pat and Mike; his four grandchildren, and all of those in New Mexico and across our great Nation who are mourning his loss and honoring his memory.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. LUJÁN. Mr. President, I am honored to be here with Senator HEINRICH to recognize a friend, a mentor, and a true American hero. I rise today to honor and pay my respects to a great American hero and friend we recently lost.

Hiroshi ''Hershey'' Miyamura was born on October 6, 1925, to Yaichi and Tori Miyamura in Gallup, NM. In growing up in a household of seven children, Hershey's parents left their homeland of Japan to settle in New Mexico in the hopes of creating a better life for their children. While he never thought of himself as a serious student, Mom and Dad hoped he would be. As a child, Hershey's mind was otherwise occupied with tales of Hopalong Cassidy riding on his steed—the larger-than-life-hero who saves the day.

He later remarked in life that he always liked ''the good guys'' on and off the big screen. This is why it did not surprise anyone when Hershey's determined perseverance to join the U.S. Army finally became a reality. This dream became possible when the Federal Government created a battalion of mostly Japanese Americans during the Second World War.

In a time when prejudice toward Japanese Americans was at an alltime high, Hershey remained firm in his conviction that he would serve under the flag and country his parents worked so hard to make their home, refusing to let tolerance extinguish his desire to serve our Nation at the highest level.

Hershey joined the Army shortly before Japan's surrender in World War II, training as a machine gunner—a job he excelled at. When the Korean war began, he was recalled to service. As a corporal, he was entrusted as a squad leader in the Second Battalion, Seventh Infantry Regiment, Third Infantry Division.

Even in the fog of war, Hershey was focused and selfless. He never lost sight of the friends he served alongside with. His fellow Americans were at the heart of everything he did.

Fighting with the bayonet secured at the end of his rifle during a nighttime ambush by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Hershey ordered his squadron back to safer grounds, providing first-aid treatment when he could. Staying behind to cover their withdrawal, Corporal Miyamura fought off over 50 enemy troops before he was badly wounded and captured.

For the next 28 months, he was a prisoner of war—all the while, his wife Terry did not know if her husband was dead or alive. Hershey suffered tremendously during this time. It is an agony that is almost impossible to imagine, and the strength of Hershey and Terry represents the very best that we all have, the very best in each of us.

On the day of his release from the prisoner-of-war camp, Hershey would recall that day with pristine detail: the first sight of the Star-Spangled Banner blowing in the breeze, knowing that he was almost home.

Returning to Gallup, NM, Hershey was greeted by a beaming crowd of family and friends, and military flyovers welcomed him home. For a moment, he was lost, but he was never forgotten.

Hershey would go on to be awarded the Medal of Honor, our Nation's highest military declaration for valor, by President Dwight Eisenhower, a revered figure Hershey looked up to as a tested and admired World War II general.

After the war, he worked hard in Gallup as an auto mechanic and small business owner, doing what he could to send his three kids off to college. He lived out the last days of his life just as he lived the first days of his life, as a source of joy and light.

A soft-spoken and honest man, Hershey Miyamura witnessed the deepest evil and yet still chose joy. He chose to be a source of light to all who knew and loved him.

Hershey continued to tell and retell his story to future generations with humility and that ever-present smile, beaming ear to ear.

I want to remark on the clarity and sharpness he had, seemingly unfazed by the years that aged him. Talking with him and learning about his legacy of service was like being taken back to the dirt roads of South Korea alongside him. Hershey's experiences never left him.

As for all the western cowboys and the Hollywood ''good guys'' he dreamed of as a child, I think it is fair to say Hershey far surpassed them and turned himself into a larger than life, real American war hero.

Hershey passed away 2 weeks ago. He was the second-to-last living Korean war Medal of Honor recipient. His legacy and impenetrable faith will live on through all of us who loved him and know him, who have the honor of continuing to tell his story.

I would encourage everyone across America to learn this story and to lift Hershey up.

Hershey is survived by his sons, Mike and Pat; his daughter Kelly; his granddaughters, Megan, Marisa, and Madison; his grandson Ian; his five great-grandchildren; his sisters, Michiko, Suzi, and Shige.

May God watch over and bless his family.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to ask for unanimous consent for Jay Snyder, our nominee to be a member of the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy.

Around the world today, American values are in direct competition with powerful autocratic regimes. From Iranian protestors struggling against a misogynistic theocracy in Tehran to the African and Latin-American nations combating Russian propaganda, to the information warfare China directs across the Taiwan Strait, in every case, a well-run American public diplomacy program is often the best tool we have to make the case for our vision of the world—a world that respects international law, that supports free speech, and defends fundamental rights. And the members of the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy are essential to this effort.

Since 1948, the Commission has worked to understand and inform foreign publics. And whether it is our people-to-people exchanges that introduce the world to our country or confronting the deluge of misinformation meant to undermine democracies across the globe, Jay Snyder's perspectives and expertise will be critical.

He has a career spanning public service, academia, philanthropy, and the private sector, working throughout the United States, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East.

He has served on the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy before, starting in 2003. He has also served as a representative to the United Nations General Assembly and in his home State at the New York State Commission on Public Authority Reform.

In 2009, he founded the Open Hands Initiative, a nonprofit organization dedicated to public diplomacy, connecting young leaders and underserved communities across the developing world.

He also serves on Georgetown University's College Board of Advisors and the University of Southern California's Center for Public Diplomacy Advisory Board.

This is a nominee who will hit the ground running from day one.

Russia and China are not sitting idly by. They are throwing money and manpower at an all-out effort to convince the world that democracy doesn't work. We need to be fighting back. Our Nation cannot afford to wait another day without Mr. Synder assuming his post to tackle these challenges.

So I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination under the privileged section of the Executive Calendar: PN2451, Jay T. Snyder, to be a Member of the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy; that the Senate vote on the nomination without intervening action or debate; that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; 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 Idaho.

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, first of all, let me say that I concur with the chairman of the committee on the remarks he has made regarding his position. It is an important position, and the points he makes about countering what China is doing certainly is well-taken, and I completely agree with it.

I am going to object to this, but it is for process reasons, not because the individual or because of the lack of importance of the position it is.

In the past, we have always moved these together when we have a partisan situation like this. When we discharge them from the committee, they are discharged in pairs. On this particular one, we haven't done that.

I know the chairman is going to say that that is our fault because we haven't put a person up yet to move in tandem with this. To that, I will concede. But having said that, again, the process is we have always done this in pairs in the past.

I commit to the chairman—I have already talked to the chairman about this—that we will do this. And before the end of January, we will have such a person to move together with this.

If he asks after that, I will not object. But at this time, I have been requested to object so that we can have the opportunity to put that person up.

So at this point, I would object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I thank my distinguished colleague, the ranking member on the Foreign Relations Committee, for his remarks and for the conversation we had before. I appreciate that, and I look forward to making this happen in the very early part of the new Congress.

But I will just simply say that the Board, of course, is comprised of nominees recommended by the majority and the minority, and, ideally, that is how they would move forward. I am ready to be supportive of moving forward on other nominees for this position as well.

But as has been said, the reality is that the minority has yet to make their recommendations, despite having had more than 2 years to do so—2 years.

So, in a sense, it is not fair to reject those who are waiting and went through the process and did their disclosures and everything else and have been hanging out there because the minority has not chosen to make their nominations.

I understand the Senator is objecting on behalf of his leadership. I just hope that this draws attention to the Republican leadership so that they, hopefully, will come up with their two names so that as we start the new session of Congress, we can get this done right away.

With that, 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.

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

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, I rise today in support of Dr. Laura Taylor-Kale, the President's nominee to be Assistant Secretary of Defense for Industrial Base Policy.

As a member of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, I know that growing and sustaining our industrial base is a critical aspect of the resilience of our national security, and it is critical also to maintaining our competitive advantage with China and other near-peer competitors. A resilient defense industrial base is also vital to the support the United States is providing to Ukraine.

Dr. Taylor-Kale is well suited for this role, having served in the Obama-Biden administration as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Manufacturing in the International Trade Administration and as the senior adviser for policy and operations at the U.S. Development Finance Corporation. She has significant professional experience at the intersection of business and government and has a thorough understanding of industry challenges and their impact on supply chains most crucial to our national security. Her experience across government, the private sector, multilateral organizations, and academia leave her well suited to help ensure the Department of Defense continues to deliver secure and resilient capabilities to our forces.

Filling this position is important. It is vital to addressing critical vulnerabilities in industrial supply chains, to reducing reliance on foreign adversaries, and securing domestic industrial capacity—all actions that are key to U.S. economic and national security.

If we are serious about the role of the United States as a global competitor, we need a fully staffed and capable team managing the current and future needs of our military forces. Dr. Taylor-Kale will help complete that team.

I ask unanimous consent that at a time to be determined by the majority leader, in consultation with the Republican leader, the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 1152, Laura Taylor-Kale, of California, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense. (New Position); that there be 10 minutes for debate equally divided in the usual form on the nomination; that upon the use or yielding back of the time, the Senate vote without intervening action or debate on the nomination; and that the Senate resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I want to say a few words about the Biden administration's policies on the very subject which Dr. Laura Taylor-Kale is going to be in charge.

Now, I have been working with this administration probably more than most Republican Senators, particularly on Department of Defense issues—on Department of Defense personnel, on helping them actually get confirmed—so I don't come down here and do this lightly. Heck, I introduced the Secretary of Defense, Secretary Austin, at his confirmation hearing and then whipped votes to make sure he got confirmed. So this is not my regular course of business even as it relates to the Biden administration but particularly as it relates to the Department of Defense. I have been someone who has been trying to help.

But I am objecting because the Biden administration's policies are completely at odds with the President's public statements and my friend from Wisconsin's statements about the need for an industrial policy in critical minerals that will help our military and help our economy.

Dr. Taylor-Kale will be in charge of this at the Pentagon—industrial policy, critical minerals, rare earths. What we are seeing, Mr. President, is they talk about this, but then they take actions against these very policies that hurt us. The No. 1 area where they take actions is my State, the great State of Alaska, which has more energy for America, more critical resources, more critical minerals, more rare earths for our Nation—for our Nation.

My State has had 40 Executive orders or Executive actions in 2 years from this administration, issued singularly and solely against Alaska. Of course, that is crushing the economy of my State, workers in my State. But here is the broader point for this topic today: It is really undermining America's national security. Critical minerals, natural resources—we all know we need them, yet one big part of America—it is the target of this administration to shut it down. It is ridiculous.

As I said to my colleague, if a Republican administration went to Wisconsin

or issued 40 Executive orders and Executive actions solely against Wisconsin or Maine and you guys came to me and said, ''Hey, Dan, help us. Geez Louise, the war on Alaska. Help,'' I would help.

My State is getting crushed.

Here is the specific issue that relates to this nominee. The President held a summit on critical minerals—a good example of what we need to do—on February 22, 2022, and he said: We need these critical minerals. The demand for them is going to increase 400 to 600 percent over the next several decades.

We can't build a future that's made in America if we ourselves are dependent on China for the materials that power the products of today and tomorrow.

And our national security.

That is the President of the United States on his big critical minerals summit hosted at the White House to talk about supply chains and industrial capacity and military issues.

The same day the President of the United States held that critical minerals summit, the Department of the Interior said that they were going to reverse a 7-year EIS record of decision, $10 million by professional staff in the Federal Government, on what is called the Ambler Mining District in Alaska, one of the biggest, most extensive sources of critical minerals in the country, maybe even in the world—a project, by the way, that has been in permitting since the Obama administration.

That same day, they reversed it and said: Alaska, start over.

Nuts. Crazy.

So what I have done is I have put a hold on a couple of Department of Defense nominees who are in charge of this area, and Dr. Taylor-Kale is one. But I have been reasonable. I went to the Deputy Secretary of the Interior, the Deputy Secretary of Defense. We held a conference with White House officials. I simply said: I am not asking to reverse your crazy decision—which it was crazy. It hurts my State for sure, but it hurts the national security of our country.

I simply said: I want three simple asks—so I have been trying to work to get the nominee cleared—three simple asks from this administration: Identify a definitive, workable schedule with a clear, legitimate timeline for completing the review of this project that has already been in almost 10 years of permitting—to do it in a timely manner. That was No. 1. Clearly state the Federal Government's intent to allow the Alaska entities that are trying to move this forward to continue to complete baseline scientific data gathering and design work, such as wetland delineations and engineering reconnaissance for this road. That was No. 2. Allow these Alaska entities that are moving this road and project forward to complete its planned geological drilling and core sampling program, which is critical to advancing the project and engineering design, as this case is now being remanded.

That was it. That was it. Three simple requests. None of these are hard. None of them are hard.

I have raised this with the Secretary of Defense, the national security team, of course, Interior, and they keep telling me no. This is easy. If the Secretary of the Interior came and said, ''Senator SULLIVAN, I saw your remarks on the floor. I agree with all three of those things. You are right; they are simple,'' I would lift my hold today.

So the ball is in the administration's court. If they really want Dr. Taylor-Kale to be confirmed, they could do it tonight. Meet my requests, which are quite reasonable. I did not ask them to review or reverse the crazy decision that they made in February of 2022. These are very simple requests. I have been very reasonable on this. No one on their side is being reasonable, so I will continue to hold her and some of the other DOD nominees who are in charge of critical minerals and industrial capacity in the Department of Defense until the simple demands that I am asking for that not only will help my State but will help the national security of America.

They won't do it, so I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Wisconsin.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, I listened carefully to my colleague from Alaska as he objected, and I just want to add a couple of comments in response.

I had a chance to share with him that there was a Wisconsin conflict between the Department of Defense and the Department of Interior, something that when I was a Member of the House of Representatives I worked on for 14 years and could not get it shaken loose—finger pointing, finger pointing. And then I had the honor of being elected to the U.S. Senate, where we have the power to place holds on nominees. And I had the opportunity, and took advantage of that opportunity, to place a hold on a nominee who was absolutely in the position to resolve the issue. And it is a powerful tool.

In this case, the person who is being held could be doing so much to advance and grow our defense industrial base and help to improve our national security and resiliency. And this particular person is not in a position to, if confirmed, resolve the issue that I heard my colleague describe. So I am disappointed that we cannot move ahead with this confirmation at this time.

I understand the power of the hold, but it is much more powerful when the person being held is also in a position to resolve the issue.

And with that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I just want to say that I certainly would be willing to work with my colleague from Wisconsin on this issue. I have been working on it in good faith with other Members on the other side of the aisle. Maybe, perhaps, she can help me with the three simple asks we have put forward to the Department of Interior, and if they agree to those simple asks—and they are simple—then I will lift my hold. So maybe the Senator from Wisconsin and I can work together on this.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. VAN HOLLEN). The Senator from Wisconsin.

Ms. BALDWIN. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill 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. Without objection, it is so ordered.

FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS AND EXTENSIONS ACT, 2023—Motion to Proceed

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask that the Chair lay before the Senate the message to accompany H.R. 1437.

Mr. MARSHALL. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS).

The result was announced—yeas 75, nays 20 as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 393 Leg.]

YEAS—75

Baldwin	Hickenlooper	Reed
Bennet	Hirono	Romney
Blumenthal	Hyde-Smith	Rosen
Booker	Inhofe	Rubio
Boozman	Kaine	Sanders
Brown	Kelly	Schatz
Cantwell	Kennedy	Schumer
Capito	King	Shaheen
Cardin	Klobuchar	Shelby
Carper	Lankford	Sinema
Casey	Leahy	Smith
Cassidy	Luján	Stabenow
Collins	Manchin	Sullivan
Coons	Markey	Tester
Cornyn	McConnell	Thune
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Toomey
Cotton	Merkley	Tuberville
Duckworth	Moran	Van Hollen
Durbin	Murkowski	Warner
Feinstein	Murphy	Warnock
Gillibrand	Murray	Warren
Graham	Ossoff	Whitehouse
Grassley	Padilla	Wicker
Hassan	Peters	Wyden
Heinrich	Portman	Young

NAYS—20

Blackburn	Ernst	Johnson
Braun	Fischer	Lee
Cramer	Hagerty	Lummis
Crapo	Hawley	Marshall
Daines	Hoeven	

Paul	Rounds	Scott (FL)
Risch	Sasse	Scott (SC)

NOT VOTING—5

Barrasso	Burr	Tillis
Blunt	Cruz	

The motion was agreed to.

FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS AND EXTENSIONS ACT, 2023

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair lays before the Senate the following message from the House.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Resolved, That the House agree to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 1437) entitled ''An Act to amend the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 to direct the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to provide comprehensive and regularly updated Federal precipitation information, and for other purposes'', with a House amendment to Senate amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

MOTION TO CONCUR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment, and I ask for the yeas and nays on the motion to concur.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a second?

There is a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays are ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

MOTION TO CONCUR WITH AMENDMENT NO. 6534

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to concur in the House amendment with an amendment No. 6534, which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from New York [Mr. SCHUMER] moves to concur with the House amendment to the Senate amendment with an amendment numbered 6534.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that further reading be dispensed with.

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

The amendment (No. 6534) is as follows:

(Purpose: To add an effective date)

At the end add the following:

SEC. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This Act shall effect on the date that is 1 day after the date of enactment of this Act.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask for the yeas and nays on the motion to concur with an amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays are ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 6535 TO AMENDMENT NO. 6534

Mr. SCHUMER. I have an amendment at the desk to amendment No. 6534, which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from New York [Mr. SCHUMER] proposes an amendment numbered 6535 to amendment No. 6534.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that further reading be dispensed with.

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

The amendment (No. 6535) is as follows:

(Purpose: To modify the effective date)

On page 1, line 3, strike ''1'' and insert ''2''.

MOTION TO REFER WITH AMENDMENT NO. 6536

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to refer the House message to the Committee on Appropriations with instructions to report back forthwith with an amendment No. 6536.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from New York [Mr. SCHUMER] moves to refer the bill to the Committee on Appropriations with instructions to report back forthwith with an amendment numbered 6536.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that further reading be waived.

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

The amendment (No. 6536) is as follows:

(Purpose: To add an effective date)

At the end add the following:

SEC. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This Act shall take effect on the date that is 4 days after the date of enactment of this Act.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask for the yeas and nays on the motion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays are ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 6537 TO AMENDMENT NO. 6536

Mr. SCHUMER. I have an amendment to the instructions, which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from New York [Mr. SCHUMER] proposes an amendment numbered 6537 to the instructions to the motion to refer.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that further reading be waived.

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

The amendment (No. 6537) is as follows:

(Purpose: To modify the effective date)

On page 1, line 3, strike ''4'' and insert ''5''.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask for the yeas and nays on my amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays are ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 6538 TO AMENDMENT NO. 6537

Mr. SCHUMER. I have an amendment to amendment No. 6537, which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from New York [Mr. SCHUMER] proposes an amendment numbered 6538 to amendment No. 6537.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that further reading of the amendment be waived.

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

The amendment (No. 6538) is as follows:

(Purpose: To modify the effective date)

On page 1, strike ''5'' and insert ''6''.

Mr. SCHUMER. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO). The Senator from Missouri is recognized.

NO TIKTOK ON GOVERNMENT DEVICES ACT

Mr. HAWLEY. Madam President, last night, the Senate took the important step of unanimously, on a bipartisan basis, passing legislation to ban TikTok on all Government devices.

Now, this has been a longtime coming. I first introduced this piece of legislation almost 3 years ago. But last night's legislation is vitally important because never has the security threat to the American people from the Chinese Communist Party been more grave and never has the determination on the part of the Chinese Communist Party to leverage every possible asset, every possible platform to gather information—personal information—from the American people been more serious than it is now. That is why last night's action by this body is so critical.

Let's talk about TikTok for a moment, the most downloaded app in the world for the last 2 and 3 years running. Back in 2020, over 100 million Americans—100 million—used TikTok, and that was over 2 years ago. Since 2022, TikTok's average monthly users—and this year, every quarter of this year—has increased by 234 percent. It is incredible growth. You can see why. It is a fun app to use.

Here is what Americans don't know because TikTok doesn't want them to know. It is that the app runs continuously in the background of your phone or device. It collects your keystrokes. It has access to your email, access to your calendars, access to the notes and clipboard functions of your computer or iPhone or tablet or device. It, of course, tracks your geolocation. It is essentially an evidence-gathering, data-gathering machine that runs on your phone.

Can you turn it off? Can you stop it from doing these things? No, you can't, not if you want to use the app.

What is the connection to Beijing? Only this: that TikTok is owned by ByteDance. Under Chinese law that company must—must—provide all data to the Chinese Communist Party that the party wants upon its request.

We know that there are Chinese Communist Party members in TikTok leadership. We know that the Chinese Communist Party has held so-called training sessions for ByteDance and TikTok

employees. We know that this data—Americans' data—is available to the Chinese Communist Party, to Beijing, because of TikTok, and it is time we did something to protect American users.

We have been warned repeatedly by our own intelligence Agencies that TikTok is a security threat. Heck, the Director of the FBI has testified under oath that TikTok poses major security risks. That is why the Pentagon, the State Department, the Department of Homeland Security, TSA, the Navy, the Army, the Air Force, the Coast Guard, and the Marine Corps have already banned the use of TikTok on Government devices. The only sensible next step is for this Congress to act to make that ban across the board for all Federal devices.

Now TikTok has tried to get in on the act. They issued a statement this morning admitting that there may be national security concerns with their platform, after denying it under oath for years on end to Congress. But they also begged Congress not to do anything rash like actually take action. They said: No, no, no, no. Wait, wait. Negotiate with us.

Well, I just say this: The time to wait to secure the privacy of American citizens is long past, and the least we can do, the very first step we can take, is to ban this app and its use on Federal Government devices.

I hope that now the House and the Senate will act together to move this legislation quickly to the President's desk and we can take the further historic step of seeing this legislation enacted into law, protecting the privacy and the security of every single American.

It is within our reach. Let's act now and get it done.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader.

TRIBUTE TO PATRICK J. TOOMEY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, the Senate is often labeled as the world's greatest deliberative body—a place where generations of titanic statesmen have asked the deep questions about America, questions like: How do we balance individual liberty with the common good? What role should we play on the world stage? and ''How should tax depreciation affect a small restaurant owner who is buying a new Fry-o-lator?''

Anyone around the Senate would recognize that last query as the work of our detail-oriented, hometown-focused, economic whiz—the junior Senator from Pennsylvania, PAT TOOMEY.

PAT's entire sterling career—from the private sector to the House, to nonprofit activism, to the Senate—has revolved around the reality that economics is central to daily life. What can seem like dry details or esoteric issues can determine whether whole societies rise or fall and whether hard-working families struggle or succeed. For two terms in the Senate and almost two decades total in Congress, PAT's commanding mastery of economic issues has had a massive, massive impact on his State and his country.

Our friend takes particular pride, as he should, in his leading role in delivering the generational tax reform of 2017. Most people involved in that massive effort found it exhausting. PAT considered it energizing. Our resident economist was actually in his element, and the work he helped lead created one of the best economic moments for working Americans in a generation, before the pandemic.

But tax reform is far from the only fruit of PAT's labors. From the JOBS Act of 2012, which put financial markets more within the reach of everyday investors, to the CARES Act, where PAT helped steer our bedrock financial institutions through pandemic turmoil, we knew we were getting a principled firebrand when our friend joined the Senate.

We have also gotten a collegial consensus-builder. Whether it was PAT's work on the 2011 supercommittee or his tenure at the top of the Banking Committee, PAT has blended principle, pragmatism, and persuasion.

He is always professional and respectful to his colleagues, to nominees—to everybody. He is unusually skilled at fighting the fight and unusually skilled at getting an outcome.

PAT's life and career have brought him a long way, but you still see the seeds that were planted by his father—a marine vet and utility worker. There wasn't any legacy fast track into the Ivy League, but thanks to a good upbringing, it was hard work and sheer brainpower that paved our friend's PATh to a prep school merit scholarship and then on to Harvard.

PAT cut his professional teeth as a trader in New York and Hong Kong—a free marketeer right from the start. But right as his Wall Street opportunities were taking off, PAT hit pause on his big city rise and put his economic instincts to an even higher stakes test: He actually headed back to Allentown to set up a family business from scratch. The small restaurant PAT and his brothers started was a proving ground for PAT's deep convictions in the community-building, life-changing power of free enterprise and entrepreneurship.

I understand PAT's first venture into elected office, a local commission, was mostly just an effort to make sure bureaucrats didn't meddle with the success of Rookies Restaurant and others like it.

The rest, of course, is history. PAT Toomey became a formidable Congressman, then a pivotal outside player, and finally a masterful and essential Senator. PAT has led the charge for his fellow Pennsylvanians on one front after another.

In one instance, he responded to tragedy close to home with a solution for the entire country. Heinous buck-passing on child abuse in public schools, known as passing the trash, had let an offender who had abused a child in Pennsylvania proceed to strike again in West Virginia. With the help of the senior Senator from that State, PAT spearheaded legislation that compels States to crack down on this abhorrent practice.

Another time, through sheer willpower, PAT literally became a life-saving legislative guardian angel for a young Pennsylvanian battling cystic fibrosis. Sarah Murnaghan was only 12 years old when outdated and tangled rules around lung transplants put her young life in serious peril. PAT rallied a coalition of Members. They relentlessly lobbied the executive branch. A Federal judge weighed in, and, long story short, that young lady got her transplant and is still with us today.

PAT's creative problem-solving has known few bounds. The way I hear it, one time, our colleague literally leveraged the America's Cup sailboat race as a way to get a specialized transport ship reflagged so that Pennsylvania's natural gas industry could keep moving useful byproducts to market.

In the midst of all of this, PAT made sure his office's casework for Pennsylvanians was just as superlative. His team's incredibly tight turnaround for responding to constituents has earned PAT praise from unlikely corners. I understand that, one time, former President Clinton went out of his way to inform our colleague that a friend of his in the Keystone State couldn't believe how quick and substantive was a reply he or she had gotten from Senator TOOMEY's office.

While many Capitol Hill offices struggle just to turn around the correspondence that comes in, I have it on good authority that PAT will literally go combing through local newspapers' ''Letters to the Editor'' so that he can proactively initiate contact with Pennsylvanians who haven't even sought him out.

Even the most eager morning people on PAT's staff have learned to expect the lights will already be on when they get to the office—their boss, already primed with ideas and questions: ''I think we could come at this a few different ways'' or ''Have you seen how German Government bonds are trading today?''

But our colleague is also known for his thoughtful, almost fatherly leadership style. PAT holds everyone to a high standard, especially himself, but if something goes amiss, there is no quick temper, are no harsh words—just a facial expression that his team affectionately calls ''that 'disappointed dad' look.'' And no matter what happens, everyone is invited to the annual pool party at PAT's house.

Talk about an interesting Senate creature—a man with a brain formed on the trading floor and a heart shaped by Lehigh Valley kitchen tables.

PAT's true loves are family and free enterprise. This combination has made him a formidable Senator, but it has

also shown us the writing on the wall: The Senate was never going to keep our friend forever.

PAT is always careful to refer to his Senate service as the ''greatest professional honor of my life.'' Note the caveat, because everyone knows what PAT sees as the greatest honor overall. We have seen our friend fiercely guard every possible moment of family normalcy with Kris and their three kids. We have seen hours blocked off on PAT's calendar on a weeknight under the label ''Duncan's Baseball Practice.'' We have heard about evening sprints to the train station in order to make it to a Christmas pageant—only to see our friend right back here the very next morning.

So like I said, Madam President, family and free enterprise—the two great loves.

I heard a classic PAT TOOMEY story where a young intern in his office was excitedly telling his friends about the prestigious ivory tower Path that he was aspiring to. Apparently, his boss, the Senator, chimed in with something to the effect of, Yeah, that sounds great, but have you ever considered opening up a small business?

So while we are going to miss PAT around these parts, none of us can claim surprise that family and free enterprise have teamed up to steal him back.

Since we are talking about an all-star Senate dad, let me put it this way: PAT, your colleagues and I aren't mad. We are just disappointed.

(Laughter.)

You have achieved so much. You have done just what you hoped to.

Congratulations, and thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

FAREWELL TO THE SENATE

Mr. TOOMEY. Madam President, I rise for the customary farewell address.

I would like to begin by thanking our colleague and our leader, MITCH MCCONNELL, for his very, very kind words.

I appreciate that, Leader MCCONNELL. I would also like to say that I appreciate the confidence you have repeatedly placed in me. Your recollections have brought back many memories.

One was the supercommittee. I served on the supercommittee, but what most of you probably don't know is that Leader MCCONNELL had great reservations about putting me on the supercommittee. Oh, yes, he grilled me for what seemed like hours over several occasions.

Here is why: He grilled me because he wanted an outcome. And his concern was, will this firebrand from the Club for Growth be willing to compromise, be willing to reach an agreement that couldn't possibly be exactly what he wanted?

What was most important—as I recall from our conversations—to Leader MCCONNELL was that the people on that supercommittee, at least the ones that he could appoint, be interested in a successful outcome?

I would suggest that one of the things that is underappreciated about Leader MCCONNELL is how relentlessly focused he is on outcomes. It is hard to know because he doesn't tell us that much about what he is thinking, if you haven't noticed, but I am pretty sure that that is a big driver.

So, Leader MCCONNELL, I appreciate your leadership. I appreciate the confidence you placed in me. I appreciate our friendship and terrific working relationship.

For the many thanks that I have to give, I will start with my family. Starting with my parents, they did a great job raising six kids, I will tell you that much.

I have to really stress my gratitude for my wife Kris. Most of you probably don't know, but Kris had a very successful and promising career as a consultant, which she put aside so that I could pursue mine. So, in many ways, I think she had a tougher job because she was home raising three kids. And she has done a phenomenal job of that.

Last month, we celebrated our 25th wedding anniversary, and I think I will spend the next 25 years letting her know how much I appreciate her.

Our kids are here. Bridget is 22; Patrick is 21; and Duncan is 12½.

You know, growing up in a political family has its disadvantages. You would be surprised to learn, but it seems like about every 6 years or so people ran some really nasty ads about me on television. They did. The kids see ads, obviously. Also, I missed more of their activities than I would have liked to because I had to be here, but they were always terrifically understanding about that. I am sure looking forward to spending more time with each of them.

For those of us who serve on this body, we all know that staffs are the unsung heroes of our successes. I have been luckier than anybody deserves to be with the teams that I have had working for me over the years—18 years in public office over a 24-year period; 6 in the House and 12 in the Senate. I have just had wonderful, wonderful folks—mostly younger people, as we know our staffs tend to be, but just terrifically capable, hard-working, bright people.

My State staff, for instance—Leader MCCONNELL was kind enough to point out—the reputation that we had. I don't deserve the credit for that. They are the ones who worked so hard on behalf of our constituents.

From Philly to Erie and the other 65 counties and enumerable little boroughs and townships, every day they approached constituent service with enthusiasm and professionalism that was amazing. I mean, little boroughs requesting Federal grants and businesses struggling with Federal bureaucracies and regulations, veterans stymied by the VA or the Social Security Administration—it didn't matter what it was, my staff was on the ball getting the job done and doing it with a great attitude.

My personal office here in DC, both when I was in the House and in the Senate, also are just terrific, terrific people.

You know, I represent a very big State that is relatively close to DC so we have a huge number of constituents who want to come down and make their case, as they should. Most of those meetings end up getting taken by our staff, as you know. They have just done such a great job.

Our leg and comms shops are always working so hard to get the policy exactly right and get our message right; the administrative staff that kept things running smoothly so I never had to worry about anything.

I have to say a special thanks to the Banking Committee staff. I have been on the Banking Committee since I got here, but only the last 2 years have I been the ranking member on the committee. I honestly think we accomplished about as much as you can when you are in the minority, and so much of it is because it is a great team.

We focused on all the areas of jurisdiction of the committee: financial services, monetary policy, housing, transit. We did a lot of important work on the nominees to important regulatory posts. I think we did a good job of providing the oversight of powerful regulators, including encouraging them to stay in their lanes. I will always be grateful to them.

By the way, many of them are still here, and they will be here to the bitter end. We are still processing requests for the omni.

I have got to say a big thanks to the campaign teams that I have had over the years. You know, my first House primary was a very improbable success. I know most of you are thinking any election that I won was an improbable success. I get that. But I can tell you for sure, it wouldn't have happened without a terrifically talented and dedicated campaign staff, some of whom became part of the official staff, others have chosen to stay on the political side.

As for all of you guys, my colleagues, I have teamed up with every Republican at some point over the years, and most of my Democratic colleagues also at one time or another, and it has been a real honor and it has been a privilege to work with each of you. You folks have been terrific allies, even when it is on an item that is a rare item of agreement.

Speaking of which, let me say a word about my colleague BOB CASEY. You know, I don't think you could ask for a more collegial, thoughtful colleague than the fellow that shares the senatorial responsibilities with me for Pennsylvania. The fact is, we canceled each other's vote out almost every time—that is a true fact—but we have also worked together when we could.

One of the areas where we had just tremendous success is filling vacancies on the Federal bench in Pennsylvania.

In fact, Senator CASEY, and according to the last count that I have, you and I working together these last 12 years got 33 Federal judges confirmed to the bench in Pennsylvania.

Now, that happens because we have great staff work happening; we have volunteers who do a wonderful job of vetting candidates across our Commonwealth; but it also happens because BOB and I wanted to get this job done so that the people of Pennsylvania could have justice. And I think that only two—only New York and California have had more judges confirmed in this time.

So, Senator CASEY, I appreciate the great working relationship we have had.

As a general matter, as a body, I think we all understand we are not that popular, but I don't think I have ever worked with a more impressive group of individuals. So I appreciate having had that chance.

I also have to thank the people of this great Commonwealth of Pennsylvania that my family and I get to live in. Leader MCCONNELL used my line. It is true, and I say it all the time, and it will always be true, representing Pennsylvania in the U.S. Senate for these 12 years has been the greatest honor of my professional life. I will always be enormously grateful to the wonderful people of this great State for their entrusting me with this awesome responsibility.

I am also uniquely grateful to the people, the volunteers, who made those campaigns successful.

When I think about my mission in the Senate, I think about two complementary aspects of it.

First, it is to represent and defend the specific interests of Pennsylvania, and I tried to do that to the best of my ability.

You know, I think sometimes we are such a big and diverse State that what is good for Pennsylvania is usually good for America and vice versa, but it has also been important to me to defend and advance the cause of personal freedom. In the hierarchy of political values, freedom is first for me.

I think the purpose, the real purpose of government is to secure the blessings of liberty, and government too often is the source of restrictions on our freedom instead.

But in this category of defending and advancing personal freedom, my focus has tended to be the economic realm. Economic freedom is a fundamental aspect of personal freedom, and there is a well-documented high correlation between a society's economic freedom and the level of prosperity and the standard of living of the people in that society.

So you probably won't be surprised to learn that I think my biggest legislative accomplishment was that opportunity that I had to be a part of a small group of Senators, Finance Committee members, who got a chance to develop and help pass the 2017 tax reform. That group included Senator PORTMAN, Senator SCOTT, Senator THUNE, and countless hours that we spent in a conference room dealing with what was a very complex product.

We took our draft, and we presented it to our colleagues, and over a course of many weeks, we kind of iterated our way to what became the most sweeping tax reform in at least 30 years. And we expanded economic freedom with that product. Honestly, I have to tell you, I think the results were even better than what we had hoped for.

By the time the tax reform had been fully implemented—I think calendar year 2019—we had the strongest economy of my lifetime. We had strong economic growth, a 50-year low unemployment, alltime record-low unemployment for African Americans, alltime record-low unemployment for Hispanic Americans and other ethnic minority groups. Wages were growing, and they were growing faster than the rate of inflation, which means that workers were able to see a rise in their standard of living. And wages were growing fastest for the lowest income Americans so we were also narrowing the income gap.

We ended corporate inversions. There hasn't been one since. Remember how frequently they were occurring?

And with a lower corporate tax rate but also fewer deductions, business boomed. The corporate tax rate was down to 21 percent. This year, with a 21-percent top rate, we are exceeding the revenue projections that were made prior to tax reform when the rate was 35 percent. This is not just about inflation. As a share of our economy, total Federal tax revenue is at a multidecade high. So much for the thought that we were going to increase the size of the deficit from the tax reform.

Oh, and by the way, we also made the Tax Code even more progressive than it was. That is right. Higher earners now pay a greater portion of the total tax burden than they did before our tax reform.

I know my Democratic colleagues were skeptical about this, and I understand. But I would like to suggest, the data is in, and it is really good. There are important provisions that are scheduled to expire, and I do hope that Congress and the administration can find a bipartisan path to extending—or better still—making permanent these otherwise expiring provisions.

I hope you will indulge me for just a few moments to make a couple of other recommendations. I have got one for my Republican colleagues; I have got one for my Democratic colleagues—mostly for my Democratic colleagues—and two for this institution that we have had this privilege to serve in.

For my Republican colleagues, let me just say, our party can't be about or beholden to any one man. We are much bigger than that. Our party is much bigger than that. We are the political representation of this huge center-right coalition across America. On a good day, that is more than half of Americans.

And I hope we resist the temptation to adopt the protectionist, nativist, isolationist, redistributive policies that some are suggesting we embrace. I think those are inconsistent with the core values of a majority of the people in this coalition. More important, I think those ideas lead to bad outcomes for our country.

For my Democratic colleagues, I have heard many of you passionately—and I believe sincerely—declare your determination to defend our democracy, but I would suggest we all remember that democracy requires much more than the ease of voting in an election.

Elections are absolutely necessary, but they are an insufficient condition for a truly democratic society.

Elections really are a means to an end; they are not the end themselves. The end, or purpose, of elections is to provide the mechanism of accountability of the government to the people whose consent is our sole source of legitimacy.

When we hand over Congress's responsibilities to unelected and, therefore, unaccountable parts of our government—be that the courts or independent regulators or executive branch Agencies—we really undermine our democracy, which, of course, is really our Republic, because we weaken the accountability of our government.

Now, look, both sides have done this over time, but I would just hope we could all agree that preserving more responsibility and, therefore, accountability for the legislative branch of government is a good thing for our Republic.

And then two suggestions for this amazing, historic institution. The first one—and it is the most important one: Please keep the filibuster. It is the only mechanism that forces bipartisan consensus. It prevents governance from the extremes. By forcing bipartisanship, it results in more durable legislation and so lessens the likelihood of big swings in policies. It provides stability for our constituents. And if you want to see more polarization, get rid of the filibuster and we will have much more polarization.

The second thought I had that I wanted to share with you is, I think we can all agree that the Senate has not been functioning as well as it once did and as it really should. I don't think too many committees are producing too much legislation the old-fashioned way. The old-fashioned way was actually a pretty good vetting process for developing legislative ideas. And when legislation does get to the floor, typically, there are very few substantive amendments that are allowed to be considered.

The result is, as a body, it is very difficult for us to discover whether and

where there might be a consensus. I know there are a lot of reasons for this, including political polarization, reasons why the Senate behaves in a way that tends to block debate and voting.

But there might be some relatively modest tweaks in Senate rules that might just facilitate restoring some of what used to be normal functioning. I know a lot of you have done a lot of work in this and that work is still underway. Let me suggest you consider one small tweak, a small but important technical change to a rule, the rule which enables the obstruction of the body.

I am not talking about the filibuster but, rather, the rule that effectively requires unanimous consent, in most cases, to allow a vote on an amendment, any amendment, even a germane amendment.

I can tell you, most Pennsylvanians are very surprised to learn that in order for a Senator to get a vote on almost anything, he or she needs the permission of every other Senator. I don't think this rule is workable any longer, and it contributes to the dysfunction. So I have just got a simple idea: Consider raising the threshold for blocking an amendment to some number greater than one.

Now, I support the filibuster because I think it is reasonable for 41 Senators to be able to block legislation. It just doesn't seem reasonable for one. So I don't know what the right number is, and I am not religious about this. Maybe it is 10. Maybe it is 20. Maybe it is 50. But I would just suggest that this body consider somehow raising the bar of preventing the Senate from functioning. There may be better ways to do it, but that is one suggestion.

Let me conclude with this: You know, we have all inherited something really, really, truly special. I know we all appreciate that, the fact that we live in the greatest country in the history of humanity and that we serve in this amazing legislative body.

I suspect we all get asked—I know I get asked from time to time—some version of the question: How worried are you about our country's future? And, often, there is some combination of national security, political polarization, and the future of our economy that is the primary concern of the people posing the question.

My short reply is usually: Look, we have gotten through much tougher times.

But think about it. I think that is so true, and it is important to remember. On national security, we have got real threats out there. Russia is obviously led by a violent, dangerous bully. The Chinese Communist Party is a rising and increasingly aggressive threat. But nowhere do we face the imminent threats that we faced during World War II and at several moments during the Cold War.

And we are polarized, and it is uncomfortable and it is problematic; but, in 1968, we had political assassinations and cities were being burned down. And this Chamber, this very Chamber we are in right now, first opened its doors in 1859. Imagine living through the decade that followed that.

As for the economy, look, there are always risks to any economy. Ours is no exception. I think inflation is a significant problem. There is a possibility we have a recession next year. We have huge and growing national debt, and I think that is going to be a real challenge for us.

But I think it is worth remembering this: The vast majority of Americans have a much higher standard of living today than our parents did when they were our age. And a rising standard of living is, after all, the purpose of economic growth.

So I always answer that question about America's future with the truth, and that is that, despite our challenges, I am extremely bullish on America. And I think my optimism is easily justified by our history.

America has always been able to survive and thrive, and America remains the greatest nation in the history of the world. If we keep on being Americans, we will remain the greatest nation on the planet.

Thank you, Madam President.

(Applause, Senators rising.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

TRIBUTE TO PATRICK J. TOOMEY

Mr. CASEY. Madam President, I rise to offer some remarks about my colleague from Pennsylvania, Senator TOOMEY.

I think you can tell from his presentation today what he holds most dear, and, of course, that is his family—both Kris, his wife, and his children—and I am so happy that he is going to be able to spend more time with them.

I thought I would offer some remarks about his service as well as the ways that we have worked together. Let me start with the basic assertion which Senator TOOMEY made reference to that he and I didn't agree on much. And I think it is probably—I am not going to speak for him, but I kind of am in this moment. I am not sure he wanted to be caught dead agreeing with me on some issues, and that is just the way it works around here.

But one thing we tried to do from the opening day that he got here in January of 2011—I had been here a few years at that point—was we tried to—and I think we were successful over 12 years—have a kind of mutual respect, which is easy to articulate and harder to effectuate, and it requires both sides to give and take. And I am grateful that we were able to do that together.

There are a lot of ways in the Senate, as is true in the House or any other legislative body, even when you are from the same State, to kind of poke each other on a regular basis. We refrained from that. It didn't mean we were praising each other's legislative result or point of view, but we tried to demonstrate that basic mutual respect and not to try to undermine each other.

As Senator TOOMEY outlined, I think the manifestation of the work we did together—or maybe the most evident manifestation of that—was the work we did on Federal district court judges. As everyone knows who follows the work of the Senate, Senators make recommendations to an administration about who should serve on the district courts in their State. In our State, we have an Eastern District, a Middle District, and a Western District. Depending on which month or year you are in, you have vacancies in each of those Federal districts throughout the State. And if you want a judge or a candidate to be a judge to advance, you have to work with your colleague.

Now, it is a little easier when you have two Democrats and two Republicans. It is more challenging when you have a split delegation in the Senate. But we worked together. And as Senator TOOMEY made reference to, we vetted and then advanced for nomination and then saw through the confirmation of 33 Federal and district court judges in 12 years.

He mentioned that it was the third highest other than California and Texas. But what is noteworthy about that—really significant, I believe—is that it was from a split-delegation State. The two States I just mentioned didn't have that split. So it is a singular achievement that we should both be proud of. But, as he also indicated, our staffs deserve the lion's share of the credit. They had to do so much work in making sure that those nominees were vetted and could be advanced.

So I am grateful for that work that he did with me and with our office for the State of Pennsylvania. And, PAT, I can't thank you enough for the work we did together on Federal district court judges.

We also worked together most recently, the last couple of years, on some nursing home reforms—maybe, more particularly, the oversight that the Federal Government provides with respect to nursing homes when you have a program—they call it the Special Focus Facility Program—where the intent of that program is to focus on the poor-performing nursing homes.

But we did an investigation where we saw that there are some nursing homes that were not quite on the list that they should have been on and weren't getting that kind of special focus of attention. I also worked with Senator TOOMEY on that nursing home legislation.

So on a range of issues important to Pennsylvania and important in the Nation, we tried every day to, when we were at our best, work well together.

I especially appreciate what he had to do not just as a Member of the Senate but, in this case, in the early days of 2021 as a Republican Senator when he had two big decisions to make. He had a decision to make on January 6

about how he would vote on the certification question; and he, in my judgment, voted the right way and, I think, voted in a way that was courageous.

And then just a few weeks went by and there was the impeachment proceedings here in the Senate for the then-former President, and that was maybe an even more difficult vote, to cast the vote that he cast in that impeachment proceeding.

Both votes were exceedingly difficult for any political figure, for any member of a political party at any time in history. And it was a very difficult time, I am sure, for him to cast those votes. But he did because he wanted to advance the interests of democracy and he wanted to advance the concept that we claim to hold dear, which is the rule of law and upholding the rule of law.

And I can't imagine a more difficult set of votes so close in time for any Senator, and I am grateful that he voted the way that he did. And I know the people of Pennsylvania were grateful.

So on so many fronts, I said—recently, we had a gathering of Pennsylvanians. On so many fronts, even when we didn't agree on big issues, we were able to come together on some Pennsylvania priorities as well as issues that related to the Federal judiciary.

One thing that I think we are in agreement on and have always been in agreement on is both of us, in our personal capacities, married way above our class. I married above my class when I married Terese, and I think the same is true of PAT when he married Kris. We agree on that, right? We do. OK.

I am happy for PAT TOOMEY and Kris and their children, but I will miss working with him and serving alongside him. As he said, it is a privilege to serve in this institution, and he served this institution and the people of our State with honor and with distinction.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WARNOCK). The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, when it was reported a few years ago that Senator PAT TOOMEY had taken up beekeeping, he said this about the appeal of his new hobby:

> When you're in my line of work, you're often dealing with abstractions. It's fun to have something tangible, where you can see the results.

Well, my good friend from Pennsylvania has, of course, produced many tangible results during his 12 years in the Senate. As Senator TOOMEY's service here draws to a close, I rise today in tribute to an outstanding leader who has been as busy and beneficial as those hard-working bees he tends.

PAT came to the Senate in 2011 well prepared for this line of work by his three terms in the House. With his background in the financial services industry and as the owner and operator of a small family business with his brothers, he has been an effective voice for economic growth, regulatory reform, and fiscal responsibility. His respectful demeanor, his integrity, and his commitment to getting the facts have earned him the respect of colleagues on both sides of the aisle. His persuasive and principled arguments often convince his opponents to become his allies.

I always personally looked forward to Senator TOOMEY coming to visit me to discuss a nominee or a piece of legislation. Inevitably, he would arrive with all the facts, all the data, all the quotations, and make his case. He didn't rely simply on rhetoric or an appeal to party loyalty—not at all. His approach was to present a solid case for why I should agree with him, and his track record, I must say, was very good.

Throughout his time in Congress, PAT has focused on creating good jobs for the people in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and across our entire country. He knows that America has the best workers in the world, and when they have a level playing field, they can compete with anyone.

Drawing on his expertise in finance, PAT pushed for policies that supported workers and were conducive to the startup and growth of businesses. He played an absolutely essential role in shaping the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, which reduced the tax burden for American families. He coauthored sections of the JOBS Act, which made it easier for businesses to invest and expand. He has always worked to cut red-tape to help unleash economic opportunities.

There is another side to PAT as well. He is a true champion for those who are vulnerable in our society. I have worked with him on many issues over the years, including legislation to safeguard seniors from financial exploitation, as well as a bill to support 50 million Americans who serve as family caregivers. PAT has led efforts to better protect children from abuse, as well as to prevent animal cruelty.

PAT is a determined leader. He is a leader who seeks bipartisan solutions. After the horrendous and heartbreaking Sandy Hook school shooting in 2012 that took the lives of 26 people, including 20 children, he reached across the aisle to work with another good friend of mine, Senator JOE MANCHIN, on comprehensive legislation to keep firearms out of the hands of criminals, terrorists, and those who are dangerously mentally ill. That initiative laid the foundation for the Safer Communities Act that became law this year. It was a pleasure to serve with PAT on the bipartisan 20- Member working group who forged that landmark law.

PAT, it has been such an honor to serve with you, and I cherish our friendship. I will miss those visits to my office to straighten me out on certain issues and to educate me.

In all sincerity, I really did look forward to those visits because they were always an intellectual exchange, and you always made such a great case.

I wish you, Kris, and your wonderful children all the best. You will be missed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I rise to talk about my dear friend PAT TOOMEY. My dear friend from Maine mentioned what we worked on. We worked on many pieces of legislation together, and PAT was always a stalwart.

As far as when it came to financial matters, I think PAT was the go-to person, whether you were a Democrat or Republican, to get his opinion on finances. Basically, whether it be taxes or tax credits or extenders, whatever it may be, PAT would give you an answer, and PAT was accurate.

But I saw a different side of PAT on December 14, 2012, when 26 people were killed in Sandy Hook. Twenty of them were children, 6 and 7 years old. And I saw the heart and soul of PAT TOOMEY.

I knew I had to do something. I couldn't live with it. I come from what we call a very gun-friendly atmosphere, environment in my State of West Virginia. PAT, being my next door neighbor in Pennsylvania, had the same, and we knew that it was difficult. So I decided that I wanted to introduce a bill, but I needed a partner. I needed a true partner who believed. PAT stepped forward, and we had the Manchin-Toomey background check.

It was the beginning. And what drove us was the compassion, PAT's compassion and his heart and soul. This massacre that happened to these children should never have happened. School should be the safest place a child goes and a parent can at least breathe easily. And seeing what they went through—and I think we bonded with all of the parents. We still to this day talk to them, and our hearts and prayers are with them.

PAT was with me side by side to fight the good fight. We came up a few votes short. Looking back on that, that would have been a tremendous beginning many years ago. It could have prevented an awful lot of the senseless, horrific tragedies that have happened, with families losing their children.

With that, my dear friend, I want to say thank you. That was a bill that—I think we did everything in that bill for the right reason. We didn't want to take anyone's guns away from them. We wanted to make sure people could still enjoy the hunting that we grew up with, the sports shooting that we enjoyed—all of the recreational things you do with guns when you come from a gun culture. PAT and I called it gun sense. You just have to have some gun sense. And it is the truth, but we had to educate people.

On the other hand, we were saying we wanted to make sure that—we grew up in an atmosphere where we were taught as young children: You know, you don't sell your gun to a stranger.

You don't even loan your gun to a family member who is irresponsible. That is your prized possession. You are responsible. That is a lethal weapon. You are responsible.

That is how we were raised. We both understood that. But if we were understanding that, then basically we thought, We all had to have permits when we went and bought a gun. We all bought guns and went through background checks, and everybody should. So if I didn't want to sell my gun to a stranger, why should a gun show with loopholes do it? Why should you be able to mail a gun across State lines and do it? Why should that happen?

That is what we were trying to do, is close the loopholes. Make this common gun sense.

PAT, you stood tall. You really did, buddy. And I know it was a tough, tough period of time. But we did the right thing, and we are seeing some changes now. We need more changes. But it is gun sense and common sense but also protecting people's rights. We can do both in America.

We are going to miss you, buddy. We really are going to miss you. You have been something special here.

I met both of your children. I went up and spoke to their school at Harvard, and I just enjoyed it very much. And when they introduced themselves, I could tell right away that they were their mother's children and they had the spirit of their dad. I can tell you that too.

But, anyway, it has been a pleasure calling you my friend, and you always will be my friend. God bless and Godspeed, my friend.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I, too, rise to thank Senator TOOMEY for his distinguished public service. I first got to know PAT TOOMEY back in 2011.

For those who have been around here a long time or at least a medium amount of time, you may remember the budget impasse in 2011 between the House and the Senate. At that time, there were constant threats of government shutdowns. There was, of course, the issue of the debt ceiling.

What finally happened was that a piece of legislation or an agreement was reached that said: We are going to create what was then called a supercommittee to try to work out some of these budget issues, and if the supercommittee did not reach an agreement, then this Rube Goldberg machine would take effect, providing automatic budget cuts both to defense and nondefense spending.

Everybody agreed that having this automatic sequester take place would not serve the best interests of the country and hoped that this supercommittee would be able to come up with a solution.

Senator TOOMEY was new to the Senate then, but because of his great expertise and because of the fact that he was trusted by Leader MCCONNELL, he was appointed as one of the very few people—about three or four people from the Senate—to participate on the supercommittee, and I was appointed by Speaker PELOSI to serve on the supercommittee.

We did not, in the end, succeed in reaching an agreement, but one of the really good things that came out of that supercommittee from my perspective was getting to know and work with PAT TOOMEY. We disagreed on a lot of those issues, and, of course, ultimately the disagreements in the supercommittee overwhelmed our ability to get to some kind of yes. But what I learned during that process was, when you are talking to PAT TOOMEY, you are talking to somebody who is incredibly knowledgeable and presents his perspective very well.

You also found somebody who was trustworthy. PAT TOOMEY never said anything in that process where he went back on his word. He was always very clear about where he stood. Once he said he was for something, he would stick with it, and if he was against it, you would know he was against it.

You also knew he was someone you could trust in terms of confidence because when you are in a situation like the supercommittee—and we worked for weeks. It was a good-faith effort. We worked for weeks. But you have to learn to trust each other because you are talking about different proposals that ultimately would require a compromise, and we all know that compromise can sometimes be very difficult and politically charged.

So during that period of time, I recognized that PAT TOOMEY was someone you could trust. Because of that, when I came to the U.S. Senate, it was a great privilege to work with my by then friend PAT TOOMEY on a range of issues.

Senator TOOMEY talked today about his passion and conviction for expanding freedom. That passion extends to extending freedom to people around the world. We were able to team up on a number of measures to try to do exactly that. One was the Otto Warmbier BRINK Act, which was legislation that has been passed into law to try to make sure that we hold North Korea accountable for its nuclear program and also hold them accountable on human rights. It is named after an American who was mistreated in North Korea and then came home and died.

We worked on that legislation, and, again, it was always a back-and-forth. It was secondary sanctions legislation, which has now been used by multiple administrations to apply sanctions to try to advance our policies to try to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula and bring more pressure on the North Korean regime.

In that same vein, we worked together on the Hong Kong Autonomy Act after we saw China violate its commitments and agreements with respect to Hong Kong. That empowered the executive branch to apply sanctions on officials in China who were participating directly in depriving citizens in Hong Kong of their freedom, and that legislation passed as well.

Now, even in the closing days of this session, we are working together with respect to our efforts to cut off Putin's bank account that funds his war machine against Ukraine by backing up the Biden administration and G7's proposal for the oil price cap, which many have heard more about recently since this just took effect. We believe that in order for it to be effective in the long term, we need to be sure we have global compliance. To do that, that also should be backed up with a measure to provide more teeth and the prospect of sanctions.

I just wanted to come to the floor to say that, PAT, it has been great working with you on these issues. As others have said, we can always disagree, but you know how to disagree agreeably. You know how to argue your point in a respectful manner, and you have found common ground wherever you could. I am grateful.

I said a few good words about PAT TOOMEY the other day that were picked up in the Philadelphia Inquirer, and PAT said: You know, you might have gotten yourself in trouble.

I said: I have probably gotten you in just as much trouble. Of course, you are now stepping down after 12 distinguished years.

But that is the kind of trouble we should all be willing to get into, working together for the good of the country and the people of our States.

PAT, to you and Kris and your three children, as you leave here, we give you all our very best wishes, and I know and I am confident you will remain engaged in the public debate going forward. But you have earned this departure from the United States Senate. Thank you for your distinguished service to the people of Pennsylvania and to the people of the United States of America. Godspeed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

JAMES M. INHOFE DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023—Resumed

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume consideration of the message to accompany H.R. 7776; that notwithstanding rule XXII, it be in order to make motions to concur with the following amendments: Sullivan, 6522; Johnson-Cruz, 6526; that if Senator SULLIVAN makes the motion to concur with amendment, there be up to 60 minutes of debate equally divided between the two leaders or their designees; that upon the use or yielding back of the time, the Sullivan motion and motion to refer be withdrawn; the Senate vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to concur with Manchin amendment 6513; that upon

disposition of the motion to concur with the Manchin amendment, the Senate vote on the motion to concur with the Johnson amendment; further, that if none of the motions to concur with amendment are agreed to, the Senate immediately vote on the motion to concur; that there be 2 minutes for debate equally divided between the votes; and that with respect to the Johnson motion and the motion to concur be subject to a 60-affirmative vote threshold for adoption; finally, that if the motion to concur is agreed to, the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H. Con. Res. 121, which is at the desk; that the concurrent resolution be considered and agreed to, all without further intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SCHUMER. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

MOTION TO CONCUR WITH AMENDMENT NO. 6522

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I move to concur with a further amendment, No. 6522, to the message to accompany H.R. 7776, and I ask that it be reported by number.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Alaska [Mr. SULLIVAN] moves to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 7776 with an amendment numbered 6522.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To amend the Camp Lejeune Justice Act of 2022 to appropriately limit attorney's fees)

At the appropriate place in subtitle G of title X of division A, insert the following:

SEC. 10___. PROTECT CAMP LEJEUNE VETS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This section may be cited as the ''Protect Camp Lejeune Victims Ensnared by Trial-lawyer's Scams Act'' or the ''Protect Camp Lejeune VETS Act''.

(b) ATTORNEYS FEES IN FEDERAL CAUSE OF ACTION RELATING TO WATER AT CAMP LEJEUNE, NORTH CAROLINA.—The Camp Lejeune Justice Act of 2022 (28 U.S.C. 2671 note prec.) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsections (h), (i), and (j) as subsections (i), (j), and (k), respectively; and

(2) by inserting after subsection (g) the following:

''(h) ATTORNEYS FEES.—

''(1) LIMITATIONS.—

''(A) GENERAL RULE.—Notwithstanding any contract, the attorney of an individual, or of the legal representative of an individual, may not receive, for services rendered in connection with an action filed under subsection (b) or any administrative action relating to such an action (as described in section 2675 of title 28, United States Code) (in this subsection referred to as an 'administrative claim'), more than the percentage specified in paragraph (2) of a payment made in the action.

''(B) AMOUNT OF PAYMENT DETERMINED AFTER OFFSET.—For purposes of this subsection, the amount of the payment made in an action shall be the amount of the payment after any offsetting reduction under subsection (e)(2) is made.

''(C) PROHIBITION ON ANCILLARY FEES.—Attorneys fees paid in accordance with this subsection may not include any ancillary fees.

''(2) APPLICABLE PERCENTAGE LIMITATIONS.—The percentage specified in this paragraph is—

''(A) 2 percent for an administrative claim with respect to which a party entered a contract for services on or after August 10, 2022; or

''(B) 10 percent for—

''(i) an administrative claim with respect to which a party entered a contract for services before August 10, 2022;

''(ii) a resubmission of an administrative claim after the denial of an initial administrative claim, without regard to the date on which the party entered the applicable contract for services; or

''(iii) a judgment rendered or settlement entered in an action filed under subsection (b).

''(3) PENALTY.—Any attorney who violates paragraph (1) shall be fined not more than $5,000.

''(4) TERMS FOR PAYMENT OF FEES.—Any judgment rendered, settlement entered, or other award made with respect to an action filed under subsection (b) or an administrative claim shall provide that—

''(A) the Government may not pay attorneys fees to an attorney directly; and

''(B) attorneys fees shall be payable to the attorney by an individual, or legal representative of an individual, after the individual or legal representative receives the amounts payable under the judgment, settlement, or award.

''(5) DISCLOSURE.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Any judgment rendered, settlement entered, or other award made with respect to an action filed under subsection (b) or an administrative claim shall require disclosure to the Attorney General or to the court of the attorneys fees charged to an individual, or the legal representative of an individual.

''(B) REPORTING.—The Attorney General shall collect the disclosures under subparagraph (A) of attorneys fees charged and submit to Congress an annual report detailing—

''(i) the total amount paid under such judgments, settlements, and awards;

''(ii) the total amount of attorney fees paid in connection with such judgments, settlements, and awards; and

''(iii) for each such judgment, settlement, or award—

''(I) the name of the attorney for the individual or legal representative of the individual;

''(II) if applicable, the law firm of the attorney; and

''(III) the amount of fees paid to the attorney.''.

(c) UPDATE OF REGULATIONS.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall amend section 14.636 of title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, and any other relevant regulations, to comply with the amendments made by subsection (b).

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I am really working hard with my colleagues here—I see Senator DURBIN has come to the floor—to make a law that we all know is the right thing to do.

In fact, in my 8 years in the U.S. Senate, I don't think I have ever been involved with a matter that more desperately cries out for a just resolution to a simple issue. And it is this: Do we, as the U.S. Senate, want to help sick U.S. Marines and their families, or do we want to allow a legislative bill that continues to further enrich trial lawyers in America? That is the question. That is the law I am working hard with many of my colleagues to make happen.

And I think everyone knows the answer. Everyone in this body knows what the right thing to do is. Every American watching knows what the right thing to do is, and that is to help the brave Marine Corps heroes and their families who have sacrificed for decades to serve our Nation.

I have spoken to many of my colleagues, many of my Democratic colleagues in particular, and I know in their hearts that they also recognize we need to fix this problem.

So what I am asking my colleagues to do, particularly my Democratic friends, is this: Help me fix it.

Now, I want to say something. You are going to need a little courage, like the marines that we are helping. You have a constituency that really does not like my legislation: the trial bar of America. We know they are very powerful. We know that most of my colleagues don't ever want to cross them, and they certainly don't want my bill to pass.

But, again, I ask my Democratic colleagues: Have courage. Do the right thing. Work with me on fixing this problem.

So what is the problem?

Well, I have spoken on the floor about this problem, usually in angry tones because it burns me up. And any American watching who understands this, almost immediately, it burns them up. And the marines and their families, it burns them up as well.

But to be honest, this afternoon I am really down here more in terms of sadness and disappointment rather than anger. But I am going to explain it once again, and if you are watching on TV or watching back at home, give a call to your Senator and say ''Hey. Fix this injustice.'' This is a real easy, easy issue to fix. Here is the problem.

We, a couple months ago, passed here the PACT Act, which was legislation to help military members who have been sickened by burn pits. This is an issue that I have been focused on my whole Senate career, starting with bipartisan legislation several years ago with Senator MANCHIN, Senator KLOBUCHAR. So that was good. Important. Expensive, but important.

We have got to take care of our veterans and our military. To me, that is the No. 1 priority we should be doing here in the Senate, which is why a provision of the PACT Act—to provide compensation for marines who were sickened by contaminated water at Camp Lejeune—was also considered in the PACT Act. That was important. We should do that for these marines and their families—marines serving in the 1970s, 1980s at Camp Lejeune.

So far, so good. That is what has happened.

But as the legislation of the PACT Act and the Camp Lejeune marines compensation act—it started to become clear something reared its ugly head, and what reared its ugly head

was the legislation was more of a gift to America's trial lawyers than it was to sick marines.

Now, we have all seen these ads. As a matter of fact, this morning, on the radio, I heard a couple of them already. You can't go anywhere, turning on the TV, without a lawyer asking marines to call to get them to help under this Camp Lejeune compensation act. Here we are. We have seen it. Everybody has seen it.

We had a VA hearing about a month ago. I asked the VA, How much do you think trial lawyers have been spending? This is a month ago. They estimated well over a billion dollars a month ago. A billion dollars. A billion dollars.

Do you think that $1 billion is going to go to sick marines and their families? It is not. It is not. Now look, I don't blame the marines who are dialing these 1–800 numbers. They are getting bombarded. If they are sick, they think this is the way they are going to get cured and get their money.

That is not the case. A lot of these are scams, and we know it. A lot of these are scams. The problem right now is if a marine calls one of these numbers, there is no limitation on what the trial lawyer representing the marine can take out of the marine's award. No limitation, no cap on contingency fees, no cap on anything.

And here is the real problem. Everybody saw this problem coming; that is, as opposed to the marines getting compensation for being sick, the trial lawyers of America would be enriched. Everybody saw it coming. And to their credit, the Biden administration saw it coming. So the Justice Department of the Biden administration had recommended in their technical assistance to us here in the Senate that there should be caps on these awards for trial lawyers. Makes sense. This is the Biden administration Justice Department—friends of many of these law firms, but they knew it was the right thing to do. They said 10 percent caps on contingency awards and 2 percent for filing fees. That was the Biden administration's recommendation.

Now, that didn't happen. I won't go into all the bloody, gory details, but as we tried to amend the PACT Act, we wanted an amendment to do that. The Biden administration did, the veterans service organizations did because it was pretty simple. If there is a cap on fees for the lawyers, the marines are going to get more; if there isn't, the trial lawyers are going to get more. We worked it hard.

Unfortunately and sadly—really sadly—my Democratic colleagues blocked all those amendments when we tried to pass the PACT Act.

So what has happened? What the Biden Justice Department predicted, what we all predicted, it is happening. Billions of dollars of ads—see them every day, hear them every day and every night, and marines getting crumbs and trial attorneys getting rich. That is just not right.

There is not one Senator who knows that that is the right thing to do. This is an injustice right now in America, and already some marines have lost money because of these scams. Some of these firms are promising big paydays. Of course, they are asking for money upfront. A recent media story highlighted a marine in Kentucky whose face was actually used in an ad claiming he had received a $35,000 settlement. In fact, he told a reporter he got 35 cents, OK? That is not justice.

So, of course, right now the VA, local governments, veterans groups are frantically trying to warn marines and their families: Hey, don't listen to that, and, Congress, please help us. There are reports that some law firms are charging 50 or 60 percent contingency fees. Are you kidding me?

The veterans groups, the VA itself, the Biden administration VA, are crying out for help—help—no more scams.

Here is what the American Legion said at a recent meeting in a resolution they had passed:

> WHEREAS, Predatory law firms charging exorbitant fees have engaged in aggressive marketing campaigns [hurting veterans]. . . . The American Legion urges Congress to provide the necessary oversight [for] the implementation of the Camp Lejeune Justice Act to ensure veterans receive fair compensation.

That is the American Legion.

I am a member. The VFW has also come out in support of what we are trying to do. So this should be simple. This should be simple.

So what does my bill do? What does my amendment do? I am going to explain it briefly here. The full name of my amendment, my bill, is the Protect Camp Lejeune Victims Ensnared by Trial Lawyers Scams Act, the VETS Act for short. And it is pretty simple. First of all, it just goes back to what the Biden administration had recommended in terms of a cap. Everybody here agrees there needs to be a cap on contingency fees.

They had mentioned 10 percent, as I mentioned, on contingency fees and a 2-percent cap for filing the necessary paperwork.

Now my good friend, the Senator from Illinois, the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, Senator DURBIN, respectfully, I think he is going to speak and say: Well, wait a minute. The normal fee is 33½ percent, one-third contingency fees. That is actually correct.

But this isn't a normal fee. The reason the Biden administration has a low contingency fee at 10 percent is that the lawyers who are going to receive and help marines get these benefits aren't going to go through big trials. They are not going to go through discovery. It is almost an administrative procedure process to check some boxes. The government doesn't even have a defense in this. So that is why 33⅓ percent, the standard fare for contingency fees, has no place in this legislation—no place in this legislation. This is a government administrative process that is going to be made easy, supposedly, in the bill for marines—sick marines to recover compensation and their families.

So when you hear talk about: No, no, it has got to be one-third. That is just not true.

The Biden administration recommended 10 percent. So don't be fooled by that. Americans watching, don't be fooled by that.

So here is another thing.

That is the key to my legislation. The other thing we are saying is because the compensation will come out of other benefits that the veterans receive from the VA, we make sure that the contingency fee is based on the net award, not the total award. Again, that is to serve the marines and their families, not the trial lawyers.

Let me give you one final thing my legislation does, and I don't think there is any Senator who disagrees with this. And I am pretty sure the chairman of the Judiciary Committee does not disagree with this. Somehow, in the VA-implemented regulations on the implementation of this legislation, they issued a reg that makes sure that trial lawyers get paid before the sick marines and their families.

They what? Yes, right now. Now that is crazy. Everybody, including lawyers, knows that the client gets paid and then the client pays the lawyer. It shouldn't be the lawyer gets paid and then the client gets paid. That is crazy, especially if the client is a sick U.S. marine. And I even think my colleague Senator DURBIN agrees with that. So that is the other piece of this legislation.

We could fix that overnight by having the Secretary of the VA take a relook at that reg and say: Hey, that is wrong. Let's rescind that. I would welcome if Secretary McDonough would do that.

Well, I am going to keep fighting for this issue. This is an urgent issue. Payments under the Camp Lejeune Act will start early next year. The ads that we saw that I showed you here are likely to intensify over the holidays to try to ensnare even more marines into these schemes.

But here is what I am going to do: I am going to withdraw my amendment. I am not going to force a vote on this amendment this afternoon because I want to get to a law, and I had a feeling that unfortunately my amendment was not going to get passed in this Senate on this vote this afternoon.

So I want to work with Senator DURBIN, Senator BLUMENTHAL, other Members on the other side of the aisle to do what we all know is the right thing—to pass a law that emphasizes what we all thought the bill was doing in the first place in the PACT Act, to take care of sick marines and their families and not enrich trial lawyers.

Again, I urge my colleagues to work with me. Like the U.S. marines, have courage to stand up to powerful interest groups who are trying to take more money from individuals who deserve it.

Work with me on this. It is the holiday season. Let's give the marines and their families the gift that they deserve and have earned through courage and sacrifice, not the lump of coal and breadcrumbs, which is the result of this bill that dramatically focuses on enriching trial lawyers at the expense of the U.S. marines. I am committed to work all weekend, all next week, but we need to get this done before we finish this Congress at the end of the year.

Every American knows it. Every U.S. Senator knows it. It is the right thing to do, and I certainly hope my colleagues are going to work with me to make it happen.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, at the outset, let me thank my colleague from Alaska for his service to the United States of America and the Marine Corps, and let me thank all the women and men who serve in the Marine Corps and all our branches of military service. We owe them a great debt of gratitude, and we certainly owe them justice.

What is at issue here is the discovery that the water that they were drinking while they were training at Camp Lejeune was poisoned, and it was endangering the health of the marines and their families. For years, they sought compensation and protection and failed. And just this last year, we passed the PACT Act. Under that provision of law, it finally gave a cause of action to these marines and their families to recover for the damages they had suffered because of this poisonous water at this U.S. Government facility training camp at Camp Lejeune. I voted for that, proudly. It was a strong bipartisan rollcall, as it should have been. But let me make sure you understand and everyone listening understands what these marines who believe that they have been damaged by this poisoned water—this contaminated water—have to go through now to recover even the first dollar.

The first instance is, they don't receive it automatically. The Senator from Alaska continues to refer to the Biden administration's standards of 2 percent and 10 percent and so forth. He is quoting from a hypothetical that dealt with the Compensation Fund, not what we passed here in the U.S. Senate.

The Compensation Fund is like for 9/11 victims. We understand those cases. It wasn't a question of the victims going in and proving that 9/11 actually occurred or that their loved one was killed. It was almost an automatic thing that you qualify for. So the low contingency fees which he quoted was for a hypothetical approach which is not the law.

What is the law today?

What if my father or someone in my family—my son—had gone through training at Camp Lejeune in the period of time that is affected by this? How do they recover? There are two avenues to recovery. One of them is file a claim with the U.S. Navy, and the Navy can decide that the claim is meritorious and pay it.

But if the Navy does not pay it, the administrative hearing does not result in a payment to the plaintiff, to the claimant, to the marine, the next step is a serious one. It goes to the Federal court, not just any Federal court but the one we designated, the Eastern District of North Carolina.

What happens at that court? That marine now is walking into a Federal courtroom and has to establish a case and prove the liability of the government for his losses.

What does he have to prove? Well, he has to prove causation, liability, and damages.

Have you ever been in a Federal courtroom or walked in there by yourself and seen what happens? I am telling you that it is a humbling experience even for a trained lawyer.

I have been through it, and I will tell you this: I wouldn't want to go through it with something as serious as recovering damages for healthcare costs or injuries to someone dear to me and my family without having adequate legal representation.

What does it cost to get this representation?

Well, there is no requirement that the marines hire a lawyer at all, but if they do, the ordinary course of business says that they are going to pay a contingency fee, which means you don't pay the lawyer upfront. The lawyer basically represents you, and if they recover, then you recover, but if they don't recover anything for your claim, they are emptyhanded as you are emptyhanded. That is the nature of a contingency fee.

The Senator from Alaska came to the floor about 2 weeks ago and raised this issue, and I said: Let's work on this together. I want to say our staffs have worked on it together. I am sorry that we haven't reached an agreement, but here was the proposal that I put on the table and the reason for it.

First, on the contingency fee, if you are just going to go to the Navy and file your administrative claim, we put a cap on the contingency fee, which the lawyer is paid, of 20 percent—20 percent. Where did we get that? From the Federal Tort Claims Act. That is the percentage that is used now under the law. Then we said, if you have to go to a trial in a Federal court, the maximum—maximum—attorney's fee is one-third if you recover. If you don't recover, you don't pay. It is a contingency fee.

Now, the Senator from Alaska has said: Well, let's do 2 percent and 10 percent instead of 20 percent and 33 percent.

So what can you buy for a 2-percent contingency fee or a 10-percent contingency fee? Well, you can probably buy a lawyer who has never tried a case in court. You could buy an attorney whose office is in the trunk of his car. You could buy an attorney who will put the veteran's file at the bottom of the stack because there is so little money involved in it—or you could buy an attorney who will say: My paralegal in Singapore will get back to you later.

That is what you get if you try to get by with 2 percent and 10 percent when, in the ordinary course of business, it is 33⅓ percent. You are doing the veterans no favor by saying that they can't pay any more than a 2-percent contingency fee if they can't find a good lawyer, and I am sorry to say you won't find a lot of good lawyers at a 2-percent contingency fee. That is just the reality.

We went to the Senator from Alaska and said: We will cap the contingency fees: 20 percent for an administrative case and no more than a 33⅓-percent contingency fee if the case goes to trial.

Then we went further. He raised a point that I think is a valid point: How does a marine know he is going to get paid? We think the lawyer will be paid, but will the marine be paid if there is a verdict or a settlement? We put in language that said, definitely, the marine has to be the first paid. We offered that to the Senator from Alaska.

We went further. There is a bill pending before the U.S. Senate—a bipartisan bill. Senator BLUMENTHAL of Connecticut and Senator BOOZMAN of Arkansas, a Republican, have come up with a bill that says: Those people who are ripping off veterans—unaccredited groups that are ripping off veterans—by making them pay fees to collect the benefits they are owed by law ought to be criminally liable. There is a criminal fine in that bill.

So those are the three things we offered to the Senator from Alaska. It was not that he would go away emptyhanded but that he would get a result and get that result in a timely way. We made that offer over the last 2 weeks. He did not accept it. I wish he had.

I am still going to work with him to reach that goal so that we can make sure that all men and women who are affected by the Camp Lejeune contaminated water get compensated with competent attorneys who can represent them in court effectively and recover for them. We are doing them no favor if we limit the contingency fee and they can't hire a competent attorney. That is the maximum amount, 20 and 33, but it is certainly within the realm of ordinary practice.

So I would say to the Senator from Alaska that the offer I made 2 weeks ago I make to you again now. Let's fix this problem. Let's not trade speeches on the floor of the Senate. We both feel intensely about our points of view, but we share one common value that, I think, we ought to make very clear here: We want these marines to be compensated. That is why we passed the PACT Act. We want to do it in a way that they are not exploited. I

abhor those attorneys or even those who are not attorneys who are trying to exploit these individuals.

Let's work together to put an end to that once and for all, and let's do it in a timely way. By the time we get back here to consider legislation, it will be almost February—another 6 weeks or longer—and time will have been wasted.

I would just say to the Veterans Health Administration and to all of the veterans' services organizations: Warn all of those who would be plaintiffs in these lawsuits not to be taken in by anyone who is going to cheat them. Make sure that they are treated fairly. We can do our part too. Let's pledge together to get that done in the new year.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I want to thank my colleague from Illinois.

He has my full commitment to try to get this done before we leave, and I am willing to compromise on some of these issues. He makes a good point in that, with the Senate's schedule, we are not going to be back here until almost the end of January, and by then, some of these payments will have started to be awarded.

We do not want—and I think the Senator from Illinois agrees with me—situations wherein payments are going by 50, 60 percent to contingency fees. Nobody wants that. We shouldn't want that. That is just unfair. This regulation at the VA is also ridiculously unfair in favoring trial lawyers over sick marines.

So the Senator from Illinois has my commitment. I will work day and night on this issue to try and get it done before we leave—before we leave. Otherwise, you are going to have a lot of marines—sick marines—and their families who are going to get ripped off. We know that that is going to happen, and we shouldn't allow it.

I will work with the Senator from Illinois, as he has got a lot of power as the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, on this important issue that, I think, we should all care about. So I appreciate his comments, and I will redouble my efforts on this topic.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I want to close by thanking the Senator from Alaska—a Republican, a Democrat but committed to the same values—for making sure that these marines and their families are treated fairly.

We currently have 14,000 pending. These marines had 2 years from when we passed the law back in, I believe, June or July to file their claims. There is going to be a mountain of claims involved here, and we have got to make sure that we do it in a thoughtful way and in a timely way that is fair to the marines every step of the way. I will be part of that effort with you, Senator.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that if the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to concur with respect to amendment No. 6513 is not agreed, the motion to concur with amendment be withdrawn; and that if cloture is invoked, by the use or yielding back of time, the second-degree amendment be withdrawn.

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

Mr. DURBIN. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

AMENDMENT NO. 6513

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I am here today to speak about a very important piece of legislation we have coming before us, and we have an amendment to that legislation. The legislation, of course, is the National Defense Authorization Act.

This piece of legislation is something that we do annually in order to basically protect our country and be able to defend ourselves and be able to maintain the superpower status that we are. Part of that is what they call energy security, energy independence. You cannot be a superpower in the world if you do not have energy independence, and you can't be secure if you don't have energy independence.

Now, what has happened to us since this horrible war that Putin has bestowed upon the citizens of Ukraine is that he has weaponized energy. We have seen it coming. He has basically doubled down, so he has put Europe in a tremendous bind.

On top of that, we have seen the necessity that we have and the reality of the world we live in. We use fossil fuels, but can we use them cleaner and better? Absolutely. We do it better than anyplace in the world, and we can use it and do more to it.

We have a piece of legislation—a couple of them. We have the bipartisan infrastructure bill that we worked on across the aisle, and now we have the Inflation Reduction Act, the IRA. Those two pieces of legislation are unbelievably unprecedented in our country.

What the IRA does is this, simply: It guarantees energy security. For 10 years, we are going to be able to basically produce fossil energy in the United States of America—more of it, better and cleaner, than at any time in the world—while we are also going to invest record amounts of money into new, clean technology for the future. You can't eliminate one.

People say: Well, my definition on energy and on climate is elimination. I want to eliminate—no coal, no oil, no gas.

Well, you are not living in the real world, and you have just seen that happen.

Our Nation, when we got pinched a little bit by these high prices that people are paying at the pump, we started thinking about removing sanctions from Iran—the most prolific terrorist supporters in the world—and giving them money to continue to do what they do, which is to wreak havoc on the world.

We are also talking about lifting the sanctions on Venezuela, which basically has very little oversight as far as environmental controls, because we needed it. We wanted someone else to do what we wouldn't do, and that is just wrong. It is not who we are as a country.

We can do it. We can lead the world. We are the superpower, and that means we have to produce everything that we have, an all-in energy policy, better than anyplace else in the world.

Now, in order to do that, we passed a piece of legislation that puts us on two paths. You can walk and chew gum. You have to have fossil. Now, if you are doing fossil, which is cleaner—that means carbon capture and sequestration—we put billions of dollars in there for that. On top of that, we put billions of dollars for methane, plugging old wells, abandoned mine lands—we are cleaning up everything. Tremendous.

If you are using the fossil that we use in the United States—cleaner and helping our allies around the world—we have been able to help the climate more than it can ever be helped by anything else. As we develop the new technologies of the world—hydrogen—we can make that all day long.

We are on the verge of doing something unbelievable, but let me tell you, most of it will be for naught because without permitting reform—the United States of America is more litigious than any nation on Earth that has been developed, anyone. It takes longer to do anything here. We have people talking about how they have been trying to get permits for 16 years. Canada, average of 3 years; our friends in Australia, Down Under, 2 to 3 years; us, 5, 7, 10, and more.

This is a 10-year path we have. We have appropriated money in this piece of legislation for a 10-year path.

A lot of the programs we want to do, whether it is building pipelines, whether it is building new transmission lines to carry the energy that we need, whether it is developing new, cleaner technologies, whether it is carrying pipelines that are carrying hydrogen and CO_2, we have all of this that we need, and it is not going to happen, and I just can't believe it.

Here is the thing I can't believe: All of my Republican friends—and I have worked with them, and I know they are upset when politics plays into this, but they are upset about the IRA. We did it through reconciliation. Well, it is the only vehicle we had—the only vehicle we had—to do something that was monumental. And we did that by working with my colleagues on the other side for the last 5 years.

My colleagues on the other side, my Republican friends, have always said: Joe, we have to have more energy. Well, guess what, the IRA is going to put more energy in. The Inflation Reduction Act is going to produce more

oil, more gas, cleaner than anywhere in the world, and we are going to have more energy.

Why did you call it inflation reduction? Because if you have more product, you can reduce the price. It is pretty simple—supply and demand. So we are on that.

They said: Well, we have to pay down debt.

Well, guess what the IRA did. It paid down over $250 billion of debt—the first time in history. For 30 years, we haven't paid down on debt. We did. So we have done so many things, but that seems to be a pretty good thing that is kind of stuck in their craw, and I am ashamed of that. I am afraid of that. And I am basically afraid for our country, that we are going down a path where it is all about the politics and all about the policy.

The policy is, the permitting bill that we have in front of us has been worked. We have worked it, and we have been sitting down and talking for 2 or 3 months. We have talked with our Senators on this side, we have talked with our Senators on the Republican side, and we looked at different things.

We are not basically eliminating any of the review process. We are basically expediting how we do it, and that is all we are asking for. We are asking the courts to expedite when they take this under consideration because of the environment. The environment is near and dear to all of us, and we all have a responsibility.

What we haven't taken into consideration is, if we don't do this, we will not be able to maintain independence, energy independence, which means energy security, which means national security. That is what we are not taking into consideration.

Who are we going to ask to do what we won't do for ourselves? Who is going to come to our rescue? We didn't see the Saudis coming. We didn't say—that didn't work too well. Nothing else is coming on board.

So I had a thing in this bill, and they said: Oh, it is a dirty deal with Joe, the Mountain Valley Pipeline. Oh yeah.

So 283 miles are completed of that pipeline, out of 303. Ninety-three percent is completed. We have a pipeline there that comes out of West Virginia that is a gathering with Southwestern Pennsylvania. It is also Southeast Ohio, the Marcellus Shale. It will put 2 billion cubic feet of gas per day into the market. You need more product in the market. It will backfill in the South and the Southwest. It will also help at Coves Point. You have LNG for all of our allies who are in desperate need of it.

So much is being done, and it has been so politicized. So if you want to know why people are upset, you want to know why they are mad, watch this place operate for a while.

I had a person one time said: JOE, I just can't believe what I see on television.

I said: Oh, you are upset, and you are mad, and you can't believe what you see on television when you are sitting in your nice, comfortable home? Try it from my seat. Try it from this seat, when you have got to play politics day in and day out to do what is right for our country.

If we don't have energy, we are not the country—my little State has given its all. We have produced the coal for the last hundred years that built the ships, built the guns, and built basically everything that we have had, the guns and ships and built America. We are probably one of the most patriotic States in the Nation. We have more people, lost more blood, given more life for the cause of freedom than most any State.

We are willing to do whatever it takes. We do the heavy lifting and don't complain—never have. But yet we try to do something now to produce more energy because the country needs it—oh, you can't put a dirty pipeline in. It is not; it is gas. It is transitional fuel. We need it. You are going to have it for quite a while, so why don't you use it from where you have it? The best supply in the world is right here next door. Yet the politics is being played.

They are afraid that maybe—I am up in cycle in 2024, that this might give me a leverage to get reelected. I have been on the ballot for 40 years. I don't know what is going to happen. I don't know what tomorrow is going to bring. I know what we have before us today. You have an unbelievable opportunity that is not going to happen in our lifetime again.

If we don't pass permitting reform right now—my Republican friends are saying: Oh, don't worry, when we have control of the House, we will be able to have a better deal.

My friends, let me say this: You had from 2016 to 2020. You had a President who was a Republican. The House was Republican. The Senate was Republican. You only had one vote for permitting reform, and that was mine as a Democrat—nobody else. Now we are going to have a supermajority of Democrats who are willing to move forward and maybe not be all comfortable about it, but it is the right thing to do, and now, because of politics, my friends aren't going to step to the plate? That is what they don't like. That is what people don't like. That is the politics that basically is destroying our country. You can't have it.

So I come before you to ask for your support on a piece of legislation. There is so much good that we can do. We can fix the mistakes that we have made. But you can't do it if you don't have the energy to provide the citizens of your country to have the opportunities to defend themselves and be able to help our allies around the world. We will not maintain superpower status, I can assure you, if that can't be done.

This piece of legislation, without the permitting—we have been able to do so much in the bipartisan infrastructure bill, the Inflation Reduction Act, and now having this—to be able to put it into operation is something that is desperately needed.

So, with that, I can only say that I pray to the Good Lord that we can put our politics aside and look at what is needed and go back home and tell the people this was absolutely—it is a win for everybody. It truly is a win for everybody.

This is something that I don't know how we can explain it if we vote against it. I don't know how we wouldn't vote for it. It is something we have all wanted.

Let me make one more point. All 50 of my Republican colleagues have signed on to a piece of legislation which is permitting—with my colleague from West Virginia—which is permitting reform, all 50. They know it needs to be done.

Now, if you are going to let the perfect be the enemy of the good, you are going to say: Well, it is just not good enough. Is it 50 percent, is it 70 percent better than what we have ever had? Is it moving in the right direction? Does it build a foundation? Does it give you something to work off of? I believe it does because you have had tremendous amount of input.

That is all I am asking for. I am asking for a fair evaluation of a piece of legislation that will not pass through these Halls again.

So with that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. President, certainly the chairman of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee and I agree on so many goals when it comes to American energy. We both believe in American energy independence. We believe in affordable clean energy. We agree that we want to leave this world cleaner, healthier, and safer than we found it. But unfortunately I oppose his amendment and ask my colleagues to oppose it as well.

I am afraid this amendment will do more harm than good. It will give the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission—FERC, as it is known—the power to socialize the cost of new high-voltage transmission lines. That is right—a huge shift of power will go from the States to the Federal Government.

Unelected bureaucrats would have the authority to make electric customers in mostly red States pay to deliver expensive and intermittent energy that fits the green energy dreams of blue States and in many cases causes rural America to pay for urban America's electricity. It would even give Federal regulators the authority to make residents of inland States pay for transmission lines that connect offshore wind farms to coastal States, such as California, New Jersey, and New York. It would allow these same regulators to make our residents pay for these transmission lines even if power on those lines would not serve them.

While this transportation of wind and solar electricity fits their social agenda, let me remind everyone that the

cost of transporting this electricity is approximately 10 times more than transporting enough clean natural gas to produce an equivalent amount of electricity. We need not only clean energy, we need affordable energy.

This is why Republican attorneys general from across the Nation and the nonpartisan National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners strongly oppose this amendment. These expert public officials pleaded with us not to go down this road in September. They remain opposed to Senator MANCHIN's latest draft.

In a December 12, 2022, letter, the attorneys general state that they ''write to again express strong opposition to the renewed attempt to make sweeping changes to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's authority.'' They go on to say that the Manchin amendment ''guts states' traditional authority over energy and land use policies.''

Let me say that again. They go on to say that the Manchin amendment ''guts states' traditional authority over energy and land use policies.''

They tell us that the amendment does little, if anything, to address the concerns they raised in September. In their December letter, the public utility commissioners say Senator MANCHIN's legislation ''eliminates the last vestiges of states' electric transmission sitting jurisdiction.'' This is simply bad policy.

Another issue is the damage the amendment would do to the efforts to develop hydrogen as an energy source. It would choke hydrogen pipelines under a mountain of regulation.

The final text of this amendment only saw the light of day just a week ago. The amendment has not been the subject of any debate in committee. We have had no hearings, no witnesses, and no markups. Changing the complex Federal Power Act and Natural Gas Act during a lameduck session without any opportunity for meaningful public input is a recipe for disaster. This is no way to make changes to complex laws.

Finally, Senator MANCHIN's amendment does nothing to address the problem of never-ending environmental litigation. We both represent proud energy States: West Virginia, a great coal State; Kansas, oil, gas, wind, solar. But it seems like there is never an end to the environmental litigation challenges we have. Nuisance lawsuits block energy projects from moving forward, driving up the cost to consumers. This is an issue that needs to be addressed.

I look forward to working with my colleague and with the chairman this next Congress through regular order to enact changes to laws that will actually speed energy projects of all kinds.

We must enable Federal permits for energy projects to be more durable. We must ensure that Federal permitting is evenhanded. We must rein in the endless and often federally funded litigation that is killing projects. Senator MANCHIN's amendment addresses none of these problems.

The Senate should reject this amendment. We should work together under regular order. We should enact real and effective permitting reform in the next Congress.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I need to respond to that. I wasn't intending to do so, but I want to clarify that, and I would hope my good friend would listen to my clarification because it is in the bill.

And either someone maybe had not informed you, sir, but, basically, that can't be done, what you said. I can't charge you in Kansas if the line passes through Kansas and you don't benefit from it. If there is no improved reliability, if it didn't reduce congestion, if it didn't reduce or lower power losses, if it wasn't greater carrying capacity, if it didn't reduce operating reserve—all of these that you have to have benefit to have any cost. We made that in the bill. We were very, very correct.

You know who brought that to me? Senator CRAMER, our good friend from North Dakota, my Republican friend from North Dakota. He said: Joe, you can't do that.

Now, the other thing is, you were saying that, basically, the States lose all their rights. Again, Senator CRAMER said: Joe, you have got to at least have 1 year. I said: It makes sense to me.

Now, let me tell you what happens. If there is new energy coming into the market, wherever it is coming from, new transmission lines coming in, if that line is going to come into a State and the State thinks it is invading its territory—because most of all of the utilities have monopolies on their grid system, correct? They all have monopolies. They don't want anyone infringing on that.

Well, guess what? They all have great relationships with the public service commissions. If the public service commission is saying: OK. Who wants to come in here?—and they are coming—and they say: Let's sit down and talk.

Now, if the person who is already there—let's say you have your own power company and you have the utility lines or the grid system, and you say: I am not going to expand. I am not bringing any more power because I am not going to develop over here. It is not profitable for me.

Then they have got to make a decision, your PSC. Now, if you all can't agree in 1 year and it is something of national interest, then it can move.

But think what would happen if Dwight Eisenhower, building the interstate highway system—from, I think, your part of the world—the great general, the great President, OK. This would have never happened. He would have never built the interstate system. How about the interstate pipeline system? We would have never had the energy we have today.

All we are asking for is the opportunity to bring energy to the market where it is needed. That is all.

And then when you said: Well, it is going to be a litigious nightmare—that is what we tried to work through, and we did that. You know why? We basically put deadlines. We set firm deadlines for permitting decisions: 2 years for environmental impact statements, 1 year for environmental assessments. That is a tremendous improvement from where we have been. Then we basically put enforcement. We have stronger enforcement than any other permitting reform law passed ever in the United States of America.

It lets project developers seek a court order. So if you are trying to get something and you are being held up, then you have, basically, the expedited right to go to the court and to have expedition. You don't have that now.

To me—I have heard people say: Just that right there allows me to make a decision whether I stay with the program or get out of it, if I am going to do a project or not, without losing my rear end and going bankrupt.

We have answered every question that we possibly could. It is the most advanced, bipartisan bill we could ever get and still have the support we need. All we need is your support, sir.

I call for the vote, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time is yielded back.

Under the previous order, the Sullivan motion is withdrawn, and the motion to refer with instructions is also withdrawn.

There are now 2 minutes equally divided before a vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the Manchin motion to concur with amendment.

Mr. SCHATZ. I yield back.

Mr. MANCHIN. I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That time is yielded back.

CLOTURE MOTION

Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 7776, to provide for improvements to the rivers and harbors of the United States, to provide for the conservation and development of water and related resources, and for other purposes with amendment No. 6513.

Charles E. Schumer, Joe Manchin III, Jon Tester, Martin Heinrich, Thomas R. Carper, Brian Schatz, Amy Klobuchar, Kyrsten Sinema, Tammy Baldwin, Richard J. Durbin, Christopher A. Coons, Sheldon Whitehouse, Angus S. King, Jr., Sherrod Brown, Michael F. Bennet, Christopher Murphy.

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

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 7776, a bill to provide for improvements to the rivers and harbors of the United States, to

provide for the conservation and development of water and related resources, and for other purposes, with an amendment, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY), and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 47, nays 47, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 394 Leg.]

YEAS—47

Baldwin	Heinrich	Reed
Bennet	Hickenlooper	Romney
Blumenthal	Hirono	Rosen
Brown	Kelly	Schatz
Cantwell	King	Schumer
Capito	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Cardin	Leahy	Sinema
Carper	Luján	Smith
Casey	Manchin	Sullivan
Collins	Murkowski	Tester
Coons	Murphy	Toomey
Cortez Masto	Murray	Van Hollen
Durbin	Ossoff	Warner
Feinstein	Padilla	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Peters	Wyden
Hassan	Portman	

NAYS—47

Blackburn	Hoeven	Risch
Booker	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Boozman	Inhofe	Rubio
Braun	Johnson	Sanders
Cassidy	Kaine	Sasse
Cornyn	Kennedy	Scott (FL)
Cotton	Lankford	Scott (SC)
Cramer	Lee	Shelby
Crapo	Lummis	Stabenow
Daines	Markey	Thune
Duckworth	Marshall	Tuberville
Ernst	McConnell	Warnock
Fischer	Menendez	Warren
Graham	Merkley	Wicker
Grassley	Moran	Young
Hawley	Paul	

NOT VOTING—6

Barrasso	Burr	Hagerty
Blunt	Cruz	Tillis

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KAINE). On this vote, the yeas are 47, the nays are 47.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is rejected.

Under the previous order, the motion to concur with Manchin amendment No. 6513 is withdrawn.

The Senator from Wisconsin.

MOTION TO CONCUR WITH AMENDMENT NO. 6526

Mr. JOHNSON. I move to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 7776 with an amendment numbered 6526.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Wisconsin [Mr. JOHNSON], for himself and others, moves to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 7776 with an amendment numbered 6526.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To provide remedies to members of the Armed Forces discharged or subject to punishment under the COVID–19 vaccine mandate)

Insert after section 525 the following:

SEC. 525A. REMEDIES FOR MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES DISCHARGED OR SUBJECT TO PUNISHMENT UNDER THE COVID–19 VACCINE MANDATE.

(a) LIMITATION ON IMPOSITION OF NEW MANDATE.—The Secretary of Defense may not issue any COVID–19 vaccine mandate as a replacement for the rescinded mandates under this Act absent a further act of Congress expressly authorizing a replacement mandate.

(b) REMEDIES.—Section 736 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022 (Public Law 117–81; 10 U.S.C. 1161 note prec.) is amended—

(1) in the section heading, by striking ''**TO OBEY LAWFUL ORDER TO RECEIVE**'' and inserting ''**TO RECEIVE**'';

(2) in subsection (a)—

(A) by striking ''a lawful order'' and inserting ''an order''; and

(B) by striking ''shall be'' and all that follows through the period at the end and inserting ''shall be an honorable discharge.'';

(3) by redesignating subsection (b) as subsection (e); and

(4) by inserting after subsection (a) the following new subsections:

''(b) PROHIBITION ON ADVERSE ACTION.—The Secretary of Defense may not take any adverse action against a covered member based solely on the refusal of such member to receive a vaccine for COVID–19.

''(c) REMEDIES AVAILABLE FOR A COVERED MEMBER DISCHARGED OR PUNISHED BASED ON COVID–19 STATUS.—At the election of a covered member and upon application through a process established by the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary shall—

''(1) adjust to 'honorable discharge' the status of the member if—

''(A) the member was separated from the Armed Forces based solely on the failure of the member to obey an order to receive a vaccine for COVID–19; and

''(B) the discharge status of the member would have been an 'honorable discharge' but for the refusal to obtain such vaccine;

''(2) reinstate the member to service at the highest grade held by the member immediately prior to the involuntary separation, allowing, however, for any demotion that was not related to the member's COVID–19 vaccination status, with an effective date of reinstatement as of the date of involuntary separation;

''(3) for any member who was subject to any punishment other than involuntary separation based solely on the member's COVID–19 vaccination status—

''(A) restore the member to the highest grade held prior to such punishment, allowing, however, for any demotion that was not related to the member's COVID–19 vaccination status, with an effective date of reinstatement as of the date of involuntary separation; and

''(B) compensate such member for any pay and benefits lost as a result of such punishment;

''(4) expunge from the service record of the member any reference to any adverse action based solely on COVID–19 status, including involuntary separation; and

''(5) include the time of involuntary separation of the member reinstated under paragraph (2) in the computation of the retired or retainer pay of the member.

''(d) ATTEMPT TO AVOID DISCHARGE.—The Secretary of Defense shall make every effort to retain members of the Armed Forces who are not vaccinated against COVID–19.''.

(c) IMMEDIATE RESCISSION OF MANDATE.—Notwithstanding the deadline provided for in section 525, the rescission of the COVID–19 mandate shall take effect immediately.

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for up to 6 minutes of debate equally divided.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Wisconsin.

Mr. JOHNSON. I rise to offer an amendment on behalf of myself and Senator CRUZ. I want to say I appreciate Senate leadership for allowing this amendment. I appreciate, as does Senator CRUZ, the conferees' willingness to consider or repeal the vaccine mandate, which they didn't include. We truly appreciate that.

This amendment reflects the fact that we don't think the vaccine mandate went far enough. So our amendment is pretty simple, it immediately ends the vaccine mandate, whereas what is in the bill allows it to continue for 30 days.

It prohibits DOD from imposing a future COVID–19 vaccine mandate without the express authorization of Congress. It prohibits DOD from taking any adverse action against a servicemember solely for refusing to get the COVID–19 vaccine.

It allows the servicemember to be reinstated with backpay if kicked out of the military solely for refusing the vaccine. And it redresses any other types of adverse actions the DOD took against a servicemember for refusing the COVID–19 vaccine.

People serving in our military are the finest among us. Over 8,000 were terminated because they refused to get this experimental vaccine, and so I am urging all of my colleagues to support the Senators and my amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I stand in opposition to the proposed amendment.

On August 24, 2021, the Secretary of Defense issued a legal order directive that all personnel in the U.S. forces should be vaccinated against COVID–19. At that point, it was an approved FDA pharmaceutical. It is a legally binding order.

We need a healthy and ready force to defend the United States, and I think we've forgotten where we were before the vaccine. For example, the USS Theodore Roosevelt, one of the most important aircraft carriers in our fleet, and particularly in the Pacific, was effectively put out of commission when 27 percent of her crew were infected with COVID. Hundreds were hospitalized. The carrier had to dock in Guam for 2 months. For 2 months, we did not have the striking power of an American aircraft carrier in the Pacific.

Since Secretary Austin's mandate, we have had no repeat incidents where a naval vessel had to be, essentially, taken out of service, nor in the other services have we seen anything like that.

Mandatory vaccination is not a new issue for military personnel. Servicemembers are commonly required to get

17 different vaccinations when they enter the military or when they deploy to serve overseas areas, including measles, mumps, diphtheria, hepatitis, smallpox, and flu.

In fact, the first mandatory vaccination was ordered by General George Washington for the smallpox during the American Revolution.

The Department of Defense issued the COVID–19 vaccine mandate. It was a lawful order. The department made its expectations very clear, a personnel could take the vaccine or they could request an exemption, but if their exemption was denied and they still refused the shot, they would be discharged.

In the U.S. military, a lawful order is not a suggestion; it is a command. And for those of us who have the privilege of commanding American military personnel, that is the essence of order and discipline in the U.S. military, which distinguishes us from many other services throughout the world.

Ninety percent of our troops are vaccinated because they are putting their Nation, their fellow soldiers, and their families ahead of their personal opinions or personal desires. That is the function of the military, this unswerving dedication to Nation and to following and to protecting their fellow personnel.

What message do we send if we pass this bill? It is a very dangerous one. What we are telling soldiers is: If you disagree, don't follow the order. And then just lobby Congress. And they will come along, and they will restore your rank. They will restore your benefits. They will restore everything. So orders are just sort of a suggestion. They are not.

Let me conclude by this: This is a critical line in the U.S. oath of enlistment.

> I will obey the orders of the President of the United States and the orders of the officers appointed over me.

That is what we are talking about tonight. We must reject this amendment to reaffirm that oath, that commitment, that pillar of American military discipline and order.

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, how much time do I have left?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. A minute and a half.

Mr. JOHNSON. I would argue that it is not a lawful order because the executive order required that the vaccine be fully FDA-approved. In August of 2021, the FDA did something very strange: They extended the emergency use authorization for the vaccine available in the U.S. and granted approval on Comirnaty. But that, to my knowledge—and I have asked repeatedly—none of that has been made available to our members of the service. So it is not a fully FDA-approved product. And the FDA is completely ignoring its own safety surveillance systems on VAERS. There have been over 32,500 deaths reported worldwide. Twenty-six percent of those deaths are occurring on a zero, 1 or 2 following vaccination. There are all kinds of different, scary safety signals that are being ignored. It was not unreasonable for people to refuse this experimental gene therapy.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator yield the remainder of your time?

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes.

VOTE ON MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on the motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment with amendment No. 6526.

Mr. JOHNSON. 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. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY), and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS).

The result was announced—yeas 40, nays 54, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 395 Leg.]

YEAS—40

Blackburn	Hoeven	Risch
Boozman	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Braun	Inhofe	Sasse
Capito	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Cornyn	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Cotton	Lankford	Shelby
Cramer	Lee	Sullivan
Crapo	Lummis	Thune
Daines	Marshall	Toomey
Ernst	McConnell	Tuberville
Fischer	Moran	Wicker
Graham	Murkowski	Young
Grassley	Paul	
Hawley	Portman	

NAYS—54

Baldwin	Heinrich	Reed
Bennet	Hickenlooper	Romney
Blumenthal	Hirono	Rosen
Booker	Kaine	Rounds
Brown	Kelly	Sanders
Cantwell	King	Schatz
Cardin	Klobuchar	Schumer
Carper	Leahy	Shaheen
Casey	Luján	Sinema
Cassidy	Manchin	Smith
Collins	Markey	Stabenow
Coons	Menendez	Tester
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Murphy	Warner
Durbin	Murray	Warnock
Feinstein	Ossoff	Warren
Gillibrand	Padilla	Whitehouse
Hassan	Peters	Wyden

NOT VOTING—6

Barrasso	Burr	Hagerty
Blunt	Cruz	Tillis

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote the yeas are 40, the nays are 54.

The affirmative 60-vote threshold having not been achieved, the motion to concur is not agreed to.

The motion was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that upon the disposition of H. Con. Res. 121, the Senate resume consideration of the message with respect to H.R. 1437; that it be in order to make motions to concur with the following amendments: Scott of Florida amendment No. 6540; Lee amendment No. 6541, as modified with the changes at the desk; that there be 2 minutes for debate between each vote, equally divided between the two leaders or their designees, and the Senate vote in relation to the Scott and Lee motions; that if neither of the motions to concur with amendment are agreed to, the Schumer motion to refer and motion to concur with amendment be withdrawn and the Senate immediately vote on the motion to concur; that the Scott motion and motion to concur votes be subject to a 60-affirmative vote threshold for adoption; finally, that if the motion to concur is agreed to, the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H. Con. Res. 123, which is at the desk; that the concurrent resolution be considered and agreed to, all without further intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, two quick points. First, I know that our great Senator from Rhode Island who handled this bill so well will speak, but I do want to wish my congratulations to Senator INHOFE, who has been in this body for such a long time and led the Armed Services Committee in both the majority and minority with such fervor and concern for our soldiers and troops. So thank you.

Mr. INHOFE. Thank you.

Mr. SCHUMER. OK. Now, in an effort to move along this evening, I would ask Members to please remain on or near the floor during votes tonight.

I ask unanimous consent that the remaining votes this evening be 10-minute votes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

There are now 2 minutes equally divided prior to voting on the motion to concur.

The Senator from Rhode Island

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I have a much longer statement, but I want to briefly rise to express my support for the Fiscal Year 2023 National Defense Authorization Act. I am pleased that we are about to pass it.

First, let me acknowledge Ranking Member INHOFE, whose leadership on the Armed Services Committee and in this Chamber has been monumental.

For more than 20 years I have had the privilege of serving with him on the committee. In turn, we have been chairman and ranking member. And I am honored that this year's bill will be named the James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act.

(Applause, Senators rising.)

Mr. President, I would also like to add my congratulations and thanks to the House Armed Services Chairman,

ADAM SMITH, and Ranking Member MIKE ROGERS. Their partnership was absolutely invaluable to make this moment possible.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I rise today to note that, during the 117th Congress, several major legislative efforts to further U.S. foreign policy are becoming law, and I would like to highlight several here today. I feel strongly that these accomplishments merit special recognition, as they represent major advances in foreign policy that will improve our country's international engagement for years to come. I am proud to have led these efforts and would like to outline a few of the major components of these monumental bills.

As chair, of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on the State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development Management, International Operations, and Bilateral International Development, I take great pride to note that we successfully passed the State Department Authorization Act this year. To put this in context, this marks only the second time within the span of the past 16 years that a State Department Authorization Act has been enacted.

The State Department Authorization Act addresses much-needed reform that will help to strengthen our diplomatic corps and efforts on an institutional level and represents months of painstaking coordination. Modern diplomatic challenges require modern solutions, and it is my belief that provisions of this bill empower the State Department to make necessary changes in key areas that will help to revitalize and redefine our diplomatic engagement.

I will note that key to these efforts is my colleague Senator BILL HAGERTY, whose team worked closely with my own, members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and the State Department on defining and addressing modern diplomatic challenges. This act also represents a victory of collaboration across parties and agencies, especially the Department of State, to reach this successful consensus.

First and foremost, Senator HAGERTY and I led the efforts to establish a Commission on Reform and Modernization at the Department of State. This 16-member commission will seek to identify areas for improvement and modernization in the organizational structure, personnel, facilities, and policy of the State Department and make recommendations to the President and Congress.

This effort is crucial; in the ever-shifting atmosphere of modern diplomacy, this commission will provide a body of oversight that keeps a big-picture view of State Department operations and establishes a critical line of communication between Congress, the President, and the Department of State.

Secondly, the State Department Authorization Act establishes new requirements to extend the ''cooling off'' period for post-employment restrictions for certain Senate-confirmed officials. U.S. foreign policy is not for sale, nor should anyone have reason to think it is. By extending the cooling off period from 1 to 3 years, these high-ranking individuals are barred from representing foreign governments before the U.S. Government for a longer period. In doing so, we lessen the risk of perception that Ambassadors and other high-ranking officials will lose sight of U.S. interests in favor of their own near-term financial gain. Again, this important congressional oversight is yet another important step to safeguard the integrity of our foreign policy.

Third, I would like to highlight key advancements we have called for in lifelong professional development at the Foreign Service Institute. We have established a new body, the Board of Visitors, that will serve to offer recommendations to improve and modernize the Foreign Service Institute. The Board of Visitors, along with a new Provost position at the Foreign Service Institute, will work to inject new outside academic and adult learning expertise to better its operations, including the development of an evaluation system to determine how to improve the quality of training and focus it on the areas most useful to better prepare diplomats for the challenges they will encounter in 21st century diplomacy.

Additionally, we identified other professional development areas that will help to improve the State Department's operations on an institutional level. We authorized the State Department to expand the scope and number of external fellowships offered across Departments and Agencies.

These external fellowships, such as the Congressional Pearson Fellowship, which allows Foreign Service Officers the opportunity to work on the Hill for a Member or committee of Congress, expand relationships and knowledge across U.S. agencies and branches, academic institutions, and civil society organizations.

We further sought to expand professional development and trainings to address 21st century diplomacy, expanding virtual opportunities for training and extending out training to partner organizations that can offer specialized expertise for modern diplomatic challenges. In addition, we authorized the State Department to pursue curriculum to better enable Foreign Service Officers to understand the issues of press freedom and tools that are available to help protect journalists, as well as incorporate special training for officers assigned to countries significantly affected by climate change receive specific instruction on U.S. policy with respect to climate resiliency and adaptation.

Lastly, we have authorized the State Department to purse a foreign language incentive pay program that will enable our diplomatic corps to maintain our diplomats' critical language skills so that they can better serve our U.S. interests. Senselessly, in the past, there had been no mechanism to keep our highly trained diplomats up to skill in critical languages such as Chinese, Russian, Dari, and Arabic. Our current system simply trains diplomats in these languages and incentivizes their use while posted abroad, but these incentives disappear when diplomats move on to other positions—and with no incentive in place to maintain their critical languages, these language skills are usually largely lost.

While we have spent significant USG resources enabling our diplomats to engage and further our interests with foreign audiences by teaching them foreign languages, up until now, we have provided no mechanism to enable our diplomatic corps to keep these critical foreign languages skills active.

This new program will strengthen the ability of our diplomats to keep these key languages fresh, which ultimately will save the U.S. Government money by eliminating the need to retrain diplomats in the same language for a second or even third time. It will also provide for a better-prepared diplomatic corps that can be called upon when there is a pressing need for diplomats with specific language skills, such as the urgent call for Dari and Pashto speakers that the Department of State issued during the 2021 fall of Afghanistan. We will now have these diplomats ready when they are needed to best serve U.S. interests.

Finally, I am also proud of our work in this body to hold accountable authoritarian government regimes across the world. For too long, we have seen democratic backsliding, rising corruption, and human rights abuses committed at a global scale. There is perhaps no better example than in Burma, where the military initiated an illegal and unjustifiable coup d'etat in February 2021.

During and following the coup, the Burmese military has engaged in despicable human rights abuses, including extrajudicial killings, torture, and wrongful imprisonment. The military-led government has imprisoned over 11,000 civilians and killed over 1,400, including children. This amounts to crimes against humanity.

We cannot look the other way in the face of these grave injustices. That is why I was proud to introduce, alongside my House colleagues Representatives Meeks and Chabot, the Burma Unified through Rigorous Military Accountability Act, better known as the BURMA Act. This important bill will authorize the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development to support democracy activists, provide humanitarian assistance, and undertake reconciliation efforts in Burma. This will include support for organizations aiding political prisoners in Burma and assistance to entities investigating crimes against humanity.

The BURMA Act also requires the President to impose strict sanctions on Burmese military or government officials, as well as actors that have knowingly operated in Burma's defense sector or have undermined the nation's democratic processes. The United States must continue to stand with the people of Burma and for a civilian-led government based on the recognition of human rights and democratic principles.

To conclude, I am proud of the work we have accomplished in this Chamber during the 117th Congress. By modernizing State Department operations and pursuing an anti-corruption, human rights-focused foreign policy agenda, the United States continues to be at the forefront of global diplomacy.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. First of all, I want to thank the chairman for all the hard work. People don't realize that this is, in my opinion, the most significant vote of the year. It has been one we have been through for a long period of time, and it is necessary, and I like the way it turned out. It is really good.

I am pleased that the Senate is voting today for the fiscal year 2023 National Defense Authorization Act. I have said it before, and I am not the only one saying it: The world is more dangerous than I have ever seen it before in my lifetime. Typically, there is bipartisan agreement on this fact, and that is why this bill has gotten done for 61 years in a row. It is almost always bipartisan, and for this year's bill, that is definitely the case. We have worked together for a long period of time. I have worked closely with my friend Chairman JACK REED, and both of us made sure that that would be the case.

The Armed Services Committee agreed, almost unanimously, to boost President Biden's inadequate defense budget by $45 billion. This additional funding will address record-high inflation rates and ensure that we are able to implement the little blue book that we talk about all the time. It has worked very successfully in the past. It will be working successfully long after I am gone too. So additional funding will address record high inflation rates, and we are ensured that we will be able implement the little blue book the way we have done it in the past.

We need to prioritize defense. It is as simple as that. The NDAA addresses the National Defense Strategy in concrete ways. We need to get this done. We are going to get it done, and we will get it done this evening.

I encourage all of my colleagues to support this year's National defense authorization bill. Let's extend our track record of getting this bill done, and let's show our troops that we love them and that we support them.

I yield the floor.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I yield back all time.

VOTE ON MOTION TO CONCUR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to concur.

The yeas and nays were previously ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY), and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS).

The result was announced—yeas 83, nays 11, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 396 Leg.]

YEAS—83

Baldwin	Hassan	Reed
Bennet	Heinrich	Risch
Blackburn	Hickenlooper	Romney
Blumenthal	Hirono	Rosen
Boozman	Hoeven	Rounds
Brown	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Cantwell	Inhofe	Sasse
Capito	Johnson	Schatz
Cardin	Kaine	Schumer
Carper	Kelly	Scott (FL)
Casey	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Cassidy	King	Shaheen
Collins	Klobuchar	Shelby
Coons	Lankford	Sinema
Cornyn	Leahy	Smith
Cortez Masto	Luján	Stabenow
Cotton	Manchin	Sullivan
Cramer	Marshall	Tester
Crapo	McConnell	Thune
Daines	Menendez	Toomey
Duckworth	Moran	Tuberville
Durbin	Murkowski	Van Hollen
Ernst	Murphy	Warner
Feinstein	Murray	Warnock
Fischer	Ossoff	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Padilla	Wicker
Graham	Peters	Young
Grassley	Portman	

NAYS—11

Booker	Lummis	Sanders
Braun	Markey	Warren
Hawley	Merkley	Wyden
Lee	Paul	

NOT VOTING—6

Barrasso	Burr	Hagerty
Blunt	Cruz	Tillis

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. OSSOFF). On this vote, the yeas are 83, the nays are 11.

The 60-vote threshold having been achieved, the motion to concur in James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023 is agreed to.

The motion was agreed to.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise to express my support for the fiscal year 2023 National Defense Authorization Act. I am pleased that we have just voted on a wide, bipartisan basis to approve this bill.

First, I would like to acknowledge Ranking Member INHOFE, whose leadership on the Armed Services Committee and in this Chamber has been monumental. For more than 20 years, I have had the privilege to serve with him on the Armed Services Committee, in turn each of us serving as chairman and ranking member. In honor of his well-earned retirement, I am pleased that the committee voted to name this year's bill the James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act.

I would also thank my colleagues from the House Armed Services Committee, Chairman SMITH and Ranking Member ROGERS. Their partnership made this bill possible.

As we enact the NDAA, we must keep in mind that the United States is engaged in a long-term strategic competition with China. Beijing poses a serious potential threat to our national security, as the only country in the world capable of mounting a sustained challenge to our interests.

In addition, Russia has demonstrated its willingness to inflict violence and undermine the global order while states like Iran and North Korea continue to push the boundaries of military brinkmanship. Threats like terrorism, climate change, and pandemics remain persistent.

The interconnected nature of these problems must drive how we transform our tools of national power. The passage of the FY23 NDAA will be a critical step toward meeting these complex challenges.

Turning to the specifics of this year's defense bill. The NDAA authorizes $817 billion for the Department of Defense and $29 billion for national security programs within the Department of Energy. This includes a $45 billion boost to address inflation, accelerate the production of certain munitions, and increase procurement of aircraft, ships, submarines, armored vehicles, long-range artillery, and other resources needed by the services and combatant commands.

The bill contains a number of important provisions that I would like to briefly highlight.

To begin, we have to ensure the United States can out-compete, deter, and prevail against our near-peer rivals. This NDAA confronts China and Russia by increasing our investments in the Pacific Deterrence Initiative, the European Deterrence Initiative, and the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative. It also authorizes the Taiwan Enhanced Resilience Act of 2022, which is designed to increase our security cooperation with Taiwan.

Importantly, this year's NDAA provides a 4.6-percent pay raise for both military servicemembers and the Department of Defense civilian workforce. It also authorizes funding to ease the impacts of inflation on the force and increases the resources available to support military families.

The bill includes new support for our industrial base to produce the munitions needed to backfill our stocks, while also keeping supplies flowing to Ukraine and other European allies. Moreover, the bill authorizes $1 billion for the National Defense Stockpile to acquire rare earths and critical minerals needed to help meet the defense, industrial, and civilian needs of the United States.

America's capacity for technological innovation has long given us the strongest economy and military on earth, but this advantage is not a given; it must be nurtured and maintained. To that end, this year's NDAA authorizes significant funding increases for cutting-edge technologies like microelectronics, hypersonic weapons, and low-cost unmanned aircraft. Similarly, it increases funding to support U.S. Cyber Command's Hunt Forward Operations and artificial intelligence capabilities.

And, as we navigate threats of nuclear escalation from Russia and increasing capabilities from China, the NDAA enhances our deterrence strategy by helping to modernize the U.S. nuclear triad. It makes progress toward ensuring the security of our nuclear stockpile, delivery systems, and infrastructure; increasing capacity in missile defense; and strengthening nonproliferation programs.

This bill was originally crafted by the Armed Services Committee after a series of thoughtful hearings, discussions, and debates on both sides of the aisle. Through the committee markup process, we considered more than 443 amendments and ultimately adopted 233 of them. Senator INHOFE and I introduced this bill to the full Senate with the intent of adding more amendments on the floor. Although we were not able to come to hold debate on the floor, we were ultimately able to adopt amendments from Senators on both sides of the aisle in the final legislation, including several major authorization bills from other committees.

Over the past several weeks, the Senate and House Armed Services Committees have worked around the clock to come to an agreement on this final version. I am proud of the improvements we made throughout this process, and I was pleased to see the House vote last week in an overwhelmingly bipartisan fashion, 350–80, to pass the bill. We have produced a strong NDAA that both parties, both Chambers, and the President will be able to sign.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the phenomenal staff who made this bill possible. There are dozens of staff across the committees and floor who worked tirelessly to bring us to this point, and we are all immensely grateful for their dedication. I will submit each of their names for the record. I want to specifically recognize the director for the Armed Services Democratic staff, Elizabeth King, and the director for the Republican staff, John Wason. They have led their staffs admirably and collaborated with bipartisanship, diligence, and skill.

I would also like to thank members of the Armed Services Committee staff: Jody Bennett, Carolyn Chuhta, Jon Clark, Jenny Davis, Jonathan Epstein, Jorie Feldman, Kevin Gates, Creighton Greene, Gary Leeling, Kirk McConnell, Maggie McNamara Cooper, Bill Monahan, Mike Noblet, John Quirk, Andy Scott, Cole Stevens, Brittany Amador, Patrick Shilo, Alison Warner, Leah Brewer, Megan Lustig, Joe Gallo, Chad Johnson, Jessica Lewis, Griffin Cannon, Brandon Kasprick, Sofia Kamali, Vannary Kong, and, once again, staff director Elizabeth King.

Let me conclude by once again thanking Ranking Member INHOFE, Chairman SMITH, and Ranking Member ROGERS for working thoughtfully and on a bipartisan basis to develop this important piece of legislation.

Finally, I thank my colleagues for voting in favor of this excellent bill.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, after months of deliberating, just like that, the most important bill we work on every year has passed the Senate.

There is an old document that no one reads anymore called the Constitution. It tells us what we are supposed to be doing here: providing for our national defense. That is why Congress has passed a Defense authorization bill for 61 years in a row. This year will be No. 62. I am proud to have been involved in quite a few of those.

Just like prior years, Republicans and Democrats came together and made compromises on the many provisions in this bill. And it is a good thing we did because we face threats like I have never seen before in my life. We have got a bill that addresses many of these threats and helps provide our military with all the tools needed to do their jobs.

This bill includes a significant topline increase and provides a blueprint for where we need to invest to deter China. It fully supports our nuclear modernization program. It also takes the first step to restoring America as the Arsenal of Democracy by expanding munitions production. It includes multiple provisions that strengthen America's frontline partners, including Ukraine and Taiwan. We continue to take care of servicemembers, including by repealing the COVID vaccine mandate and strengthening parents' rights at DOD schools. It is also important to note that we kept poison pills out of the final text that could have jeopardized passage of this critical bill. This is a good bill. It is not the bill I would have written on my own, but I am proud to vote for it today.

Lastly, I would like to thank a few people who put in a ton of work on the NDAA. That starts with Chairman REED, who has been a great partner and friend. I would like to thank the Armed Services Committee staff, who have worked tirelessly to make this bill a reality, including the majority staff director, Liz King.

On my staff, there are many who have had a hand in crafting this bill. They worked the late nights and early mornings to make sure we had a bill to vote on today. First on that list is my Republican staff director, John Wason. John has been serving this country his entire life, first in the U.S. Army, then at the House Armed Services Committee, and now here in the Senate. None of this would be possible without his leadership.

On the minority staff for the committee, I want to thank:

Rick Berger
Scott Richardson
Greg Lilly
Jennie Wright
Adam Barker
Kristina Belcourt
Allen Edwards
Katie Magnus
Sean O'Keefe
Brad Patout
Jason Potter
Brian Slattery
Katie Sutton
Eric Trager
Adam Trull, and
T.C. Williams

On my personal staff, I want to thank:

Dan Hillenbrand
Wendi Price
Kim Cutter
Sarah Klotz
Sofia Rafiq
Mark Powers
Ellen Brown
Jake Hinch
Jake Johnson
Alexandra Slocum
Bennett Crow
Davis Bunn
Laurie Fitch
Lauren Pickett
Whitney Sterling
Isabelle Colleti
Laura Hill, and
Richard Balzano

And the hard-working floor staff:

Robert Duncan
Chris Tuck
Tony Hanagan
Katherine Foster
Brian Canfield
Max Boyd
Maddie Sanborn
Charlotte Ueland, and
Noelle Ringel

I am very grateful for all of their service.

As I finish my time here in the Senate, I can leave knowing that we have done all we can to support our troops for another year and we have succeeded.

DIRECTING THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO MAKE A CORRECTION IN THE ENROLLMENT OF THE BILL H.R. 7776

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, H. Con. Res. 121 is considered and agreed to, and the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table.

The concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 121) was agreed to.

FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS AND EXTENSIONS ACT, 2023—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The pending business is now the message with respect to H.R. 1437.

The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the following Senators be permitted to speak prior to

the votes in relation to H.R. 1437: Senator LEE for 5 minutes and Senator SCOTT for 1 minute.

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

MOTION TO CONCUR WITH AMENDMENT NO. 6541, AS MODIFIED

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I move to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 1437, with amendment numbered 6541, as modified, with the changes at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report by number.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Utah [Mr. LEE] moves to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 1437, with an amendment numbered 6541, as modified.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: In the nature of a substitute)

In lieu of the matter proposed to be inserted, insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Further Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2023''.

SEC. 2. TABLE OF CONTENTS.

The table of contents of this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short Title.
Sec. 2. Table of Contents.
Sec. 3. References.
Sec. 4. Payment to Widows and Heirs of Deceased Members of Congress.

DIVISION A—FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2023

DIVISION B—OTHER MATTERS

Title I—Extensions
Title II—Budgetary matters

DIVISION C—HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Title I—Medicare and Medicaid
Title II—Human Services
Title III—Extension of FDA Authorizations
Title IV—Indian Health

DIVISION D—PRECIP ACT

SEC. 3. REFERENCES.

Except as expressly provided otherwise, any reference to ''this Act'' contained in any division of this Act shall be treated as referring only to the provisions of that division.

SEC. 4. PAYMENT TO WIDOWS AND HEIRS OF DECEASED MEMBERS OF CONGRESS.

There is hereby appropriated for fiscal year 2023, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, for payment to Colette Wallace McEachin, beneficiary of Aston Donald McEachin, late a Representative from the Commonwealth of Virginia, $174,000.

DIVISION A—FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2023

SEC. 101. The Continuing Appropriations Act, 2023 (division A of Public Law 117–180) is amended—

(1) by striking the date specified in section 106(3) and inserting ''March 10, 2023'';

(2) by adding after section 157 the following new section:

''SEC. 158. During the period covered by this Act, section 227(a) of the Federal Cybersecurity Enhancement Act of 2015 (6 U.S.C. 1525) shall not apply.''.

This division may be cited as the ''Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2023''.

DIVISION B—OTHER MATTERS

TITLE I—EXTENSIONS

SEC. 101. EXTENSION OF FCC AUCTION AUTHORITY.

Section 309(j)(11) of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 309(j)(11)) is amended by striking ''December 16, 2022'' and inserting ''March 10, 2023''.

SEC. 102. EXTENSION OF AUTHORIZATION FOR SPECIAL ASSESSMENT FOR DOMESTIC TRAFFICKING VICTIMS' FUND.

Section 3014(a) of title 18, United States Code, is amended, in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking ''December 16, 2022'' and inserting ''March 10, 2023''.

SEC. 103. UNITED STATES PAROLE COMMISSION EXTENSION.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This section may be cited as the ''United States Parole Commission Further Extension Act of 2022''.

(b) AMENDMENT OF SENTENCING REFORM ACT OF 1984.—For purposes of section 235(b) of the Sentencing Reform Act of 1984 (18 U.S.C. 3551 note; Public Law 98–473; 98 Stat. 2032), as such section relates to chapter 311 of title 18, United States Code, and the United States Parole Commission, each reference in such section to ''35 years'' or ''35-year period'' shall be deemed a reference to ''35 years and 130 days'' or ''35-year and 130-day period'', respectively.

SEC. 104. EXTENSION OF COMMODITY FUTURES TRADING COMMISSION CUSTOMER PROTECTION FUND EXPENSES ACCOUNT.

Section 1(b) of Public Law 117–25 (135 Stat. 297), as amended by section 104 of division C of the Continuing Appropriations and Ukraine Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2023 is amended by striking ''December 16, 2022'' each place it appears and inserting ''March 10, 2023''.

TITLE II—BUDGETARY MATTERS

SEC. 201. PAYGO REPORT.

Notwithstanding subsection (a) of section 5 of the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010 (2 U.S.C. 934), the Office of Management and Budget shall make publicly available the annual PAYGO report required under such subsection for 2022 and prepare any order required under subsection (b) of such section not later than March 11, 2023.

DIVISION C—HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

TITLE I—MEDICARE AND MEDICAID

SEC. 101. EXTENSION OF INCREASED INPATIENT HOSPITAL PAYMENT ADJUSTMENT FOR CERTAIN LOW-VOLUME HOSPITALS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1886(d)(12) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395ww(d)(12)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (B), in the matter preceding clause (i), by striking ''December 17, 2022'' and inserting ''March 11, 2023'';

(2) in subparagraph (C)(i)—

(A) in the matter preceding subclause (I), by striking ''December 16, 2022'' and inserting ''March 10, 2023'';

(B) in subclause (III), by striking ''December 16, 2022'' and inserting ''March 10, 2023''; and

(C) in subclause (IV), by striking ''December 17, 2022'' and inserting ''March 11, 2023''; and

(3) in subparagraph (D)—

(A) in the matter preceding clause (i), by striking ''December 16, 2022'' and inserting ''March 10, 2023''; and

(B) in clause (ii), by striking ''December 16, 2022'' and inserting ''March 10, 2023''.

(b) IMPLEMENTATION.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Health and Human Services may implement the provisions of, including the amendments made by, this section by program instruction or otherwise.

SEC. 102. EXTENSION OF THE MEDICARE-DEPENDENT HOSPITAL PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1886(d)(5)(G) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395ww(d)(5)(G)) is amended—

(1) in clause (i), by striking ''December 17, 2022'' and inserting ''March 11, 2023''; and

(2) in clause (ii)(II), by striking ''December 17, 2022'' and inserting ''March 11, 2023''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) EXTENSION OF TARGET AMOUNTS.—Section 1886(b)(3)(D) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395ww(b)(3)(D)) is amended—

(A) in the matter preceding clause (i), by striking ''December 17, 2022'' and inserting ''March 11, 2023''; and

(B) in clause (iv), by striking ''December 16, 2022'' and inserting ''March 10, 2023''.

(2) PERMITTING HOSPITALS TO DECLINE RECLASSIFICATION.—Section 13501(e)(2) of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993 (42 U.S.C. 1395ww note) is amended by striking ''December 16, 2022'' and inserting ''March 10, 2023''.

SEC. 103. EXTENSION OF INCREASED FMAPS UNDER MEDICAID FOR THE TERRITORIES.

Section 1905(ff) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396d(ff)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2), by striking ''December 16, 2022'' and inserting ''March 10, 2023''; and

(2) in paragraph (3), by striking ''December 16, 2022'' and inserting ''March 10, 2023''.

SEC. 104. MEDICARE IMPROVEMENT FUND.

Section 1898(b)(1) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395iii(b)(1)) is amended by striking ''$7,308,000,000'' and inserting ''$7,278,000,000''.

TITLE II—HUMAN SERVICES

SEC. 201. EXTENSION OF MATERNAL, INFANT, AND EARLY CHILDHOOD HOME VISITING PROGRAMS.

Activities authorized by section 511 of the Social Security Act shall continue through March 10, 2023, and out of any money in the Treasury of the United States not otherwise appropriated, there is hereby appropriated for such purpose an amount equal to the pro rata portion of the amount appropriated for such activities for fiscal year 2022.

SEC. 202. EXTENSION OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES PROGRAMS.

Activities authorized by part B of title IV of the Social Security Act shall continue through March 10, 2023, in the manner authorized for fiscal year 2022, and out of any money in the Treasury of the United States not otherwise appropriated, there are hereby appropriated such sums as may be necessary for such purpose.

TITLE III—EXTENSION OF FDA AUTHORIZATIONS

SEC. 301. REAUTHORIZATION OF THE CRITICAL PATH PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP.

Section 566(f) of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 360bbb–5(f)) is amended by striking ''$1,265,753 for the period beginning on October 1, 2022 and ending on December 16, 2022'' and inserting ''$2,646,574 for the period beginning on October 1, 2022 and ending on March 10, 2023''.

SEC. 302. REAUTHORIZATION OF THE BEST PHARMACEUTICALS FOR CHILDREN PROGRAM.

Section 409I(d)(1) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 284m(d)(1)) is amended by striking ''$5,273,973 for the period beginning on October 1, 2022 and ending on December 16, 2022'' and inserting ''$11,027,398 for the period beginning on October 1, 2022 and ending on March 10, 2023''.

SEC. 303. REAUTHORIZATION OF THE HUMANITARIAN DEVICE EXEMPTION INCENTIVE.

Section 520(m)(6)(A)(iv) of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 360j(m)(6)(A)(iv)) is amended by striking ''December 17, 2022'' and inserting ''March 11, 2023''.

SEC. 304. REAUTHORIZATION OF THE PEDIATRIC DEVICE CONSORTIA PROGRAM.

Section 305(e) of the Pediatric Medical Device Safety and Improvement Act of 2007

(Public Law 110–85; 42 U.S.C. 282 note) is amended by striking ''$1,107,534 for the period beginning on October 1, 2022, and ending on December 16, 2022'' and inserting ''$2,315,753 for the period beginning on October 1, 2022 and ending on March 10, 2023''.

SEC. 305. REAUTHORIZATION OF PROVISION PERTAINING TO DRUGS CONTAINING SINGLE ENANTIOMERS.

Section 505(u)(4) of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 355(u)(4)) is amended by striking ''December 17, 2022'' and inserting ''March 11, 2023''.

SEC. 306. REAUTHORIZATION OF CERTAIN DEVICE INSPECTIONS.

Section 704(g)(11) of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 374(g)(11)) is amended by striking ''December 17, 2022'' and inserting ''March 11, 2023''.

SEC. 307. REAUTHORIZATION OF ORPHAN DRUG GRANTS.

Section 5(c) of the Orphan Drug Act (21 U.S.C. 360ee(c)) is amended by striking ''$6,328,767 for the period beginning on October 1, 2022, and ending on December 16, 2022'' and inserting ''$13,232,876 for the period beginning on October 1, 2022 and ending on March 10, 2023''.

SEC. 308. REAUTHORIZATION OF REPORTING REQUIREMENTS RELATED TO PENDING GENERIC DRUG APPLICATIONS AND PRIORITY REVIEW APPLICATIONS.

Section 807 of the FDA Reauthorization Act of 2017 (Public Law 115–52) is amended, in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking ''December 16, 2022'' and inserting ''March 10, 2023''.

SEC. 309. REAUTHORIZATION OF THIRD-PARTY REVIEW PROGRAM.

Section 523(c) of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 360m(c)) is amended by striking ''December 17, 2022'' and inserting ''March 11, 2023''.

TITLE IV—INDIAN HEALTH

SEC. 401. EXTENSION OF MORATORIUM.

Section 424(a) of title IV of division G of Public Law 113–76 is amended by striking ''December 16, 2022'' and inserting ''March 11, 2023''.

DIVISION D—PRECIP ACT

SEC. 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Providing Research and Estimates of Changes In Precipitation Act'' or the ''PRECIP Act''.

SEC. 2. AMENDMENT TO THE WEATHER RESEARCH AND FORECASTING INNOVATION ACT OF 2017 RELATING TO IMPROVING FEDERAL PRECIPITATION INFORMATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 (15 U.S.C. 8501 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''TITLE VI—IMPROVING FEDERAL PRECIPITATION INFORMATION

''SEC. 601. STUDY ON PRECIPITATION ESTIMATION.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of the PRECIP Act, the Administrator, in consultation with other Federal agencies as appropriate, shall seek to enter an agreement with the National Academies—

''(1) to conduct a study on the state of practice and research needs for precipitation estimation, including probable maximum precipitation estimation; and

''(2) to submit, not later than 24 months after the date on which such agreement is finalized, to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate, and make publicly available on a website, a report on the results of the study under paragraph (1).

''(b) STUDY.—The report under subsection (a) shall include the following:

''(1) An examination of the current state of practice for precipitation estimation at scales appropriate for decisionmaker needs, and rationale for further evolution of this field.

''(2) An evaluation of best practices for precipitation estimation that are based on the best-available science, include considerations of non-stationarity, and can be utilized by the user community.

''(3) A framework for—

''(A) the development of a National Guidance Document for estimating extreme precipitation in future conditions; and

''(B) evaluation of the strengths and challenges of the full spectrum of approaches, including for probable maximum precipitation studies.

''(4) A description of existing research needs in the field of precipitation estimation in order to modernize current methodologies and consider non-stationarity.

''(5) A description of in-situ, airborne, and space-based observation requirements, that could enhance precipitation estimation and development of models, including an examination of the use of geographic information systems and geospatial technology for integration, analysis, and visualization of precipitation data.

''(6) A recommended plan for a Federal research and development program, including specifications for costs, timeframes, and responsible agencies for addressing identified research needs.

''(7) An analysis of the respective roles in precipitation estimation of various Federal agencies, academia, State, tribal, territorial, and local governments, and other public and private stakeholders.

''(8) Recommendations for data management to promote long-term needs such as enabling retrospective analyses and data discoverability, interoperability, and reuse.

''(9) Recommendations for how data and services from the entire enterprise can be best leveraged by the Federal Government.

''(10) A description of non-Federal precipitation data, its accessibility by the Federal Government, and ways for National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to improve or expand such datasets.

''(c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized $1,500,000 to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to carry out this study.

''SEC. 602. IMPROVING PROBABLE MAXIMUM PRECIPITATION ESTIMATES.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date on which the National Academies makes public the report under section 601, the Administrator, in consideration of the report recommendations, shall consult with relevant partners, including users of the data, on the development of a plan to—

''(1) not later than 6 years after the completion of such report and not less than every 10 years thereafter, update probable maximum precipitation estimates for the United States, such that each update considers non-stationarity;

''(2) coordinate with partners to conduct research in the field of extreme precipitation estimation, in accordance with the research needs identified in such report;

''(3) make publicly available, in a searchable, interoperable format, all probable maximum precipitation studies developed by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration that the Administrator has the legal right to redistribute and deemed to be at an appropriate state of development on an internet website of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; and

''(4) ensure all probable maximum precipitation estimate data, products, and supporting documentation and metadata developed by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration are preserved, curated, and served by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, as appropriate.

''(b) NATIONAL GUIDANCE DOCUMENT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROBABLE MAXIMUM PRECIPITATION ESTIMATES.—The Administrator, in collaboration with Federal agencies, State, territorial, Tribal and local governments, academia, and other partners the Administrator deems appropriate, shall develop a National Guidance Document that—

''(1) provides best practices that can be followed by Federal and State regulatory agencies, private meteorological consultants, and other users that perform probable maximum precipitation studies;

''(2) considers the recommendations provided in the National Academies study under section 601;

''(3) facilitates review of probable maximum precipitation studies by regulatory agencies; and

''(4) provides confidence in regional and site-specific probable maximum precipitation estimates.

''(c) PUBLICATION.—Not later than 2 years after the date on which the National Academies makes public the report under section 601, the Administrator shall make publicly available the National Guidance Document under subsection (b) on an internet website of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

''(d) UPDATES.—The Administrator shall update the National Guidance Document not less than once every 10 years after the publication of the National Guidance Document under subsection (c) and publish such updates in accordance with such subsection.

''SEC. 603. DEFINITIONS.

'' In this title:

''(1) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term 'Administrator' means the Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

''(2) NATIONAL ACADEMIES.—The term 'National Academies' means the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.

''(3) UNITED STATES.—The term 'United States' means, collectively, each State of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Virgin Islands of the United States, and any other territory or possession of the United States.''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 1(b) of the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 (15 U.S.C. 8501 note) is amended in the table of contents by adding at the end the following:

''TITLE VI—IMPROVING FEDERAL PRECIPITATION INFORMATION

''Sec. 601. Study on precipitation estimation.

''Sec. 602. Improving probable maximum precipitation estimates.

''Sec. 603. Definitions.''.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, we find ourselves back in the same place. It is like deja vu all over again. We have been through this process year after year. I have been here 12 years, and it seems more often than not, we are in a very similar circumstance.

We are just a few days away from Christmas, and we are being asked to

move the deadline for the expiration of government funding, potentially leading to a shutdown even closer to Christmas. Today, we are being asked to move it to the day before Christmas Eve.

Obviously, we need to keep the government funded. We don't want a shutdown. No one wants a shutdown. A shutdown would be particularly bad at this time of year. It would be horrible for our constituents, people who rely on the government for a paycheck or for this or that program. It would all be bad, and we all feel the weight of that.

We also feel the weight, as we approach Christmas, of wanting to be able to make good on our promises to our families to spend the holidays with them rather than here in Washington.

As a result of that, every year, knowing this, there seem to be people who want to make sure that all spending decisions are wrapped into one spending bill. Very often, those are wrapped together in one omnibus spending package and then held off until a day or two—sometimes just hours—before the government is set to shut down.

That is when the magic happens. But it is not good magic; it is really bad magic. That is when these twin threats of sacrificing Christmas on the one hand or running into a government shutdown on the other hand—they operate like paired scissor blades to cut through what would otherwise be an insurmountable task. And that task involves convincing Senators to vote for a bill 3,000-plus pages long—likely this year containing 7,500 or so earmarks—a bill that they have never seen; a bill that does not, as we speak right now, exist without ever having seen it.

We all know that this is wrong. We all know that this is a corrupt way to run a government. This is a corrupt process that brings about all kinds of special interest giveaways. And in the absence of the light of day, they pass with the threat—the extorted threat—of a government shutdown or canceling Christmas—Members end up voting for that which they know they have no business supporting.

That is why my amendment is simple. My amendment simply gives us the flexibility to make these decisions not under duress, to make these decisions with clarity of mind and not influenced by this dual threat of a shutdown and cancellation of Christmas.

Now, look, whether you are for this omnibus bill that has yet to come into existence, that has yet to make a public appearance to see the light of day—whether you are for it or against it, you should support my amendment, because if you support my amendment, you are just giving us more flexibility.

The American people deserve nothing less than to allow us to make decisions consciously, knowingly, under the light of day, with clarity of mind, and not under duress. That is what my amendment affords them, extending this out to March 10.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

MOTION TO CONCUR WITH AMENDMENT NO. 6540

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, I move to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 1437 with amendment No. 6540.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Florida [Mr. SCOTT] moves to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 1437 with an amendment numbered 6540.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To rescind certain funding provided to the Internal Revenue Service under section 10301 of Public Law 117–169 and to protect American small businesses, gig workers, and freelancers by repealing the burdensome American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 transactions reporting threshold)

At the end, add the following:

DIVISION E—INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE AND TAX ADMINISTRATION

SEC. 101. RESCISSION OF CERTAIN FUNDS FOR ENHANCED INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE RESOURCES.

Effective on the date of enactment of this Act, the unobligated balances of the amounts made available under the following provisions of Public Law 117–169 are rescinded:

(1) INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE ENFORCEMENT FUNDS.—Section 10301(1)(A)(ii).

(2) INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE OPERATIONS SUPPORT.—Section 10301(1)(A)(iii).

SEC. 102. REPEAL OF MODIFICATIONS OF EXCEPTIONS FOR REPORTING OF THIRD PARTY NETWORK TRANSACTIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 6050W(e) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended to read as follows:

''(e) EXCEPTION FOR DE MINIMIS PAYMENTS BY THIRD PARTY SETTLEMENT ORGANIZATIONS.—A third party settlement organization shall be required to report any information under subsection (a) with respect to third party network transactions of any participating payee only if—

''(1) the amount which would otherwise be reported under subsection (a)(2) with respect to such transactions exceeds $20,000, and

''(2) the aggregate number of such transactions exceeds 200.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall apply to returns for calendar years beginning after December 31, 2021.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, everyone in this Chamber spoke about the pain American families are feeling as they deal with the raging inflation brought on by Joe Biden's reckless spending, so it was shocking to many of us when Senate Democrats approved $70 billion to supersize the IRS with 87,000 new agents. That means more audits on families and small businesses just as they struggle to get by thanks to skyrocketing prices.

What is worse, the Biden administration is also changing IRS standards to begin tracking financial transactions Americans make in excess of $600 to vendors like Cash App and Venmo and PayPal. It is an outrageous violation of Americans' privacy. It is stuff we see in communist China.

That is why I filed an amendment to strike the funding for the new IRS agents to prevent the IRS from spying on your bank accounts.

I urge my colleagues to protect Americans' privacy, stop the ridiculous audits on families, and support my amendment.

I yield back my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is now 2 minutes of debate prior to a vote in relation to the Scott amendment. That time is equally divided.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, colleagues, I would strongly urge opposition to the Scott motion. The Scott motion would strip funding the IRS needs very much to go after wealthy tax cheats who are refusing to pay taxes they already owe. The most recent IRS Commissioner, a Republican appointee, estimated that the amount of taxes owed that are not collected could be as much as $1 trillion per year.

Working Americans—firefighters and nurses—who pay their taxes with every paycheck believe that the IRS must have the resources it needs to go after the sophisticated, wealthy tax cheats at the top, but powerful special interests who don't want to pay what they already owe are lying to the American people about how the additional IRS funding will be used.

I urge my colleagues to strongly oppose the Scott motion.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

VOTE ON MOTION TO CONCUR

The question occurs on agreeing to the motion to concur with the Scott amendment.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY), the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI), and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS).

Further, if present and voting the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) would have voted ''yea.''

The result was announced—yeas 45, nays 47, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 397 Leg.]

YEAS—45

Blackburn	Cramer	Hoeven
Boozman	Crapo	Hyde-Smith
Braun	Daines	Inhofe
Capito	Ernst	Johnson
Cassidy	Fischer	Kennedy
Collins	Graham	Lankford
Cornyn	Grassley	Lee
Cotton	Hawley	Lummis

Marshall	Rounds	Sullivan
McConnell	Rubio	Tester
Moran	Sasse	Thune
Paul	Scott (FL)	Toomey
Portman	Scott (SC)	Tuberville
Risch	Shelby	Wicker
Romney	Sinema	Young

NAYS—47

Baldwin	Heinrich	Peters
Bennet	Hickenlooper	Reed
Blumenthal	Hirono	Rosen
Booker	Kaine	Sanders
Brown	King	Schatz
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Schumer
Cardin	Leahy	Shaheen
Carper	Luján	Smith
Casey	Manchin	Stabenow
Coons	Markey	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Warner
Duckworth	Merkley	Warnock
Durbin	Murphy	Warren
Feinstein	Murray	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Wyden
Hassan	Padilla	

NOT VOTING—8

Barrasso	Cruz	Murkowski
Blunt	Hagerty	Tillis
Burr	Kelly	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 45, the nays are 47.

The 60-vote threshold having not been achieved, the motion to concur is not agreed to.

The motion was rejected.

MOTION TO CONCUR WITH AMENDMENT NO. 6451

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There are now 2 minutes of debate prior to a vote in relation to the Lee motion.

The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, we will be voting in a moment on my amendment. Again, this amendment is something that everyone in this Chamber should be able to support, whether you like the omnibus or whether you hate the omnibus. The Senate should be in a position to be able to review the omnibus with a clear head without the pressure of an imminent threat at Christmastime of a shutdown. The American people deserve this, and so do we. This is the only way to make this right. I encourage all of you to vote for my amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, a continuing resolution to March 10 is shortsighted and wholly unnecessary. It imperils our national security, and it ignores the real pain and consequences of inflation.

Without funding from a full-year omnibus appropriations bill, the NDAA we passed this evening is a broken promise, the bipartisan PACT Act goes underfunded, and VA medical care falls at least $7.5 billion short.

While some of my colleagues are quick to raise the alarm about our southern border, a CR into March does nothing to address the influx of migrants at our border now. It does nothing to help communities ravaged by drought, hurricanes, flooding and fire. While families feel the pain of inflation, a CR into March does nothing to provide them with relief.

We have a bipartisan, bicameral framework in place that should allow us to complete an omnibus appropriations bill early next week. A CR into March asks us to abandon our work without offering a different or viable alternative. I urge my colleagues to reject that proposal and allow us time to complete our work.

VOTE ON MOTION TO CONCUR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question occurs on agreeing to the motion to concur with the Lee amendment.

Mr. LEE. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is 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 Arizona (Mr. KELLY) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS), and the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT).

The result was announced—yeas 35, nays 56, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 398 Leg.]

YEAS—35

Blackburn	Graham	Risch
Boozman	Grassley	Romney
Braun	Hawley	Rubio
Capito	Hoeven	Sasse
Cassidy	Hyde-Smith	Scott (FL)
Cornyn	Johnson	Sullivan
Cotton	Kennedy	Thune
Cramer	Lankford	Toomey
Crapo	Lee	Tuberville
Daines	Lummis	Wicker
Ernst	Marshall	Young
Fischer	Paul	

NAYS—56

Baldwin	Hirono	Reed
Bennet	Inhofe	Rosen
Blumenthal	Kaine	Rounds
Booker	King	Sanders
Brown	Klobuchar	Schatz
Cantwell	Leahy	Schumer
Cardin	Luján	Shaheen
Carper	Manchin	Shelby
Casey	Markey	Sinema
Collins	McConnell	Smith
Coons	Menendez	Stabenow
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Tester
Duckworth	Murkowski	Van Hollen
Durbin	Murphy	Warner
Feinstein	Murray	Warnock
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Warren
Hassan	Padilla	Whitehouse
Heinrich	Peters	Wyden
Hickenlooper	Portman	

NOT VOTING—9

Barrasso	Cruz	Moran
Blunt	Hagerty	Scott (SC)
Burr	Kelly	Tillis

The motion was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to refer and the motion to concur with amendments are withdrawn.

There are now 2 minutes equally divided prior to the vote on the motion to concur.

The majority leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, we haven't had a single government shutdown during the entire 117th Congress, and thanks to this weeklong extension today, we are not starting now.

Today's 1-week continuing resolution will keep the government open long enough to give our appropriators a chance to finish their work on a yearlong funding package.

This is about taking a very simple, exceedingly responsible step to ensure we finish the year without hiccups and without minimal drama. A 1-week CR will give us more time so we can keep working.

I want to thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for their great cooperation.

Next week, hopefully, we will finish the job, passing a package that will keep the government fully funded into next fall. Nobody is going to get everything they want, but the final product will include wins everyone can get behind, including passing the Electoral Count Act, emergency aid for Ukraine, and funding for our kids, our veterans, our small businesses, and our military families.

No drama, no gridlock, no government shutdown this week, it is a win for the American people. I thank my colleagues for their work.

I ask for the yeas and nays.

VOTE ON MOTION TO CONCUR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question occurs on agreeing to the motion to concur.

The yeas and nays have been requested.

Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT), the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS), and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY).

The result was announced—yeas 71, nays 19, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 399 Leg.]

YEAS—71

Baldwin	Duckworth	Luján
Bennet	Durbin	Manchin
Blumenthal	Feinstein	Markey
Booker	Gillibrand	McConnell
Boozman	Graham	Menendez
Brown	Grassley	Merkley
Cantwell	Hassan	Murkowski
Capito	Heinrich	Murphy
Cardin	Hickenlooper	Murray
Carper	Hirono	Ossoff
Casey	Hyde-Smith	Padilla
Cassidy	Inhofe	Peters
Collins	Kaine	Portman
Coons	Kennedy	Reed
Cornyn	King	Romney
Cortez Masto	Klobuchar	Rosen
Cotton	Leahy	Rubio

Sanders	Stabenow	Warnock
Schatz	Sullivan	Warren
Schumer	Tester	Whitehouse
Shaheen	Thune	Wicker
Shelby	Tuberville	Wyden
Sinema	Van Hollen	Young
Smith	Warner	

NAYS—19

Blackburn	Hawley	Paul
Braun	Hoeven	Risch
Cramer	Johnson	Rounds
Crapo	Lankford	Sasse
Daines	Lee	Scott (FL)
Ernst	Lummis	
Fischer	Marshall	

NOT VOTING—10

Barrasso	Hagerty	Tillis
Blunt	Kelly	Toomey
Burr	Moran	
Cruz	Scott (SC)	

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). On this vote, the yeas are 71, the nays are 19.

The 60-vote threshold having been achieved, the motion to concur is agreed to.

The motion was agreed to.

PROVIDING FOR A CORRECTION IN THE ENROLLMENT OF H.R. 1437

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, H. Con. Res. 123 is considered agreed to, and the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table.

The concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 123) was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The junior Senator from Maine.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. KING. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations en bloc: Calendar Nos. 1175, 1176, 1177, 1178, 1179, 1180, and 1181; 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; and 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 en bloc nominations of Kendra Davis Briggs, of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of fifteen years; Errol Rajesh Arthur, of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of fifteen years; Leslie A. Meek, of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of fifteen years; Carl Ezekiel Ross, of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of fifteen years; Laura E. Crane, of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of fifteen years; Veronica M. Sanchez, of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of fifteen years; and Vijay Shanker, of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the District of Columbia Court of Appeals for the term of fifteen years?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now resume legislative session.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. KING. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that at a time to be determined by the majority leader, in consultation with the Republican leader, the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Executive Calendar No. 1301, Martin J. Gruenberg, of Maryland, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation for a term of six years. (Reappointment); further, that at a time to be determined by the majority leader, in consultation with the Republican leader, the Senate vote without intervening action or debate on the nomination; further, that if the nomination is confirmed, the Senate consider the following nominations en bloc: Calendar Nos. 1298, 1299, 1300, 1302, and 1297; that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc without intervening action or debate; and that if the nominations are confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate then resume legislative session.

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. KING. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations: Calendar Nos. 1303 through 1311 and all nominations on the Secretary's desk in the Air Force, Army, Marine Corps, Navy, and Space Force; that the nominations be confirmed en bloc; that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to any of the nominations; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate then resume legislative session.

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

The nominations considered and confirmed are as follows:

IN THE AIR FORCE

The following named officers for appointment in the United States Air Force to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 624:

To be brigadier general

Col. David C. Epperson

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Air Force to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 624:

To be brigadier general

Col. Thomas P. Sherman

IN THE MARINE CORPS

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Marine Corps to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

To be lieutenant general

Maj. Gen. Francis L. Donovan

IN THE AIR FORCE

The following named Air National Guard of the United States officers for appointment in the Reserve of the Air Force to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., sections 12203 and 12212:

To be major general

Brig. Gen. Donald K. Carpenter
Brig. Gen. Samuel C. Keener
Brig. Gen. Mark W. Mitchum
Brig. Gen. Mark D. Piper

The following named Air National Guard of the United States officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Air Force to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

To be lieutenant general

Maj. Gen. Steven S. Nordhaus

IN THE ARMY

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Army to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 624:

To be brigadier general

Col. Paige M. Jennings

IN THE NAVY

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Navy to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 624:

To be rear admiral (lower half)

Capt. Jonathan T. Stephens

IN THE MARINE CORPS

The following named officers for appointment in the United States Marine Corps to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 624:

To be major general

Brig. Gen. Marcus B. Annibale
Brig. Gen. Lorna M. Mahlock
Brig. Gen. Joseph A. Matos, III
Brig. Gen. David L. Odom
Brig. Gen. Thomas B. Savage
Brig. Gen. William H. Swan
Brig. Gen. Brian N. Wolford
Brig. Gen. Calvert L. Worth, Jr.

IN THE ARMY

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Army to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

To be general

Lt. Gen. Charles R. Hamilton

NOMINATIONS PLACED ON THE SECRETARY'S DESK

IN THE AIR FORCE

PN2462 AIR FORCE nominations (70) beginning KIMBERLYN. BARR, and ending BENJAMIN D. YOUNGQUIST, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of August 3, 2022.

PN2463 AIR FORCE nominations (61) beginning NATHAN J. ABEL, and ending BAI LAN ZHU, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of August 3, 2022.

PN2464 AIR FORCE nominations (91) beginning BILLY S. ALLEN, and ending JOSHUA D. WILD, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of August 3, 2022.

PN2465 AIR FORCE nominations (302) beginning ALLEN Y. AGNES, and ending JOSE L. ZAMBRANO, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of August 3, 2022.

PN2466 AIR FORCE nominations (10) beginning DANIEL A. BUNCH, and ending MICHAEL WILLIAM SUDEN, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of August 3, 2022.

PN2467 AIR FORCE nominations (12) beginning DEAR BELOVED, and ending JOHN T. SZCZEPANSKI, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of August 3, 2022.

PN2595 AIR FORCE nominations (60) beginning KARLA E. ADAMS, and ending JESSE M. WICKHAM, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 8, 2022.

PN2597 AIR FORCE nominations (12) beginning JACQUELINE E. BVLGARI, and ending KELLY L. VERMILLION, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 8, 2022.

PN2645 AIR FORCE nomination of Keenan E. Dalrymple, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 15, 2022.

PN2646 AIR FORCE nomination of Susan D. Baumgartner, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 15, 2022.

PN2647 AIR FORCE nomination of Stigen A. Westberg, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 15, 2022.

PN2648 AIR FORCE nomination of Beau D. Graham, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 15, 2022.

PN2649 AIR FORCE nomination of Kristen M. Barra, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 15, 2022.

PN2650 AIR FORCE nomination of Evans R. Wright, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 15, 2022.

PN2776 AIR FORCE nomination of Jeremy A. Krohngold, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 17, 2022.

PN2801 AIR FORCE nomination of Chandramouli Rajaram, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of December 7, 2022.

IN THE ARMY

PN2425 ARMY nomination of Sean P. Hutchison, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of July 27, 2022.

PN2527 ARMY nomination of Andrew K. Arrington, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 6, 2022.

PN2802 ARMY nomination of Christopher A. Kreiler, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of December 7, 2022.

PN2803 ARMY nominations (3) beginning MICHAEL A. RIZZOTTI, and ending BRETT C. SHEPARD, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of December 7, 2022.

PN2804 ARMY nomination of Ronald W. Sprang, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of December 7, 2022.

PN2805 ARMY nomination of Ryan C. Agee, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of December 7, 2022.

PN2806 ARMY nomination of Philip J. Deaguilera, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of December 7, 2022.

PN2807 ARMY nomination of Brian C. Beldowicz, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of December 7, 2022.

PN2808 ARMY nomination of Christopher A. Benson, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of December 7, 2022.

IN THE MARINE CORPS

PN2809 MARINE CORPS nominations (108) beginning DAVID AHN, and ending JAY M. ZARRA, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of December 7, 2022.

IN THE NAVY

PN2810 NAVY nomination of Tapeka C. Pringle, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of December 7, 2022.

IN THE SPACE FORCE

PN2656 SPACE FORCE nomination of Ashton M. Shelton, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 15, 2022.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now resume legislative session.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. KING. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations en bloc: Calendar Nos. 1259, 1260, 1294, 1295, and 1296; 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; and 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 en bloc nominations of Kathleen Ann Kavalec, 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 Romania; Jessica Davis Ba, of the District of Columbia, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire; Henry C. Leventis, of Tennessee, to be United States Attorney for the Middle District of Tennessee for the term of four years; Michael D. Black, of Ohio, to be United States Marshal for the Southern District of Ohio for the term of four years; and Catrina A. Thompson, of North Carolina, to be United States Marshal for the Middle District of North Carolina for the term of four years?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now resume legislative session.

MORNING BUSINESS

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, stop me if you have heard this one before: Two atoms walk into a bar, they collide into one other at extreme speeds, under extreme heat, and they leave later that evening combined—as one, single element.

The process I have just described is known as nuclear fusion. For the past 60 years, it is a process that has only existed in theory—written on chalkboards and debated in lecture halls. But last week, everything changed, when the brilliant minds at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California made a breakthrough. For the first time in human history, these American researchers achieved what is known as fusion ignition.

They constructed the world's largest laser system—the size of a sports stadium—to recreate conditions that can only be found in the cores of stars and giant planets. And they harnessed that power to combine two particles into one, and as a result, they created more energy than was used to start the process. In other words, these federally funded researchers achieved a scientific feat that could pave the way for unlimited, carbon-free energy. And in the words of our Secretary of Energy, Jennifer Granholm, it is a breakthrough that ''[only] happened because we invested in our national labs . . . and we invested in fundamental research.''

Now, let's be clear, this technology is a long way off from powering our homes and businesses, but it is a revolutionary proof of concept. These American researchers have proven that nuclear fusion—and, potentially, a carbon-free future—are possible.

And this remarkable breakthrough is a return to form for America: Throughout our history, our government has funded the revolutionary research considered too risky for investors in the private sector—the kinds of discoveries

that cost too much and take too long for private investors—but can change the world. And time and again, these Federal investments have paid off. Could you imagine the world economy today without the internet or the microchip? Well, both were the products of federally funded research. And both have created well-paying jobs for generations of families in our country. This new breakthrough in nuclear fusion proves that America is at its best when we pioneer the inventions and industries of tomorrow.

And that is exactly why we, in this Senate today, need to invest our Nation's capacity to innovate. We can't face tomorrow's challenges with yesterday's budget. But sadly, that is the reality we are faced with if Congress fails to pass a spending package by the end of this month.

Yes, it is that time of the year again in Washington: the end-of-year sprint to pass a government funding bill—also known as an omnibus. And as we approach the closing days of this Congress, we need to answer a fundamental question: Will we pass a government funding bill that adequately addresses our Nation's greatest challenges? Or we will give up and kick the can to the next Congress?

And this isn't just about funding for fundamental research; we are talking about the fundamental problems Americans face every single day. If we don't pass an omnibus in the next several days, the Federal Government will have to rely on what is known as a continuing resolution; it is essentially copying and pasting last year's budget into next year. Imagine if a high school student did that on a term paper; they would fail the class—and for good reason.

Fortunately, earlier this week, Senator LEAHY, Senator SHELBY, and Congresswoman DELAURO announced a spending framework that will hopefully lead to an omnibus appropriations package to fully fund the government through the next fiscal year. That omnibus bill will support healthcare for our senior citizens and veterans, infrastructure projects to rebuild and revitalize our communities, and community violence prevention programs to keep our kids and families safe. These are real solutions to the urgent problems American families deal with every single day. In fact, over the past 2 years, this Senate has passed a number of policies to address those same problems—many of them bipartisan.

We passed the biggest infrastructure bill in a generation, to rebuild our roads and bridges and replace lead pipes in cities like Chicago. We passed the CHIPS and Science Act, to bring manufacturing jobs back to our shores and secure our domestic supply of a component that is critical in the 21st century economy. We passed the PACT Act, to keep our promise to America's veterans and help those suffering from toxic exposure during their time on the battlefield. And we also passed the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, to combat the scourge of gun violence that has now become the No. 1 killer of America's children.

But here is the issue: If we leave Washington without passing a spending package, these policies will be little more than words on paper—because none of these initiatives will receive the funding they need to start helping American families. That is unacceptable; the American people have already shown that they support these policies.

How do we know that? Well, as members of this Senate, we voted on every one of those measures I just mentioned. They all passed. Last month, many of these same Senators touted their support for these measures in their reelection campaigns. And every single one of them was reelected—every single one. That hasn't happened since 1934. That is about as clear a message as you get in politics: The policies we have passed are popular—and even more important, they are necessary.

So how can we now turn around and tell the American people: Sorry, you will just have to wait a little longer. We have decided not to fund those promises we made? How can we tell that to the veteran who needs life-saving medical care today? Or the mother whose child is at risk of gun violence today? Or Americans who don't have access to safe drinking water today? These Americans have already waited too long, and they shouldn't have to wait a moment longer. We should do our job and fund the government.

Passing an omnibus also will bring millions of dollars in earmark funding that Senator DUCKWORTH and I have worked to secure for community projects in Illinois. These projects will improve our State's transportation systems, clean up our water, strengthen community violence prevention initiatives, expand access to healthcare, create jobs, and much more. But if we leave Washington without passing an omnibus, these projects will not receive the funding they need to move forward.

And worse yet, public safety will suffer. In my town of Springfield, our U.S. Attorney tells me his office needs Federal funding to hire more assistant U.S. Attorneys, who are on the frontlines of combating gun violence and violent crime. And across the country, there is a shortage of more than 750 assistant U.S. Attorneys. If we fail to pass a spending package, those shortages, which are a risk to public safety, will extend into next year. That would be a pitiful closing act for the 117th Congress, which has done a lot of good work for the American people.

So let's come together and finish the job. Let's fully fund the government before we leave for the holidays, so hard-working Americans can finally get the solutions they have been waiting on.

ARMS SALES NOTIFICATION

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, section 36(b) of the Arms Export Control Act requires that Congress receive prior notification of certain proposed arms sales as defined by that statute. Upon such notification, the Congress has 30 calendar days during which the sale may be reviewed. The provision stipulates that, in the Senate, the notification of proposed sales shall be sent to the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

In keeping with the committee's intention to see that relevant information is available to the full Senate, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the notifications which have been received. If the cover letter references a classified annex, then such annex is available to all Senators in the office of the Foreign Relations Committee, room SD–423.

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

DEFENSE SECURITY COOPERATION AGENCY,
Washington, DC.

Hon. ROBERT MENENDEZ,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(5)(A) of the Arms Export Control Act (AECA), as amended, we are forwarding Transmittal No. 0V–22. This notification relates to enhancements or upgrades from the level of sensitivity of technology or capability described in the Section 36(b)(1) AECA certification 22–15 of February 11, 2022.

Sincerely,

JAMES A. HURSCH,
Director.

Enclosures.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 0V–22

Report of Enhancement or Upgrade of Sensitivity of Technology or Capability (Sec. 36(b)(5)(A), AECA)

(i) Purchaser: Government of Australia.

(ii) Sec. 36(b)(1), AECA Transmittal No.: 22–15; Date: February 22, 2022; Military Department: Air Force.

(iii) Description: On February 22, 2022 Congress was notified by Congressional certification transmittal number 22–15, of the possible sale, under Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, of AN/AAQ 24(V)N Large Aircraft Infrared Countermeasures (LAIRCM) component systems required to support an ongoing upgrade of its large Air Mobility Platforms, which include C–17As, KC–30As, and C–130Js. As such, the Government of Australia requested to buy twenty-seven (27) AN/AAQ 24(V)N Large Aircraft Infrared Countermeasures (LAIRCM) System Processor Replacements (LSPR) (27 installed, 0 spares); and thirty (30) Guardian Laser Turret Assemblies (GLTA) (30 installed, 0 spares). Also included were LAIRCM Control Indicator Unit Replacements (CIURs); Advanced Threat Missile Warning Sensors (ATWs); Smart Card Assemblies (SCAs); High Capacity Cards/User Data Memory Cards (HCCs/UDMs) (installed and spares); Simple Key Loaders; initial spares, consumables, and repair/return support; support and test equipment; integration and test support; personnel training, publications and technical documentation; U.S. Government and contractor engineering, technical and logistics support services; and other related elements of logistical and

program support. The estimated total sale was $122 million. Major Defense Equipment (MDE) constituted $34 million of this total.

This transmittal reports the addition of the following MDE item: one (1) AN/AAQ 24(V)N Large Aircraft Infrared Countermeasures (LAIRCM) System Processor Replacement (LSPR) at an estimate of $0.5M. Also included are User Data Modules and card connectors; and additional engineering and technical services. The estimated total value of these additional items is $8.0 million. This transmittal also reports a $7 million increase in value to the estimated cost of the previously notified MDE. The total estimated MDE value will increase by $7.5 million to $41.5 million. The estimated total value will increase by $15.5 million, resulting in an estimated total case value of $137.5 million.

(iv) Significance: This notification is being provided as the additional MDE item was not enumerated in the original notification. The proposed sale will further improve Australia's capability to meet current and future threats by providing modern protection for large air mobility platforms.

(v) Justification: This proposed sale will support the foreign policy and national security objectives of the United States. Australia is one of our most important allies in the Western Pacific. The strategic location of this political and economic power contributes significantly to ensuring peace and economic stability in the region. It is vital to the U.S. national interest to assist our ally in developing and maintaining a strong and ready self-defense capability.

(vi) Sensitivity of Technology: The Sensitivity of Technology statement contained in the original notification applies to items reported here.

(vii) Date Report Delivered to Congress: December 15, 2022.

ARMS SALES NOTIFICATION

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, section 36(b) of the Arms Export Control Act requires that Congress receive prior notification of certain proposed arms sales as defined by that statute. Upon such notification, the Congress has 30 calendar days during which the sale may be reviewed. The provision stipulates that, in the Senate, the notification of proposed sales shall be sent to the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

In keeping with the committee's intention to see that relevant information is available to the full Senate, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the notifications which have been received. If the cover letter references a classified annex, then such annex is available to all Senators in the office of the Foreign Relations Committee, room SD–423.

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

DEFENSE SECURITY COOPERATION AGENCY,
Washington, DC.

Hon. ROBERT MENENDEZ,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(5)(A) of the Arms Export Control Act (AECA), as amended, we are forwarding Transmittal No. 0J–22. This notification relates to enhancements or upgrades from the level of sensitivity of technology or capability described in the Section 36(b)(1) AECA certification 22–14 of April 4, 2022.

Sincerely,

JAMES A. HURSCH,
Director.

Enclosures.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 0J–22

Report of Enhancement or Upgrade of Sensitivity of Technology or Capability (Sec. 36(b)(5)(A), AECA)

(i) Purchaser: Government of Bulgaria.

(ii) Sec. 36(b)(1), AECA Transmittal No.: 22–14; Date: April 4, 2022; Implementing Agency: Air Force; Funding Source: National Funds.

(iii) Description: On April 4, 2022, Congress was notified by Congressional certification transmittal number 22–14 of the possible sale, under Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, of four (4) F–16 C Block 70 aircraft; four (4) F–16 D Block 70 aircraft; eleven (11) F100–GE–129D engines (8 installed, 3 spares); eleven (11) Improved Programmable Display Generators (iPDG) (8 installed, 3 spares); eleven (11) AN/APG–83 Active Electronically Scanned Array (AESA) Scalable Agile Beam Radars (SABR) (8 installed, 3 spares); eleven (11) Modular Mission Computers (MMC) 7000AH (8 installed, 3 spares); eleven (11) LN–260 or equivalent Embedded Global Positioning System (GPS) Inertial Navigation Systems (INS) (EGI) with Selective Availability Anti-Spoofing Module (SAASM) and Precise Positioning Service (PPS) (8 installed, 3 spares); nineteen (19) Advanced Medium Range Air-to-Air Missile (AMRAAM) AIM–120C–7/C–8 or equivalent missiles; two (2) AMRAAM Guidance Sections; forty-eight (48) LAU–129A launchers (40 installed, 8 spares); twenty-eight (28) GBU–39/B Small Diameter Bombs (SDBs); two (2) SDB Guided Test Vehicles (GTVs); eleven (11) M61A1 Vulcan Cannons (8 installed, 3 spares); four (4) AN/AAQ–33 Sniper Advanced Targeting Pods (ATPs); twelve (12) Multifunctional Information Distribution System with Joint Tactical Radio Systems (MIDS–JTRS) (aircraft terminals and ground station terminals) (10 installed, 2 spares); twenty (20) AIM–9X Block II missiles; eight (8) AIM–9X Block II Captive Air Training Missiles (CATMs); four (4) AIM–9X Block II Tactical Guidance Units; four (4) AIM–9X Block II CATM Guidance Units; twenty-four (24) FMU–139 or FMU–152 fuze systems; twelve (12) KMU–572 Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM) Tail Kits for 500LB GBU–38 or Laser JDAM GBU–54; twelve (12) MXU–650 Air Foil Groups (AFGs) for Enhanced Paveway II EGBU–49; twelve (12) MAU–210 Enhanced Computer Control Groups (ECCGs) for EPII EGBU–49; twenty-four (24) MK–82 or BLU–111 or equivalent Bomb Bodies; six (6) MK–82 Inert Bombs; and two (2) GBU–39 SDB I Practice Bombs. Also included are AN/ARC–238 radios; AN/APX–126 or equivalent Advanced Identification Friend or Foe (AIFF) with Combined Interrogator Transponders (CIT); Joint Helmet Mounted Cueing System II (JHMCS II) or Scorpion Hybrid Optical-based Inertial Tacker (HObIT) helmet mounted displays; AN/ALQ–254 Viper Shield or equivalent Electronic Warfare (EW) systems; AN/ALE–47 Countermeasure Dispenser Systems (CMDS), KY–58M Cryptographic Devices, KIV–78 Cryptographic Devices, and Simple Key Loaders (SKLs); Joint Mission Planning Systems (JMPS) or equivalent; AIM–120 Captive Air Training Missiles (CATM); PGU–28 High Explosive Incendiary (HEI) ammunition; PGU–27 training rounds (non HEI); ARD–446 impulse cartridges; ARD–863 impulse cartridges; BBU–36/B impulse cartridges; BBU–35/B impulse cartridges; MK–124 smoke flares; MJU–7/B flare cartridges L463 or MJU–53 or equivalent; Common Munitions Built-in-Test (BIT) Reprogramming Equipment (CMBRE); ADU–890 adapter for CMBRE; ADU–891 adapter for CMBRE; Night Vision Devices (NVD); NVD Spare Image Intensifier Tubes; Remote Operated Video Enhanced Receiver (ROVER) 6i units; Tactical Network ROVER Kit; DSU–38 laser sensors for GBU–54; Cartridge Actuated Device/Propellant Actuated Devices (CADs/PADs); GBU–39 tactical training rounds; BRU–57 bomb racks; BRU–61 bomb racks; MAU–12 bomb racks and TER–9A triple ejection racks; other chaff and flare, ammunition, and pylons; launcher adaptors and weapons interfaces; fuel tanks and attached hardware; travel pods; aircraft and weapons integration, test, and support equipment; electronic warfare database and mission data file development; precision measurement and calibration laboratory equipment; secure communications; cryptographic equipment; precision navigation equipment; aircraft and personnel support and test equipment; spare and repair parts; repair and return services; maps, publications, and technical documentation; studies and surveys; classified/unclassified software and software support; personnel training and training equipment; facilities and facility management, design and/or construction services; U.S. Government and contractor engineering, technical and logistics support services; and other related elements of logistical and program support. The estimated total cost was $1.673 billion. Major Defense Equipment (MDE) constituted $0.978 billion of this total.

This transmittal reports a correction to the previously notified ''eleven (11) F100–GE–129D engines (8 installed, 3 spares)'' to ''eleven (11) F110–GE–129D engines (8 installed, 3 spares);'' there is currently no GE aircraft engine designated as F100. The following non-MDE items will also be included: ROVER 6Si units with Tactical Network ROVER (TNR) 2i kits; and STINGER MB ground terminal systems. The total MDE value will remain $0.978 billion. The total case value will remain $1.673 billion.

(iv) Significance: This notification is being provided to correctly identify the designation of F110–GE–129D engines to be included in this sale. Additionally, the inclusion of the additional non-MDE items represents an increase in capability over what was previously notified. The proposed articles and services will support Bulgaria's purchase of F–16s and associated equipment and will provide Bulgaria with a credible defense capability to deter aggression in the region.

(v) Justification: This proposed sale will support the foreign policy and national security objectives of the United States by helping to improve the security of a NATO ally that is a force for political stability and economic progress in Europe.

(vi) Sensitivity of Technology: The L3Harris ROVER 6Si transceiver provides real-time, full-motion video (FMV) and other network data for situational awareness, targeting, battle damage assessment, surveillance, relay, convoy over-watch operations and other situations where eyes-on-target are required. It provides expanded frequencies and additional processing resources from previous ROVER versions, allowing increased levels of collaboration and interoperability with numerous manned and unmanned airborne platforms.

The TNR 2i handheld transceiver supports both analog and digital waveforms enabling interoperability with commonly fielded US and NATO airborne platforms. In addition to traditional video downlink capability, TNR 2i provides bidirectional IP networking (Net-T). This kind of network connectivity allows for Digitally Aided Close Air Support (DaCAS), ground force position sharing, chat and large file transfer capabilities.

The STINGER MB is a tracking antenna system for long-range data links, supporting simultaneous transmit and receive capability in the UHF, L, S, C and Ku frequency bands.

The highest level of classification of information included in this potential sale is SECRET.

(vii) Date Report Delivered to Congress: December 15, 2022.

TRIBUTE TO DR. PATRICK BREYSSE

Mr. PETERS. Madam President, I rise today to honor a public servant who has made a significant impact protecting the health of Michiganders and people across the country from environmental hazards and related health concerns. Dr. Patrick Breysse will be retiring from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention—CDC—and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry—ATSDR—after serving 36 years both in government and as a professor at the Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health. Dr. Breysse's expertise in environmental exposure assessment and epidemiology has resulted in preventing disease, saving lives, and improving the health of communities.

Dr. Breysse joined CDC in December 2014 to lead the Agency's efforts to investigate the relationship between environmental factors and health. Under Dr. Breysse, CDC and ATSDR took significant steps to address lead exposure, improve safe drinking water, reduce exposure to hazardous substances, and play a critical role in CDC's emergency preparedness and response to natural disasters. His recent priorities include addressing per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances—PFAS—contamination in drinking water and the health effects of poor air quality, extreme heat, flooding, and other weather-related hazards. He also led the public health response to the Flint water crisis in my home State of Michigan and remains focused on preventing lead exposures from public drinking water and working to make our environments lead-free. Dr. Breysse has worked closely with State, local, Territorial, and Tribal partners and been a true advocate for the health of our communities.

Dr. Breysse has also been a leader in bringing attention to the health concerns related to PFAS chemicals, testifying before Congress, briefing staff and Members, and initiating a groundbreaking health study at ATSDR to fill research gaps and examine the relationship between these chemicals and human health. He led the charge to better understand the contamination of PFAS in our water supply and the numerous potentially associated health effects. His vision and foresight helped lead to changes in standards, improvements in guidance for health professionals, and attention to this issue across the Nation.

Dr. Breysse is leaving behind a rich legacy of improving the quality of science and practice related to environmental health within CDC and ATSDR. I am thankful for Dr. Pat Breysse and his commitment to the health of our communities and for the countless public servants like him who dedicate their lives to protecting others.

TRIBUTE TO LISA ELIJAH

Ms. SINEMA. Madam President, I rise today to congratulate and thank Lisa Elijah, who has been serving as a HillVets fellow in my office this year. Lisa, an Air Force veteran, has been an asset to the people of Arizona, to the U.S. Congress, and to my staff.

Arizona is home to nearly half a million veterans, making up almost 9 percent of the State. We pride ourselves on our strong connection with the military and take seriously the responsibility to care for our troops after they retire. Serving Arizona veterans is paramount in our office, and handling veterans' affairs issues is one of the most challenging and demanding portfolios for my team.

In the year she has worked in my office, Lisa has become an essential member of the staff and a valued liaison with the Arizona veteran community. As part of my policy team, Lisa has participated in dozens of meetings and was the primary point of contact for organizations and government Agencies on veterans' policy. She has assisted in making informed recommendations on veterans' legislation, cosponsorships, and meeting preparation. She has helped us draft thoughtful and influential policy that I know will help the servicemembers and families of Arizona, including legislation designed to improve the VA Family Caregivers Program.

Moreover, Lisa has gone above and beyond, taking the helm of our veterans' affairs team for several months, including coordinating with a legislative correspondent, policy adviser, and our State-based veterans outreach team across three geographically distinct offices. In this role, she has engaged with key stakeholders in the veteran's community, including grassroot organizations, government Agencies, and other interested parties. She also took the lead on preparing me for hearings in the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, preparing talking points, background material, and working with committee staff on legislation.

I know that Lisa's work for veterans is not yet concluded. Her future position that will allow her to continue her work for veterans in Arizona and throughout the Nation. I am excited to see her continued success.

I am incredibly proud of the work Lisa Elijah accomplished throughout this challenging year. She has set an outstanding example for others, and my team and I will miss her.

TRIBUTE TO SERGEANT MAJOR NICHOLAS J. STOKELY

Mr. OSSOFF. Madam President, today it is with great pleasure that I honor a superb Army noncommissioned officer and legislative liaison. After 2 years of exemplary service with the Army Office of the Chief, Legislative Liaison, SGM Nicholas J. Stokely was selected to serve as the next battalion command sergeant major for the 96th Civil Affairs Battalion, Special Operations (Airborne), at Fort Bragg, NC. He is no stranger to positions of trust and authority as he currently serves as the legislative assistant to the 16th Sergeant Major of the Army. He will assume responsibility for this new position in June.

On this occasion, I believe it is appropriate to recognize Sergeant Major Stokely's distinguished 25-year career spent serving the interests of the American people, whether here in the halls of Congress or out in the field with his boots on the ground. He is a native of Fountain Inn, SC. It is there that he first began his military service as an infantryman in the South Carolina National Guard in 1997. Sergeant Major Stokely enlisted in the Active-Duty Army in February 2002 and served in numerous leadership positions while stationed at Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Washington State.

In 2006, he donned the iconic hat of the U.S. Army drill sergeant, helping train young men and women in preparation for the rigors of serving in the Army. Sergeant Major Stokely has excelled in every job the Army has asked him to take on, and true to form, he was selected as the 2007 Infantry Training Brigade Drill Sergeant of the Year at Fort Benning, GA. This is indicative of how he approaches his job.

In 2009, Sergeant Major Stokely began a new chapter in his career by completing the Civil Affairs Specialist Course at Fort Bragg and joining the ranks of Special Forces operators. He subsequently served in every leadership position possible while assigned to the 95th Civil Affairs Brigade. He then went on to serve as an instructor and course manager at the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School.

It is clear the Army has consistently relied upon Sergeant Major Stokely for his exceptional leadership. He has deployed on numerous occasions in support of America's national defense. Sergeant Major Stokely has deployed in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom, Enduring Freedom, the European Reassurance Initiative, and European Deterrence Initiative with multiple tough assignments within Special Operations units across the Asian and European continents.

In 2019, Sergeant Major Stokely arrived on Capitol Hill, serving as the defense fellow for Representative JASON CROW of Colorado's Sixth District. From there, he did exceptional work liaising on the Army's Senate Liaison Division staff before his selection as a legislative assistant. In each of these positions, his primary responsibility was to help continue and strengthen Army relationships across Congress.

Over the past 2 years, Sergeant Major Stokely has traveled all over the world leading congressional and staff delegations doing just that.

Now, he will continue his distinguished Army career, returning to lead men and women. I am thankful for his service and sacrifice. On behalf of Congress, I wish him, his wonderful wife Kristina, and three beautiful children Cody, Cailynn, and Kinslee all the best.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO THE COUNTRY MUSIC HALL OF FAME CLASS OF 2022

• Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, on October 16, Music City welcomed the Country Music Hall of Fame's Class of 2022, Joe Galante, Jerry Lee Lewis, and Keith Whitley, into country music's closest circle of friends. As a lifelong fan, I like to spend time each year reflecting not only on the ties that bind the genre, but on those that set each generation of artists, songwriters, musicians, and executives apart. This year, the Hall's newest members have one very simple thing in common: Country music came naturally to them.

If all had gone according to plan for Joe Galante, he never would have spent his life making country music. This year's Non-Performer inductee came to Nashville on a 2-year assignment as a junior financial analyst, then spent more than four decades modernizing the country music recording industry's business practices as one of the most influential executives in entertainment. The industry at the time may not have known what to make of this young man from New York City, but the industry of today is far more successful and creative for having embraced his vision of what country music could be.

On October 28, 2022, we lost Jerry Lee Lewis, this year's Veterans Era Artist inductee. But if there was ever an entertainer whose spirit will endure in the music of future generations of country stars, it is Jerry Lee. He made his mark in rock & roll, gospel, and the blues, but country is where he felt most at home. He was one of the greatest showmen in music and he knew it—and as the Hall's CEO Kyle Young put it, who are we to argue?

Keith Whitley, this year's Modern Era Artist inductee, died before he reached most of country's unique career milestones. But during his short time in the spotlight, he stood at the forefront of the New Traditionalist revival and convinced Music City that while sonic evolution was inevitable, country's roots would always be waiting for artists brave enough to embrace them. Keith struggled to control the darkest parts of himself and eventually succumbed, leaving behind a singular body of work that reveals a passion and dedication to the craft we have rarely seen since.

On behalf of all Tennesseans, it is my honor to celebrate these men for their contributions to the gift that is country music.•

TRIBUTE TO THE HUNEYCUTT FAMILY

• Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam President, I rise today to congratulate the Huneycutt family for earning the distinction of Arkansas Farm Family of the year.

This honor reflects the dedication of brothers Ted and Steve Huneycutt to farming and the important role they play in Arkansas' No. 1 industry. Ted and his wife Cindy have four children: Sara, Trey, Luke, and Greyson. Steve and his wife Leanne also have four children: Josh, Jessica, Ashley, and Logan. The family has been farming in Clark County since 1882.

On their 4,000-acre farm, the Huneycutts raise cattle and grow cotton, wheat, corn, soybeans, and hay. They also operate the Barn at Richwoods and Benchmark Ag, a risk management service providing producers with cash sale recommendations along with commodity futures, options and crop insurance. The Huneycutts are in the process of launching Ouachita Valley Meat Company, which will provide producers the products and processing capabilities to sell their own products.

The family is committed not only to farming and producing safe supplies of food and fiber to the world, but also to serving their community by lending their time and skills to numerous boards and committees.

The Arkansas Farm Bureau's program honors farm families across the State for their outstanding work on their farms and their positive impact and work on behalf of their neighbors. This recognition is a reflection of their contributions to agriculture at the local and State level and its implications for improved farm practices and management. The Huneycutts are well-deserving of this honor, and I wish them luck as they compete in the Sunbelt Expo Southeastern Farmer of the Year program next year.

I congratulate Ted, Steve, Cindy, Leanne, and their children on their exceptional achievements in agriculture and ask my colleagues to join me in honoring them for this accomplishment. I wish them continued success in their future endeavors and look forward to the contributions they will continue to offer Arkansas farming and agriculture.•

TRIBUTE TO TIMMYE CROWLEY

• Mr. DAINES. Madam President, today I have the distinct honor of recognizing Timmye Crowley of the U.S. Postal Service in Yellowstone County for her dedication to serving her fellow Montanans and a unique act of kindness that saved a man's life.

Timmye has worked for the U.S. Postal Service for more than 20 years, delivering countless letters and packages to the people of Montana. Recently, on her day off, she decided to extend a helping hand during this busy season by making additional deliveries along her normal route. As she approached a house which she knew belonged to an elderly resident, she decided to walk up to the front door to personally deliver this man's mail, in an effort to avoid the man potentially falling on the icy sidewalks, which are a common sight during Montana winters.

Upon reaching the front door, Timmye realized smoke was billowing out of the house and suspected there was a fire inside. She saw through the window that the man was asleep in a chair and promptly began pounding on the door to wake him up to ensure he would not get hurt. The man was hard of hearing, so he was unaware of the smoke detector alarms. He soon woke up and walked to the front door as Timmye called 9–1-1. First responders arrived on the scene shortly, and the man was no longer in danger.

Thanks to Timmye's efforts, a potentially fatal outcome was avoided. It is my distinct honor to recognize Timmye Crowley for her passion and willingness to go the extra mile serving the Billings community. Keep up the great work, Timmye. You make Montana proud.•

RECOGNIZING JUST FOR YOU BOUTIQUE

• Mr. PAUL. Madam President, as ranking member of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, each week I recognize an outstanding Kentucky small business that exemplifies the American entrepreneurial spirit. This week, it is my privilege to recognize Just For You Boutique of Frankfort, KY, as the Senate Small Business of the Week.

Across the country you will not find two small businesses with the same origin story. In most cases, the tale behind how one gets started is just as unique as the business itself. Such is the story of Nicole Boyd's business, Just For You Boutique. Nicole, a native of the Bluegrass State, was driving through its capital when she found herself stopped at a red light. As she gazed out the window towards an empty storefront, she couldn't help but notice a big ''Available for Sale or Rent'' sign in the window. It was in that moment that Nicole decided that she would open her own clothing store, right there in that location. Sometimes, all it takes is a self-starting individual to make their dream a reality, as is the case with Nicole. Not long after that fateful stop in Frankfort traffic, Just For You Boutique opened up on March 8, 2016.

As an active member of the community, Nicole's favorite aspect of owning her own business is that it enables her to really engage with the people of Frankfort, as she is constantly seeing

friends and neighbors walk through her doors. Moreover, Nicole understands that successful businesses put their community first. She often collaborates with other small businesses around Frankfort to offer products and experiences that are unique to Kentucky and to Frankfort specifically. Nicole offers a wide variety of goods in her store, from fashion-forward apparel and jewelry to everyday home goods that could liven up any living space. Nicole pays special mind to feature homegrown Kentucky products, between coffee grinds made by local brewers and handcrafted artisanal soaps from local companies, Nicole makes Kentucky vendors her merchandise mainstay. Given the wide variety of goods she keeps in store, it would only make sense that Nicole would choose to name her boutique Just For You as it is a place where anyone, whether shopping for a gift or for themselves, can find something that is uniquely for them.

Part of what makes Just For You Boutique so special is that Nicole understands that strength often comes in numbers. She jumps at every opportunity to amplify her store by collaborating with other small businesses around the State capital, thereby growing the customer base for businesses across Main Street. Just this past Halloween, Nicole participated in a ''Trunk-or-Treat'' trunk show where small businesses all around Frankfort came together in a local park to brave the autumn rain and sell their goods. The Halloween trunk show was just one of many community events that Just For You participates in, as they also enjoy vending their goods at other Frankfort festivals and events. Nicole has even offered a unique promotion where customers can show their receipts from other local businesses to receive 10 percent off their purchase from Just For You Boutique. As an entrepreneur, it is clear the Nicole looks beyond the success of her own storefront and works to support those operating around her.

Not only does Nicole do her best to support other small businesses around Frankfort, she runs her store with a charitable heart. When a young lady around Frankfort was diagnosed with breast cancer, Nicole jumped into action. Suzanna, who had spent a lot of time inside Just For You Boutique, designed shirts emblazoned with a pink cancer ribbon with the hashtag #SuzannaStrong. In a show of support for Suzanna, Nicole printed shirt with her design and began selling them in her store, with all proceeds from the sales going towards the cost of Suzanna's medical treatment. It is acts of kindness such as these that sets Just For You Boutique apart from other businesses, as Nicole keeps her finger on the pulse of developments around the community and always keeps an ear out for those in need. I want to commend Nicole on making her dream of owning her own a store a reality and thank her for all that she does to support small businesses. Congratulations to Nicole Boyd along with the entire team at Just For Your Boutique. I look forward to seeing your continued growth and success in Kentucky.●

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:04 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, without amendment:

S. 7. An act to make a technical amendment to the Violence Against Women Act of 1994, and for other purposes.

S. 2899. An act to require the Director of the Bureau of Prisons to address deficiencies and make necessary upgrades to the security camera and radio systems of the Bureau of Prisons to ensure the health and safety of employees and inmates.

S. 2991. An act to establish a Department of Homeland Security Center for Countering Human Trafficking, and for other purposes.

S. 3905. An act to prevent organizational conflicts of interest in Federal acquisition, and for other purposes.

S. 4003. An act to amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to provide for training on alternatives to use of force, de-escalation, and mental and behavioral health and suicidal crises.

S. 5230. An act to increase accessibility to the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System, to facilitate data sharing between such system and the National Crime Information Center database of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 1082. An act to prohibit the unauthorized sale of ride-hailing signage and study the incidence of fatal and non-fatal assaults in TNC and for-hire vehicles in order to enhance safety and save lives.

H.R. 5349. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1550 State Road S–38–211 in Orangeburg, South Carolina, as the ''J.I. Washington Post Office Building''.

H.R. 6218. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 317 Blattner Drive in Avon, Minnesota, as the ''W.O.C. Kort Miller Plantenberg Post Office''.

H.R. 6220. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 100 3rd Avenue Northwest in Perham, Minnesota, as the ''Charles P. Nord Post Office''.

H.R. 6221. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 155 Main Avenue West in Winsted, Minnesota, as the ''James A. Rogers Jr. Post Office''.

H.R. 6611. An act to authorize the Government of France to establish a commemorative work in the District of Columbia and its environs to honor the extraordinary contributions of Jean Monnet to restoring peace between European nations and establishing the European Union, and for other purposes.

H.R. 6630. An act to designate of the United States Postal Service located at 1400 N Kraemer Blvd. in Placentia, California, as the ''PFC Jang Ho Kim Post Office Building''.

H.R. 6725. An act to change the address of the Marilyn Monroe Post Office, and for other purposes.

H.R. 7832. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 396 South California Avenue in West Covina, California, as the ''Esteban E. Torres Post Office Building''.

H.R. 8665. An act to amend title 44, United States Code, to remove pronouns from such title that reference the Archivist, and for other purposes.

The message further announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolutions, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 123. Concurrent resolution providing for a correction in the enrollment of H.R. 1437.

H. Con. Res. 124. Concurrent resolution directing the Clerk of the House of Representatives to make a correction in the enrollment of H.R. 2617.

The message also announced that the House agreed to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 1437) to amend the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 to direct the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to provide comprehensive and regularly updated Federal precipitation information, and for other purposes, with an amendment, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate.

The message further announced that the House agreed to the amendments numbered 1, 2, 3, and 5 to the bill (H.R. 2617) to amend section 1115 of title 31, United States Code, to amend the description of how performance goals are achieved, and for other purposes, and that the House agreed to the amendment numbered 4 of the Senate, with an amendment, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate.

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

At 3:24 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bills:

S. 1617. An act to modify the requirements for the Administrator of the Small Business Administration relating to declaring a disaster in a rural area, and for other purposes.

S. 2796. An act to amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to provide for the eligibility of rural community response pilot programs for funding under the Comprehensive Opioid Abuse Grant Program, and for other purposes.

S. 3092. An act to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to improve the provision of certain disaster assistance, and for other purposes.

S. 3115. An act to remove the 4–year sunset from the Pro bono Work to Empower and Represent Act of 2018.

S. 3499. An act to amend the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act of 2006 to repeal certain obsolete requirements, and for other purposes.

S. 3662. An act to temporarily increase the cost share authority for aqueous film forming foam input-based testing equipment, and for other purposes.

S. 3825. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 3903 Melear Drive in Arlington, Texas, as the ''Ron Wright Post Office Building''.

S. 3875. An act to require the President to develop and maintain products that show the risk of natural hazards across the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 4017. An act to designate the United States courthouse located at 111 South Highland Avenue in Jackson, Tennessee, as the ''James D. Todd United States Courthouse'', and for other purposes.

S. 4052. An act to reauthorize a program for early detection, diagnosis, and treatment regarding deaf and hard-of-hearing newborns, infants, and young children, and for other purposes.

S. 4834. An act to reauthorize the National Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force Program.

S. 5060. An act to redesignate the Federal building located at 212 Third Avenue South in Minneapolis, Minnesota, as the ''Paul D. Wellstone Federal Building'', and for other purposes.

H.R. 228. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 2141 Ferry Street in Anderson, California, as the ''Norma Comnick Post Office Building''.

H.R. 263. An act to amend the Lacey Act Amendments of 1981 to clarify provisions enacted by the Captive Wildlife Safety Act, to further the conservation of certain wildlife species, and for other purposes.

H.R. 310. An act to posthumously award the Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to Glen Doherty, Tyrone Woods, J. Christopher Stevens, and Sean Smith, in recognition of their contributions to the Nation.

H.R. 700. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 303 East Mississippi Avenue in Elwood, Illinois, as the ''Lawrence M. 'Larry' Walsh Sr. Post Office''.

H.R. 1193. An act to amend title IV of the Public Health Service Act to direct the Director of the National Institutes of Health, in consultation with the Director of the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, to establish a program under which the Director of the National Institutes of Health shall support or conduct research on valvular heart disease, and for other purposes.

H.R. 2220. An act to amend title 40, United States Code, to modify the treatment of certain bargain-price options to purchase at less than fair market value, and for other purposes.

H.R. 2930. An act to enhance protections of Native American tangible cultural heritage, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3175. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 135 Main Street in Biloxi Mississippi, as the ''Robert S. McKeithen Post Office Building''.

H.R. 3462. An act to require an annual report on the cybersecurity of the Small Business Administration, and for other purposes.

H.R. 5481. An act to name the Department of Veterans Affairs community-based outpatient clinic in Forest City, North Carolina, as the ''Master Sergeant Jerry K. Crump VA Clinic''.

H.R. 5796. An act to amend title 35, United States Code, to establish a competition to award certificates that can be redeemed to accelerate certain matters at the Patent and Trademark Office, and for other purposes.

H.R. 6614. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 4744 Grand River Avenue in Detroit, Michigan, as the ''Rosa Louise McCauley Parks Post Office Building''.

H.R. 6722. An act to designate the Department of Veterans Affairs communitybased outpatient clinic in French Camp, California, as the ''Richard A. Pittman VA Clinic''.

H.R. 6863. An act to designate the medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Memphis, Tennessee, as the ''Lt. Col. Luke Weathers, Jr. VA Medical Center''.

H.R. 7077. An act to require the United States Fire Administration to conduct onsite investigations of major fires, and for other purposes.

H.R. 7535. An act to encourage the migration of Federal Government information technology systems to quantum-resistant cryptography, and for other purposes.

H.R. 7903. An act to designate the Department of Veterans Affairs communitybased outpatient clinic located in Canton, Michigan, as the ''Major General Oliver W. Dillard VA Clinic''.

H.R. 7925. An act to designate the Department of Veterans Affairs communitybased outpatient clinic located in Palm Desert, California, as the ''Sy Kaplan VA Clinic''.

The enrolled bills were subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

At 3:44 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 1948. An act to amend title 38, United States Code, to modify authorities relating to the collective bargaining of employees in the Veterans Health Administration.

H.R. 8393. An act to enable the people of Puerto Rico to choose a permanent, nonterritorial, fully self-governing political status for Puerto Rico and to provide for a transition to and the implementation of that permanent, nonterritorial, fully self-governing political status, and for other purposes.

PRIVILEGED NOMINATIONS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

On request by Senator JAMES E. RISCH, under the authority of S. Res. 116, 112th Congress, the following nomination was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations: Janet Keller, of California, to be a Member of the United States Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy for a term expiring July 1, 2023, vice Elizabeth F. Bagley, term expired.

On request by Senator JAMES E. RISCH, under the authority of S. Res. 116, 112th Congress, the following nomination was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations: Jay T. Snyder, of New York, to be a Member of the United States Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy for a term expiring July 1, 2023, vice Lyndon L. Olson, Jr., term expired.

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–5852. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), transmitting, pursuant to law, the Uniform Resource Locator (URL) for the Department of Defense Agency Financial Report for fiscal year 2022; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–5853. A communication from the President and CEO, Inter-American Foundation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Foundation's Annual Management Report for fiscal year 2022 received in the Office of the President pro tempore of the Senate; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–5854. A communication from the Deputy Associate Administrator for Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Administration's Agency Financial Report for fiscal year 2022 received in the Office of the President pro tempore of the Senate; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–5855. A communication from the Senior Official Performing the Duties of the Chief Financial Officer, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department's Agency Financial Report for fiscal year 2022 received in the Office of the President pro tempore of the Senate; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–5856. A communication from the Director, Congressional Affairs, Federal Election Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's Agency Financial Report for fiscal year 2022 received in the Office of the President pro tempore of the Senate; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–5857. A communication from the Treasurer, National Gallery of Art, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Gallery's Performance and Accountability Report for the year ended September 30, 2022 received in the Office of the President pro tempore of the Senate; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–5858. A communication from the Chairman of the United States International Trade Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's Agency Financial Report for fiscal year 2022 received in the Office of the President pro tempore of the Senate; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–5859. A communication from the Chair of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's Semiannual Report of the Inspector General and the Semiannual Management Report for the period from April 1, 2022 through September 30, 2022; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–5860. A communication from the Administrator, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the cost of response and recovery efforts for FEMA–3543-EM in the State of Louisiana having exceeded the $5,000,000 limit for a single emergency declaration; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–5861. A communication from the Administrator, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the cost of response and recovery efforts for FEMA–3569-EM in the State of Mississippi having exceeded the $5,000,000 limit for a single emergency declaration; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–5862. A communication from the Administrator, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the cost of response and recovery efforts for FEMA–3568-EM in the State of Louisiana having exceeded the $5,000,000 limit for a single emergency declaration; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–5863. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting a legislative proposal entitled ''Transfer

of administrative jurisdiction over certain parcels of federal land in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia''

EC–5864. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department's Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2022 through September 30, 2022; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–5865. A communication from the Board Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Farm Credit Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Administration's Semiannual Report of the Inspector General and the Semiannual Management Report on the Status of Audits for the period from April 1, 2022 through September 30, 2022; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–5866. A communication from the Board Members, Railroad Retirement Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Board's Performance and Accountability Report for fiscal year 2022, including the Office of Inspector General's Auditor's Report; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–5867. A communication from the Chairman of the Railroad Retirement Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Board's Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2022 through September 30, 2022; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–5868. A communication from the Chairman of the Railroad Retirement Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Board's Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2022 through September 30, 2022; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–5869. A communication from the Director of Congressional Affairs, Federal Election Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2022 through September 30, 2022 received in the Office of the President pro tempore of the Senate; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–5870. A communication from the Chairman, Federal Maritime Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's Semiannual Report of the Inspector General and a Management Report for the period from April 1, 2022 through September 30, 2022 received in the Office of the President pro tempore of the Senate; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–5871. A communication from the Public and Legislative Affairs Officer, Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Board's Agency Financial Report for fiscal year 2022 received in the Office of the President pro tempore of the Senate; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–5872. A communication from the Director of Congressional Affairs, Federal Election Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2022 through September 30, 2022; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–5873. A communication from the General Counsel, Office of Management and Budget, Executive Office of the President, transmitting, pursuant to law, six (4) reports relative to vacancies in the Office of Management and Budget, received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 2, 2022; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–5874. A communication from the Chair of the Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's Semiannual Report of the Inspector General and a Management Report for the period from April 1, 2022 through September 30, 2022; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–5875. A communication from the Acting Chairman, Merit Systems Protection Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Board's Agency Financial Report for fiscal year 2022; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–5876. A communication from the Director of Financial Management, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department's Agency Financial Report for fiscal year 2022; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–5877. A communication from the Treasurer, National Gallery of Art, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Gallery's Performance and Accountability Report for the year ended September 30, 2022; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–5878. A communication from the Chairman of the United States International Trade Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's Agency Financial Report for fiscal year 2022; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–5879. A communication from the Chair of the Federal Trade Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2022 through September 30, 2022 and the Uniform Resource Locator (URL) for the report; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–5880. A communication from the Director, Office of Acquisition Policy, General Services Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Federal Acquisition Regulation; Federal Acquisition Circular 2023–01, Introduction'' (FAC 2023–01) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 13, 2022; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–5881. A communication from the Section Chief of the Diversion Control Division, Drug Enforcement Administration, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Schedules of Controlled Substances: Placement of Amineptine in Schedule I'' ((21 CFR Part 1308) (Docket No. DEA–371)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 13, 2022; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–5882. A communication from the Section Chief of the Diversion Control Division, Drug Enforcement Administration, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Default Provisions for Hearing Proceedings Relating to the Revocation, Suspension, or Denial of a Registration'' ((RIN117–AB36) (Docket No. DEA–438)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 13, 2022; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–5883. A communication from the Section Chief of the Diversion Control Division, Drug Enforcement Administration, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Specific Listing for 1-boc-4-AP, a Currently Controlled List I Chemical'' ((21 CFR Part 1310) (Docket No. DEA–1046)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 13, 2022; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–5884. A communication from the Section Chief of the Diversion Control Division, Drug Enforcement Administration, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Schedules of Controlled Substances: Placement of Ganaxolone in Schedule V'' ((21 CFR Part 1308) (Docket No. DEA–990)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 13, 2022; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–5885. A communication from the Section Chief of the Diversion Control Division, Drug Enforcement Administration, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Technical Correction to Regulation Regarding Registration Exception for Officials'' ((21 CFR Part 1301) (Docket No. DEA–555)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 13, 2022; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–5886. A communication from the Section Chief of the Diversion Control Division, Drug Enforcement Administration, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Schedules of Controlled Substances: Placement of Daridorexant in Schedule IV'' ((21 CFR Part 1308) (Docket No. DEA–949)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 13, 2022; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–5887. A communication from the General Counsel, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Revised Filling and Reporting Requirements for Interstate Natural Gas Company Rate Schedules and Tariffs'' (Docket No. RM21–18–000) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 13, 2022; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–5888. A communication from the Deputy Chief, National Forest System, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the final maps and perimeter boundary descriptions for the enclosed Wild and Scenic Rivers; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–5889. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel for Legislation, Regulation and Energy Efficiency, Department of Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Energy Conservation Program: Energy Conservation Standards for Ceiling Fans'' (RIN1904–AD88) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 13, 2022; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–5890. A communication from the General Counsel, National Indian Gaming Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Audit Standards'' (RIN3141–AA68) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 2, 2022; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

EC–5891. A communication from the Director of Congressional Affairs, Federal Election Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Internet Communication Disclaimers and Definition of 'Public Communication'" (Notice 2022–22) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 13, 2022; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

EC–5892. A communication from the Regulation Development Coordinator, Office of Regulation Policy and Management, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''National Service Life Insurance (NSLI)—Veterans Affairs Life Insurance Program Amendments'' (RIN2900–AR53) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 13, 2022; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EC–5893. A communication from the Regulation Development Coordinator, Office of

Regulation Policy and Management, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''VA Acquisition Regulation: Department of Veterans Affairs Acquisition Regulation System and Research and Development'' (RIN2900–AQ23) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 2, 2022; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EC–5894. A communication from the Regulation Development Coordinator, Office of Regulation Policy and Management, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Readjustment Counseling Scholarship Program'' (RIN2900–AR31) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 13, 2022; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EC–5895. A communication from the Attorney for Regulatory Affairs Division, Office of the General Counsel, Consumer Product Safety Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Safety Standard for Infant Bouncer Seats'' (Docket No. CPSC–2015–0028) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 13, 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5896. A communication from the Chief of Staff, Media Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Update to Publication for Television Broadcast Station DMA Determinations for Cable and Satellite Carriage'' ((MB Docket No. 22–239) (FCC 22–89)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 13, 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5897. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Takeoff Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments; Amendment No. 4030'' ((RIN2120–AA65) (Docket No. 31452)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 13, 2022; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5898. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Tetraniliprole; Pesticide Tolerances'' (FRL No. 10296–01–OCSPP) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 13, 2022; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–5899. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Propyzamide; Extension of Tolerance for Emergency Exemption'' (FRL No. 10484–01–OCSPP) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 13, 2022; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–5900. A communication from the Director of the Regulations Management Division, Rural Utilities Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Implementing Provisions of the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018'' (RIN0572–AC49) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 13, 2022; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–5901. A communication from the Director of the Regulations Management Division, Rural Utilities Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Electric Program Streamline and Improvement'' (RIN0572–AC57) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 13, 2022; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–5902. A communication from the Director of the Regulations Management Division, Rural Utilities Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Rural Broadband Loans, Loan/Grant Combinations, and Loan Guarantees'' (RIN0572–AC46) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 13, 2022; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–5903. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency that was declared in Executive Order 13851 with respect to Nicaragua; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. PETERS, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, without amendment:

S. 419. A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide for a full annuity supplement for certain air traffic controllers (Rept. No. 117–260).

By Mr. PETERS, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 1350. A bill to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to establish a national risk management cycle, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 117–261).

By Mr. PETERS, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, with amendments:

S. 3897. A bill to require the reduction of the reliance and expenditures of the Federal Government on legacy information technology systems, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 117–262).

S. 4328. A bill to modify the fire management assistance cost share, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 117–263).

By Mr. PETERS, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 4477. A bill to amend title 31, United States Code, to require agencies to include a list of outdated or duplicative reporting requirements in annual budget justifications, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 117–264).

By Mr. PETERS, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, with an amendment:

S. 4816. A bill to require the Archivist of the United States to submit to Congress a comprehensive plan for reducing the backlog of requests for records from the National Personnel Records Center, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 117–265).

By Mr. PETERS, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 4930. A bill to prohibit Federal procurement from companies operating in the Russian Federation, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 117–266).

By Ms. CANTWELL, from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 1541. A bill to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to require the Federal Communications Commission to ensure just and reasonable charges for telephone and advanced communications services in correctional and detention facilities.

S. 1628. A bill to amend the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 to strengthen protections relating to the online collection, use, and disclosure of personal information of children and minors, and for other purposes.

By Ms. CANTWELL, from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, with an amendment:

S. 3405. A bill to require the Federal Communications Commission to issue a rule providing that certain low power television stations may be accorded primary status as Class A television licensees, and for other purposes.

By Ms. CANTWELL, from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 3663. A bill to protect the safety of children on the internet.

By Ms. CANTWELL, from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, without amendment:

S. 4101. A bill to require the Secretary of Commerce to provide training and guidance relating to human rights abuses, including such abuses perpetrated against the Uyghur population by the Government of the People's Republic of China, and for other purposes.

By Ms. CANTWELL, from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 4237. A bill to establish and maintain a coordinated program within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration that improves wildfire, fire weather, fire risk, and smoke related forecasting, detection, modeling, observations, and service delivery, and to address growing needs in the wildland-urban interface, and for other purposes.

By Ms. CANTWELL, from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, with an amendment:

S. 4321. A bill to amend the Save Our Seas 2.0 Act to improve the administration of the Marine Debris Foundation, to amend the Marine Debris Act to improve the administration of the Marine Debris Program of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and for other purposes.

By Ms. CANTWELL, from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 4802. A bill to authorize appropriations for the Coast Guard, and for other purposes.

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. MERKLEY:

S. 5264. A bill to amend the Bank Holding Company Act of 1956 to prohibit bank holding companies from facilitating fossil fuel production from new sources, or from facilitating transactions that would provide funds for the construction of new or expanded fossil infrastructure that would drive such production, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. RUBIO:

S. 5265. A bill to require a strategy for countering the People's Republic of China; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. KAINE (for himself and Ms. COLLINS):

S. 5266. A bill to reauthorize the program for infant and early childhood mental health promotion, intervention, and treatment; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. WARREN (for herself and Mr. MARSHALL):

S. 5267. A bill to require the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network to issue guidance on digital assets, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

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

S. 5268. A bill to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services, acting through the Director of the National Institutes of Health, to take certain steps to increase clinical trial diversity, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. HOEVEN (for himself, Mr. CRAMER, Ms. ERNST, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. INHOFE, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. MORAN, Mr. RUBIO, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mr. RISCH, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. CRUZ, and Mr. LANKFORD):

S. 5269. A bill to prohibit the Department of Defense from requiring contractors to provide information relating to greenhouse gas emissions; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. SCHATZ:

S. 5270. A bill to amend title 13, United States Code, to imporve the operations of the Bureau of the Census, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. HICKENLOOPER (for himself and Mr. TILLIS):

S. 5271. A bill to establish the American Worker Retirement Plan, improve the financial security of working Americans by facilitating the accumulation of wealth, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

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

S. 5272. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to expand access to psychological and behavioral services; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. RUBIO:

S. 5273. A bill to require a determination of whether certain Chinese entities are responsible for human rights abuses that meet the criteria for the imposition of sanctions under the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act or the Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act of 2020; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. DURBIN:

S. 5274. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to reinstate criminal penalties for persons charging veterans unauthorized fees relating to claims for benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. CASEY (for himself and Ms. STABENOW):

S. 5275. A bill to require that certain aspects of bridge projects be carried out by certified contractors, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Ms. DUCKWORTH (for herself, Mrs. MURRAY, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and Ms. BALDWIN):

S. 5276. A bill to prohibit the limitation of access to assisted reproductive technology, and all medically necessary care surrounding such technology; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. SANDERS, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. SMITH, Mr. SCHATZ, and Ms. WARREN):

S. 5277. A bill to reform the financing of Senate elections, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND:

S. 5278. A bill to amend the Plant Protection Act to require the publication of information on violations of wood packaging material regulations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. WYDEN:

S. 5279. A bill to establish a pilot program to address technology-related abuse in domestic violence cases; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. TOOMEY (for himself and Mr. HAGERTY):

S. 5280. A bill to amend the Consumer Financial Protection Act of 2010 to subject the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection to the regular appropriations process, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. CASEY (for himself, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. BOOKER, and Mr. MENENDEZ):

S. 5281. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to promote the matriculation, and increase in the graduation rates, of individuals with disabilities within higher education; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. BENNET:

S. 5282. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide for terms and conditions for nonimmigrant workers performing agricultural labor or services, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. SCOTT of Florida (for himself and Mr. RUBIO):

S. 5283. A bill to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate a segment of the Little Manatee River in the State of Florida for study for potential addition to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. WARREN (for herself, Mr. BOOKER, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and Ms. SMITH):

S. 5284. A bill to improve the public health response to addressing maternal mortality and morbidity during the COVID–19 public health emergency; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. LUJÁN (for himself, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. 5285. A bill to extend the residential treatment program for pregnant and postpartum women pilot program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. LUMMIS:

S. 5286. A bill to provide for the strengthening of the supervision of digital asset markets by self-regulatory organizations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. MORAN (for himself, Mr. WARNER, Mr. BLUNT, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. 5287. A bill to jump-start economic recovery through the formation and growth of new businesses, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself, Mr. BLUNT, and Mrs. CAPITO):

S. 5288. A bill to require executive agencies and Federal courts to comply with address confidentiality programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. MERKLEY (for himself and Mr. BOOKER):

S. 5289. A bill to create a moratorium on the government use of facial recognition technology until a Commission recommends the appropriate guidelines and limitation for use of facial recognition technology; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself, Mr. PORTMAN, and Mrs. CAPITO):

S. 5290. A bill to require an evaluation of the implementation of the STOP Act of 2018, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. CAPITO:

S. 5291. A bill to delay the implementation of the modifications of exceptions for reporting of third party network transactions; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. DUCKWORTH:

S. 5292. A bill to protect and expand access to donor milk, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Ms. WARREN, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, and Mr. BLUMENTHAL):

S.J. Res. 67. A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relative to the fundamental right to vote; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BRAUN (for himself, Mr. HAGERTY, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. BURR, and Mr. KENNEDY):

S.J. Res. 68. A joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of Labor relating to ''Prudence and Loyalty in Selecting Plan Investments and Exercising Shareholder Rights''; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. MERKLEY (for himself, Mr. MARKEY, and Ms. HIRONO):

S.J. Res. 69. A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States to abolish the electoral college and to provide for the direct election of the President and Vice President of the United States; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 424

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 424, a bill to establish in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor of the Department of State a Special Envoy for the Human Rights of LGBTQI Peoples, and for other purposes.

S. 754

At the request of Ms. BALDWIN, the names of the Senator from Nevada (Ms. ROSEN), the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER), the Senator from California (Mr. PADILLA), the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER), the Senator from Nevada (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO), the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN), the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. WARNOCK), the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS), the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO), the

Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) were added as cosponsors of S. 754, a bill to provide health insurance benefits for outpatient and inpatient items and services related to the diagnosis and treatment of a congenital anomaly or birth defect.

S. 1157

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1157, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow workers an above-the-line deduction for union dues and expenses and to allow a miscellaneous itemized deduction for workers for all unreimbursed expenses incurred in the trade or business of being an employee.

S. 2044

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2044, a bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to prohibit employment of children in tobacco-related agriculture by deeming such employment as oppressive child labor.

S. 2076

At the request of Mr. BENNET, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) was withdrawn as a cosponsor of S. 2076, a bill to establish a program to develop antimicrobial innovations targeting the most challenging pathogens and most threatening infections.

At the request of Mr. BENNET, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2076, supra.

S. 2569

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2569, a bill to enhance the rights of domestic workers, and for other purposes.

S. 3238

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the names of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 3238, a bill to assist employers providing employment under special certificates issued under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 in transforming their business and program models to models that support people with disabilities through competitive integrated employment, to phase out the use of such special certificates, and for other purposes.

S. 3546

At the request of Mr. HAGERTY, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3546, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the amendments made to reporting of third party network transactions by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.

S. 3797

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3797, a bill to amend title V of the Social Security Act to support stillbirth prevention and research, and for other purposes.

S. 4009

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the names of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) and the Senator from Iowa (Ms. ERNST) were added as cosponsors of S. 4009, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to rebase the calculation of payments for sole community hospitals and Medicare-dependent hospitals, and for other purposes.

S. 4105

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the names of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY) and the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) were added as cosponsors of S. 4105, a bill to treat certain liquidations of new motor vehicle inventory as qualified liquidations of LIFO inventory for purposes of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

S. 4260

At the request of Ms. BALDWIN, the names of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS), the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE), the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) and the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) were added as cosponsors of S. 4260, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to increase the number of permanent faculty in palliative care at accredited allopathic and osteopathic medical schools, nursing schools, social work schools, and other programs, including physician assistant education programs, to promote education and research in palliative care and hospice, and to support the development of faculty careers in academic palliative medicine.

S. 4587

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the names of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE), the Senator from Utah (Mr. ROMNEY), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. HAWLEY), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) and the Senator from Mississippi (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH) were added as cosponsors of S. 4587, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to Benjamin Berell Ferencz, in recognition of his service to the United States and international community during the post-World War II Nuremberg trials and lifelong advocacy for international criminal justice and rule of law.

S. 5008

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 5008, a bill to promote affordable access to evidence-based opioid treatments under the Medicare program and require coverage of medication assisted treatment for opioid use disorders, opioid overdose reversal medications, and recovery support services by health plans without cost-sharing requirements.

S. 5104

At the request of Mrs. FISCHER, the names of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) and the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN) were added as cosponsors of S. 5104, a bill to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to require the National Advisory Council on Indian Education to include at least 1 member who is the president of a Tribal College or University and to require the Secretaries of Education and Interior to consider the National Advisory Council on Indian Education's reports in the preparation of budget materials.

S. 5112

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 5112, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the 250th Anniversary of the United States Marine Corps, and to support programs at the Marine Corps Heritage Center.

S. RES. 803

At the request of Mr. COONS, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 803, a resolution condemning the detention and death of Mahsa Amini and calling on the Government of Iran to end its systemic persecution of women.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. KAINE (for himself and Ms. COLLINS):

S. 5266. A bill to reauthorize the program for infant and early childhood mental health promotion, intervention, and treatment; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, the COVID–19 pandemic has amplified the need to expand mental health services for children in the United States. More than 20 percent of parents with children aged 5–12 years reported that their children experienced worsened mental or emotional health as a result of the pandemic. In Virginia, one in five children experience symptoms of a mental health disorder. Schools, childcare settings, and communities are in need of additional support to address the needs of our Nation's children and families.

Early identification and intervention for emotional or behavioral disorders for infants and young children may help to prevent more severe mental health issues in later youth and adulthood. That is why Senator COLLINS and I are introducing the Investing in Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Act to reauthorize the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health—IECMH—program through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, SAMHSA. First

authorized in 2016 under the 21st Century Cures Act, the goal of the IECMH program is to improve outcomes for children, from birth up to 12 years of age, by developing, maintaining, or enhancing infant and early childhood mental health promotion, intervention, and treatment services.

Since 2018, SAMHSA has provided $20 million in funding to support infant and early childhood mental health programs across the country. This funding has been used to train the mental health workforce and provide screenings and referrals for evidence-based mental health services for children and families. To date, grantees have trained nearly 10,000 mental health professionals and screened over 17,000 children and families.

Reauthorizing the IECMH program will allow SAMSHA to continue this important work to address childhood mental health through fiscal year 2027. The bill also includes a $30 million increase in funding to expand these services and would allow SAMSHA to provide technical assistance to grantees, either directly or through grants or contracts to nonprofit entities. Language to reauthorize the IECMH program was included in the Supporting Children's Mental Health Care Access Act of 2022 introduced by Representatives KIM SCHRIER and MARIANNETTE MILLER-MEEKS, which was included in the Restoring Hope for Mental Health and Well-Being Act that passed out of the House in June 2022. I urge my colleagues to support this bill so we can continue to address the mental health crisis among our children.

By Mr. DURBIN:

S. 5274. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to reinstate criminal penalties for persons charging veterans unauthorized fees relating to claims for benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

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

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

S. 5274

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

SECTION 1. REINSTATEMENT OF PENALTIES FOR CHARGING VETERANS UNAUTHORIZED FEES RELATING TO CLAIMS FOR BENEFITS UNDER LAWS ADMINISTERED BY THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

Section 5905 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in the section heading, by striking ''**Penalty**'' and inserting ''**Penalties**'' (and conforming the table of sections at the beginning of chapter 59 of such title accordingly);

(2) by striking ''Whoever'' and inserting the following:

''(a) WITHHOLDING OF BENEFITS.—Whoever''; and

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

''(b) CHARGING OF UNAUTHORIZED FEES.—Except as provided in sections 5904 or 1984 of this title, whoever solicits, contracts for, charges, or receives, or attempts to solicit, contract for, charge, or receive, any fee or compensation with respect to the preparation, presentation, or prosecution of any claim for benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary shall be fined as provided in title 18.''.

SEC. 2. LIMITATION ON ATTORNEY FEES FOR FEDERAL CAUSE OF ACTION RELATING TO WATER AT CAMP LEJEUNE, NORTH CAROLINA.

Section 804 of the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act of 2022 (Public Law 117–168; 28 U.S.C. 2671 note prec.) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(k) ATTORNEY FEES.—

''(1) LIMITATIONS.—No legal representative of an individual who brings an action under subsection (b) or who presents a claim under section 2675 of title 28, United States Code, pursuant to subsection (h) shall charge, demand, receive, or collect for services rendered in bringing such action or presenting such claim, fees in excess of—

''(A) 20 percent of an award, compromise, or settlement made or reached within 180 days after presenting a claim under section 2675 of title 28, United States Code, pursuant to subsection (h); and

''(B) 33.3 percent on a claim that is resolved by settlement, compromise, or judgement after the initiation of an action.

''(2) TERMS FOR PAYMENT OF FEES.—Any judgment rendered, settlement entered, compromise made, or other award made with respect to an action brought under subsection (b) or a claim presented under section 2675 of title 28, United States Code, pursuant to subsection (h) by a legal representative of an individual shall require the following:

''(A) All funds from the judgment, settlement, compromise, or other award shall be deposited into an account held in trust for the individual in accordance with all applicable provisions of State law.

''(B) The legal representative shall—

''(i) once any funds described in subparagraph (A) have been deposited into an account pursuant to such subparagraph, notify the individual of such deposit; and

''(ii) promptly deliver to such individual such amount of such funds as the individual is entitled to receive.

''(C) That no funds shall be paid from the account described in subparagraph (A) to a legal representative of the individual as compensation for services rendered to such individual until the relevant funds from such account have been disbursed to the individual in accordance with subparagraph (B).

''(3) PENALTIES.—

''(A) FEE LIMITATIONS.—Any legal representative who charges, demands, receives, or collects for services rendered in connection with an action under subsection (b) or a claim under section 2675 of title 28, United States Code, pursuant to subsection (h), any amount in excess of that allowed under paragraph (1) of this subsection, if recovery be had, shall be fined not more than $5,000.

''(B) TERMS FOR PAYMENT.—Failure of a legal representative subject to paragraph (2) to comply with a requirement of such paragraph shall be punishable consistent with the penalties provided in section 2678 of title 28, United States Code.

''(4) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to annul, alter, affect, or exempt any person from complying with the laws of any State or locality with respect to the practice of law, except to the extent that those laws are inconsistent with any provision of this subsection, and then only to the extent of the inconsistency.''.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. SANDERS, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. SMITH, Mr. SCHATZ, and Ms. WARREN):

S. 5277. A bill to reform the financing of Senate elections, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

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

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

S. 5277

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the ''Fair Elections Now Act of 2022''.

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

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

TITLE I—SMALL DONOR INCENTIVE PROGRAMS

Sec. 101. Sense of the Senate regarding small donor incentive programs.

TITLE II—SMALL DOLLAR FINANCING OF SENATE ELECTION CAMPAIGNS

Sec. 201. Eligibility requirements and benefits of fair elections financing of Senate election campaigns.

Sec. 202. Prohibition on joint fundraising committees.

Sec. 203. Exception to limitation on coordinated expenditures by political party committees with participating candidates.

TITLE III—RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION

Sec. 301. Petition for certiorari.

Sec. 302. Electronic filing of FEC reports.

TITLE IV—REVENUE PROVISIONS

Sec. 401. Freedom From Influence Fund revenue.

TITLE V—MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

Sec. 501. Severability.

Sec. 502. Effective date.

TITLE I—SMALL DONOR INCENTIVE PROGRAMS

SEC. 101. SENSE OF THE SENATE REGARDING SMALL DONOR INCENTIVE PROGRAMS.

It is the sense of the Senate that Congress should take steps to allow more Americans to fully participate in our democracy through authorizing publicly financed small donor incentive programs, including small-dollar voucher programs that broaden and diversify the number of Americans who are able to have their voice heard in the marketplace of ideas.

TITLE II—SMALL DOLLAR FINANCING OF SENATE ELECTION CAMPAIGNS

SEC. 201. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS AND BENEFITS OF FAIR ELECTIONS FINANCING OF SENATE ELECTION CAMPAIGNS.

The Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 (52 U.S.C. 30101 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''TITLE V—FAIR ELECTIONS FINANCING OF SENATE ELECTION CAMPAIGNS

''Subtitle A—General Provisions

''SEC. 501. DEFINITIONS.

''In this title:

''(1) ALLOCATION FROM THE FUND.—The term 'allocation from the Fund' means an allocation of money from the Freedom From Influence Fund to a participating candidate pursuant to section 522.

''(2) COMMISSION.—The term 'Commission' means the Federal Election Commission.

''(3) ENHANCED MATCHING CONTRIBUTION.—The term 'enhanced matching contribution' means an enhanced matching payment provided to a participating candidate for qualified small dollar contributions, as provided under section 524.

''(4) ENHANCED SUPPORT QUALIFYING PERIOD.—The term 'enhanced support qualifying period' means, with respect to a general election, the period which begins 60 days before the date of the election and ends 14 days before the date of the election.

''(5) FAIR ELECTIONS QUALIFYING PERIOD.—The term 'Fair Elections qualifying period' means, with respect to any candidate for Senator, the period—

''(A) beginning on the date on which the candidate files a statement of intent under section 511(a)(1); and

''(B) ending on the date that is 30 days before—

''(i) the date of the primary election; or

''(ii) in the case of a State that does not hold a primary election, the date prescribed by State law as the last day to qualify for a position on the general election ballot.

''(6) FAIR ELECTIONS START DATE.—The term 'Fair Elections start date' means, with respect to any candidate, the date that is 180 days before—

''(A) the date of the primary election; or

''(B) in the case of a State that does not hold a primary election, the date prescribed by State law as the last day to qualify for a position on the general election ballot.

''(7) FUND.—The term 'Fund' means the Freedom From Influence Fund established by section 502.

''(8) IMMEDIATE FAMILY.—The term 'immediate family' means, with respect to any candidate—

''(A) the candidate's spouse;

''(B) a child, stepchild, parent, grandparent, brother, half-brother, sister, or half-sister of the candidate or the candidate's spouse; and

''(C) the spouse of any person described in subparagraph (B).

''(9) MATCHING CONTRIBUTION.—The term 'matching contribution' means a matching payment provided to a participating candidate for qualified small dollar contributions, as provided under section 523.

''(10) NONPARTICIPATING CANDIDATE.—The term 'nonparticipating candidate' means a candidate for Senator who is not a participating candidate.

''(11) PARTICIPATING CANDIDATE.—The term 'participating candidate' means a candidate for Senator who is certified under section 514 as being eligible to receive an allocation from the Fund.

''(12) QUALIFYING CONTRIBUTION.—The term 'qualifying contribution' means, with respect to a candidate, a contribution that—

''(A) is in an amount that is—

''(i) not less than $5; and

''(ii) not more than $200;

''(B) is made by an individual who is not otherwise prohibited from making a contribution under this Act;

''(C) is made during the Fair Elections qualifying period; and

''(D) meets the requirements of section 512(b).

''(13) QUALIFIED SMALL DOLLAR CONTRIBUTION.—The term 'qualified small dollar contribution' means, with respect to a candidate, any contribution (or series of contributions)—

''(A) which is not a qualifying contribution (or does not include a qualifying contribution);

''(B) which is made by an individual who is not prohibited from making a contribution under this Act; and

''(C) the aggregate amount of which does not exceed $200 per election.

''(14) QUALIFYING MULTICANDIDATE POLITICAL COMMITTEE CONTRIBUTION.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The term 'qualifying multicandidate political committee contribution' means any contribution to a candidate that is made from a qualified account of a multicandidate political committee (within the meaning of section 315(a)(2)).

''(B) QUALIFIED ACCOUNT.—For purposes of subparagraph (A), the term 'qualified account' means, with respect to a multicandidate political committee, a separate, segregated account of the committee that consists solely of contributions which meet the following requirements:

''(i) All contributions to such account are made by individuals who are not prohibited from making contributions under this Act.

''(ii) The aggregate amount of contributions from each individual to such account and all other accounts of the political committee do not exceed the amount described in paragraph (13)(C).

''SEC. 502. FREEDOM FROM INFLUENCE FUND.

''(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established in the Treasury a fund to be known as the 'Freedom from Influence Fund'.

''(b) AMOUNTS HELD BY FUND.—The Fund shall consist of the following amounts:

''(1) APPROPRIATED AMOUNTS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Amounts appropriated to the Fund.

''(B) SENSE OF THE SENATE REGARDING APPROPRIATIONS.—It is the sense of the Senate that—

''(i) there should be imposed on any payment made to any person (other than a State or local government or a foreign nation) who has a contract with the Government of the United States in excess of $10,000,000 a tax equal to 0.50 percent of amount paid pursuant to each contract, except that the aggregate tax on each contract for any taxable year shall not exceed $500,000; and

''(ii) the revenue from such tax should be appropriated to the Fund.

''(2) VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS.—Voluntary contributions to the Fund.

''(3) OTHER DEPOSITS.—Amounts deposited into the Fund under—

''(A) section 513(c) (relating to exceptions to contribution requirements);

''(B) section 521(c) (relating to remittance of allocations from the Fund);

''(C) section 532 (relating to violations); and

''(D) any other section of this Act.

''(4) INVESTMENT RETURNS.—Interest on, and the proceeds from, the sale or redemption of, any obligations held by the Fund under subsection (c).

''(c) INVESTMENT.—The Commission shall invest portions of the Fund in obligations of the United States in the same manner as provided under section 9602(b) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

''(d) USE OF FUND.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The sums in the Fund shall be used to provide benefits to participating candidates as provided in subtitle C.

''(2) INSUFFICIENT AMOUNTS.—Under regulations established by the Commission, rules similar to the rules of section 9006(c) of the Internal Revenue Code shall apply.

''Subtitle B—Eligibility and Certification

''SEC. 511. ELIGIBILITY.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—A candidate for Senator is eligible to receive an allocation from the Fund for any election if the candidate meets the following requirements:

''(1) The candidate files with the Commission a statement of intent to seek certification as a participating candidate under this title during the period beginning on the Fair Elections start date and ending on the last day of the Fair Elections qualifying period.

''(2) The candidate meets the qualifying contribution requirements of section 512.

''(3) The candidate files with the Commission a statement certifying that the authorized committees of the candidate meet the requirements of section 513(d)(2).

''(4) Not later than the last day of the Fair Elections qualifying period, the candidate files with the Commission an affidavit signed by the candidate and the treasurer of the candidate's principal campaign committee declaring that the candidate—

''(A) has complied and, if certified, will comply with the contribution and expenditure requirements of section 513;

''(B) if certified, will not run as a nonparticipating candidate during such year in any election for the office that such candidate is seeking; and

''(C) has either qualified or will take steps to qualify under State law to be on the ballot.

''(b) GENERAL ELECTION.—Notwithstanding subsection (a), a candidate shall not be eligible to receive an allocation from the Fund for a general election or a general runoff election unless the candidate's party nominated the candidate to be placed on the ballot for the general election or the candidate otherwise qualified to be on the ballot under State law.

''SEC. 512. QUALIFYING CONTRIBUTION REQUIREMENT.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—A candidate for Senator meets the requirement of this section if, during the Fair Elections qualifying period, the candidate obtains—

''(1) a number of qualifying contributions equal to the sum of—

''(A) 2,000; plus

''(B) 500 for each congressional district in the State with respect to which the candidate is seeking election; and

''(2) a total dollar amount of qualifying contributions equal to 10 percent of the amount of the allocation such candidate would be entitled to receive for the primary election under section 522(c)(1) (determined without regard to paragraph (5) thereof) if such candidate were a participating candidate.

''(b) REQUIREMENTS RELATING TO RECEIPT OF QUALIFYING CONTRIBUTION.—Each qualifying contribution—

''(1) may be made by means of a personal check, money order, debit card, credit card, or electronic payment account;

''(2) shall be accompanied by a signed statement containing the contributor's name and the contributor's address in the State in which the contributor is registered to vote; and

''(3) shall be acknowledged by a receipt that is sent to the contributor with a copy kept by the candidate for the Commission and a copy kept by the candidate for the election authorities in the State with respect to which the candidate is seeking election.

''(c) VERIFICATION OF QUALIFYING CONTRIBUTIONS.—The Commission shall establish procedures for the auditing and verification of qualifying contributions to ensure that such contributions meet the requirements of this section.

''SEC. 513. CONTRIBUTION AND EXPENDITURE REQUIREMENTS.

''(a) GENERAL RULE.—A candidate for Senator meets the requirements of this section if, during the election cycle of the candidate, the candidate—

''(1) except as provided in subsection (b), accepts no contributions other than—

''(A) qualifying contributions;

''(B) qualified small dollar contributions;

''(C) qualifying multicandidate political committee contributions;

''(D) allocations from the Fund under section 522;

''(E) matching contributions under section 523;

''(F) enhanced matching contributions under section 524;

''(G) vouchers provided to the candidate under section 525;

''(H) subject to subsection (c), personal funds of the candidate or of any immediate family member of the candidate (other than funds received through qualified small dollar contributions); and

''(I) subject to subsection (d), contributions from individuals who are otherwise permitted to make contributions under this Act, subject to the applicable limitations of section 315, except that the aggregate amount of contributions a participating candidate may accept from any individual with respect to any election during the election cycle may not exceed $1,000; and

''(2) makes no expenditures from any amounts other than from—

''(A) qualifying contributions;

''(B) qualified small dollar contributions;

''(C) qualifying multicandidate political committee contributions;

''(D) allocations from the Fund under section 522;

''(E) matching contributions under section 523;

''(F) enhanced matching contributions under section 524;

''(G) vouchers provided to the candidate under section 525;

''(H) subject to subsection (c), personal funds of the candidate or of any immediate family member of the candidate (other than funds received through qualified small dollar contributions); and

''(I) subject to subsection (d), contributions from individuals who are otherwise permitted to make contributions under this Act, subject to the applicable limitations of section 315, except that the aggregate amount of contributions a participating candidate may accept from any individual with respect to any election during the election cycle may not exceed $1,000.

For purposes of this subsection, a payment made by a political party in coordination with a participating candidate shall not be treated as a contribution to or as an expenditure made by the participating candidate.

''(b) CONTRIBUTIONS FOR LEADERSHIP PACS, ETC.—A political committee of a participating candidate which is not an authorized committee of such candidate may accept contributions other than contributions described in subsection (a)(1) from any person if—

''(1) the aggregate contributions from such person for any calendar year do not exceed $200; and

''(2) no portion of such contributions is disbursed in connection with the campaign of the participating candidate.

''(c) SPECIAL RULES FOR PERSONAL FUNDS.—A candidate who is certified as a participating candidate may use personal funds (including personal funds of any immediate family member of the candidate) so long as—

''(1) the aggregate amount used with respect to the election cycle (including any period of the cycle occurring prior to the candidate's certification as a participating candidate) does not exceed $50,000; and

''(2) the funds are used only for making direct payments for the receipt of goods and services which constitute authorized expenditures in connection with the election cycle involved.

''(d) REQUIREMENTS RELATING TO SUBSEQUENT CONTRIBUTIONS AND NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS.—

''(1) RESTRICTION ON SUBSEQUENT CONTRIBUTIONS.—

''(A) PROHIBITING DONOR FROM MAKING SUBSEQUENT NONQUALIFIED CONTRIBUTIONS DURING ELECTION CYCLE.—An individual who makes a qualified small dollar contribution to a candidate with respect to an election may not make any subsequent contribution to such candidate with respect to the election cycle which is not a qualified small dollar contribution.

''(B) TREATMENT OF SUBSEQUENT NONQUALIFIED CONTRIBUTIONS.—If, notwithstanding the prohibition described in subparagraph (A), an individual who makes a qualified small dollar contribution to a candidate with respect to an election makes a subsequent contribution to such candidate with respect to the election which is prohibited under subparagraph (A) because it is not a qualified small dollar contribution, the candidate may take one of the following actions:

''(i) Not later than 2 weeks after receiving the contribution, the candidate may return the subsequent contribution to the individual. In the case of a subsequent contribution which is not a qualified small dollar contribution because the contribution fails to meet the requirements of paragraph (13)(C) of section 501 (relating to the aggregate amount of qualified small dollar contributions that may be made by an individual to a candidate), the candidate may return an amount equal to the difference between the amount of the subsequent contribution and the amount described in such paragraph.

''(ii) The candidate may retain the subsequent contribution, so long as not later than 2 weeks after receiving the subsequent contribution, the candidate remits to the Commission for deposit in the Freedom from Influence Fund established by section 502 an amount equal to any payments received by the candidate under this title which are attributable to the qualified small dollar contribution made by the individual involved.

''(C) NO EFFECT ON ABILITY TO MAKE MULTIPLE CONTRIBUTIONS.—Nothing in this subsection may be construed to prohibit an individual from making multiple qualified small dollar contributions to any candidate or any number of candidates, so long as each contribution meets the definition of a qualified small dollar contribution under section 501(13).

''(2) NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR CANDIDATES.—

''(A) NOTIFICATION.—Each authorized committee of a candidate who seeks to be a participating candidate under this title shall provide the following information in any materials for the solicitation of contributions, including any internet site through which individuals may make contributions to the committee:

''(i) A statement that if the candidate is certified as a participating candidate under this title, the candidate will receive matching payments in an amount which is based on the total amount of qualified small dollar contributions received.

''(ii) A statement that a contribution which meets the definition of a qualified small dollar contribution under section 501(13) shall be treated as a qualified small dollar contribution under this title.

''(iii) A statement that if a contribution is treated as qualified small dollar contribution under this title, the individual who makes the contribution may not make any contribution to the candidate or the authorized committees of the candidate during the election cycle which is not a qualified small dollar contribution.

''(B) ALTERNATIVE METHODS OF MEETING REQUIREMENTS.—An authorized committee may meet the requirements of subparagraph (A)—

''(i) by including the information described in paragraph (1) in the receipt provided under section 512(b)(3) to a person making a qualified small dollar contribution; or

''(ii) by modifying the information it provides to persons making contributions which is otherwise required under title III (including information it provides through the internet).

''(e) EXCEPTION.—Notwithstanding subsection (a), a candidate shall not be treated as having failed to meet the requirements of this section if any contributions that are not qualified small dollar contributions, qualifying contributions, qualifying multicandidate political committee contributions, or contributions that meet the requirements of subsection (b) and that are accepted before the date the candidate files a statement of intent under section 511(a)(1) are—

''(1) returned to the contributor; or

''(2) submitted to the Commission for deposit in the Fund.

''SEC. 514. CERTIFICATION.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 5 days after a candidate for Senator files an affidavit under section 511(a)(4), the Commission shall—

''(1) certify whether or not the candidate is a participating candidate; and

''(2) notify the candidate of the Commission's determination.

''(b) REVOCATION OF CERTIFICATION.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Commission may revoke a certification under subsection (a) if—

''(A) a candidate fails to qualify to appear on the ballot at any time after the date of certification; or

''(B) a candidate otherwise fails to comply with the requirements of this title, including any regulatory requirements prescribed by the Commission.

''(2) REPAYMENT OF BENEFITS.—If certification is revoked under paragraph (1), the candidate shall repay to the Fund an amount equal to the value of benefits received under this title plus interest (at a rate determined by the Commission) on any such amount received.

''Subtitle C—Benefits

''SEC. 521. BENEFITS FOR PARTICIPATING CANDIDATES.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—For each election with respect to which a candidate is certified as a participating candidate under section 514, such candidate shall be entitled to—

''(1) an allocation from the Fund to make or obligate to make expenditures with respect to such election, as provided in section 522;

''(2) matching contributions, as provided in section 523;

''(3) enhanced matching contributions, as provided in section 524; and

''(4) for the general election, vouchers for broadcasts of political advertisements, as provided in section 525.

''(b) RESTRICTION ON USES OF ALLOCATIONS FROM THE FUND.—Allocations from the Fund received by a participating candidate under section 522, matching contributions under section 523, and enhanced matching contributions under section 524 may only be used for campaign-related costs.

''(c) REMITTING ALLOCATIONS FROM THE FUND.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than the date that is 180 days after an election in which the participating candidate appeared on the ballot, such participating candidate shall remit to the Commission for deposit in the Fund an amount equal to the lesser of—

''(A) the amount of money in the candidate's campaign account; or

''(B) the sum of the allocations from the Fund received by the candidate under section 522, the matching contributions received by the candidate under section 523, and the enhanced matching contributions under section 524.

''(2) EXCEPTIONS.—

''(A) SUBSEQUENT ELECTION.—In the case of a candidate who qualifies to be on the ballot for a primary runoff election, a general election, or a general runoff election, the amounts described in paragraph (1) may be retained by the candidate and used in such subsequent election.

''(B) CANDIDATE SEEKING CERTIFICATION FOR NEXT ELECTION CYCLE.—Notwithstanding paragraph (1), a participating candidate may withhold not more than $100,000 from the amount required to be remitted under paragraph (1) if the candidate files a signed affidavit with the Commission that the candidate will seek certification as a participating candidate with respect to the next election cycle, except that the candidate may not use any portion of the amount withheld until the candidate is certified as a participating candidate with respect to that next election cycle. If the candidate fails to seek certification as a participating candidate prior to the last day of the qualifying period for the next election cycle (as described in section 511), or if the Commission notifies the candidate of the Commission's determination that the candidate does not meet the requirements for certification as a participating candidate with respect to such cycle, the candidate shall immediately remit to the Commission the amount withheld.

''SEC. 522. ALLOCATIONS FROM THE FUND.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall make allocations from the Fund under section 521(a)(1) to a participating candidate—

''(1) in the case of amounts provided under subsection (d)(1), after the date on which such candidate is certified as a participating candidate under section 514;

''(2) in the case of a general election after—

''(A) the date of the certification of the results of the primary election or the primary runoff election; or

''(B) in any case in which there is no primary election, the date the candidate qualifies to be placed on the ballot; and

''(3) in the case of a primary runoff election or a general runoff election, after the certification of the results of the primary election or the general election, as the case may be.

''(b) METHOD OF PAYMENT.—The Commission shall distribute funds available to participating candidates under this section through the use of an electronic funds exchange or a debit card.

''(c) TIMING OF PAYMENT.—The Commission shall, in coordination with the Secretary of the Treasury, take such steps as may be necessary to ensure that the Secretary is able to make payments under this section from the Treasury not later than 2 business days after date of the applicable certification as described in subsection (a).

''(d) AMOUNTS.—

''(1) PRIMARY ELECTION ALLOCATION; INITIAL ALLOCATION.—Except as provided in paragraph (5), the Commission shall make an allocation from the Fund for a primary election to a participating candidate in an amount equal to 67 percent of the base amount with respect to such participating candidate.

''(2) PRIMARY RUNOFF ELECTION ALLOCATION.—The Commission shall make an allocation from the Fund for a primary runoff election to a participating candidate in an amount equal to 25 percent of the amount the participating candidate was eligible to receive under this section for the primary election.

''(3) GENERAL ELECTION ALLOCATION.—Except as provided in paragraph (5), the Commission shall make an allocation from the Fund for a general election to a participating candidate in an amount equal to the base amount with respect to such candidate.

''(4) GENERAL RUNOFF ELECTION ALLOCATION.—The Commission shall make an allocation from the Fund for a general runoff election to a participating candidate in an amount equal to 25 percent of the base amount with respect to such candidate.

''(5) UNCONTESTED ELECTIONS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—In the case of a primary or general election that is an uncontested election, the Commission shall make an allocation from the Fund to a participating candidate for such election in an amount equal to 25 percent of the allocation which such candidate would be entitled to under this section for such election if this paragraph did not apply.

''(B) UNCONTESTED ELECTION DEFINED.—For purposes of this subparagraph, an election is uncontested if not more than 1 candidate has campaign funds (including payments from the Fund) in an amount equal to or greater than 10 percent of the allocation a participating candidate would be entitled to receive under this section for such election if this paragraph did not apply.

''(e) BASE AMOUNT.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as otherwise provided in this subsection, the base amount for any candidate is an amount equal to the sum of—

''(A) $750,000; plus

''(B) $150,000 for each congressional district in the State with respect to which the candidate is seeking election.

''(2) INDEXING.—In each even-numbered year after 2027—

''(A) each dollar amount under paragraph (1) shall be increased by the percent difference between the price index (as defined in section 315(c)(2)(A)) for the 12 months preceding the beginning of such calendar year and the price index for calendar year 2022;

''(B) each dollar amount so increased shall remain in effect for the 2-year period beginning on the first day following the date of the last general election in the year preceding the year in which the amount is increased and ending on the date of the next general election; and

''(C) if any amount after adjustment under subparagraph (A) is not a multiple of $100, such amount shall be rounded to the nearest multiple of $100.

''SEC. 523. MATCHING PAYMENTS FOR QUALIFIED SMALL DOLLAR CONTRIBUTIONS.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall pay to each participating candidate an amount equal to 600 percent of the amount of qualified small dollar contributions received by the candidate from individuals after the date on which such candidate is certified under section 514.

''(b) LIMITATION.—The aggregate payments under subsection (a) with respect to any candidate shall not exceed 400 percent of the allocation such candidate is entitled to receive for such election under section 522 (determined without regard to subsection (d)(5) thereof).

''(c) TIME OF PAYMENT.—The Commission shall make payments under this section not later than 2 business days after the receipt of a report made under subsection (d).

''(d) REPORTS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Each participating candidate shall file reports of receipts of qualified small dollar contributions at such times and in such manner as the Commission may by regulations prescribe.

''(2) CONTENTS OF REPORTS.—Each report under this subsection shall disclose—

''(A) the amount of each qualified small dollar contribution received by the candidate; and

''(B) the name, address, and occupation of each individual who made a qualified small dollar contribution to the candidate.

''(3) FREQUENCY OF REPORTS.—Reports under this subsection shall be made no more frequently than—

''(A) once every month until the date that is 90 days before the date of the election; and

''(B) once every week after the period described in subparagraph (A) and until the date of the election.

''(4) LIMITATION ON REGULATIONS.—The Commission may not prescribe any regulations with respect to reporting under this subsection with respect to any election after the date that is 180 days before the date of such election.

''(e) APPEALS.—The Commission shall provide a written explanation with respect to any denial of any payment under this section and shall provide the opportunity for review and reconsideration within 5 business days of such denial.

''SEC. 524. ENHANCED MATCHING SUPPORT.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—In addition to the payments made under section 523, the Commission shall make an additional payment to an eligible candidate under this section.

''(b) ELIGIBILITY.—A candidate is eligible to receive an additional payment under this section if the candidate meets each of the following requirements:

''(1) The candidate is on the ballot for the general election for the office the candidate seeks.

''(2) The candidate is certified as a participating candidate under this title with respect to the election.

''(3) During the enhanced support qualifying period, the candidate receives qualified small dollar contributions in a total amount of not less than the sum of $15,000 for each congressional district in the State with respect to which the candidate is seeking election.

''(4) During the enhanced support qualifying period, the candidate submits to the Commission a request for the payment which includes—

''(A) a statement of the number and amount of qualified small dollar contributions received by the candidate during the enhanced support qualifying period;

''(B) a statement of the amount of the payment the candidate anticipates receiving with respect to the request; and

''(C) such other information and assurances as the Commission may require.

''(5) After submitting a request for the additional payment under paragraph (4), the candidate does not submit any other application for an additional payment under this title.

''(c) AMOUNT.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (2), the amount of the additional payment made to an eligible candidate under this subtitle shall be an amount equal to 50 percent of—

''(A) the amount of the payment made to the candidate under section 523 with respect to the qualified small dollar contributions which are received by the candidate during the enhanced support qualifying period (as included in the request submitted by the candidate under (b)(4)(A)); or

''(B) in the case of a candidate who is not eligible to receive a payment under section 523 with respect to such qualified small dollar contributions because the candidate has reached the limit on the aggregate amount of payments under section 523, the amount of the payment which would have been made to

the candidate under section 523 with respect to such qualified small dollar contributions if the candidate had not reached such limit.

''(2) LIMIT.—The amount of the additional payment determined under paragraph (1) with respect to a candidate may not exceed the sum of $150,000 for each congressional district in the State with respect to which the candidate is seeking election.

''(3) NO EFFECT ON AGGREGATE LIMIT.—The amount of the additional payment made to a candidate under this section shall not be included in determining the aggregate amount of payments made to a participating candidate with respect to an election cycle under section 523.

''SEC. 525. POLITICAL ADVERTISING VOUCHERS.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall establish and administer a voucher program for the purchase of airtime on broadcasting stations for political advertisements in accordance with the provisions of this section.

''(b) CANDIDATES.—The Commission shall only disburse vouchers under the program established under subsection (a) to participants certified pursuant to section 514 who have agreed in writing to keep and furnish to the Commission such records, books, and other information as it may require.

''(c) AMOUNTS.—The Commission shall disburse vouchers to each candidate certified under subsection (b) in an aggregate amount equal to $100,000 multiplied by the number of congressional districts in the State with respect to which such candidate is running for office.

''(d) USE.—

''(1) EXCLUSIVE USE.—Vouchers disbursed by the Commission under this section may be used only for the purchase of broadcast airtime for political advertisements relating to a general election for the office of Senate by the participating candidate to which the vouchers were disbursed, except that—

''(A) a candidate may exchange vouchers with a political party under paragraph (2); and

''(B) a political party may use vouchers only to purchase broadcast airtime for political advertisements for generic party advertising (as defined by the Commission in regulations), to support candidates for State or local office in a general election, or to support participating candidates of the party in a general election for Federal office, but only if it discloses the value of the voucher used as an expenditure under section 315(d).

''(2) EXCHANGE WITH POLITICAL PARTY COMMITTEE.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—A participating candidate who receives a voucher under this section may transfer the right to use all or a portion of the value of the voucher to a committee of the political party of which the individual is a candidate (or, in the case of a participating candidate who is not a member of any political party, to a committee of the political party of that candidate's choice) in exchange for money in an amount equal to the cash value of the voucher or portion exchanged.

''(B) CONTINUATION OF CANDIDATE OBLIGATIONS.—The transfer of a voucher, in whole or in part, to a political party committee under this paragraph does not release the candidate from any obligation under the agreement made under subsection (b) or otherwise modify that agreement or its application to that candidate.

''(C) PARTY COMMITTEE OBLIGATIONS.—Any political party committee to which a voucher or portion thereof is transferred under subparagraph (A)—

''(i) shall account fully, in accordance with such requirements as the Commission may establish, for the receipt of the voucher; and

''(ii) may not use the transferred voucher or portion thereof for any purpose other than a purpose described in paragraph (1)(B).

''(D) VOUCHER AS A CONTRIBUTION UNDER FECA.—If a candidate transfers a voucher or any portion thereof to a political party committee under subparagraph (A)—

''(i) the value of the voucher or portion thereof transferred shall be treated as a contribution from the candidate to the committee, and from the committee to the candidate, for purposes of sections 302 and 304;

''(ii) the committee may, in exchange, provide to the candidate only funds subject to the prohibitions, limitations, and reporting requirements of title III of this Act; and

''(iii) the amount, if identified as a 'voucher exchange', shall not be considered a contribution for the purposes of sections 315 and 513.

''(e) VALUE; ACCEPTANCE; REDEMPTION.—

''(1) VOUCHER.—Each voucher disbursed by the Commission under this section shall have a value in dollars, redeemable upon presentation to the Commission, together with such documentation and other information as the Commission may require, for the purchase of broadcast airtime for political advertisements in accordance with this section.

''(2) ACCEPTANCE.—A broadcasting station shall accept vouchers in payment for the purchase of broadcast airtime for political advertisements in accordance with this section.

''(3) REDEMPTION.—The Commission shall redeem vouchers accepted by broadcasting stations under paragraph (2) upon presentation, subject to such documentation, verification, accounting, and application requirements as the Commission may impose to ensure the accuracy and integrity of the voucher redemption system.

''(4) EXPIRATION.—

''(A) CANDIDATES.—A voucher may only be used to pay for broadcast airtime for political advertisements to be broadcast before midnight on the day before the date of the Federal election in connection with which it was issued and shall be null and void for any other use or purpose.

''(B) EXCEPTION FOR POLITICAL PARTY COMMITTEES.—A voucher held by a political party committee may be used to pay for broadcast airtime for political advertisements to be broadcast before midnight on December 31st of the odd-numbered year following the year in which the voucher was issued by the Commission.

''(5) VOUCHER AS EXPENDITURE UNDER FECA.—The use of a voucher to purchase broadcast airtime constitutes an expenditure as defined in section 301(9)(A).

''(f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

''(1) BROADCASTING STATION.—The term 'broadcasting station' has the meaning given that term by section 315(f)(1) of the Communications Act of 1934.

''(2) POLITICAL PARTY.—The term 'political party' means a major party or a minor party as defined in section 9002 (3) or (4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (26 U.S.C. 9002 (3) or (4)).

''Subtitle D—Administrative Provisions

''SEC. 531. DUTIES OF THE FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION.

''(a) DUTIES AND POWERS.—

''(1) ADMINISTRATION.—The Commission shall have the power to administer the provisions of this title and shall prescribe regulations to carry out the purposes of this title, including regulations—

''(A) to establish procedures for—

''(i) verifying the amount of valid qualifying contributions with respect to a candidate;

''(ii) effectively and efficiently monitoring and enforcing the limits on the raising of qualified small dollar contributions;

''(iii) monitoring the raising of qualifying multicandidate political committee contributions through effectively and efficiently monitoring and enforcing the limits on individual contributions to qualified accounts of multicandidate political committees;

''(iv) effectively and efficiently monitoring and enforcing the limits on the use of personal funds by participating candidates;

''(v) monitoring the use of allocations from the Fund and matching contributions under this title through audits or other mechanisms; and

''(vi) the administration of the voucher program under section 525; and

''(B) regarding the conduct of debates in a manner consistent with the best practices of States that provide public financing for elections.

''(2) REVIEW OF FAIR ELECTIONS FINANCING.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—After each general election for Federal office, the Commission shall conduct a comprehensive review of the Fair Elections financing program under this title, including—

''(i) the maximum dollar amount of qualified small dollar contributions under section 501(13);

''(ii) the maximum and minimum dollar amounts for qualifying contributions under section 501(12);

''(iii) the number and value of qualifying contributions a candidate is required to obtain under section 512 to qualify for allocations from the Fund;

''(iv) the amount of allocations from the Fund that candidates may receive under section 522;

''(v) the maximum amount of matching contributions a candidate may receive under section 523;

''(vi) the maximum amount of enhanced matching contributions a candidate may receive under section 524;

''(vii) the amount and usage of vouchers under section 525;

''(viii) the overall satisfaction of participating candidates and the American public with the program; and

''(ix) such other matters relating to financing of Senate campaigns as the Commission determines are appropriate.

''(B) CRITERIA FOR REVIEW.—In conducting the review under subparagraph (A), the Commission shall consider the following:

''(i) QUALIFYING CONTRIBUTIONS AND QUALIFIED SMALL DOLLAR CONTRIBUTIONS.—The Commission shall consider whether the number and dollar amount of qualifying contributions required and maximum dollar amount for such qualifying contributions and qualified small dollar contributions strikes a balance regarding the importance of voter involvement, the need to assure adequate incentives for participating, and fiscal responsibility, taking into consideration the number of primary and general election participating candidates, the electoral performance of those candidates, program cost, and any other information the Commission determines is appropriate.

''(ii) REVIEW OF PROGRAM BENEFITS.—The Commission shall consider whether the totality of the amount of funds allowed to be raised by participating candidates (including through qualifying contributions and small dollar contributions), allocations from the Fund under section 522, matching contributions under section 523, enhanced matching contributions under section 524, and vouchers under section 525 are sufficient for voters in each State to learn about the candidates to cast an informed vote, taking into account the historic amount of spending by winning candidates, media costs, primary

election dates, and any other information the Commission determines is appropriate.

''(C) RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADJUSTMENT OF AMOUNTS.—Based on the review conducted under subparagraph (A), the Commission shall make recommendations to Congress for any adjustment of the following amounts:

''(i) The maximum dollar amount of qualified small dollar contributions under section 501(13)(C).

''(ii) The maximum and minimum dollar amounts for qualifying contributions under section 501(12)(A).

''(iii) The number and value of qualifying contributions a candidate is required to obtain under section 512(a)(1).

''(iv) The base amount for candidates under section 522(d).

''(v) The maximum amount of matching contributions a candidate may receive under section 523(b).

''(vi) The maximum amount of enhanced matching contributions a candidate may receive under section 524(c).

''(vii) The dollar amount for vouchers under section 525(c).

''(D) REPORT.—Not later than March 30 following any general election for Federal office, the Commission shall submit a report to Congress on the review conducted under subparagraph (A) and any recommendations developed under subparagraph (C). Such report shall contain a detailed statement of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the Commission based on such review.

''(b) REPORTS.—Not later than March 30, 2026, and every 2 years thereafter, the Commission shall submit to the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration a report documenting, evaluating, and making recommendations relating to the administrative implementation and enforcement of the provisions of this title.

''(c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as are necessary to carry out the purposes of this subtitle.

''SEC. 532. VIOLATIONS AND PENALTIES.

''(a) CIVIL PENALTY FOR VIOLATION OF CONTRIBUTION AND EXPENDITURE REQUIREMENTS.—If a candidate who has been certified as a participating candidate under section 514 accepts a contribution or makes an expenditure that is prohibited under section 513, the Commission shall assess a civil penalty against the candidate in an amount that is not more than 3 times the amount of the contribution or expenditure. Any amounts collected under this subsection shall be deposited into the Fund.

''(b) REPAYMENT FOR IMPROPER USE OF FREEDOM FROM INFLUENCE FUND.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—If the Commission determines that any benefit made available to a participating candidate under this title was not used as provided for in this title or that a participating candidate has violated any of the dates for remission of funds contained in this title, the Commission shall so notify the candidate and the candidate shall pay to the Fund an amount equal to—

''(A) the amount of benefits so used or not remitted, as appropriate; and

''(B) interest on any such amounts (at a rate determined by the Commission).

''(2) OTHER ACTION NOT PRECLUDED.—Any action by the Commission in accordance with this subsection shall not preclude enforcement proceedings by the Commission in accordance with section 309(a), including a referral by the Commission to the Attorney General in the case of an apparent knowing and willful violation of this title.''.

SEC. 202. PROHIBITION ON JOINT FUNDRAISING COMMITTEES.

Section 302(e) of the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 (52 U.S.C. 30102(e)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(6) No authorized committee of a participating candidate (as defined in section 501) may establish a joint fundraising committee with a political committee other than an authorized committee of a candidate.''.

SEC. 203. EXCEPTION TO LIMITATION ON COORDINATED EXPENDITURES BY POLITICAL PARTY COMMITTEES WITH PARTICIPATING CANDIDATES.

Section 315(d) of the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 (52 U.S.C. 30116(d)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (3)(A), by striking ''in the case of'' and inserting ''except as provided in paragraph (6), in the case of''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(6)(A) The limitation under paragraph (3)(A) shall not apply with respect to any expenditure from a qualified political party-participating candidate coordinated expenditure fund.

''(B) In this paragraph, the term 'qualified political party-participating candidate coordinated expenditure fund' means a fund established by the national committee of a political party, or a State committee of a political party, including any subordinate committee of a State committee, for purposes of making expenditures in connection with the general election campaign of a candidate for election to the office of Senator who is a participating candidate (as defined in section 501), that only accepts qualified coordinated expenditure contributions.

''(C) In this paragraph, the term 'qualified coordinated expenditure contribution' means, with respect to the general election campaign of a candidate for election to the office of Senator who is a participating candidate (as defined in section 501), any contribution (or series of contributions)—

''(i) which is made by an individual who is not prohibited from making a contribution under this Act; and

''(ii) the aggregate amount of which does not exceed $500 per election.''.

TITLE III—RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION

SEC. 301. PETITION FOR CERTIORARI.

Section 307(a)(6) of the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 (52 U.S.C. 30107(a)(6)) is amended by inserting ''(including a proceeding before the Supreme Court on certiorari)'' after ''appeal''.

SEC. 302. ELECTRONIC FILING OF FEC REPORTS.

Section 304(a)(11) of the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 (52 U.S.C. 30104(a)(11)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''under this Act—'' and all that follows and inserting ''under this Act shall be required to maintain and file such designation, statement, or report in electronic form accessible by computers.'';

(2) in subparagraph (B), by striking ''48 hours'' and all that follows through ''filed electronically)'' and inserting ''24 hours''; and

(3) by striking subparagraph (D).

TITLE IV—REVENUE PROVISIONS

SEC. 401. FREEDOM FROM INFLUENCE FUND REVENUE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by inserting after chapter 36 the following new chapter:

''CHAPTER 37—TAX ON PAYMENTS PURSUANT TO CERTAIN GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

''Sec. 4501. Imposition of tax.

''SEC. 4501. IMPOSITION OF TAX.

''(a) TAX IMPOSED.—There is hereby imposed on any payment made to a qualified person pursuant to a contract with the Government of the United States a tax equal to 0.50 percent of the amount paid.

''(b) LIMITATION.—The aggregate amount of tax imposed per contract under subsection (a) for any calendar year shall not exceed $500,000.

''(c) QUALIFIED PERSON.—For purposes of this section, the term 'qualified person' means any person which—

''(1) is not a State or local government, a foreign nation, or an organization described in section 501(c)(3) which is exempt from taxation under section 501(a), and

''(2) has a contract with the Government of the United States with a value in excess of $10,000,000.

''(d) PAYMENT OF TAX.—The tax imposed by this section shall be paid by the person receiving such payment.

''(e) USE OF REVENUE GENERATED BY TAX.—It is the sense of the Senate that amounts equivalent to the revenue generated by the tax imposed under this chapter should be appropriated for the financing of a Freedom From Influence Fund and used for the public financing of Senate elections.''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The table of chapters of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by inserting after the item relating to chapter 36 the following:

''CHAPTER 37—TAX ON PAYMENTS PURSUANT TO CERTAIN GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to contracts entered into after the date of the enactment of this Act.

TITLE V—MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

SEC. 501. SEVERABILITY.

If any provision of this Act or amendment made by this Act, or the application of a provision or amendment to any person or circumstance, is held to be unconstitutional, the remainder of this Act and amendments made by this Act, and the application of the provisions and amendment to any person or circumstance, shall not be affected by the holding.

SEC. 502. EFFECTIVE DATE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Except as may otherwise be provided in this Act and in the amendments made by this Act, this Act and the amendments made by this Act shall apply with respect to elections occurring during 2028 or any succeeding year, without regard to whether or not the Federal Election Commission has promulgated the final regulations necessary to carry out this Act and the amendments made by this Act by the deadline set forth in subsection (b).

(b) DEADLINE FOR REGULATIONS.—Not later than June 30, 2026, the Federal Election Commission shall promulgate such regulations as may be necessary to carry out this Act and the amendments made by this Act.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Ms. WARREN, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, and Mr. BLUMENTHAL):

S.J. Res. 67. A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relative to the fundamental right to vote; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

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

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

S.J. RES. 67

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in

Congress assembled (two-thirds of each House concurring therein), That the following article is proposed as an amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which shall be valid to all intents and purposes as part of the Constitution when ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several States:

''ARTICLE —

''SECTION 1. Every citizen of the United States, who is of legal voting age, shall have the fundamental right to vote in any public election held in the jurisdiction in which the citizen resides.

''SECTION 2. The fundamental right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State or political subdivision within a State unless such denial or abridgment is in furtherance of a compelling governmental interest and is the least restrictive means of furthering that compelling governmental interest.

''SECTION 3. The portion of section 2 of the fourteenth article of amendment to the Constitution of the United States that consists of the phrase 'or other crime,' is repealed.

''SECTION 4. The Congress shall have the power to enforce this article and protect against any denial or abridgement of the fundamental right to vote by legislation.''.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 6526. Mr. JOHNSON (for himself, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. RISCH, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. BRAUN, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. DAINES, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. PAUL, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. HAWLEY, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. LEE, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mr. RUBIO, and Mr. LANKFORD) proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 7776, to provide for improvements to the rivers and harbors of the United States, to provide for the conservation and development of water and related resources, and for other purposes.

SA 6527. Mr. SCHUMER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 7776, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 6528. Mr. SCHUMER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 7776, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 6529. Mr. SCHUMER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 6513 proposed by Mr. SCHUMER (for Mr. MANCHIN) to the bill H.R. 7776, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 6530. Mr. SCHUMER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 6513 proposed by Mr. SCHUMER (for Mr. MANCHIN) to the bill H.R. 7776, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 6531. Mr. HOEVEN (for himself, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. CRAMER, and Mr. MORAN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 7776, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 6532. Mr. MARSHALL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 7776, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 6533. Mr. MARSHALL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 7776, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 6534. Mr. SCHUMER proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 1437, to amend the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 to direct the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to provide comprehensive and regularly updated Federal precipitation information, and for other purposes.

SA 6535. Mr. SCHUMER proposed an amendment to amendment SA 6534 proposed by Mr. SCHUMER to the bill H.R. 1437, supra.

SA 6536. Mr. SCHUMER proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 1437, supra.

SA 6537. Mr. SCHUMER proposed an amendment to amendment SA 6536 proposed by Mr. SCHUMER to the bill H.R. 1437, supra.

SA 6538. Mr. SCHUMER proposed an amendment to amendment SA 6537 proposed by Mr. SCHUMER to the amendment SA 6536 proposed by Mr. SCHUMER to the bill H.R. 1437, supra.

SA 6539. Mr. KAINE (for himself and Mr. YOUNG) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 7776, to provide for improvements to the rivers and harbors of the United States, to provide for the conservation and development of water and related resources, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 6540. Mr. SCOTT of Florida (for himself, Mr. JOHNSON, and Mr. BRAUN) proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 1437, to amend the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 to direct the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to provide comprehensive and regularly updated Federal precipitation information, and for other purposes.

SA 6541. Mr. LEE (for himself, Mr. BRAUN, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, and Mr. JOHNSON) proposed an amendment to the bill H .R. 1437, supra.

SA 6542. Mr. KING (for Mr. BARRASSO) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 3957, to amend the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act to make certain activities eligible for grants from the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund, and for other purposes.

SA 6543. Mr. KING (for Mr. SCOTT of Florida) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 688, to prohibit contracting with persons that have business operations with the Maduro regime, and for other purposes.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 6526. Mr. JOHNSON (for himself, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. RISCH, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. BRAUN, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. DAINES, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. PAUL, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. HAWLEY, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. LEE, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mr. RUBIO, and Mr. LANKFORD) proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 7776, to provide for improvements to the rivers and harbors of the United States, to provide for the conservation and development of water and related resources, and for other purposes; as follows:

Insert after section 525 the following:

SEC. 525A. REMEDIES FOR MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES DISCHARGED OR SUBJECT TO PUNISHMENT UNDER THE COVID–19 VACCINE MANDATE.

(a) LIMITATION ON IMPOSITION OF NEW MANDATE.—The Secretary of Defense may not issue any COVID–19 vaccine mandate as a replacement for the rescinded mandates under this Act absent a further act of Congress expressly authorizing a replacement mandate.

(b) REMEDIES.—Section 736 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022 (Public Law 117–81; 10 U.S.C. 1161 note prec.) is amended—

(1) in the section heading, by striking ''**TO OBEY LAWFUL ORDER TO RECEIVE**'' and inserting ''**TO RECEIVE**'';

(2) in subsection (a)—

(A) by striking ''a lawful order'' and inserting ''an order''; and

(B) by striking ''shall be'' and all that follows through the period at the end and inserting ''shall be an honorable discharge.'';

(3) by redesignating subsection (b) as subsection (e); and

(4) by inserting after subsection (a) the following new subsections:

''(b) PROHIBITION ON ADVERSE ACTION.—The Secretary of Defense may not take any adverse action against a covered member based solely on the refusal of such member to receive a vaccine for COVID–19.

''(c) REMEDIES AVAILABLE FOR A COVERED MEMBER DISCHARGED OR PUNISHED BASED ON COVID–19 STATUS.—At the election of a covered member and upon application through a process established by the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary shall—

''(1) adjust to 'honorable discharge' the status of the member if—

''(A) the member was separated from the Armed Forces based solely on the failure of the member to obey an order to receive a vaccine for COVID–19; and

''(B) the discharge status of the member would have been an 'honorable discharge' but for the refusal to obtain such vaccine;

''(2) reinstate the member to service at the highest grade held by the member immediately prior to the involuntary separation, allowing, however, for any demotion that was not related to the member's COVID–19 vaccination status, with an effective date of reinstatement as of the date of involuntary separation;

''(3) for any member who was subject to any punishment other than involuntary separation based solely on the member's COVID–19 vaccination status—

''(A) restore the member to the highest grade held prior to such punishment, allowing, however, for any demotion that was not related to the member's COVID–19 vaccination status, with an effective date of reinstatement as of the date of involuntary separation; and

''(B) compensate such member for any pay and benefits lost as a result of such punishment;

''(4) expunge from the service record of the member any reference to any adverse action based solely on COVID–19 status, including involuntary separation; and

''(5) include the time of involuntary separation of the member reinstated under paragraph (2) in the computation of the retired or retainer pay of the member.

''(d) ATTEMPT TO AVOID DISCHARGE.—The Secretary of Defense shall make every effort to retain members of the Armed Forces who are not vaccinated against COVID–19.''.

(c) IMMEDIATE RESCISSION OF MANDATE.—Notwithstanding the deadline provided for in section 525, the rescission of the COVID–19 mandate shall take effect immediately.

SA 6527. Mr. SCHUMER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 7776, to provide for improvements to the rivers and harbors of the United States, to provide for the conservation and development of water and related resources, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end add the following:

SEC. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This Act shall take effect on the date that is 7 days after the date of enactment of this Act.

SA 6528. Mr. SCHUMER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 7776, to provide for improvements to the rivers and harbors of the United States, to provide for the conservation and development of water and related resources, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end add the following:

SEC. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This Act shall take effect on the date that is 8 days after the date of enactment of this Act.

SA 6529. Mr. SCHUMER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 6513 proposed by Mr. SCHUMER (for Mr. MANCHIN) to the bill H.R. 7776, to provide for improvements to the rivers and harbors of the United States, to provide for the conservation and development of water and related resources, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 1, line 3, strike ''8'' and insert ''9''.

SA 6530. Mr. SCHUMER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 6513 proposed by Mr. SCHUMER (for Mr. MANCHIN) to the bill H.R. 7776, to provide for improvements to the rivers and harbors of the United States, to provide for the conservation and development of water and related resources, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 1, line 3, strike ''9'' and insert ''10''.

SA 6531. Mr. HOEVEN (for himself, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. CRAMER, and Mr. MORAN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 7776, to provide for improvements to the rivers and harbors of the United States, to provide for the conservation and development of water and related resources, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of subtitle B of title VIII, add the following:

SEC. 823. PROHIBITION ON REQUIRING DEFENSE CONTRACTORS TO PROVIDE INFORMATION RELATING TO GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) GREENHOUSE GAS.—The term ''greenhouse gas'' means—

(A) carbon dioxide;

(B) methane;

(C) nitrous oxide;

(D) nitrogen trifluoride;

(E) hydrofluorocarbons

(F) perfluorcarbons; or

(G) sulfur hexafluoride.

(2) GREENHOUSE GAS INVENTORY.—The term ''greenhouse gas inventory'' means a quantified list of an entity's annual greenhouse gas emissions.

(3) SCOPE 1 EMISSIONS.—The term ''Scope 1 emissions'' means direct greenhouse gas emissions from sources that are owned or controlled by the reporting entity.

(4) SCOPE 2 EMISSIONS.—The term ''Scope 2 emissions'' means indirect greenhouse gas emissions associated with the generation of electricity, heating and cooling, or steam, when these are purchased or acquired for the reporting entity's own consumption but occur at sources owned or controlled by another entity.

(5) SCOPE 3 EMISSIONS.—The term ''Scope 3 emissions'' means greenhouse gas emissions, other than those that are Scope 2 emissions, that are a consequence of the operations of the reporting entity but occur at sources other than those owned or controlled by the entity.

(b) PROHIBITION ON DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS.—The Secretary of Defense may not require the recipient of a Federal contract to provide a greenhouse gas inventory or to provide any other report on greenhouse gas emissions, including Scope 1 emissions, Scope 2 emissions, or Scope 3 emissions.

SA 6532. Mr. MARSHALL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 7776, to provide for improvements to the rivers and harbors of the United States, to provide for the conservation and development of water and related resources, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

Beginning on page 2193, strike line 1 and all that follows through page 2238, line 3.

SA 6533. Mr. MARSHALL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 7776, to provide for improvements to the rivers and harbors of the United States, to provide for the conservation and development of water and related resources, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of subtitle B of title VII, add the following:

SEC. 725. PROHIBITION ON USE OF FUNDS TO CARRY OUT MEMORANDUM RELATING TO REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CARE.

No funds appropriated pursuant to an authorization of appropriations under this Act may be used to carry out the memorandum of the Secretary of Defense dated October 20, 2022, relating to ensuring access to reproductive health care.

SA 6534. Mr. SCHUMER proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 1437, to amend the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 to direct the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to provide comprehensive and regularly updated Federal precipitation information, and for other purposes; as follows:

At the end add the following:

SEC. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This Act shall take effect on the date that is 1 day after the date of enactment of this Act.

SA 6535. Mr. SCHUMER proposed an amendment to amendment SA 6534 proposed by Mr. SCHUMER to the bill H.R. 1437, to amend the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 to direct the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to provide comprehensive and regularly updated Federal precipitation information, and for other purposes; as follows:

On page 1, line 3, strike ''1'' and insert ''2''.

SA 6536. Mr. SCHUMER proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 1437, to amend the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 to direct the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to provide comprehensive and regularly updated Federal precipitation information, and for other purposes; as follows:

At the end add the following:

SEC. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This Act shall take effect on the date that is 4 dayS after the date of enactment of this Act.

SA 6537. Mr. SCHUMER proposed an amendment to amendment SA 6536 proposed by Mr. SCHUMER to the bill H.R. 1437, to amend the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 to direct the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to provide comprehensive and regularly updated Federal precipitation information, and for other purposes; as follows:

On page 1, line 3, strike ''4'' and insert ''5''.

SA 6538. Mr. SCHUMER proposed an amendment to amendment SA 6537 proposed by Mr. SCHUMER to the amendment SA 6536 proposed by Mr. SCHUMER to the bill H.R. 1437, to amend the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 to direct the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to provide comprehensive and regularly updated Federal precipitation information, and for other purposes; as follows:

On page 1, strike ''5'' and insert ''6''.

SA 6539. Mr. KAINE (for himself and Mr. YOUNG) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 7776, to provide for improvements to the rivers and harbors of the United States, to provide for the conservation and development of water and related resources, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of subtitle C of title XII, add the following:

SEC. 1240A. REPEAL OF AUTHORIZATIONS FOR USE OF MILITARY FORCE AGAINST IRAQ.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following findings:

(1) The Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution (Public Law 102–1; 105 Stat. 3; 50 U.S.C. 1541 note), enacted on January 14, 1991 (in this preamble ''the 1991 AUMF''), and the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002 (Public Law 107–243; 116 Stat. 1498; 50 U.S.C. 1541 note), enacted on October 16, 2002 (in this preamble ''the 2002 AUMF''), currently remain valid law.

(2) Recent presidential administrations have maintained that the 2002 AUMF only serves to ''reinforce'' any legal authority to combat ISIS provided by the Authorization for Use of Military Force (Public Law 107–40; 115 Stat. 224; 50 U.S.C. 1541), enacted September 18, 2001, and is not independently required to authorize any such activities.

(3) Repealing the 1991 AUMF and the 2002 AUMF would therefore not affect ongoing United States military operations.

(4) Since 2014, United States military forces have operated in Iraq at the request of the Government of Iraq for the sole purpose of supporting its efforts to combat ISIS, consistent with the Strategic Framework Agreement that Iraq and the United States signed on November 17, 2008.

(5) During a press briefing on December 24, 2020, Commander of the United States Central Command, General Frank McKenzie, reiterated that United States forces are in Iraq ''at their invitation''.

(6) Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken and Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi of Iraq discussed ''the Iraqi government's responsibility and commitment to protect U.S. and Coalition personnel in Iraq at the government's invitation to fight ISIS'' in a February 16, 2021, phone call.

(7) Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III stated on February 19, 2021, that he ''welcomed that expanded NATO mission in Iraq that responds to the desires and aspirations of the Iraqi government''.

(8) In a February 23, 2021, call with Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi of Iraq, President Joseph R. Biden affirmed United States support for Iraq's ''sovereignty and independence''.

(9) Neither the 1991 AUMF nor the 2002 AUMF are being used as the sole legal basis for any detention of enemy combatants currently held by the United States.

(10) Authorizations for the use of military force that are no longer necessary should have a clear political and legal ending.

(b) REPEAL OF AUTHORIZATION FOR USE OF MILITARY FORCE AGAINST IRAQ RESOLUTION.—The Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution (Public Law 102–1; 105 Stat. 3; 50 U.S.C. 1541 note) is hereby repealed.

(c) REPEAL OF AUTHORIZATION FOR USE OF MILITARY FORCE AGAINST IRAQ RESOLUTION OF 2002.—The Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002 (Public Law 107–243; 116 Stat. 1498; 50 U.S.C. 1541 note) is hereby repealed.

SA 6540. Mr. SCOTT of Florida (for himself, Mr. JOHNSON, and Mr. BRAUN) proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 1437, to amend the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 to direct the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to provide comprehensive and regularly updated Federal precipitation information, and for other purposes; as follows:

At the end, add the following:

DIVISION E—INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE AND TAX ADMINISTRATION

SEC. 101. RESCISSION OF CERTAIN FUNDS FOR ENHANCED INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE RESOURCES.

Effective on the date of enactment of this Act, the unobligated balances of the amounts made available under the following provisions of Public Law 117–169 are rescinded:

(1) INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE ENFORCEMENT FUNDS.—Section 10301(1)(A)(ii).

(2) INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE OPERATIONS SUPPORT.—Section 10301(1)(A)(iii).

SEC. 102. REPEAL OF MODIFICATIONS OF EXCEPTIONS FOR REPORTING OF THIRD PARTY NETWORK TRANSACTIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 6050W(e) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended to read as follows:

''(e) EXCEPTION FOR DE MINIMIS PAYMENTS BY THIRD PARTY SETTLEMENT ORGANIZATIONS.—A third party settlement organization shall be required to report any information under subsection (a) with respect to third party network transactions of any participating payee only if—

''(1) the amount which would otherwise be reported under subsection (a)(2) with respect to such transactions exceeds $20,000, and

''(2) the aggregate number of such transactions exceeds 200.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall apply to returns for calendar years beginning after December 31, 2021.

SA 6541. Mr. LEE (for himself, Mr. BRAUN, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, and Mr. JOHNSON) proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 1437, to amend the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 to direct the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to provide comprehensive and regularly updated Federal precipitation information, and for other purposes; as follows:

In lieu of the matter proposed to be inserted, insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Further Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2023''.

SEC. 2. TABLE OF CONTENTS.

The table of contents of this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short Title.
Sec. 2. Table of Contents.
Sec. 3. References.
Sec. 4. Payment to Widows and Heirs of Deceased Members of Congress.

DIVISION A—FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2023

DIVISION B—OTHER MATTERS

Title I—Extensions
Title II—Budgetary matters

DIVISION C—HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Title I—Medicare and Medicaid
Title II—Human Services
Title III—Extension of FDA Authorizations
Title IV—Indian Health

DIVISION D—PRECIP ACT

SEC. 3. REFERENCES.

Except as expressly provided otherwise, any reference to ''this Act'' contained in any division of this Act shall be treated as referring only to the provisions of that division.

SEC. 4. PAYMENT TO WIDOWS AND HEIRS OF DECEASED MEMBERS OF CONGRESS.

There is hereby appropriated for fiscal year 2023, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, for payment to Colette Wallace McEachin, beneficiary of Aston Donald McEachin, late a Representative from the Commonwealth of Virginia, $174,000.

DIVISION A—FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2023

SEC. 101. The Continuing Appropriations Act, 2023 (division A of Public Law 117–180) is amended—

(1) by striking the date specified in section 106(3) and inserting ''March 10, 2023'';

(2) by adding after section 157 the following new section:

''SEC. 158. During the period covered by this Act, section 227(a) of the Federal Cybersecurity Enhancement Act of 2015 (6 U.S.C. 1525) shall not apply.''.

This division may be cited as the ''Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2023''.

DIVISION B—OTHER MATTERS

TITLE I—EXTENSIONS

SEC. 101. EXTENSION OF FCC AUCTION AUTHORITY.

Section 309(j)(11) of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 309(j)(11)) is amended by striking ''December 16, 2022'' and inserting ''March 10, 2023''.

SEC. 102. EXTENSION OF AUTHORIZATION FOR SPECIAL ASSESSMENT FOR DOMESTIC TRAFFICKING VICTIMS' FUND.

Section 3014(a) of title 18, United States Code, is amended, in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking ''December 16, 2022'' and inserting ''March 10, 2023''.

SEC. 103. UNITED STATES PAROLE COMMISSION EXTENSION.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This section may be cited as the ''United States Parole Commission Further Extension Act of 2022''.

(b) AMENDMENT OF SENTENCING REFORM ACT OF 1984.—For purposes of section 235(b) of the Sentencing Reform Act of 1984 (18 U.S.C. 3551 note; Public Law 98–473; 98 Stat. 2032), as such section relates to chapter 311 of title 18, United States Code, and the United States Parole Commission, each reference in such section to ''35 years'' or ''35-year period'' shall be deemed a reference to ''35 years and 53 days'' or ''35-year and 53-day period'', respectively.

SEC. 104. EXTENSION OF COMMODITY FUTURES TRADING COMMISSION CUSTOMER PROTECTION FUND EXPENSES ACCOUNT.

Section 1(b) of Public Law 117–25 (135 Stat. 297), as amended by section 104 of division C of the Continuing Appropriations and Ukraine Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2023 is amended by striking ''December 16, 2022'' each place it appears and inserting ''March 10, 2023''.

TITLE II—BUDGETARY MATTERS

SEC. 201. PAYGO REPORT.

Notwithstanding subsection (a) of section 5 of the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010 (2 U.S.C. 934), the Office of Management and Budget shall make publicly available the annual PAYGO report required under such subsection for 2022 and prepare any order required under subsection (b) of such section not later than March 11, 2023.

DIVISION C—HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

TITLE I—MEDICARE AND MEDICAID

SEC. 101. EXTENSION OF INCREASED INPATIENT HOSPITAL PAYMENT ADJUSTMENT FOR CERTAIN LOW-VOLUME HOSPITALS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1886(d)(12) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395ww(d)(12)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (B), in the matter preceding clause (i), by striking ''December 17, 2022'' and inserting ''March 11, 2023'';

(2) in subparagraph (C)(i)—

(A) in the matter preceding subclause (I), by striking ''December 16, 2022'' and inserting ''March 10, 2023'';

(B) in subclause (III), by striking ''December 16, 2022'' and inserting ''March 10, 2023''; and

(C) in subclause (IV), by striking ''December 17, 2022'' and inserting ''March 11, 2023''; and

(3) in subparagraph (D)—

(A) in the matter preceding clause (i), by striking ''December 16, 2022'' and inserting ''March 10, 2023''; and

(B) in clause (ii), by striking ''December 16, 2022'' and inserting ''March 10, 2023''.

(b) IMPLEMENTATION.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Health and Human Services may implement the provisions of, including the amendments made by, this section by program instruction or otherwise.

SEC. 102. EXTENSION OF THE MEDICARE-DEPENDENT HOSPITAL PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1886(d)(5)(G) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395ww(d)(5)(G)) is amended—

(1) in clause (i), by striking ''December 17, 2022'' and inserting ''March 11, 2023''; and

(2) in clause (ii)(II), by striking ''December 17, 2022'' and inserting ''March 11, 2023''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) EXTENSION OF TARGET AMOUNTS.—Section 1886(b)(3)(D) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395ww(b)(3)(D)) is amended—

(A) in the matter preceding clause (i), by striking ''December 17, 2022'' and inserting ''March 11, 2023''; and

(B) in clause (iv), by striking ''December 16, 2022'' and inserting ''March 10, 2023''.

(2) PERMITTING HOSPITALS TO DECLINE RECLASSIFICATION.—Section 13501(e)(2) of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993 (42 U.S.C. 1395ww note) is amended by striking ''December 16, 2022'' and inserting ''March 10, 2023''.

SEC. 103. EXTENSION OF INCREASED FMAPS UNDER MEDICAID FOR THE TERRITORIES.

Section 1905(ff) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396d(ff)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2), by striking ''December 16, 2022'' and inserting ''March 10, 2023''; and

(2) in paragraph (3), by striking ''December 16, 2022'' and inserting ''March 10, 2023''.

SEC. 104. MEDICARE IMPROVEMENT FUND.

Section 1898(b)(1) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395iii(b)(1)) is amended by striking ''$7,308,000,000'' and inserting ''$7,278,000,000''.

TITLE II—HUMAN SERVICES

SEC. 201. EXTENSION OF MATERNAL, INFANT, AND EARLY CHILDHOOD HOME VISITING PROGRAMS.

Activities authorized by section 511 of the Social Security Act shall continue through March 10, 2023, and out of any money in the Treasury of the United States not otherwise appropriated, there is hereby appropriated for such purpose an amount equal to the pro rata portion of the amount appropriated for such activities for fiscal year 2022.

SEC. 202. EXTENSION OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES PROGRAMS.

Activities authorized by part B of title IV of the Social Security Act shall continue through March 10, 2023, in the manner authorized for fiscal year 2022, and out of any money in the Treasury of the United States not otherwise appropriated, there are hereby appropriated such sums as may be necessary for such purpose.

TITLE III—EXTENSION OF FDA AUTHORIZATIONS

SEC. 301. REAUTHORIZATION OF THE CRITICAL PATH PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP.

Section 566(f) of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 360bbb–5(f)) is amended by striking ''$1,265,753 for the period beginning on October 1, 2022 and ending on December 16, 2022'' and inserting ''$2,646,574 for the period beginning on October 1, 2022 and ending on March 10, 2023''.

SEC. 302. REAUTHORIZATION OF THE BEST PHARMACEUTICALS FOR CHILDREN PROGRAM.

Section 409I(d)(1) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 284m(d)(1)) is amended by striking ''$5,273,973 for the period beginning on October 1, 2022 and ending on December 16, 2022'' and inserting ''$11,027,398 for the period beginning on October 1, 2022 and ending on March 10, 2023''.

SEC. 303. REAUTHORIZATION OF THE HUMANITARIAN DEVICE EXEMPTION INCENTIVE.

Section 520(m)(6)(A)(iv) of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 360j(m)(6)(A)(iv)) is amended by striking ''December 17, 2022'' and inserting ''March 11, 2023''.

SEC. 304. REAUTHORIZATION OF THE PEDIATRIC DEVICE CONSORTIA PROGRAM.

Section 305(e) of the Pediatric Medical Device Safety and Improvement Act of 2007 (Public Law 110–85; 42 U.S.C. 282 note) is amended by striking ''$1,107,534 for the period beginning on October 1, 2022, and ending on December 16, 2022'' and inserting ''$2,315,753 for the period beginning on October 1, 2022 and ending on March 10, 2023''.

SEC. 305. REAUTHORIZATION OF PROVISION PERTAINING TO DRUGS CONTAINING SINGLE ENANTIOMERS.

Section 505(u)(4) of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 355(u)(4)) is amended by striking ''December 17, 2022'' and inserting ''March 11, 2023''.

SEC. 306. REAUTHORIZATION OF CERTAIN DEVICE INSPECTIONS.

Section 704(g)(11) of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 374(g)(11)) is amended by striking ''December 17, 2022'' and inserting ''March 11, 2023''.

SEC. 307. REAUTHORIZATION OF ORPHAN DRUG GRANTS.

Section 5(c) of the Orphan Drug Act (21 U.S.C. 360ee(c)) is amended by striking ''$6,328,767 for the period beginning on October 1, 2022, and ending on December 16, 2022'' and inserting ''$13,232,876 for the period beginning on October 1, 2022 and ending on March 10, 2023''.

SEC. 308. REAUTHORIZATION OF REPORTING REQUIREMENTS RELATED TO PENDING GENERIC DRUG APPLICATIONS AND PRIORITY REVIEW APPLICATIONS.

Section 807 of the FDA Reauthorization Act of 2017 (Public Law 115–52) is amended, in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking ''December 16, 2022'' and inserting ''March 10, 2023''.

SEC. 309. REAUTHORIZATION OF THIRD-PARTY REVIEW PROGRAM.

Section 523(c) of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 360m(c)) is amended by striking ''December 17, 2022'' and inserting ''March 11, 2023''.

TITLE IV—INDIAN HEALTH

SEC. 401. EXTENSION OF MORATORIUM.

Section 424(a) of title IV of division G of Public Law 113–76 is amended by striking ''December 16, 2022'' and inserting ''March 11, 2023''.

DIVISION D—PRECIP ACT

SEC. 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Providing Research and Estimates of Changes In Precipitation Act'' or the ''PRECIP Act''.

SEC. 2. AMENDMENT TO THE WEATHER RESEARCH AND FORECASTING INNOVATION ACT OF 2017 RELATING TO IMPROVING FEDERAL PRECIPITATION INFORMATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 (15 U.S.C. 8501 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''TITLE VI—IMPROVING FEDERAL PRECIPITATION INFORMATION

''SEC. 601. STUDY ON PRECIPITATION ESTIMATION.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of the PRECIP Act, the Administrator, in consultation with other Federal agencies as appropriate, shall seek to enter an agreement with the National Academies—

''(1) to conduct a study on the state of practice and research needs for precipitation estimation, including probable maximum precipitation estimation; and

''(2) to submit, not later than 24 months after the date on which such agreement is finalized, to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate, and make publicly available on a website, a report on the results of the study under paragraph (1).

''(b) STUDY.—The report under subsection (a) shall include the following:

''(1) An examination of the current state of practice for precipitation estimation at scales appropriate for decisionmaker needs, and rationale for further evolution of this field.

''(2) An evaluation of best practices for precipitation estimation that are based on the best-available science, include considerations of non-stationarity, and can be utilized by the user community.

''(3) A framework for—

''(A) the development of a National Guidance Document for estimating extreme precipitation in future conditions; and

''(B) evaluation of the strengths and challenges of the full spectrum of approaches, including for probable maximum precipitation studies.

''(4) A description of existing research needs in the field of precipitation estimation in order to modernize current methodologies and consider non-stationarity.

''(5) A description of in-situ, airborne, and space-based observation requirements, that could enhance precipitation estimation and development of models, including an examination of the use of geographic information systems and geospatial technology for integration, analysis, and visualization of precipitation data.

''(6) A recommended plan for a Federal research and development program, including specifications for costs, timeframes, and responsible agencies for addressing identified research needs.

''(7) An analysis of the respective roles in precipitation estimation of various Federal agencies, academia, State, tribal, territorial, and local governments, and other public and private stakeholders.

''(8) Recommendations for data management to promote long-term needs such as enabling retrospective analyses and data discoverability, interoperability, and reuse.

''(9) Recommendations for how data and services from the entire enterprise can be best leveraged by the Federal Government.

''(10) A description of non-Federal precipitation data, its accessibility by the Federal Government, and ways for National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to improve or expand such datasets.

''(c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized $1,500,000 to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to carry out this study.

''SEC. 602. IMPROVING PROBABLE MAXIMUM PRECIPITATION ESTIMATES.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date on which the National Academies makes public the report under section 601, the Administrator, in consideration of the report recommendations, shall consult with relevant partners, including users of the data, on the development of a plan to—

''(1) not later than 6 years after the completion of such report and not less than every 10 years thereafter, update probable maximum precipitation estimates for the United States, such that each update considers non-stationarity;

''(2) coordinate with partners to conduct research in the field of extreme precipitation estimation, in accordance with the research needs identified in such report;

''(3) make publicly available, in a searchable, interoperable format, all probable maximum precipitation studies developed by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration that the Administrator has the legal right to redistribute and deemed to be at an appropriate state of development on an internet website of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; and

''(4) ensure all probable maximum precipitation estimate data, products, and supporting documentation and metadata developed by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration are preserved, curated, and served by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, as appropriate.

''(b) NATIONAL GUIDANCE DOCUMENT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROBABLE MAXIMUM PRECIPITATION ESTIMATES.—The Administrator, in collaboration with Federal agencies, State, territorial, Tribal and local governments, academia, and other partners the Administrator deems appropriate, shall develop a National Guidance Document that—

''(1) provides best practices that can be followed by Federal and State regulatory agencies, private meteorological consultants, and

other users that perform probable maximum precipitation studies;

''(2) considers the recommendations provided in the National Academies study under section 601;

''(3) facilitates review of probable maximum precipitation studies by regulatory agencies; and

''(4) provides confidence in regional and site-specific probable maximum precipitation estimates.

''(c) PUBLICATION.—Not later than 2 years after the date on which the National Academies makes public the report under section 601, the Administrator shall make publicly available the National Guidance Document under subsection (b) on an internet website of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

''(d) UPDATES.—The Administrator shall update the National Guidance Document not less than once every 10 years after the publication of the National Guidance Document under subsection (c) and publish such updates in accordance with such subsection.

''SEC. 603. DEFINITIONS.

'' In this title:

''(1) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term 'Administrator' means the Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

''(2) NATIONAL ACADEMIES.—The term 'National Academies' means the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.

''(3) UNITED STATES.—The term 'United States' means, collectively, each State of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Virgin Islands of the United States, and any other territory or possession of the United States.''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 1(b) of the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 (15 U.S.C. 8501 note) is amended in the table of contents by adding at the end the following:

''TITLE VI—IMPROVING FEDERAL PRECIPITATION INFORMATION

''Sec. 601. Study on precipitation estimation.

''Sec. 602. Improving probable maximum precipitation estimates.

''Sec. 603. Definitions.''.

SA 6542. Mr. KING (for Mr. BARRASSO) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 3957, to amend the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act to make certain activities eligible for grants from the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund, and for other purposes; as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Safeguarding Treatment for the Restoration of Ecosystems from Abandoned Mines Act'' or the ''STREAM Act''.

SEC. 2. LONG-TERM ABANDONED MINE LAND RECLAMATION.

Section 40701(c) of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (30 U.S.C. 1231a(c)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''Grants under'' and inserting the following:

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), grants under''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(2) LONG-TERM ABANDONED MINE LAND RECLAMATION.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Not more than 30 percent of the total amount of a grant made annually under subsection (b)(1) may be retained by the recipient of the grant if those amounts are deposited into a long-term abandoned mine land reclamation fund established under State law, from which amounts (together with all interest earned on the amounts) are expended by the State or Indian Tribe, as applicable, for—

''(i) the abatement of the causes and the treatment of the effects of acid mine drainage resulting from coal mining practices, including for the costs of building, operating, maintaining, and rehabilitating acid mine drainage treatment systems;

''(ii) the prevention, abatement, and control of subsidence; or

''(iii) the prevention, abatement, and control of coal mine fires.

''(B) REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—Each recipient of a grant under subsection (b)(1) that deposits grant amounts into a long-term abandoned mine land reclamation fund under subparagraph (A) shall—

''(i) offer amendments to the inventory maintained under section 403(c) of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (30 U.S.C. 1233(c)) to reflect the use of the amounts for—

''(I) acid mine drainage abatement and treatment;

''(II) subsidence prevention, abatement, and control; and

''(III) coal mine fire prevention, abatement, and control; and

''(ii) include in the annual grant report of the recipient information on the status and balance of amounts in the long-term abandoned mine land reclamation fund.

''(C) TERM.—Amounts retained under subparagraph (A) shall not be subject to—

''(i) subsection (d)(4)(B); or

''(ii) any other limitation on the length of the term of an annual grant under subsection (b)(1).''.

SA 6543. Mr. KING (for Mr. SCOTT of Florida) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 688, to prohibit contracting with persons that have business operations with the Maduro regime, and for other purposes; as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Banning Operations and Leases with the Illegitimate Venezuelan Authoritarian Regime Act'' or the ''BOLIVAR Act''.

SEC. 2. PROHIBITION ON CONTRACTING WITH PERSONS THAT HAVE BUSINESS OPERATIONS WITH THE MADURO REGIME.

(a) PROHIBITION.—Except as provided in subsections (b), (c), and (d), the head of an executive agency may not enter into a contract for the procurement of goods or services with any person that the head of an executive agency determines, with the concurrence of the Secretary of State, knowingly engages in significant business operations with an authority of the Government of Venezuela that is not recognized as the legitimate Government of Venezuela by the United States.

(b) EXCEPTIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The prohibition under subsection (a) does not apply to a contract that the Secretary of State determines—

(A) is necessary—

(i) for purposes of providing humanitarian assistance to the people of Venezuela;

(ii) for purposes of providing disaster relief and other urgent life-saving measures; or

(iii) to carry out noncombatant evacuations; or

(B) is in the national security interests of the United States.

(2) SUPPORT FOR UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES.—The prohibition in subsection (a) shall not apply to contracts that support United States Government activities in Venezuela, including those necessary for the maintenance of United States Government facilities in Venezuela, or to contracts with international organizations.

(3) NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENT.—The Secretary of State shall notify the appropriate congressional committees of any contract entered into on the basis of an exception provided for under paragraph (1).

(c) OFFICE OF FOREIGN ASSETS CONTROL LICENSES.—The prohibition in subsection (a) does not apply to a person that has a valid license to operate in Venezuela issued by the Office of Foreign Assets Control.

(d) AMERICAN DIPLOMATIC MISSION IN VENEZUELA.—The prohibition in subsection (a) does not apply to contracts related to the operation and maintenance of the United States Government's consular offices and diplomatic posts in Venezuela.

(e) WAIVER.—The Secretary of State may waive the requirements of subsection (a) if the Secretary of State determines that to do so is in the national interest of the United States.

(f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term ''appropriate congressional committees'' means the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate and the Committee on Homeland Security and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives.

(2) BUSINESS OPERATIONS.—The term ''business operations'' means engaging in commerce in any form, including acquiring, developing, maintaining, owning, selling, possessing, leasing, or operating equipment, facilities, personnel, products, services, personal property, real property, or any other apparatus of business or commerce.

(3) EXECUTIVE AGENCY.—The term ''executive agency'' has the meaning given the term in section 133 of title 41, United States Code.

(4) GOVERNMENT OF VENEZUELA.—(A) The term ''Government of Venezuela'' includes the government of any political subdivision of Venezuela, and any agency or instrumentality of the Government of Venezuela.

(B) For purposes of subparagraph (A), the term ''agency or instrumentality of the Government of Venezuela'' means an agency or instrumentality of a foreign state as defined in section 1603(b) of title 28, United States Code, with each reference in such section to ''a foreign state'' deemed to be a reference to ''Venezuela''.

(5) PERSON.—The term ''person'' means—

(A) a natural person, corporation, company, business association, partnership, society, trust, or any other nongovernmental entity, organization, or group;

(B) any governmental entity or instrumentality of a government; and

(C) any successor, subunit, parent entity, or subsidiary of, or any entity under common ownership or control with, any entity described in subparagraph (A) or (B).

(g) TERM OF APPLICABILITY.—This section shall apply with respect to any contract entered into during the three-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. KING. Mr. President, I have five 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 BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

The Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, December 15, 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 Thursday, December 15, 2022, at 9 a.m., to conduct a business meeting.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

The Special Committee on Aging is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, December 15, 2022, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA AND GLOBAL HEALTH POLICY

The Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health Policy of the Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, December 15, 2022, at 10 a.m., to conduct a classified briefing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON CHEMICAL SAFETY, WASTE MANAGEMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE, AND REGULATORY OVERSIGHT

The Subcommittee on Chemical Safety, Waste Management, Environmental Justice, and Regulatory Oversight of the Committee on Environment and Public Works is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, December 15, 2022, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Jonathan McKernan, a detailee on the Banking Committee, be given floor privileges throughout the remainder of this Congress.

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

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that floor privileges be granted to David Rosner—he is a FERC detailee with my staff on the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources—effective immediately through the end of Congress.

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

BANNING OPERATIONS AND LEASES WITH THE ILLEGITIMATE VENEZUELAN AUTHORITARIAN REGIME ACT

Mr. KING. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 96, S. 688.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 688) to prohibit contracting with persons that have business operations with the Maduro regime, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

Mr. KING. I ask unanimous consent that the Scott substitute amendment at the desk be considered read and agreed to.

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

The amendment (No. 6543) in the nature of a substitute was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: In the nature of a substitute)

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Banning Operations and Leases with the Illegitimate Venezuelan Authoritarian Regime Act'' or the ''BOLIVAR Act''.

SEC. 2. PROHIBITION ON CONTRACTING WITH PERSONS THAT HAVE BUSINESS OPERATIONS WITH THE MADURO REGIME.

(a) PROHIBITION.—Except as provided in subsections (b), (c), and (d), the head of an executive agency may not enter into a contract for the procurement of goods or services with any person that the head of an executive agency determines, with the concurrence of the Secretary of State, knowingly engages in significant business operations with an authority of the Government of Venezuela that is not recognized as the legitimate Government of Venezuela by the United States.

(b) EXCEPTIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The prohibition under subsection (a) does not apply to a contract that the Secretary of State determines—

(A) is necessary—

(i) for purposes of providing humanitarian assistance to the people of Venezuela;

(ii) for purposes of providing disaster relief and other urgent life-saving measures; or

(iii) to carry out noncombatant evacuations; or

(B) is in the national security interests of the United States.

(2) SUPPORT FOR UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES.—The prohibition in subsection (a) shall not apply to contracts that support United States Government activities in Venezuela, including those necessary for the maintenance of United States Government facilities in Venezuela, or to contracts with international organizations.

(3) NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENT.—The Secretary of State shall notify the appropriate congressional committees of any contract entered into on the basis of an exception provided for under paragraph (1).

(c) OFFICE OF FOREIGN ASSETS CONTROL LICENSES.—The prohibition in subsection (a) does not apply to a person that has a valid license to operate in Venezuela issued by the Office of Foreign Assets Control.

(d) AMERICAN DIPLOMATIC MISSION IN VENEZUELA.—The prohibition in subsection (a) does not apply to contracts related to the operation and maintenance of the United States Government's consular offices and diplomatic posts in Venezuela.

(e) WAIVER.—The Secretary of State may waive the requirements of subsection (a) if the Secretary of State determines that to do so is in the national interest of the United States.

(f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term ''appropriate congressional committees'' means the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate and the Committee on Homeland Security and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives.

(2) BUSINESS OPERATIONS.—The term ''business operations'' means engaging in commerce in any form, including acquiring, developing, maintaining, owning, selling, possessing, leasing, or operating equipment, facilities, personnel, products, services, personal property, real property, or any other apparatus of business or commerce.

(3) EXECUTIVE AGENCY.—The term ''executive agency'' has the meaning given the term in section 133 of title 41, United States Code.

(4) GOVERNMENT OF VENEZUELA.—(A) The term ''Government of Venezuela'' includes the government of any political subdivision of Venezuela, and any agency or instrumentality of the Government of Venezuela.

(B) For purposes of subparagraph (A), the term ''agency or instrumentality of the Government of Venezuela'' means an agency or instrumentality of a foreign state as defined in section 1603(b) of title 28, United States Code, with each reference in such section to ''a foreign state'' deemed to be a reference to ''Venezuela''.

(5) PERSON.—The term ''person'' means—

(A) a natural person, corporation, company, business association, partnership, society, trust, or any other nongovernmental entity, organization, or group;

(B) any governmental entity or instrumentality of a government; and

(C) any successor, subunit, parent entity, or subsidiary of, or any entity under common ownership or control with, any entity described in subparagraph (A) or (B).

(g) TERM OF APPLICABILITY.—This section shall apply with respect to any contract entered into during the three-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act.

Mr. KING. I ask that the bill be considered read a third time.

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

The bill was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading and was read the third time.

Mr. KING. I know of no further debate on the bill, as amended.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate?

Hearing none, the bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill pass?

The bill (S. 688), as amended, was passed.

Mr. KING. I further ask that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

SAVING MONEY AND ACCELERATING REPAIRS THROUGH LEASING ACT

Mr. KING. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 486, S. 2793.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2793) to authorize the Administrator of General Services to establish an enhanced use lease pilot program, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Saving Money and Accelerating Repairs Through Leasing Act'' or the ''SMART Leasing Act''.

SEC. 2. ENHANCED USE LEASE PILOT PROGRAM.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term ''Administrator'' means the Administrator of General Services.

(2) PILOT PROGRAM.—The term ''pilot program'' means the enhanced use lease pilot program established under subsection (b).

(3) RELEVANT CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term ''relevant congressional committees'' means—

(A) the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate;

(B) the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate;

(C) the Committee on Oversight and Reform of the House of Representatives; and

(D) the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives.

(b) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Administrator may establish an enhanced use lease pilot program under which the Administrator may authorize Federal agencies to enter into a lease with any person or entity (including another department or agency of the Federal Government or an entity of a State or local government) with regard to any underutilized nonexcess real property and related personal property under the jurisdiction of the Administrator.

(c) MONETARY CONSIDERATION.—

(1) FAIR MARKET VALUE.—A person or entity entering into a lease under the pilot program shall provide monetary consideration for the lease at fair market value, as determined by the Administrator.

(2) UTILIZATION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator may use monetary consideration received under this subsection for a lease entered into under the pilot program to cover the full costs to the Administration in connection with the lease.

(B) CAPITAL REVITALIZATION AND IMPROVEMENTS.—Any amounts of monetary consideration received under this subsection that are not used in accordance with subparagraph (A) shall—

(i) be deposited in a working capital account to be established by the Federal agency engaged in the lease of the property; and

(ii) remain available until expended for maintenance, capital revitalization, and improvements of the real property assets and related personal property at the Federal agency, subject to the concurrence of the Administrator.

(d) ADDITIONAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS.—The Administrator may require such terms and conditions in connection with a lease under the pilot program as the Administrator considers appropriate to protect the interests of the United States.

(e) RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LEASE AUTHORITY.—The authority under the pilot program to lease property under the jurisdiction of the Administrator is in addition to any other authority under Federal law to lease property under the jurisdiction of the Administrator.

(f) WAIVER.—A property leased under the pilot program shall not be subject to section 501 of the McKinney–Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11411) before leasing the property under such pilot program.

(g) LEASE RESTRICTIONS.—

(1) NO LEASEBACK OR GUARANTEED SERVICE CONTRACT.—The Administrator may not lease back property under the pilot program during the term of the lease or enter into guaranteed service or similar contracts with the lessee relating to the property.

(2) CERTIFICATION.—The Administrator may not enter into a lease under the pilot program unless the Administrator certifies that the lease will not have a negative impact on the mission of the Administrator or the applicable Federal agency.

(3) MAXIMUM NUMBER OF LEASES.—The Administrator may enter into not more than 6 leases under the pilot program during each fiscal year.

(4) DURATION OF LEASES.—The Administrator may not enter into a lease under the pilot program with a term of more than 15 years.

(h) REPORTING.—

(1) ANNUAL REPORTS.—Not later than January 31 of each year, the Administrator shall submit to the relevant congressional committees a report on the pilot program, including—

(A) a description of each lease entered into under the pilot program, including the value of the lease, the amount of consideration received, and the use of the consideration received; and

(B) the availability and use of the funds received under the pilot program for the Administrator or the Federal agency engaged in the lease of nonexcess real property and related personal property.

(2) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than September 30, 2024, the Administrator shall submit to the relevant congressional committees a final report on the pilot program, including a recommendation on whether the pilot program should be extended.

(i) DURATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The authority to enter into leases under the pilot program shall expire on September 30, 2024.

(2) SAVINGS PROVISION.—The expiration under this subsection of authority to enter into leases under the pilot program shall not affect the validity or term of leases or the retention of proceeds by the Federal agency from leases entered into under the pilot program before the expiration of the authority.

Mr. KING. I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported substitute amendment 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 amendment in the nature of a substitute was agreed to.

The bill (S. 2793), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

COMMEMORATING THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF OPERATION PROVIDE COMFORT

Mr. KING. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 612, S. Con Res. 16.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the concurrent resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 16) commemorating the 30th anniversary of Operation Provide Comfort.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution, which had been reported from the Committee on Foreign Relations, with an amendment to strike all after the resolving clause and insert the part printed in italic, and with an amendment to the preamble to insert the part printed in italic, as follows:

Whereas, in March 1991, Saddam Hussein responded to an uprising in Iraqi Kurdistan with a violent military campaign that included the use of chemical weapons against the citizens of Iraqi Kurdistan, most of whom were unarmed civilians;

Whereas Saddam Hussein's forces killed approximately 200,000 Iraqi Kurds, destroyed approximately 4,500 Iraqi Kurdish villages, and displaced hundreds of thousands of Iraqi Kurds who fled to the northern and eastern borders of Iraq, fearing that the regime would use chemical weapons against them, as it did during Saddam Hussein's Anfal campaign, including the Halabja chemical weapon attack only 3 years before;

Whereas, at one point in the early days of the 1991 crisis, the daily death toll of fleeing Iraqi Kurds exceeded 1,000, with victims succumbing to exposure, malnutrition, and disease;

Whereas, the United States, in response to the unfolding humanitarian catastrophe, led Operation Provide Comfort, delivering humanitarian relief and enforcing a no-fly zone, saving the lives of countless thousands of Iraqi Kurds from near certain death on the freezing and rugged border mountains of Iraqi Kurdistan;

Whereas Operation Provide Comfort provided security and stability in Iraqi Kurdistan; and

Whereas the Kurdistan regional government and the Kurdish Peshmerga remain steadfast partners of the United States in the fight against extremism and terrorism: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring),

That Congress—

(1) commemorates the 30th anniversary of Operation Provide Comfort;

(2) recognizes and honors the soldiers, diplomats, political leaders, and coalition partners of the United States who implemented Operation Provide Comfort;

(3) recognizes and honors the nearly 2,000,000 Iraqis, mostly Kurds, who were displaced by the Hussein regime and who survived starvation and exposure, and for whom Operation Provide Comfort offered assistance, security, and a chance for a new life;

(4) encourages Iraqi Kurdish leaders to continue to uphold the values of democracy, human rights, and freedom; and

(5) reaffirms—

(A) the strong partnership between the United States and the Iraqi Kurds, which exists in complementarity with the United States strong partnership with the Government of Iraq; and

(B) the enduring respect and support of Congress for Iraqi Kurds, who continue to stand with the United States in shared opposition to extremism and terrorism.

Mr. KING. I further ask that the committee-reported substitute amendment be agreed to; the resolution, as amended, be agreed to; the committee-reported substitute amendment to the preamble be agreed to; the preamble, as amended, be agreed to; and 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 committee-reported amendment in the nature of a substitute was agreed to.

The resolution (S. Con. Res. 16), as amended, was agreed to.

The committee-reported amendment to the preamble in the nature of a substitute was agreed to.

The preamble, as amended, was agreed to.

FOR THE RELIEF OF REBECCA TRIMBLE

Mr. KING. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 681, which was received from the House.

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

The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 681) for the relief of Rebecca Trimble.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. KING. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The bill (H.R. 681) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

ENERGY SECURITY AND LIGHTERING INDEPENDENCE ACT OF 2022

Mr. KING. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of S. 5168 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 5168) to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to include aliens passing in transit through the United States to board a vessel on which the alien will perform ship-to-ship liquid cargo transfer operations within a class of nonimmigrant aliens, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. KING. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The bill (S. 5168) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed as follows:

S. 5168

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 ''Energy Security and Lightering Independence Act of 2022''.

SEC. 2. CHANGES IN NONIMMIGRANT CATEGORIES.

(a) TRANSIT THROUGH UNITED STATES.—Section 101(a)(15)(C) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(15)(C)) is amended to read as follows:

''(C)(i) an alien in immediate and continuous transit through the United States, for a period not to exceed 29 days;

''(ii) an alien who qualifies as a person entitled to pass in transit to and from the United Nations Headquarters District (as defined in section 209A(e) of the State Department Basic Authorities Act of 1956 (22 U.S.C. 4309a(e))) and foreign countries, under the provisions of paragraphs (3), (4), and (5) of section 11 of the Agreement regarding the Headquarters of the United Nations, done at Lake Success June 26, 1947 (61 Stat. 758); or

''(iii) an alien passing in transit through the United States to board a vessel on which the alien will perform, or to disembark from a vessel on which the alien performed, ship-to-ship liquid cargo transfer operations to or from another vessel engaged in foreign trade, for a period not to exceed 180 days;''.

(b) ALIEN CREWMEN.—Section 101(a)(15)(D) of such Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(15)(D)) is amended—

(1) in clause (ii), by adding ''or'' at the end; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(iii) an alien crewman performing ship-to-ship liquid cargo transfer operations to or from another vessel engaged in foreign trade, who intends to land temporarily solely in pursuit of the alien's responsibilities as a crewman and to depart from the United States on the vessel on which the alien arrived or on another vessel or aircraft, for a period not to exceed 180 days;''.

SEC. 3. CONDITIONAL PERMITS TO LAND TEMPORARILY.

Section 252(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1282(a)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking ''or'' at the end;

(2) in paragraph (2), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; or''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(3) 180 days, if the immigration officer determines that the crewman—

''(A) intends to depart, within the period for which the crewman is permitted to land, on the same vessel or on a vessel or aircraft other than the vessel on which the crewman arrived; and

''(B) will perform ship-to-ship liquid cargo transfer operations to or from any other vessel engaged in foreign trade during such period.''.

SEC. 4. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.

For purposes of this Act, and the amendments made by this Act, the performance by a crewman of ship-to-ship liquid cargo transfer operations to or from any other vessel engaged in foreign trade shall not be considered, for immigration purposes, to be services, work, labor or employment by the crewman within the United States.

COMMENDING AND CONGRATULATING THE NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY LUMBERJACKS MEN'S CROSS COUNTRY TEAM FOR WINNING THE 2022 NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION CROSS COUNTRY NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Mr. KING. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 865 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 865) commending and congratulating the Northern Arizona University Lumberjacks men's cross country team for winning the 2022 National Collegiate Athletic Association Cross Country National Championship.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. KING. Madam President, 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 with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 865) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of December 8, 2022, under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

WAR CRIMES REWARDS EXPANSION ACT

Mr. KING. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 416, H.R. 4250.

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

The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 4250) to amend the State Department Basic Authorities Act of 1956 to provide for rewards for the arrest or conviction of certain foreign nationals who have committed genocide or war crimes, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Foreign Relations.

Mr. KING. 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. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (H.R. 4250) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING PREVENTION ACT OF 2022

Mr. KING. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 7181, and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 7181) to amend the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 to direct the Secretary of Transportation to seek to provide for the posting of contact information of the national human trafficking hotline in the restrooms of each aircraft, airport, over-the-road bus, bus station, passenger train, and passenger railroad station operating within the United States, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. KING. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The bill (H.R. 7181) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

SAFEGUARDING TREATMENT FOR THE RESTORATION OF ECOSYSTEMS FROM ABANDONED MINES ACT

Mr. KING. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be discharged from further consideration of S. 3957, and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 3957) to amend the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act to make certain activities eligible for grants from the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. KING. I ask unanimous consent that the Barrasso substitute amendment at the desk be considered and agreed to, and the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time.

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

The amendment (No. 6542), in the nature of a substitute, was agreed to as follows:

(Purpose: In the nature of a substitute)

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Safeguarding Treatment for the Restoration of Ecosystems from Abandoned Mines Act'' or the ''STREAM Act''.

SEC. 2. LONG-TERM ABANDONED MINE LAND RECLAMATION.

Section 40701(c) of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (30 U.S.C. 1231a(c)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''Grants under'' and inserting the following:

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), grants under''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(2) LONG-TERM ABANDONED MINE LAND RECLAMATION.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Not more than 30 percent of the total amount of a grant made annually under subsection (b)(1) may be retained by the recipient of the grant if those amounts are deposited into a long-term abandoned mine land reclamation fund established under State law, from which amounts (together with all interest earned on the amounts) are expended by the State or Indian Tribe, as applicable, for—

''(i) the abatement of the causes and the treatment of the effects of acid mine drainage resulting from coal mining practices, including for the costs of building, operating, maintaining, and rehabilitating acid mine drainage treatment systems;

''(ii) the prevention, abatement, and control of subsidence; or

''(iii) the prevention, abatement, and control of coal mine fires.

''(B) REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—Each recipient of a grant under subsection (b)(1) that deposits grant amounts into a long-term abandoned mine land reclamation fund under subparagraph (A) shall—

''(i) offer amendments to the inventory maintained under section 403(c) of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (30 U.S.C. 1233(c)) to reflect the use of the amounts for—

''(I) acid mine drainage abatement and treatment;

''(II) subsidence prevention, abatement, and control; and

''(III) coal mine fire prevention, abatement, and control; and

''(ii) include in the annual grant report of the recipient information on the status and balance of amounts in the long-term abandoned mine land reclamation fund.

''(C) TERM.—Amounts retained under subparagraph (A) shall not be subject to—

''(i) subsection (d)(4)(B); or

''(ii) any other limitation on the length of the term of an annual grant under subsection (b)(1).''.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading and was read the third time.

Mr. KING. I know of no further debate on the bill, as amended.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate on the bill?

Hearing none, the bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill pass?

The bill (S. 3957), as amended, was passed.

Mr. KING. I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

AMENDING TITLE 38, UNITED STATES CODE, TO DIRECT THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO PROVIDE FOR PEER SUPPORT SPECIALISTS FOR CLAIMANTS WHO ARE SURVIVORS OF MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA

Mr. KING. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Veterans' Affairs be discharged and the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 2724.

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

The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2724) to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide for peer support specialists for claimants who are survivors of military sexual trauma, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. KING. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The bill (H.R. 2724) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

ORDERS FOR MONDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2022

Mr. KING. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 3 p.m. on Monday, December 19, and 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 proceed to executive session for the consideration of the Gruenberg nomination.

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

Mr. KING. For the information of the Senate, Senators should expect a rollcall vote at approximately 5:30 p.m. on Monday, December 19.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL MONDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2022, AT 3 P.M.

Mr. KING. Madam President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 10:02 p.m., adjourned until Monday, December, 19, 2022, at 3 p.m.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate December 15, 2022:

THE JUDICIARY

MUSETTA TIA JOHNSON, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE A JUDGE OF THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE ARMED FORCES FOR A TERM OF FIFTEEN YEARS TO EXPIRE ON THE DATE PRESCRIBED BY LAW.

KENDRA DAVIS BRIGGS, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE AN ASSOCIATE JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FOR THE TERM OF FIFTEEN YEARS.

ERROL RAJESH ARTHUR, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE AN ASSOCIATE JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FOR THE TERM OF FIFTEEN YEARS.

LESLIE A. MEEK, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE AN ASSOCIATE JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FOR THE TERM OF FIFTEEN YEARS.

CARL EZEKIEL ROSS, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE AN ASSOCIATE JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FOR THE TERM OF FIFTEEN YEARS.

LAURA E. CRANE, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE AN ASSOCIATE JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FOR THE TERM OF FIFTEEN YEARS.

VERONICA M. SANCHEZ, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE AN ASSOCIATE JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FOR THE TERM OF FIFTEEN YEARS.

VIJAY SHANKER, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE AN ASSOCIATE JUDGE OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE TERM OF FIFTEEN YEARS.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

KATHLEEN ANN KAVALEC, 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 ROMANIA.

JESSICA DAVIS BA, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF COTE D'IVOIRE.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

HENRY C. LEVENTIS, OF TENNESSEE, TO BE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF TENNESSEE FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS.

MICHAEL D. BLACK, OF OHIO, TO BE UNITED STATES MARSHAL FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF OHIO FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS.

CATRINA A. THOMPSON, OF NORTH CAROLINA, TO BE UNITED STATES MARSHAL FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF NORTH CAROLINA FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS.

IN THE AIR FORCE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be brigadier general

COL. DAVID C. EPPERSON

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be brigadier general

COL. THOMAS P. SHERMAN

IN THE MARINE CORPS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be lieutenant general

MAJ. GEN. FRANCIS L. DONOVAN

IN THE AIR FORCE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED AIR NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12212:

To be major general

BRIG. GEN. DONALD K. CARPENTER
BRIG. GEN. SAMUEL C. KEENER
BRIG. GEN. MARK W. MITCHUM
BRIG. GEN. MARK D. PIPER

THE FOLLOWING NAMED AIR NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be lieutenant general

MAJ. GEN. STEVEN S. NORDHAUS

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be brigadier general

COL. PAIGE M. JENNINGS

IN THE NAVY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be rear admiral (lower half)

CAPT. JONATHAN T. STEPHENS

IN THE MARINE CORPS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be major general

BRIG. GEN. MARCUS B. ANNIBALE
BRIG. GEN. LORNA M. MAHLOCK
BRIG. GEN. JOSEPH A. MATOS III
BRIG. GEN. DAVID L. ODOM
BRIG. GEN. THOMAS B. SAVAGE
BRIG. GEN. WILLIAM H. SWAN
BRIG. GEN. BRIAN N. WOLFORD
BRIG. GEN. CALVERT L. WORTH, JR.

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be general

LT. GEN. CHARLES R. HAMILTON

IN THE AIR FORCE

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH KIMBERLY N. BARR AND ENDING WITH BENJAMIN D. YOUNGQUIST, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON AUGUST 3, 2022.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH NATHAN J. ABEL AND ENDING WITH BAI LAN ZHU, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON AUGUST 3, 2022.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH BILLY S. ALLEN AND ENDING WITH JOSHUA D. WILD, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON AUGUST 3, 2022.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH ALLEN Y. AGNES AND ENDING WITH JOSE L. ZAMBRANO, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON AUGUST 3, 2022.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH DANIEL A. BUNCH AND ENDING WITH MICHAEL WILLIAM SUDEN, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON AUGUST 3, 2022.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH DEAR BELOVED AND ENDING WITH JOHN T. SZCZEPANSKI, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON AUGUST 3, 2022.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH KARLA E. ADAMS AND ENDING WITH JESSE M. WICKHAM, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON SEPTEMBER 8, 2022.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH JACQUELINE E. BVLGARI AND ENDING WITH KELLY L. VERMILLION, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON SEPTEMBER 8, 2022.

AIR FORCE NOMINATION OF KEENAN E. DALRYMPLE, TO BE MAJOR.

AIR FORCE NOMINATION OF SUSAN D. BAUMGARTNER, TO BE MAJOR.

AIR FORCE NOMINATION OF STIGEN A. WESTBERG, TO BE MAJOR.

AIR FORCE NOMINATION OF BEAU D. GRAHAM, TO BE MAJOR.

AIR FORCE NOMINATION OF KRISTEN M. BARRA, TO BE MAJOR.

AIR FORCE NOMINATION OF EVANS R. WRIGHT, TO BE MAJOR.

AIR FORCE NOMINATION OF JEREMY A. KROHNGOLD, TO BE MAJOR.

AIR FORCE NOMINATION OF CHANDRAMOULI RAJARAM, TO BE LIEUTENANT COLONEL.

IN THE ARMY

ARMY NOMINATION OF SEAN P. HUTCHISON, TO BE MAJOR.

ARMY NOMINATION OF ANDREW K. ARRINGTON, TO BE LIEUTENANT COLONEL.

ARMY NOMINATION OF CHRISTOPHER A. KREILER, TO BE COLONEL.

ARMY NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH MICHAEL A. RIZZOTTI AND ENDING WITH BRETT C. SHEPARD, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON DECEMBER 7, 2022.

ARMY NOMINATION OF RONALD W. SPRANG, TO BE COLONEL.

ARMY NOMINATION OF RYAN C. AGEE, TO BE COLONEL.

ARMY NOMINATION OF PHILIP J. DEAGUILERA, TO BE COLONEL.

ARMY NOMINATION OF BRIAN C. BELDOWICZ, TO BE COLONEL.

ARMY NOMINATION OF CHRISTOPHER A. BENSON, TO BE MAJOR.

IN THE MARINE CORPS

MARINE CORPS NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH DAVID AHN AND ENDING WITH JAY M. ZARRA, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON DECEMBER 7, 2022.

IN THE NAVY

NAVY NOMINATION OF TAPEKA C. PRINGLE, TO BE LIEUTENANT COMMANDER.

IN THE SPACE FORCE

SPACE FORCE NOMINATION OF ASHTON M. SHELTON, TO BE MAJOR.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

REPLACEMENT OF BUST OF ROGER BROOKE TANEY WITH BUST OF THURGOOD MARSHALL

SPEECH OF

HON. NANCY PELOSI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 14, 2022

Ms. PELOSI. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of S. 5229, legislation to:

remove the bust of Roger Taney from the United States Capitol

and commission a new statue honoring Justice Thurgood Marshall.

Let us salute those who have fought for this action in the House:

Leader STENY HOYER

Whip JIM CLYBURN

CBC Chair JOYCE BEATTY

Chair BENNIE THOMPSON

Congresswoman BARBARA LEE

Congressman G. K. BUTTERFIELD and our former colleague, Mayor Karen Bass.

Driven by their leadership, this Chamber has proudly and repeatedly voted to remove statues of Taney, Confederate officials and other advocates of bigotry from the Capitol grounds.

The House is grateful to the Senate for taking an important step forward—voting unanimously to remove this vile tribute to Taney—author of the horrendous Dred Scott ruling.

We look forward to swiftly sending this bill to the President's desk, and we remain committed to sweeping out other vestiges of hate from the halls of Congress.

This building is a Temple of Democracy. It is a monument to our nation's most fundamental ideals.

It reflects all that we take pride in as a nation—and so too should the tributes that grace its halls.

They should honor those who sought to strengthen our Democracy for all—not weaken it in favor of a few.

They should honor those who fought to expand freedom—not restrict its blessings.

There is no room for celebrating the violent, racist atrocities of our past—nor those who championed them.

That is why, in 2020, I proudly ordered the removal of the portraits of four Speakers who traitorously served in the Confederacy.

It is why the House has voted to remove Confederate statues from the Capitol.

And it is why we have made clear again and again that Roger Taney must have no place under this sacred roof.

Taney's legacy is one of hatred and oppression:

a mind twisted by bigotry

and a lifetime spent defending the evils of slavery.

He is inextricably linked to one of the most horrific chapters of our history. And yet, this bigot's likeness still casts a shadow over the Old Supreme Court Chamber.

Who better to replace him than one of the most admired jurists of our history: Justice Thurgood Marshall.

A trailblazing champion of civil rights—a voice for equal justice under the law and a force for our Democracy—Justice Marshall sought to uphold the best of America.

Personally, I will be deeply proud to see this Baltimore native take his rightful place amid the Capitol's pantheon of great American patriots.

His statue will bring luster to this building, just as his legacy continues to bring luster to our nation: guiding America toward the future our children deserve—one ruled by understanding, not prejudice.

Indeed, speaking in Philadelphia's Independence Hall three decades ago, Justice Marshall warned:

"Democracy cannot flourish amid fear. Liberty cannot bloom amid hate. Justice cannot take root amid rage."

Today, the Congress honors those words. With this vote, we toss into the dustbin of history a monument to fear—to hate—to rage.

With this vote, we renew our resolve to ensure that:

Democracy will flourish

liberty will bloom

and justice will take root, from sea to shining sea.

Mr. Speaker, I urge a resounding, bipartisan 'aye' vote to finally send this bill to the President for signature.

HONORING CONGRESSWOMAN CARRIE PITTMAN MEEK

HON. FREDERICA S. WILSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Madam Speaker, from the 24th District of the great State of Florida, I rise today to recognize and honor the life and legacy of Congresswoman Carrie Pittman Meek and commend her for her devotion to the Nation and its ideals.

Whereas, Carrie Mae Pittman was born on April 29, 1926, in Tallahassee, Florida, where she was raised, the youngest of 12 children of Willie and Carrie Pittman. She was the daughter of sharecroppers and granddaughter of a slave; and

Whereas, Congresswoman Meek earned a bachelor's degree in biology and physical education from Florida A&M University while setting records as a track and field athlete. Due to a ban in Florida that prevented Black students from attending State graduate schools, Ms. Meek enrolled at the University of Michigan, where she earned a master's degree in public health and physical education; and

Whereas, upon graduation, she accepted a position at Bethune Cookman College as an instructor and became the institution's first female basketball coach. In 1958, she returned to Florida A&M as an instructor in Health and Physical Education; a position she held until 1961. Meek continued her teaching career at Miami Dade Community College as the first Black professor, associate dean, and assistant to the Vice President from 1961 to 1979; and

Whereas, in 1979, Meek began her trailblazing political career as a Democratic Florida State House Representative. From 1983 to 1993, she served as the first African American woman in the Florida State Senate and went on to become a United States Congresswoman representing Florida's 17th Congressional district. One of the first Black members from Florida elected to Congress since the Reconstruction Era, Meek was a member of the powerful Appropriations Committee and worked to secure $100 million in aid to rebuild Dade County as the area recovered from Hurricane Andrew. While in the House, Congresswoman Meek focused her attention on issues such as economic development, health care, education, and housing. She led legislation through Congress to improve Dade County's transit system, airport, and seaport; to construct a new family and childcare center in northern Dade County; and to fund advanced aviation training programs at Miami-Dade Community College. Meek emerged as a strong advocate for Haitian immigrants and senior citizens; and

Whereas, Ms. Meek later retired from public office in 2002 and founded the Carrie Meek Foundation, which provides the Miami-Dade community with critical resources, opportunities, and jobs. Ms. Meek was awarded honorary Juris Doctor degrees from the University of Miami, Florida A&M University, Barry University, Florida Atlantic University, and Rollins College. Ms. Meek was inducted into the Florida A&M University Sports Hall of Fame and honored with the co-naming of its James N. Eaton, Sr., Southeastern Regional Black Archives Research Center and Museum in Tallahassee, Florida. Ms. Meek was honored with the renaming of Broward County's Nova Southeastern College's Outstanding Education Leadership Achievement Scholarship and Miami, Florida's Northwest 27th Boulevard; and

Whereas, Congresswoman Meek leaves to continue her work and carry on her legacy her children: Lucia Davis-Raiford, Sheila Davis Kinui (Mike), Kendrick B. Meek (Arshi); grandchildren: Ayo Raiford Barrett, Maggie Aldophe, Ryan C. Aldophe, Amber F. Kinui, Carrie Y. Kinui, Lauren Meek, Kendrick Meek, Jr.; great-grandchildren: Alana Barrett, Carissa Barrett, Anya Bonhomme, Bryce Lim, Chloe Raiford, Aidan Barrett. Woven into the tapestry of her life were special nieces and nephews: Juanita Pittman Bivins, Betty J. Pittman, Samuel Pittman, Jr. (Shirley), Cynthia G. Gilliam, Dr. Vincent June, Carmen V. Terry, Dorothy Ottman, Left to mourn her and sit in the shade under the trees in the forest she planted are a host of family members, dear cherished friends, and a beloved community; and Now, therefore, be it

Resolved That I, FREDERICA S. WILSON, a member of the United States House of Representatives representing the 24th Congressional District of Florida, am honored to recognize the late Congresswoman Carrie Pittman

Meek for her exemplary career and contributions to public service, the people of Florida, and the American people.

RECOGNIZING WILLIAM EDWARD MORGAN

HON. BETH VAN DUYNE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Ms. VAN DUYNE. Madam Speaker, on behalf of a grateful nation and the citizens of the Twenty-Fourth District of Texas, the 2022 Congressional Veteran Commendation is hereby presented to William Edward Morgan, Hospital Corpsman First Class, United States Navy, of Coppell, Texas for the honorable service he performed while in the Armed Forces of the United States of America and for his continued service to his community.

Dr. Morgan enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 1975 and served in the Hospital Corps. He was assigned as a special operations/combat swimmer capable Corpsman with 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion, 3rd Marine Division and then deployed on ship in the Asia Pacific. During his time in the Navy he rendered aid to a boat of Vietnamese refugees who had been attacked by pirates, was in elite Navy diving units, and part of the detail to raise President Franklin Roosevelt's presidential yacht from the San Francisco Bay.

The selflessness Dr. Morgan demonstrated in the U.S. Navy continues with his service to his community. He served as a doctor for 18 years at the Walter Reed Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland and later in the White House Medical Unit and on the U.S. Naval Academy's Sports Medicine Team. He currently sits on the Department of Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee on Prosthetics and Special Disabilities and as the president of Parker University here in Dallas. He has been instrumental in helping rebuild Parker University after it suffered incredible damage from a tornado in 2019. He has also expanded student veterans services at the university, as well as provided considerable support for the school's Yellow Ribbon program.

Dr. Morgan's service is consistent with the finest traditions of the United States Navy and reflects great credit upon himself, the State of Texas, and the United States of America.

HONORING THE LIFE OF RICHARD CHARLES TARTE

HON. LISA C. McCLAIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Mrs. McCLAIN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Richard Charles Tarte who passed away on November 1, 2022, at the age of 86.

Richard was born on September 14, 1936, to Charles and Eva Tarte, and grew up in Garden City, Michigan. On August 28, 1959, Richard joined the Army and was a part of Company D, 3rd Engineer Battalion in Germany. During his service, he made the rank of Specialist 4th class before being honorably discharged on July 31, 1965.

Richard learned the carpentry trade from his father and after finishing his career in the service started his own roofing and siding company. He also married Sally and made Jackson, Michigan a home. He was a resident of Jackson until his passing.

Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to recognize the life of this great American. I send my most heartfelt condolences to Richard's many loved ones, and I hope they find comfort during this difficult time in the knowledge that Richard lived a full, enriching life. There is nothing more one can ask for. We thank Richard for his service to our country and to his community.

HONORING SANDHILLS COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENT DR. JOHN R. DEMPSEY FOR 33 YEARS OF LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE

HON. RICHARD HUDSON

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Mr. HUDSON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Sandhills Community College President Dr. John R. Dempsey for 33 years of leadership and service within our community. President Dempsey will retire at the end of the year.

President Dempsey began his career in education in 1974 as a professor and associate dean at The College of Charleston. He later served as President of Belmont Abbey College before becoming President of Sandhills Community College in 1989. His 33 year tenure is the longest at a single institution among all current community college presidents in North Carolina.

President Dempsey's robust background and skillful leadership has positively transformed Sandhills Community College to better support all in our community. His tactful fundraising improved the College's endowment from $1 million to $50 million, which currently stands as the second highest among community colleges in North Carolina. He instituted the Sandhills Promise program, which provides free tuition for two years to any student from Moore or Hoke County, and the Guarantors program, which provides financial assistance to established Sandhills students who come across unexpected financial troubles. Additionally, he further developed the College's Hoke Center satellite campus by improving its facilities and instituting the SandHoke Early College in coordination with Hoke County Schools. He has overseen numerous projects on Sandhills' main campus, including the conversion of the auditorium into the multi-venue Bradshaw Performing Arts Center. President Dempsey's work has also been crucial in ensuring that instructors at the College receive proper care. He established a hierarchical system of organization to distinguish professors and associate professors, and his colleagues have widely remarked on his commitment to and success in providing instructors with necessary resources and materials. For his outstanding service, President Dempsey has been awarded many civic honors and awards. Perhaps most impressively, he became the inaugural recipient of the United Way of Moore County's Cornerstone Award in 2004.

Such impressive accomplishments represent only a fraction of President Dempsey's impact on Sandhills Community College and our community more broadly. I would like to offer my most heartfelt appreciation to President Dempsey for his committed and impactful leadership, and I join our entire community in gratitude as we honor his extraordinary career.

Madam Speaker, please join me today in honoring Sandhills Community College President, Dr. John R. Dempsey for his career of exemplary leadership and service to his community.

RECOGNIZING PETER MORIN

HON. WILLIAM R. KEATING

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Mr. KEATING. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Peter Morin as he retires after 36 years of public service to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the South Shore community.

Inspired by Atticus Finch in To Kill a Mockingbird, Peter knew from a young age that he wanted to be a lawyer. After receiving his Bachelor of Arts in political science from George Washington University and his Juris Doctor from Western New England University School of Law, Peter first began his extensive career in public service as counsel to the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health in 1986, and later became the agency's director of investigations. For over two decades, Peter diligently served the people of Massachusetts, working for the state government in a variety of roles, including general counsel to the Massachusetts Board of Registration in Medicine; senior litigation counsel and director of performance measurement for the Massachusetts Department of Correction; and director of civil process and investigations for the Norfolk County Sheriffs Office.

Seeing how measures passed at the municipal level could help and directly impact those in his community, Peter was always involved with local government in his hometown of Braintree, Massachusetts. Even throughout his years working as an attorney for the Commonwealth, Peter consistently volunteered for town committees and meetings and was elected to town wide office as a selectman and assessor. After serving as chairman of the Braintree Charter Commission, Peter moved from volunteering to working for the Town of Braintree fulltime in 2008, as the chief of staff and operations for Braintree's first mayor, Joseph Sullivan, and helped the town transition from a town meeting form of government to a mayor-council form. Peter then served as Braintree town solicitor before continuing his work at the municipal level as town administrator for the nearby Town of Norwell in 2015.

Over the past 7 years as town administrator, Peter has acted as Norwell's chief operating officer, overseeing the daily operations of the town, and handling the budget and much of the behind-the-scenes operations. Following the onset of the COVID–19 pandemic, Peter helped the town navigate and integrate new safety protocol and remote work to allow town operations to continue while ensuring that his colleagues felt safe and supported in their work during a time of uncertainty.

After three decades of public service, Peter retires from Nowell this December. Peter has dedicated his career to serving the people of Massachusetts and the South Shore, and I wish him many years of well-deserved happiness in retirement.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to honor Peter Morin, and I ask that my colleagues join me in recognizing his career and commitment to serving his community and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

HONORING JUDGE FREDERICK P. AGUIRRE

HON. J. LUIS CORREA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Mr. CORREA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the extraordinary achievements and career of retired California Superior Court Judge Frederick P. Aguirre.

Judge Aguirre attributes every opportunity he had in life to the heroism of his family, particularly his father, who played a major role in helping desegregate the schools he and his siblings attended in Placentia, California.

A graduate of the University of Southern California and the University of California at Los Angeles Law School, Judge Aguirre learned to appreciate that it was the service of his father in the U.S. Military, along with numerous other family members, that gave his padre the power to stand up to the inequity he saw after returning home from World War II.

Aguirre's father, Alfred, Uncles Richard and Joe, and 23 assorted cousins all served in Germany, Italy, North Africa, the Pacific in all branches of the U.S. Military during World War II, He also had 6 cousins who served in the Korean War and others who are still military members.

After returning from war, many of those servicemen, now accustomed to receiving the same treatment as white soldiers, did not stand by when their children were expected to attend separate schools. Aguirre's father, who worked in construction the rest of his life, joined the fight to integrate Orange County Schools, eventually becoming the first Hispanic City Councilman in Placentia.

Because of the sacrifices of his antepasados ancestors, Aguirre achieved success as a lawyer and as a judge. His wife, Linda, whose father and 5 uncles served in World War II and Korea, also experienced an accomplished career as a teacher for 3 decades in the Anaheim Union High School District. The couple, who never forgot the freedom and opportunities their forefathers provided, realized it was now time for them to reciprocate by researching and documenting the pivotal—and largely unknown—role Mexican Americans from Orange County played in U.S. military history,

Under the non-profit Latino Advocates for Education, Frederick and Linda, along with research partner Rogelio Rodriguez, produced books, a documentary and a website, which is now managed by the Orange County Department of Education.

Their recognition efforts also involved holding numerous community events to honor Latino veterans at local colleges and universities. These events continue today, most recently with Chapman University's History Department, which has taken on the task of recording oral histories of Orange County's Latino veterans.

Judge Aguirre's efforts to recognize and honor Latino veterans calls attention to his dedication in uplifting his Hispanic community. Throughout his professional career, he served as the President of the Orange County Hispanic Bar Association, as well as the President of the League of United Latin American Citizen.

Among his many accolades, he was recognized in 2014 as one of the ''101 Influential Latinos in the U.S.'' by Latino Leaders Magazine. Additionally, Mr, Aguirre was named Judge of the Year by the Hispanic Bar Association of Orange County in 2003.

Frederick Aguirre has created a legacy with roots that trace back to his father, a WWII veteran, his mother, Julia, who supported the war effort as a Rosie the Riveter working at Douglas Aircraft in Long Beach, and to his many relatives who served honorably in the U.S. Military,

For his efforts, the world now knows the names of the Mexican-Americans who made the ultimate sacrifice in service to their country. I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating the legacy of Judge Frederick P. Aguirre's work to ensure that Mexican-American veterans will be remembered honorably in American history.

HONORING COMMISSIONER ROBERT SHELLEY

HON. FREDERICA S. WILSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Madam Speaker, from the 24th District of the great State of Florida, I rise today to honor Robert Shelley for his stellar service and contributions as Commissioner of the City of Aventura.

Someone once said this about local government, ''when you are in local government, you are on the ground, and you are looking into the eyes and hearts of the people you are there to serve. It teaches you to listen; it teaches you to be expansive in the people with whom you talk to; and that engagement gives you political judgment.''

It is this same standard of leadership and approach that has distinguished his success at the City of Aventura. With input given from passionate public servants like Commissioner Shelley, Aventura is certain to have a bright future guided by a grounded approach to local governance, cooperation, and investment in the well-being of this community achieved during his tenure in office as a Commissioner.

Madam Speaker, please join me in honoring Commissioner Robert Shelley for the completion of his term in office, his time, his commitment, and outstanding contribution representing the residents of the City Aventura.

RECOGNIZING COUNCILOR EVELYN ''MIMI'' WOODSON

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a dedicated public servant, community activist, trailblazer, and dear friend of longstanding to my wife, Vivian, and me, Councilor Evelyn ''Mimi'' Woodson. She will be honored at an event on December 15, 2022, at the Columbus Convention and Trade Center for her 28 years as a member of the Columbus City Council.

Councilor Woodson's story is truly the epitome of the American Dream. She was born in Manati, Puerto Rico and spent her formative years in New York and Chicago before her family eventually settled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Because of her love of country, she joined the Wisconsin National Guard as a part time soldier before entering the United States Army where she served her country faithfully for 13 and a half years. During her distinguished military career, she was honored with the Good Conduct Medal, two Oak Leaf Clusters, and the Army Commendation Medal.

Councilor Woodson moved to Columbus in 1993 and immediately became involved in the community, establishing Kids and Things, a successful business that had as its focus the importance of youth in the community and civic engagement.

Because of her love of her community and her belief that she could make a difference, Councilor Woodson offered herself as a candidate for the Columbus City Council. The voters of District 7 elected her, and she took her first oath of office on January 3, 1995. She made history by becoming the first Latino City Councilor in the history of Columbus, Georgia. She would be re-elected 6 more times because of the trust placed in her by her constituents.

During her tenure in elective office, Councilor never lost sight of the importance of community and remained closely connected. She has been involved with many community organizations during her time on the City Council to include Columbus Against Drugs, Winterfield on the Move, American Red Cross, South Columbus Revitalization, Georgia Municipal Association, National League of Cities, Community Advancement, Hispanic Elected Officials (served as President), Georgia Association of Latino Elected Officials Board of Directors, Community Warriors, American Legion, and the Columbus Steam Center. Along with the late Harold ''Lefty'' Encarnacion, she was one of the driving forces behind the Tri City Latino Association's cultural festival in Columbus, Georgia that honors the significant role that Latinos have played in our country's rich history. The festival celebrated its 9th year in September.

Because of her great work and advocacy in her community, Councilor Woodson has been honored with many awards during her public service to include: Keep Columbus Beautiful Litter Presentation Award, Perty Favorite City Leader Award; Ernestine Aurelia Mack Service to Mankind Award; the Rainbow Push Coalition Woman on the Rise Award; Women of Action, The Courier Community Service

Award; the Harold "Lefty" Encarnacion Community Service Award; the Dr. Ophelia Devore Young Unsung Hero Honors; Mundo Hispanic Atlanta Distinguish Person of the Year; The Panamanian Association of Columbus, Georgia Mother of the Year; William H. Spencer High School Generosity in Service; Spencerian Service Award; Davis Broadcasting Women of Excellence Award; Columbus Georgia Chapter of J.U.G.S. Women of Action Honoree; and she was a 2022 inductee into the Georgia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Hall of Fame.

Councilor Woodson has used her time on the Columbus City Council for good. She would always ask the questions that others were afraid to ask. During her time in office, she truly served as a voice to the voiceless and gave hope to the hopeless.

It has been said that "Service is the rent that we pay for the space that we occupy here on this earth." Councilor Evelyn "Mimi" Woodson has paid her rent and she has paid it well.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join my wife, Vivian, and Me, along with the more than 730,000 people of the Second District in congratulating and commending Councilor Evelyn "Mimi" Woodson for her years of service to our country, state, and the Columbus City Council. May God continue to "order the steps" of her life as she embarks on her next journey.

RECOGNIZING TRACY SHANE CHUMBLEY

HON. BETH VAN DUYNE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Ms. VAN DUYNE. Madam Speaker, on behalf of a grateful nation and the Citizens of the Twenty-Fourth District of Texas, the 2022 Congressional Veteran Commendation is hereby presented to Tracy Shane Chumbley, Damage Controlman Second Class, United States Navy, of Dallas, Texas for the honorable service he performed while in the Armed Forces of the United States of America and for his continued service to his community.

Mr. Chumbley enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 1989 as a Damage Controlman, seeing sea service during Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm, and helped provide relief efforts during the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, for which he was awarded the Humanitarian Service Medal. His decorations. in addition to the Humanitarian Service Medal, include the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal and the Southwest Asia Service Medal.

The selflessness Mr. Chumbley demonstrated in the U.S. Navy continues with his service to the community. He is a firefighter with the Garland Fire Department and works closely with the Dallas chapter of the Court Appointed Special Advocates Association (CASA), which pairs community volunteers with abused and neglected children to help judges make the best decision when finding a new caring and safe home for those children.

Mr. Chumbley's service is consistent with the finest traditions of the United States Navy and reflects great credit upon himself, the State of Texas, and the United States of America.

HONORING NED REYNOLDS

HON. BILLY LONG

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Mr. LONG. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the wonderful life of Ned Reynolds, a resident of Springfield, Missouri, legendary broadcaster and a great friend to many including myself. For each of the 22 years I conducted the Missouri State all Sports Auction Ned was one of my two set up men that would introduce each item being auctioned along with another area Sportscasting Legend Art Hains.

St. Louis loved Jack Buck. Kansas City embraced Len Dawson. Springfield and the Ozarks proudly claim Ned Reynolds.

People in the Ozarks have been watching and listening to Ned Reynolds on KY3 and on the radio for more than 50 years. They have heard the phrases "get that off the screen" when one of the local favorites lost a game and "bon jour and good sports" at the end of many newscasts. Anyone who has met Ned will say sports is in his blood.

While many people in the Ozarks consider Ned a Missouri native, he grew up in Haddonfield, N.J. Ned is the middle child of three boys. His older brother is a retired professor at Rutgers University and his younger brother is retired from the U.S. Steel Corporation and heads the fundraising efforts for Theo's Work, an orphanage for underprivileged children in Haiti. Ned has a daughter, Stephanie, who is married to Darrell Hasse. He also has two grandchildren and one great grandchild.

His father was a high school principal and provided educational direction. His mother, a concert pianist, developed his love of Classical music. After graduating from Haddonfield Memorial High School, Ned attended Temple University in Philadelphia. With the strong suggestion from his father, Ned studied English rather than journalism. His father felt that a basic overall education would be more beneficial to career enhancement than journalism.

Ned has been doing sports since he was a kid. He was an announcer for little league games, high school sports reporting for local newspapers and emceed many local sporting events. In high school, he worked part-time at WKDN in Camden, NJ. Ned made his first television appearance on NBC's Today show when he was only 15. He won a special guest appearance by sending a demo tape of his sports commentary of course,

After graduation from Temple University, Ned joined the Navy. He applied to get into the armed forces radio, but was placed into the medical corps as a land-based surgical technician. After 4 years serving our country, and with his father's blessing to go into broadcasting, Ned came to KY3 in 1967. He has said that he drove into the parking lot at KY3 and never left. With his very early start in radio during high school, college, and in the service, Ned assumed his broadcasting career would be in radio. However, as is the nature of the broadcasting profession, a change was on the horizon. Working at KY3 is the only TV job that Ned has ever had. When asked why he switched from radio to television, he said: "KY3 had an opening and I was lucky enough to be in the right place at the right time." Ned officially retired from KY3 in 2014.

Ned's retirement didn't last long. He currently hosts a daily morning sports talk show on Springfield's Jock 96.9 and you can still see his sports commentary every Monday night on KY3 Sports. Ned continues to be the play-by-play announcer for the Double-A Springfield Cardinals games on KY3 and The Ozarks CW.

If Ned isn't on the radio or television, he is doing philanthropy work in the community. He gives endless hours to numerous organizations. Ned has served on the Missouri Sports Hall of Fame board; spokesman for the United Way of the Ozarks and the boards of Springfield Symphony, Springfield Ballet, ARC of the Ozarks and he MC's the annual Honor Flight of the Ozarks banquets. He can still be frequently seen on public service announcements airing on KY3 promoting several local charities and their events.

His sports reporting and dedication to the community have not gone unnoticed. Ned was honored to be selected as a Torch Barrier for the 1996 Olympic Torch Relay in Ste. Genevieve, Missouri for the Atlanta Games. At the end of his leg of the race, he handed the torch to Ozzie Smith of the St. Louis Cardinals. In 2001 Ned was inducted into the Missouri Sports Hall of Fame and received the Champion Award in 2002 from the Ambassadors of Community Health Award. In 2014 he was inducted into the Mid-America Emmy's Silver Circle and in 2019 he was inducted into The Missouri Broadcaster's Hall of Fame. He was even the first person with their own bobble head in the inaugural season of the Springfield Cardinals.

Much has happened since his Today Show appearance—and in Ned's own words . . . "it has been a wonderful ride."

Madam Speaker, I am honored to have Ned Reynolds as a friend and I join his family, friends and the entire broadcasting community in honoring his lifetime of accomplishments and service to the Missouri Ozarks.

RECOGNIZING CHAPTER 154 VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA

HON. LISA C. McCLAIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Mrs. McCLAIN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 154.

It has come to my attention that this chapter has been graciously hosting monthly luncheons at Oakmont Sterling Senior Community in my district. The love and appreciation they show to the veteran residents of this senior community, and the surrounding area, is so valuable to enriching the lives of our senior veterans.

This chapter of heroes selflessly honors and cherishes those who have served our country. I am so proud of their patriotism and continued service to our veteran commnunity. I thank them for the joy they bring to senior veterans.

HONORING THE CONTINUED SERVICE OF LIEUTENANT LOGAN O'SHEA

HON. JOE COURTNEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Mr. COURTNEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the contributions of Lieutenant Logan O'Shea, United States Navy, during his service as a legislative fellow in my Washington, DC office this year. Throughout 2022, Logan has played a critical role in supporting my work on the House Armed Services Committee and representing the proud Navy community in Eastern Connecticut.

As Chairman of the House Seapower and Projection Forces Subcommittee, which has the solemn, critical duty of overseeing much of our nation's Navy, Marine Corps, and various Air Force programs and policies. Year in, and year out, the Department of Defense's legislative fellowship program brings highly talented junior officers to Capitol Hill that provide invaluable benefits to Members of the House and Senate to the defense committees. Officers, like Logan, bring real-world experience from their time in the classroom at the various academies and experiences from their time serving on active duty. This year, as our subcommittee once again considered our approach to critical shipbuilding programs, shipbuilding industrial base development, and Navy and Marine Corps readiness through the Fiscal Year 2023 National Defense Authorization Act, Logan provided exquisite judgement in navigating the landscape of crafting such a large and critical piece of legislation.

Logan has also seized initiative in a variety of areas beyond naval affairs that benefit Eastern Connecticut. He worked tirelessly to provide insight in our Navy's planned shipbuilding programs, communicated with leadership at Naval Submarine New London to improve the quality of life on base, and drafted policy to examine how we can better improve the lives of our Navy civilian workers on various installations. He also served as the staff lead for the Friends of Australia Caucus and the AUKUS Working Group, both of which I serve as co-chair, ensuring that the ties between our countries remain as strong as ever. This is of special importance as our two nations continue to develop key priorities in support of the AUKUS security agreement to ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific. Logan's work to coordinate with the Executive Branch, other Members of Congress, and the Australian and British Embassies has facilitated new partnerships in support of our shared principles. In particular, he participated in drafting H.R. 8073, a bill establishing a joint training pipeline between the U.S. Navy and the Royal Australian Navy to enable the AUKUS effort to create a nuclear-powered submarine force. This bill was later adopted as part of the Fiscal Year 2023 NDAA.

Logan's work ethic, diligence, intelligence, and first-hand experience as a Nuclear Surface Warfare Officer made an immediate benefit and memorable impact on my office and subcommittee staff. After traveling across the world with tenures on the USS *Carney* (DDG 64) and USS *Nimitz* (CVN 68), I am thankful for his family's tremendous sacrifice to our nation and for landing in Washington for the current phase of their life. Though Logan's presence will be deeply missed by both my personal staff and Seapower staff, I know full-well that he will make his presence known as he heads to the Surface Warfare Officer Department Head Course at Naval Station Newport in Rhode Island.

Madam Speaker, as has also been the case for each of his predecessors that my office has had the opportunity to host, I have benefited greatly from Logan's training and background. This recurring process that the fellowship program fosters, strengthens civilian-military understanding for future leaders of the greatest military in the world, which I believe is a necessary component of a strong democracy. Our nation is best served at sea and here onshore by officers and leaders of the highest caliber like Logan. He embodies such qualities and has a promising career ahead in continued service to our Nation, and we owe him such gratitude. To that end, I ask that the House join me in wishing LT Logan O'Shea, his spouse Megan, and their dog Murphy, the best of luck in their next life chapter, particularly as they welcome their first born into the world.

HONORING LEONARD PITTS, JR.

HON. FREDERICA S. WILSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Madam Speaker, from the 24th District of the great State of Florida, I rise today to honor Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist, journalist, and novelist, Leonard Pitts, Jr. Mr. Pitts is the recipient of the 2022 5000 Role Models of Excellence Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Freedom and Justice Award.

A native of Southern California, Pitts entered the University of Southern California at 15 through a special honors program and graduated summa cum laude with a degree in English at age 19.

Upon graduation, he worked as a freelance music reviewer for a broad range of publications. He wrote scripts for the award-winning documentary films King: From Atlanta to the Mountaintop (1986), Who We Are (1988), and Young Black Men: A Lost Generation (1990). He served as a staff writer for the music countdown show American Top 40 and its legendary host, Casey Kasem, from 1989 to 1991. In 1991, he was hired as a music critic by the Miami Herald and began writing commentary in 1995.

He is perhaps best known for his twice-weekly syndicated columns that tackle the race, politics, and culture. He won the 2007 Pulitzer Prize in Commentary "for his fresh, vibrant columns that spoke, with both passion and compassion, to ordinary people on often divisive issues."

Other awards include first place for commentary in division four in the American Association of Sunday and Feature Editors' Ninth Annual Writing Awards competition; three National Association of Black Journalists' Awards of Excellence; and NABJ's 2008 Journalist of the Year. He is a five-time recipient of the Atlantic City Press Club's National Headliners Award and a seven-time recipient of the Society of Professional Journalists' Green Eyeshade Award. In 2001, he received the American Society of Newspaper Editors prestigious Award for Commentary Writing and was named Feature of the Year in the column writing division by Editor and Publisher magazine. In 2002, the National Society of Newspaper Columnists awarded Pitts its inaugural Columnist of the Year award; in 2016, it named him to its Hall of Fame. In 2002 and in 2009, GLAAD Media awarded Pitts the Outstanding Newspaper Columnist award. In 2017, he was awarded the Missouri Honor Medal and has received four honorary doctorates. The father of five is the author of four novels and has also written nonfiction books.

Madam Speaker, please join me in honoring Leonard Pitts, Jr.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF MURAT GOKCIGDEM

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Ms. JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize my longtime Chief of Staff, Mr. Murat Gokcigdem. He is leaving the Hill this month after 29 years of service to the House of Representatives.

Prior to coming to my office, Mr. Gokcigdem attended West Virginia University in Charleston, earning his bachelor's and his master's degree in International Public Policy. He then began his career as a Hill staffer working for Congressmen Jim Moody and Tom Barrett. He worked his way from Special Assistant to Legislative Director before joining my staff. He has since served in my Washington, DC office for over 21 years. He began as my Legislative Director in 2001 and quickly demonstrated a deep understanding of the legislative process and inner workings of Capitol Hill. His success in that role led me to promote him to Chief of Staff, where he has long advised me on all communications, legislative, and administrative issues and managed my DC and district office staff.

Murat has been a constant companion for those 21 years, probably more so than he ever imagined. I would not have made it this long in this job without his counsel. I call him at all hours of the day and night, make seemingly impossible requests, and rely on him in part for every aspect of my Congressional operation.

Murat has also served as a resource for Legislative Directors, Chiefs of Staff, and schedulers from all over the Hill, particularly for those serving the Congressional Black Caucus and the Texas delegation. They know that if they have a question, Murat has an answer.

Murat's presence in my office has greatly improved my capacity to serve the constituents of TX-30 and supported the professional development of those who have worked for me.

I want to thank him and his family, his wife Elin and his children Ela and Elif, for his service, his counsel, and most importantly, his friendship over the years.

RECOGNIZING RICARDO TORREZ CASTAÑUELA

HON. BETH VAN DUYNE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Ms. VAN DUYNE. Madam Speaker, on behalf of a grateful nation and the Citizens of the Twenty-Fourth District of Texas, the 2022 Congressional Veteran Commendation is hereby presented to Ricardo Torrez Castañuela, Master Sergeant, United States Air Force, of North Richland Hills, Texas for the honorable service he performed while in the Armed Forces of the United States of America and for his continued service to his community.

Mr. Castañuela enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1948 and served as part of an ordnance company during the Korean War, running munitions to the front lines. Upon returning to the United States he enlisted in the U.S. Air Force in 1954, being awarded a Bronze Star for meritorious actions while in Vietnam. His decorations, in addition to his Bronze Star, include the Korean Service Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal, the National Defense Service Medal with two Oak Leaf clusters, and the Air Force Commendation Medal with an Oak Leaf Cluster to denote three awards.

The selflessness Mr. Castañuela demonstrated in the U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force continues with his service to his community. He began his civilian career as a peace officer and corrections officer with the Tarrant County Sheriff's Department, attaining the rank of Major and becoming the first Hispanic-American Warden of Tarrant County.

Mr. Castañuela's service is consistent with the finest traditions of the United States Army and reflects great credit upon himself, the State of Texas, and the United States of America.

HONORING MR. JOE SUTTON AND MR. ROBERT MARLING

HON. YVETTE HERRELL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Ms. HERRELL. Madam Speaker, today I rise to honor Mr. Joe Sutton and Mr. Robert Marling, two long term friends who have emulated the important values of true friendship.

They will always cherish their friendly bets, usually paid in full in the form of 1 dollar bills, for their countless rounds of golf. And even more so, they will cherish the everlasting memories that they've formed together over the years.

Through their friendship, Robert and Joe are both found to be philanthropic spirited and humble individuals, stewards of their communities, and serve as role models for many.

Robert is smart, kindhearted, community-minded, and a great entrepreneur and mentor. He has been a major supporter of the American Heart Association, United Way, and dozens of other major charities.

Joe proudly served in the U.S. Army and retired at the rank of Colonel. During his time in the Army, he held numerous command assignments in armor and aviation, served 2 tours of duty in the Pentagon and was an Army Ranger. Joe authored a children's book and has donated the proceeds from the book to ''Children at Risk'' focused on fighting child trafficking. It is my sincerest hope that their friendship continues to be a role model for others to see and learn from. In the world we find ourselves living in today, I can think of nothing better than to celebrate friends that truly last a lifetime.

PROVIDING RESEARCH AND ESTIMATES OF CHANGES IN PRECIPITATION ACT

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 14, 2022

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, as a senior member of the Committees on the Budget, Judiciary, and on Homeland Security, I rise in support of the Senate Amendment to H.R. 1437 ''Further Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2023'', a resolution that provides funding to continue the operations of the federal government through December 23, 2022, and avoids a wasteful and irresponsible shutdown.

Passage of this resolution will avoid an inexcusable and unjustifiable government shutdown that would disrupt the lives of millions of Americans who rely on the resources and support provided by the federal government.

If this resolution does not pass:

Millions of veterans will lose their healthcare benefits.

People relying on Social Security will not receive their checks.

Millions of government employees will lose their wages.

Millions of Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries would lose access to visits and other medical needs.

Food Stamps will not be sent out, leaving millions of Americans who rely on them at risk of hunger.

Health insurance coverage to millions of children through the CHIP program will stop.

All projects created by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act will pause, and national parks and Smithsonian museums will close.

In addition to these programs, House Democrats have worked tirelessly throughout the 117th Congress to pass legislation that will better the lives of Americans, legislation that has established programs that would also be impacted by a government shutdown.

Our legislative agenda this Congress focused on lowering the price of health care and prescription drug costs, creating better paying jobs, acting on the climate crisis and making communities safer.

For example, in this Congress the House has passed and sent to the President the following legislation that has been signed into law:

H.R. 5376—INFLATION REDUCTION ACT OF 2022

This historic piece of legislation lowered health care and prescription drug costs for millions. It forces Big Pharma to negotiate lower prices, caps the cost of drugs and insulin for seniors on Medicare, and locks in lower health insurance premiums that will save 13 million Americans an average of $800 a year. And the Inflation Reduction Act's clean energy provisions will make clean, secure American energy more affordable.

H.R. 1319—AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT OF 2021

This law helped pull the economy out of the pandemic. It put vaccines in arms, money in pockets, and reopened the American economy.

H.R. 3684—INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT AND JOBS ACT

This law enacted a historic investment to rebuild our roads and bridges and bring clean water and high-speed internet to more communities and created millions of union jobs.

S. 2938—BIPARTISAN SAFER COMMUNITIES ACT

The enactment of this bill expands background checks for the purchase of firearms, add increased protections for victims of domestic violence, and fund violence prevention in schools and stronger mental health services to stop tragedies like mass shootings before they happen.

House Democrats have also made strides to bettering American life through legislation that has yet to see action in the Senate. These include:

H.R. 1, FOR THE PEOPLE ACT

This comprehensive legislation would promote government transparency, strengthen access to the ballot box and make it easier for Americans to exercise their right to vote, secure election infrastructure, and curb the influence of dark money in politics.

H.R. 6, DREAM AND PROMISE ACT

The Dream and Promise Act would protect Dreamers, Temporary Protected Status (TPS), and Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) status holders from deportation and provide an opportunity to obtain permanent legal status that would enable these groups to work legally within the United States and continue to contribute to their local communities and economy.

H.R. 7, PAYCHECK FAIRNESS ACT

This bill would strengthen labor protections around equal pay by prohibiting the use of salary history to set compensation, provide more transparent options for joining class-action lawsuits challenging systemic discrimination, and require employers to show that gender pay gaps are job-related and consistent with business need.

H.R. 842, PROTECTING THE RIGHT TO ORGANIZE (PRO) ACT

This bill aims to strengthen labor protections for union workers through overriding Republican-led ''right to work'' laws, promoting free and fair union elections, and holding companies that attempt to restrict union activity accountable.

Mr Speaker, with your leadership, House Democrats have passed historic pieces of legislation that will benefit Americans for years to come, but our work is not done.

If we fail to pass this Resolution, the new programs that we have enacted into law during the 117th Congress, as well as all the other services and programs of the federal government will be shut down and American people in every corner of the country will suffer needlessly and severely.

As Members of Congress, it is our responsibility to ensure that the government continues its operations so that Americans may continue to receive the resources services provided by the federal government passed December 16, 2022.

I strongly support this legislation and urge all Members to join me in voting for the Senate Amendment to H.R. 1437 "Further Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2023."

HONORING MIAMI/BAHAMAS GOOMBAY HONOREES

HON. FREDERICA S. WILSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Madam Speaker, from the 24th District of the great State of Florida, I rise today in celebration of the 39th Miami/Bahamas Goombay Festival and to pay tribute to a group of remarkable individuals for their historic longevity journey and commitment to Miami's Coconut Grove community.

The Miami/Bahamas Goombay Festival is a celebration of cultural expression embracing the legacy of Miami's Bahamian-rooted community known as Coconut Grove. The three-day celebration strives to provide a historical overview of the American/Bahamian culture by educating and exposing the public to its rich heritage and traditions.

These pillars of the Coconut Grove community have been an integral part in upholding the mission of the Miami/Bahamas Goombay Festival and deserve to be recognized: MayBelle Berry, Elizabeth Daniels, Thelma A. Gibson, Beatrice F. Johnson, Mary B. McCray, Delois McGriff, Hattie Mattox, Hattie M. Nelms, Ethel R. Phillip, and Dr. George A. Simpson.

Since the 19th century, Bahamians have played a significant role in the City of Miami representing one third of the registered signatories needed for the city's incorporation. Their rich Bahamian heritage has been preserved throughout the years with the support of individuals like the 39th Miami/Bahamas Goombay Festival honorees.

Madam Speaker, please join me in honoring these living legends of Coconut Grove's rich history.

EXCHANGE OF LETTERS REGARDING H.R. 2415 AND H.R. 2641

HON. RAÚL M. GRIJALVA

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Mr. GRIJALVA. Madam Speaker, I include in the RECORD the following exchange of letters regarding H.R. 2415 and H.R 2641.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE,
Washington, DC, December 13, 2022.

Hon. RAÚL M. GRIJALVA,
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN GRIJALVA: I write concerning H.R. 2415, the "Orphaned Well Cleanup and Jobs Act of 2021." This legislation would amend section 349 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 to eliminate existing subsection (g) which authorized a technical and financial assistant program at the Department of Energy to help States remedy environmental problems caused by orphaned or abandoned oil and gas wells on State or private land which is within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

In an effort to expedite the filing of the Natural Resources bill report for legislative history purposes, I agree to not seek a sequential referral at this time. The Committee takes this action with our mutual understanding that by forgoing a sequential referral request of H.R. 2415 at this time, we do not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in this or similar legislation.

Finally, I would appreciate your response to this letter confirming this understanding and ask that a copy of our exchange of letters on this matter be included in the Congressional Record to memorialize our understanding.

Sincerely,

FRANK PALLONE, Jr.,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES,
Washington, DC, December 14, 2022.

Hon. FRANK PALLONE, Jr.,
Chairman, Committee on Energy and Commerce, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN PALLONE: I write to you concerning H.R. 2641, the "Pacific Northwest Pumped Storage Hydropower Development Act of 2021."

I acknowledge and appreciate that despite considering seeking a sequential referral on this legislation, the Committee on Energy and Commerce decided not to do so when the Committee on Natural Resources filed our committee report on the bill.

I thank you for your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work with you as this measure moves through the legislative process. I will ensure that our exchange of letters is included in the Congressional Record.

Sincerely,

RAÚL M. GRIJALVA,
Chair, House Natural Resources Committee.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE,
Washington, DC, December 13, 2022.

Hon. RAÚL M. GRIJALVA,
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN GRIJALVA: I write concerning H.R. 2641, the "Pacific Northwest Pumped Storage Hydropower Development Act of 2021 ." This legislation would eliminate the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's role in the licensing of non-federal entities development of small conduit hydropower or pumped energy storage facilities at Bureau of Reclamation reservoir which is within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

In an effort to expedite the filing of the Natural Resources bill report for legislative history purposes, I agree to not seek a sequential referral at this time. The Committee takes this action with our mutual understanding that by forgoing a sequential referral request of H.R. 2641 at this time, we do not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in this or similar legislation.

Finally, I would appreciate your response to this letter confirming this understanding and ask that a copy of our exchange of letters on this matter be included in Congressional Record to memorialize our understanding.

Sincerely,

FRANK PALLONE, Jr.,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES,
Washington, DC, December 14, 2022.

Hon. FRANK PALLONE, Jr.,
Chairman, Committee on Energy and Commerce House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN PALLONE: I write to you concerning H.R. 2415, the "Orphaned Well Cleanup and Jobs Act of 2021."

I acknowledge and appreciate that despite considering seeking a sequential referral on this legislation, the Committee on Energy and Commerce decided not to do so when the Committee on Natural Resources filed our committee report on the bill.

I thank you for your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work with you as this measure moves through the legislative process. I will ensure that our exchange of letters is included in the Congressional Record .

Sincerely,

RAÚL M. GRIJALVA,
Chair, House Natural Resources Committee.

HONORING MS. DEBRA HEMBREE'S SERVICE TO SOUTH MISSISSIPPI

HON. STEVEN M. PALAZZO

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Mr. PALAZZO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize one of my district staff, Ms. Debra Hembree, for her 11 years of dedicated service as a congressional staffer. In 2011, Debra began working in my Pascagoula district office as a Congressional Liaison providing casework assistance for constituents in several counties throughout the Fourth Congressional District.

Debra is originally from Canton, MS, and is a lifelong Mississippian. She attended and graduated from the University of Southern Mississippi and Mississippi State University, receiving her Bachelor of Science Degree in Elementary Education and Master's in Elementary Education, respectively.

Debra served the community, educating young children, the future leaders of our great state, during her 30 year teaching career in the Pascagoula-Gautier School District before her retirement in 2004. Shortly after her retirement, Debra continued her teaching career at the Murray School at Wilmer Hall in Mobile, Alabama. While there, she embraced this new and challenging opportunity as the resource teacher for children in grades 6 through 12.

Debra's life was blessed 10 years ago when she met and married her husband, Tom. Together they share 3 children: Debra's daughter Anna, Anna's husband Chip; Tom's son Mitch, Mitch's wife Diana; and Tom's son Austin. They also have 2 precious grandsons, Jack and Hudson.

The foundation of Debra's life is her faith and belief that we are here to serve others. She is currently a member of First Baptist Church of Vancleave. Through the years, she has been involved in various areas of church service, including the preschool ministry, the Girls' Auxiliary, the Women's Ministry team, and Vacation Bible School. She has also been a member of the choir,

I genuinely appreciate Debra's years of service to the constituents of the Fourth Congressional District. She has always been a loyal team member who has worked diligently

to assist constituents. Her positive attitude and exceptional work ethic are exemplary. Thank you, Madam Speaker, for allowing me to express my gratitude to Mrs. Debra Hembree for 11 years of dedicated service.

AUTHORIZATION TO ESTABLISH COMMEMORATIVE WORK

SPEECH OF

HON. WILLIAM R. KEATING

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 12, 2022

Mr. KEATING. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my bill, H.R. 6611 to authorize the French Embassy in the United States to establish a commemorative work in Rock Creek Park to honor the extraordinary contributions of Jean Monnet.

Jean Monnet, a French citizen living in Washington, DC, played an extraordinary role promoting cooperation and peace on both sides of the Atlantic, which has furthered the national interest of the United States and is also of lasting historical significance to the American people.

Specifically, he is credited for his skillful efforts to restore peace between European nations, playing a critical role during both World Wars, and is often referred to as the founder of the European Union. Having sowed the seeds of the European Union, we continue to reap the benefits of Monnet's work today as evidence through the strength of the European Union and the continued coordination of the transatlantic alliance countering authoritarianism wherever it exists.

To provide more color on the importance of establishing this commemorative work, I would like to speak about the great accomplishments of Jean Monnet.

He was a French diplomat and businessman, as well as a dedicated citizen of Europe and a devoted friend of the United States. Monnet was a thoughtful individual who played a critical role in many of the 20th centuries major events. Today, he is most known for his efforts during both World Wars, the rebuilding of Europe, and the founding of European Union.

Specifically, Monnet is recognized for his creative thinking that was essential to the U.S. and Allied victory over Nazi Germany. After seeking refuge in the United States during Nazi-Germany's occupation of France, Monnet served as an adviser to U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and as a special envoy of the United States to the Free French. During that time, he also became a member of the British Purchasing Commission. There, he worked with senior U.S. officials to coordinate Allied resources, galvanize U.S. war production, and unleash the ''arsenal of democracy,'' a phrase coined by Monnet and later made famous by President Roosevelt. In fact, economist John Maynard Keynes once said that Monnet's contributions shortened the global conflict by an entire year and, through his actions, saved tens of thousands of European and American lives.

Following the Allied victory of WWII, Monnet started several initiatives which are known to have been the catalysts for the eventual creation of the European Union. For instance, Monnet proposed the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), an initiative that pooled the coal and steel resources of 6 counties in Europe, greatly contributing to increased production and resolving a centuries old dispute over these resources. In addition, he established the Action Committee for the United States of Europe, a political organization that united parties across Europe to advocate for further European integration. These 2 actions, the creation of the ECSC and the Action Committee, were both critical steps in the formation of the political union that the European Union represents today.

Monnet's legacy continues today as the transatlantic alliance stands united in the face of Russian aggression and rising autocracy globally. The United States and Europe must continue to face our challenges as he so strongly encouraged: by working together towards a more peaceful future.

With that being said, I want to acknowledge the bi-partisan effort it took to move this legislation forward and I thank my fellow Co-Chairs on the House French Caucus, Representatives LATTA, SCHIFF, and WILSON for their original co-sponsorship and all efforts to advance this legislation. I'd also like to thank Chairs GRIJALVA, NEGUSE, and my colleagues on the Natural Resources Committee for consideration of this measure and for allowing it to move to the floor so expeditiously.

I also want to thank the leadership of this House for taking on this important issue, and supporting the passing of H.R. 6611. The commemoration to Monnet will stand as a continual reminder of the historic and continuing importance of the transatlantic partnership between the United States, France, and the greater European community. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

SUSIE MURRAY

HON. BETH VAN DUYNE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Ms. VAN DUYNE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Susie Murray, the school nurse at Ursuline Academy. Since the beginning of the pandemic, Susie has gone above and beyond to keep the students, faculty, and staff of Ursuline Academy safe.

Susie diligently kept up on the protocols from the city, county, and state. She also carefully kept track of cases to help keep students and faculty as safe and healthy as possible. Susie's efforts allowed Ursuline to avoid additional lockdown periods when they returned to in-person learning. When uncertainty disheartened parents, teachers and students, Susie remained cool-headed and dedicated to the task ahead of her.

The Covid–19 pandemic, however, was not the beginning of Susie's dedication to her community. Even before the pandemic, she played a vital role in the well-being of Ursuline's students and faculty by attending retreats, chaperoning the Students Reach Out service club, and always being ready and willing to support a student or colleague in any way.

On behalf of the North Texas community, I'd like to extend my gratitude to Susie for her dedicated leadership before, during, and after the pandemic.

HONORING BRITT VAN

HON. DEREK KILMER

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Mr. KILMER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the service of Britt Van, a brilliant staffer and someone I am proud to have worked alongside for years.

Britt departs the New Dem Coalition as Policy Director this month after 5 years and 7 months with the organization. I feel especially fortunate she was on the team during the time I served as Chair of the Coalition.

During my tenure as Chair, Britt was a driving force in making the New Dems the strong coalition of policy leaders in Congress that we are known as today. She knows every New Dem policy area like the back of her hand and has skillfully guided Members on issues from housing to trade. She also restructured and revived the Coalition's policy task forces, which continue to do important work in finding the best solutions to pressing problems.

But I am most grateful and proud of Britt's work on behalf of the Coalition on 2 brilliant ideas: automatic stabilizers and the RECOMPETE program.

With automatic stabilizers, Britt took a very complicated, ''wonky'' idea and made it real and actionable for policymakers across the ideological spectrum. She advanced this idea forward in the months following the COVID–19 outbreak when we discussed how and when to enhance federal benefits during economic downturns, like we saw during the pandemic. While we weren't successful, I am confident policymakers will eventually see the value of automatic stabilizers for federal benefits. When that day comes, we can thank Britt for taking this idea from concept to reality.

With the RECOMPETE program, Britt helped me bring to life something very near and dear to my heart. When I was growing up in Port Angeles, I saw my community suffer from an economic downturn that fundamentally changed the fabric of my life. The timber industry took it on the chin, and many families were never able to recover. Since then, I've spent most of my adult life trying to find a solution and make sure this doesn't continue happening, a solution to ensure we protect workers and communities and make sure no one gets left behind. Frankly, it's why I came to Congress. And that's why I asked Britt to help me create the RECOMPETE program, which provides communities with a flexible, long-term grant to create jobs and lay the foundation for long-term economic growth.

Britt and I worked on this legislation for many long months, and after many iterations, our RECOMPETE Act was finally passed by Congress and signed into law as a part of the historic CHIPS and Science Act.

Britt's work with the RECOMPETE Act is just 1 example of how she embodies the model of what a public servant is and should be. She digs down deep into an issue, pours her life and soul into the work, and truly does it in service of a better tomorrow. She believes in the best of government to help people. She believes in the work we do and goes forward—undeterred and bravely—with that work. You really can't wish for much more in a staffer or a person—and I didn't ever.

Britt has been a wonderful presence at New Dems and on the Hill for the past 5 plus

years. We'll miss her dearly at the New Democrat Coalition, and I wish her only the best.

HONORING MIAMI/BAHAMAS GOOMBAY FESTIVAL BOARD

HON. FREDERICA S. WILSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Madam Speaker, from the 24th District of the great State of Florida, I rise today to honor Fredrika S. Brown, Leona Cooper, and Herb Hiller who have served on the board of the Miami/Bahamas Goombay Festival since its inception.

The Miami/Bahamas Goombay Festival is a celebration of cultural expression embracing the legacy of Miami's Bahamian-rooted community known as Coconut Grove. The three-day celebration strives to provide a historical overview of the American/Bahamian culture by educating and exposing the public to its rich heritage and traditions.

The Miami/Bahamas Goombay Festival in Coconut Grove is dedicated to recognizing, promoting and educating the residents of Miami-Dade County and tourists about the rich Bahamian and American Heritage and what makes this such a unique and positive blend.

The board strives to provide a historical overview of the Bahamian Culture, the commemoration of the early Coconut Grove settlers, and to introduce their music, native food specialties, artifacts, and crafts that are indigenous of the island.

The Miami/Bahamas Goombay Festival is held to bring about unity and bridge a cultural gap by building communities through the understanding of each other's likenesses and differences.

Since 1977, the Miami/Bahamas Goombay Festival has celebrated the Bahamian culture of Miami-Dade County. The festival would not be possible without the hard work of the board who has stayed the course. I salute this effort and I am thankful to the Goombay Festival committee for keeping the rich culture of our Bahamian ancestors alive in Miami.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF DELANO JOHNSON

HON. MARK DeSAULNIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Mr. DESAULNIER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the service of Delano Johnson as he celebrates his 80th birthday.

Delano has dedicated his life to serving and empowering the East County community in Contra Costa, California. Delano is the founder of Bay Point Community All-N-One Inc., a nonprofit founded in 2012 that helps connect Bay Point residents with essential resources including housing, food, clothing, and hygiene products. The organization hosts a weekly event that provides critical support and services to up to 200 families each week. Further, thanks to Delano's leadership, the organization recently hosted a very successful Thanksgiving Giveaway, distributing over 1,000 turkeys and chickens to the community.

Delano participates with a number of nonprofits in the area to do more work to better his community, including White Pony Express, Food Bank of Contra Costa & Solano, Village Keepers, and Stand Together Contra Costa. Additionally, Delano regularly hosts meetings between local charities, nonprofits, and other community-based organizations, allowing these groups to easily connect and to better provide for the residents of East County. Delano's hard work and dedication are admired by all who know him.

Please join me in recognizing and thanking Delano Johnson for his years of dedicated service as we celebrate his 80th birthday.

RECOGNIZING MATTHEW WASHINGTON ON HIS DEPARTURE

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Speaker, I rise as Chair of the Appropriations Committee, and on behalf of the Members of the Committee, and its staff, to pay tribute to Matthew Earl Washington as he departs federal service after a lengthy career in the House of Representatives.

Originally from North Carolina, Matt's distinguished career in the House began in the office of the late civil rights icon Congressman John Lewis of Georgia as a Legislative Assistant. He later served as Senior Policy Advisor to Congressman John Olver of Massachusetts when the congressman served on the Appropriations Committee. His extensive knowledge of America's security, transportation, and infrastructure earned him the position of Staff Director of the Transportation Security and Infrastructure Protection Subcommittee of the House Committee on Homeland Security where he adeptly served as the lead staffer on all Subcommittee matters for Chairwoman SHEILA JACKSON-LEE.

Since then, for the past nearly 15 years, Matt has served the Appropriations Committee with great diligence. The Committee's longest serving African American staffer on the Democratic side, he began his impressive tenure as a Professional Staff Member on the Defense Subcommittee where he oversaw the programs and funding that support active duty and reserve personnel. He later served as a Professional Staff Member for the full committee, ensuring smooth legislative and procedural processes for the Committee and Member offices.

Following these roles, equipped with unparalleled knowledge of the Committee, Matt took on the role of Clerk for the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Subcommittee in 2011 becoming the first African American staffer to hold the position. He skillfully managed and negotiated all aspects of the Subcommittee's jurisdiction, and his leadership has helped protect our national security, uphold our commitment to servicemembers, veterans, and their families, and rebuild critical military infrastructure. In 2019, Matt began serving as Clerk of the Legislative Branch Subcommittee, expertly leading the Subcommittee to enormous legislative triumphs in an attempt at making Congress work better for the American people.

His years of experience and expert knowledge of the Appropriations Committee made him an excellent addition to my Front Office staff when I became Chair of the full committee, where he has since served as Deputy Staff Director for the past two years. He has been at the helm of the investments we have made to help working families and vulnerable people all over our nation. In his unique role, he has been instrumental in the implementation of Community Project Funding, coordinating spending between all 12 subcommittees, and representing the Committee in front of critical partners during negotiations. And personally, he has been a trusted advisor throughout my first term leading this Committee.

While we will miss Matt greatly, we are excited for what the future holds for him. I wish Matt, his wife Chandini, and their children Yara and Zayn all the best, and extend my gratitude to his family for sharing him with us for so many years.

Our Nation is safer and this body is stronger because of Matt's tireless work. I join all Members of the Appropriations Committee who he has worked with in saying we will miss his expertise greatly. The Appropriations Committee is a family—one made up pf all the staff and Members who serve and have served this great institution. We are all so lucky that he will forever be part of this distinguished group. Congratulations on a remarkable federal career. His country is endlessly grateful for his leadership, service, and dedication.

RECOGNIZING THE EXEMPLARY LEADERSHIP OF ADMIRAL BENJAMIN NICHOLSON

HON. MICHAEL F. Q. SAN NICOLAS

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Mr. SAN NICOLAS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Admiral Benjamin Nicholson for his outstanding leadership as Commander of Joint Region Marianas. In June of 2021, Admiral Nicholson was sworn in as Commander of Joint Region Marianas tasked with fortifying American freedom and democracy in his work to achieve Indo-Pacific Command objectives while strengthening Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, the Republic of Palau, and the Federated States of Micronesia. With unwavering focus on the mission of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, Admiral Nicholson goes above and beyond the call of duty with his attention to the communities he serves, actively engaging local leadership and stakeholders to ensure the welfare of the general public.

Admiral Nicholson's commitment to our Armed Services began in the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy where he earned his Bachelor of Science in Marine Engineering in 1993. He continued to build his foundation earning his master's degree in Systems Engineering from the Naval Postgraduate School and a master's degree in National Security from the Naval War College. His background spans numerous command positions and numerous deployments around the world during his seagoing career.

Admiral Nicholson has further served in combat tours in Helmand, Afghanistan, and

the Provincial Reconstruction Team and Forward Operating Base in Farah, Afghanistan. He also served in numerous ashore billets including Executive Assistant to the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; Assistant Deputy Director Middle East Directorate in the Joint Staff; Special Operations Support Team to the Federal Bureau of Investigation; and head of the professional development section in the Chief of Naval Operations staff. His military decorations include the Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Bronze Star, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal (three awards), Navy Commendation Medal (four awards), Joint Service Achievement Medal, Navy Achievement Medal (three awards), Combat Action Ribbon, and various campaign and unit awards. He is also a 2015 recipient of the FBI's Director's Award.

As a first on Guam, Admiral Nicholson led unclassified briefings to multiple local leadership stakeholders on threats facing the island and region, engaging local Mayors, Senators, and Administration officials with unparalleled transparency that has served to build awareness of, confidence in, and partnership with the objectives of the Department of Defense.

The need to defend the territory of Guam from potential military threats is not limited to military establishments under Admiral Nicholson's leadership. Recent efforts to secure missile defense systems for the territory are taking a 360-degree focus to protect the entirety of the island, civilian and military alike, reassuring front-line Americans that they are protected, and reinforcing our safety and suitability to our critical visitor industry.

The food security and supply chain resilience for the region is strengthened in his work with our office to explore the feasibility of leasing Department of Defense lands for cattle grazing operations, further serving to advance local economic growth and diversification in a community that currently relies on over 90 percent of imported products.

With the island in the midst of a housing crisis due to labor shortages, material costs, and the tyranny of distance relative to American job and resource markets, Admiral Nicholson takes a mindful and creative approach in encouraging greater housing inventory to mitigate the civilian housing market impact of substantial military personnel relocation, and the subsequent growth of military housing needs.

Admiral Nicholson regularly and openly engages to address Veteran, Gold Star Family, and military dependent needs for access to amenities located within military facilities, deftly navigating the complexities of a community seeking greater access to military support in balance with the needs of mission viability.

Poignantly, Admiral Nicholson continues to be an avid partner in addressing critical healthcare needs throughout the island and region, providing guidance and solutions as the territory navigates the largest investment in its history to establish a modern healthcare facility to meet modern day healthcare needs throughout Micronesia and beyond.

The service to the country in the work of Admiral Nicholson is nothing short of exemplary, not only in his ability to effectively lead and manage the military front lines of America in the Indo-Pacific, but to do so in a manner that reflects unprecedented mindfulness of the holistic value in building, maintaining, and reinforcing community confidence and support critical to mission success

Madam Speaker, the Department of Defense and the Department of the Navy are well served and represented by the command talent of Admiral Benjamin Nicholson who is a builder of allies, communities, and constituencies. I extend my gratitude to the Admiral for his invaluable service to our Nation, and I commend him for his commitment to community engagement, civilian well-being, and his mission as Commander of Joint Region Marianas.

HONORING THE MILITARY AND PUBLIC SERVICE OF BRENNA HOLDER

HON. STEVEN M. PALAZZO

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Mr. PALAZZO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Sergeant First Class (Retired) Brenna Holder for her over 31-year career to the Mississippi Army National Guard where she served as an Active Guard Reserve Soldier (AGR). She has also served in my office for nearly 4 years as a Congressional Staffer assisting nearly 3,000 of my constituents.

She comes from a long line of Patriots, most notably her maternal grandfather, Dominick Fenelli, a United States Marine Corps, World War II Purple Heart recipient. Like her grandfather, her service began when she was 18 years old.

She enlisted as a Private attending basic training at Fort Jackson, SC. She served with the Installation Support Unit at Camp Shelby as an Administrative Specialist. She was mobilized in 1990 for Operation Desert Storm in support of Camp Shelby. She moved to Washington, D.C. in 1991 and served in the Special Actions Branch at National Guard Bureau. She served as a National Guard Support Coordinator handling logistics and administrative support for the Operation Desert Storm Homecoming Parades in Washington, D.C., and New York City. In 1997, she earned her diploma as a Licensed Practical Nurse while serving in the 108th Combat Support Hospital at Fort Indiantown Gap, PA. In 2000, she was hired AGR to serve as the Medical Detachment 6 NCOIC at Camp Shelby. She was mobilized again in 2004 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in support of units mobilizing at Mobilization Center Shelby. She later served as the Human Resources Senior Noncommissioned Officer in the Personnel Section S1 at the 154th Regiment, Regional Training Institute. She was instrumental in her section receiving favorable results in multiple TRADOC inspections. She served a few years as the Mississippi National Guard NCO Association's Awards Chairperson. She received training as an Intelligence Analyst at Fort Bragg, NC, Emergency Medical Technician at Camp Shelby, and Army Instructor at the Regional Training Institute at Camp Shelby. Her military training culminated with her completion of the Master Leader Course. She was honorarily promoted to Master Sergeant in the State of Mississippi upon her retirement.

She received many state and federal awards while in service. Most notably, the Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medals, and Army Achievement Medals.

Brenna was also a former Miss Mississippi Petite and selected in the top ten at the National level. She earned her Associates of Applied Science degree from Delaware County Community College graduating with high honors in Surgical Technology. She worked in the Operating Room at Wesley Medical Center before returning to Active Duty. She also studied Management Information Systems and Applied Technology at the University of Southern Mississippi.

Like many soldiers, she juggled it all while raising her family. She has two boys, and has been married to her husband, Josh, for over 22 years.

She has been a compassionate, dedicated, and loyal member of my team. I am honored to recognize her for her outstanding service to my constituents of South Mississippi and her example as a true American Patriot.

RECOGNIZING THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE TREATY OF HARTFORD

HON. JOSEPH SEMPOLINSKI

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Mr. SEMPOLINSKI. Madam Speaker, this week marks the anniversary of the Treaty of Hartford. Prior to 1786, the States of Massachusetts and New York had a territorial dispute regarding whether the territory of what is now Greater Western New York would be part of Massachusetts or New York.

On December 16, 1786, the Treaty of Hartford resolved this dispute. As part of the treaty, land in Greater Western New York became part of New York State. However, Massachusetts retained the right of preemption, that is, the right to negotiate any land purchase from the Iroquois Confederacy members or Haudenosaunee, especially the Seneca people who then resided and continue to reside on it to this day. Later in 1788, Massachusetts sold this right of preemption to Oliver Phelps and Nathaniel Gorham.

Early agreements such as the Treaty of Hartford and the still-binding Treaty of Canandaigua shaped the future of Greater Western New York. The beginning of this region's association with New York State started this week, in 1786. The region continues to be a vital and unique part of the northeastern United States and the Seneca Nation, with a unique economy, culture, and character.

RECOGNIZING GUNNAR MARSHALL WEST

HON. BETH VAN DUYNE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Ms. VAN DUYNE. Madam Speaker, on behalf of a grateful nation and the Citizens of the Twenty-Fourth District of Texas, the 2022 Congressional Veteran Commendation is hereby presented to Gunnar Marshall West, Captain, United States Army, of Dallas, Texas for the honorable service he performed while in the Armed Forces of the United States of America and for his continued service to his community.

Mr. West was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1973 and commissioned as an officer in 1978,

serving in the Army Medical Corps as a brigade surgeon, stationed in the First Infantry Division at Fort Riley in Kansas. He then deployed to Germany and was later awarded an Army Achievement Medal for his role in the defense of the Rock Island Arsenal during a violent protest in 1985. Among his other decorations is the Army Service Ribbon and the Overseas Service Ribbon.

The selflessness Mr. West demonstrated in the U.S. Army continues with his service to his community. He started a nonprofit organization for abused and neglected children, SouthWest Kids, and has been involved in coaching youth sports in Southlake for over two decades.

Mr. West's service is consistent with the finest traditions of the United States Army and reflects great credit upon himself, the State of Texas, and the United States of America.

HONORING JAWAN STRADER

HON. FREDERICA S. WILSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Madam Speaker, from the 24th District of the great State of Florida, I rise today to honor Jawan Strader, Emmy award winning television news anchor.

A native of Indianapolis, Indiana, Jawan Strader is an Emmy award-winning journalist and anchor of NBC 6 News South Florida and host of Voices with Jawan Strader, a community affairs show dedicated to the black community and the disenfranchised.

Bringing more than 20 years of experience covering the most impactful stories, Jawan Strader has reached into the homes of South Floridians, touching their hearts and lives. Mr. Strader has won a number of Emmy awards, including one for anchoring and his coverage of the heartbreaking Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School massacre in Parkland, Florida. He also covered the Hollywood Hills nursing home deaths of 12 senior citizens following Hurricane Irma and his field anchoring has taken him to Havana, Cuba for President Obama's visit; Orlando for the Pulse nightclub shooting. He was the only South Florida anchor covering the shooting of Black church members in Charleston, South Carolina. In 2018, the Miami New Times recognized Strader as the Best News Anchor in South Florida. In 2016, Strader received the Media Excellence award from CCNN Live for Best News Anchor. He has also received the award of distinction for Media Coverage of Public Education by the education fund of Miami-Dade. Legacy Magazine named Strader one of South Florida's most powerful and influential black people.

Mr. Strader is a long time Role Model in the 5000 Role Models of Excellence Project. He is also a mentor to a number of young journalists and member of the National Association of Black journalists, 100 Black Men of South Florida, and Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. He received his Bachelor of Arts in Journalism from Indiana University Bloomington.

RECOGNIZING THE 200TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO DIPLOMATIC BINATIONAL RELATIONSHIP

HON. MARK TAKANO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and celebrate the 200th anniversary of the diplomatic binational relationship between the United States and Mexico. On December 12, 1822, Mexican envoy José Manuel Zozaya y Bermúdez presented his diplomatic credentials to U.S. President James Monroe. In the two centuries since, we have strengthened the robust strategic and diplomatic relationship between our two countries. The United States and Mexico remain united through deep bonds of friendship and partnership that have helped make our shared continent one of the most prosperous regions in the world.

Madam Speaker, I am particularly proud of the pioneering role my hometown of Riverside, California has played in this key diplomatic relationship. Riverside is proud to have two Sister Cities in Mexico—Cuautla, Morelos and Ensenada, Baja California Norte. The relationship between Riverside and our two sister cities is grounded in both art and cultural exchanges and public safety partnerships, fostering impactful dialogue and information sharing.

I commend the International Relations Council of Riverside for their commitment to facilitating these sister-city relationships and strengthening our region's global ties. IRC Riverside brings world leaders and dignitaries to our community, providing students and local business leaders with the opportunity to interact with and learn about people from our sister cities through citizen diplomacy.

Madam Speaker, I thank the cities of Cuautla and Ensenada for their continued commitment and partnership with Riverside and their dedication to strengthening the important binational diplomatic relationship between our two countries. I know that this relationship will continue to grow and prosper in the years to come.

HONORING THE LIFE OF EDWARD ''ED'' MORRIS

HON. JOE COURTNEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Mr. COURTNEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the rich life of Edward 'Ed' V. Morris of Niantic Village, East Lyme, Connecticut. Aged 97, Ed departed from this earth peacefully on November 23rd, 2022. Ed was a giant within East Lyme and the surrounding community, and his passing forces a farewell upon us to a member of the greatest generation.

Born and raised in Hartford, Connecticut, Ed purposed his life toward strengthening his Connecticut roots and influencing opinions and decisions throughout the region. Though this is central to the arc of his life, it is worth acknowledging that immediately upon turning age 18, Ed heeded our nation's call to action and honorably served in the U.S. Army in the South Pacific Theatre during World War II. Ed was deservedly very proud of that service and over the years, he was a regular at the East Lyme Memorial Day Parade, wearing his garrison cap.

When Ed returned to Harford in 1946 after the war, he wasted no time in picking up right where he left off at age 17 pursuing his passion to work in the newspaper business. He returned to his first place of work, the Hartford Times, setting off on what would become a loyal 25 year long career with the agency until it, unfortunately, closed in 1971. Ever the adaptive, dedicated soul, Ed kept with his passion for circulating news, continuing his work with other local productions including the Hartford Courant and then the Manchester Journal Inquirer, before impressively retiring at age 70.

Ed's decades of experience in local journalism dovetailed with another passion of his, connecting with his community. In committing so wholly to his humble, meaningful line of work, Ed became a reliable and known personality amongst clientele, vendors, and small businesses alike. Whether delivering information to the local diner or neighborhood storefront, he kept up with the local conversation, becoming a direct conduit and invaluable source for reporters at every agency he worked for.

Equipped with such a gregarious personality and having developed such a knack for keeping an ear to the beat of the town, it is no surprise that he transferred his experience into political leadership. Outside of the newspaper industry and well into retirement, Ed utilized his spare time to push for greater community involvement and gather feedback on improving the region from his neighbors. He was a known presence, particularly in East Lyme, having served for years between roles including the Board of Selectman, Chairman of the Democratic Town Committee and the representative for the 20th district of the Democratic State Central Committee.

Madam Speaker, I can personally attest to the strength of Ed's character and outgoing, friendly personality, each of which we will not soon forget. It is an honor to know and represent constituents of the Second District, like Ed, who have been so purposeful in growing their personal and familial ties to our state.

Though we mourn this incredible loss, we can find appreciation that his memory and legacy will live on through his family as well as the countless number of individuals who knew him personally. He is specifically survived by his children, Brian and Christine Morris of Glastonbury, Connecticut, Pamela Seibert of Wakefield, Massachusetts, Richard 'Dick' Morris and his wife Deborah of East Lyme, as well as his grandchildren and much larger extended family who reside throughout Connecticut and Massachusetts. Dick Morris in fact followed in his father's footsteps as a community leader serving as Fire Marshal of the East Lyme Fire Department. As we memorialize his near century's worth of service to our region and the nation, I ask that my colleagues in the House join me in paying tribute to Ed Morris, codifying his name and life well-lived.

RECOGNIZING THE SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY MEN'S SOCCER TEAM'S FIRST NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP VICTORY

HON. JOHN KATKO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Mr. KATKO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Syracuse University Men's Soccer team for winning its first NCAA Division I National Championship on December 12, 2022.

Syracuse defeated the Indiana University Hoosiers in a thrilling national championship match, which ended with The Orange prevailing in a penalty kick shootout. The championship capped off an astonishing nineteen-win season, the best in school history. It also marks the 80th national championship in Syracuse Athletics history.

I am honored to extend my congratulations to the entire Syracuse Orange Men's Soccer team including Head Coach Ian McIntyre, Associate Head Coach Jukka Masalin, and Assistant Coach Sean Lawlor. Our entire Central New York community is so proud.

Madam Speaker, I ask that my colleagues in the House join me in recognizing the Syracuse University Men's Soccer team on the first of many national championships.

HONORING BARBARA LONG

HON. BILLY LONG

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Mr. LONG. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Barbara Long in recognition of her lifelong passion for and dedication to the arts.

Barbara first developed her love of the arts in her hometown of Cheyenne, WY. During high school and college she taught ballet at the E. Tolerton School of Dance. Barbara earned numerous accolades in Stars of Tomorrow competitions and was selected Miss Cheyenne under the mentorship of Elizabeth Tolerton. She also performed with the University of Wyoming Dance Troupe, Cheyenne Little Theater and the Denver Civic Ballet in the Nutcracker. She performed piano recitals at the University of Wyoming and the Wyoming Governor's mansion.

Barbara attended the University of Wyoming for 2 years on an honor scholarship. When we began dating she transferred to Missouri State University where she received her B.S. in Secondary Education. After we married, Barbara turned her artistic interest to home remodeling and design. She designed or remodeled dozens of projects as diverse as historic homes to log cabins.

What is truly remarkable about Barbara is her sustained passion for community building through the arts. She has dedicated her time, energy and talents to many local organizations, including Springfield Junior League, Girl Scouts, Greenwood Laboratory School PTA, Ozarks Counseling Center, Springfield Little Theatre, Ronald McDonald House, Family Violence Center: Hearts in Harmony and "Go Red purse-onalities" benefiting American Heart Association.

During her time in D.C., she has worked with the Congressional Club on Joint Base children's daycare project, and building a charter school playground. She has also worked with the USO, packaging Mother's Day gifts for mothers and wives of servicemen and servicewomen. Barbara has participated for several years in the March of Dimes Gourmet Gala. She is a member of Congressional Club, Republican Spouses Club, Congressional Families Cancer Prevention Advisory Committee and the Congressional Spouses for Suicide Prevention and Education.

Madam Speaker, although Barbara never seeks the spotlight, her understated but undeniable passion shines brightly from within and reflects on all those around her. I am proud to bring recognition to her today.

HONORING DR. BARBARA CAREY-SHULER

HON. FREDERICA S. WILSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Madam Speaker, from the 24th District of the great State of Florida, I rise today to recognize Dr. Barbara Carey-Shuler, a courageous community leader, dedicated public servant, sagacious mentor, inspiring educator, and loving mother, in honor of a street being named in her honor.

Dr. Carey-Shuler has been a powerful force for positive change in South Florida for decades. She is a trailblazer who has paved the way for many successful professionals, entrepreneurs, and businesses. Her efforts have improved the quality of life for thousands of South Floridians.

Dr. Carey-Shuler's life is founded on a spirit of generosity. Her unselfish character is only overshadowed by her loving spirit and acceptance of others. She considers her ability to empower and inspire others as her greatest accomplishment. Regarding her passion for helping young people she says, "I want to exude my passion so that they will have the same passion to give back and help other young people."

Dr. Carey-Shuler was first appointed to the Miami Dade County Board of Commissioners in 1979. She made a major impact through her progressive policies and legislative decisions. She initiated the groundbreaking legislation to create Affirmative Action and set-aside programs in Miami Dade County which are credited with creating more jobs and opportunities for minorities and women than any other legislation in the county's history. She also created the 15 miles per hour school zone in Dade County and was later adopted by the rest of the State of Florida. She made history in 2002 when she was selected as the first African American woman to serve as chairperson of the Miami Dade County Commission.

Dr. Carey-Shuler has never shied away from an opportunity to help others or promote equality without regard to the popularity of her decisions. In 1990, she attended an event where the late South African President Nelson Mandela delivered a speech upon his release after being unjustly imprisoned for 27 years. The event was locally controversial but Dr. Carey-Shuler was among a small group of elected officials who attended because she understood President Mandela's importance to the international campaign for human rights. Her courage and vision earned the respect and admiration of her constituents and was a large part of the reason she was re-elected several times.

Above all, Dr. Carey-Shuler values education as the key to a happy and healthy life. She was well-regarded as an administrator with Miami Dade County Public Schools. She was also credited with inspiring and advancing the careers of dozens of educators as an assistant superintendent. She has an impressive educational resume of her own; Bachelor of Arts in Communications from Florida A&M University, Master of Science in Communications from Ohio State University, Specialist Degree in Guidance from the University of Miami, and a Doctorate in Education from the University of Florida.

Since retiring from elected office in 2005, Dr. Carey-Shuler has managed very successful family-owned funeral homes in Palm Beach County, Florida. However, she has continued her passion to help others and mentor young people. Her board memberships include Spady Cultural Heritage Museum, West Palm Beach Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Delta Heritage Foundation, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Educational Foundation, Pathway to Prosperity, among several others.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues and all Americans to please join me in recognizing a great woman, a great public servant, a great businessperson, a great mother, and a great American, Dr. Barbara Carey-Shuler for her indelible contribution to our community and our Nation.

RECOGNIZING GARY LEE DILLAHUNTY

HON. BETH VAN DUYNE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2022

M. VAN DUYNE. Madam Speaker, on behalf of a grateful nation and the Citizens of the Twenty-Fourth District of Texas, the 2022 Congressional Veteran Commendation is hereby presented to Gary Lee Dillahunty, Sergeant, United States Marine Corps, of Southlake, Texas for the honorable service he performed while in the Armed Forces of the United States of America and for his continued service to his community.

Mr. Dillahunty enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps in 1968, serving as a Motor Transport Marine during the Vietnam War, billeted as the staff driver for three different general officers during his tenure in Vietnam. His decorations include the Vietnam Campaign Medal and the Vietnam Service Medal.

The selflessness Mr. Dillahunty demonstrated in the U.S. Marine Corps continues with his service to community. He has worked as a general contractor for most of his life and extended his professional knowledge towards helping many in his community with projects around their homes and helping many build their dream home.

Mr. Dillahunty's service is consistent with the finest traditions of the United States Marine Corps and reflects great credit upon himself, the State of Texas, and the United States of America.

REMEMBERING THE LIVES AND SACRIFICE OF SGT. STEVEN ROBIN AND OFFICER BRANDEN ESTORFFE

HON. MICHAEL GUEST

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Mr. GUEST. It is with great sadness that I rise today to honor the lives of Bay St. Louis officers Steven Robin and Branden Estorffe, who lost their lives in the line of duty. Both officers served their community with distinction, bravery, and honor and gave their lives in their mission to serve and protect their community.

Sgt. Steven Robin and officer Branden Estorffe displayed incredible courage in the face of danger, and their actions are a testament to their character and the dedication of all of our officers who risk their lives to protect their communities. They will be remembered for their commitment to protecting and serving the people of Bay St. Louis, and their sacrifice will not be forgotten.

I offer my deepest condolences to the families, friends, fellow officers, and colleagues of these two courageous officers. They will be greatly missed by all who knew them, but their legacy will live on in the lives they touched and the countless lives they protected. As we honor their memory and mourn their passing, let us also remember the sacrifices of all law enforcement officers and the important work they do to keep us safe every day. May they rest in peace and may their loved ones find comfort in knowing that their heroic actions in protecting the life of a child will never be forgotten.

It is my honor to recognize Sgt. Steven Robin and officer Branden Estorffe for their heroism and dedication to the people of Mississippi, the community of Bay St. Louis, and the United States. I ask my colleagues in the House to join me in remembering these brave officers.

HONORING TEXAS STATE SENATOR EDDIE LUCIO, JR.

HON. MAYRA FLORES

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Mrs. FLORES. Madam Speaker, today, I rise to honor Texas State Senator Eddie Lucio, Jr. for his 36 years of service to the residents of South Texas, 32 of which have been spent in the Texas State Senate.

Senator Lucio was born in Brownsville, Texas, and graduated from Pan American University. His public service career began in 1971 when he was elected Cameron County Treasurer at just 24 years old. For the next 15 years, Senator Lucio served in the local county government before being elected to the Texas House of Representatives in 1986 and then to the Texas State Senate in 1990.

While serving in the Texas State Senate, Senator Lucio was a champion for education, including the creation of South Texas College, the University of Texas at Brownsville, and the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. In addition, he spearheaded efforts for the creation of the University of Texas RGV School of Medicine.

Not only did he make significant advancements in establishing these colleges, but he also improved teachers' retirement system and expanded universal breakfast and lunch plans for students.

As a devout Catholic, Senator Lucio is affiliated with organizations like the Knights of Columbus and Catholic Legislators Network and has been unapologetic about his convictions. Throughout his time in the Texas State Senate, Senator Lucio remained steadfast to his values, even when this meant not being popular within his own party.

Senator Lucio has been married to his wife, Minnie Lucio, for 54 years and is the father of 2 children, Lynda Lucio-Cisneros, a school counselor, and Eddie Lucio IV, a member of the Texas House of Representatives.

For this, and for his great mentorship, I am truly grateful for Senator Lucio's service and know that the RGV region and the State of Texas, are forever better because of his dedication and service.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ADAM KINZINGER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Mr. KINZINGER. Madam Speaker, I was unable to be present to cast votes on December 8. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 513, and YEA on Roll Call No. 516.

HONORING REPRESENTATIVE STEVE CHABOT

HON. MARIO DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor of our colleague and dear friend, STEVE CHABOT, who has served in Congress as an honorable, respected, and principled public servant for 26 years.

Congressman STEVE CHABOT has demonstrated a remarkable talent for working with Members from both parties on a variety of issues, which has made him an especially effective legislator. Of his many lasting legacies, Congressman CHABOT spent years working to strengthen the Democratic Republic of China (Taiwan) by encouraging arms sales for Taiwan's defense, striving to encourage greater diplomacy between Taiwan and the United States, and strengthening trade. His Taiwan Travel Act, which became law in 2018, encourages official diplomacy between Taiwan and U.S. officials despite Executive Branch reticence under the One China Policy. He worked tirelessly to preserve a secure, free, and prosperous Taiwan.

Congressman CHABOT understands the threat that Communist China poses to Taiwan and the rest of the free world, and was tenacious in working to diminish that threat on behalf of the United States and our allies. While the United States continues to address a growing threat from Communist China which pirates intellectual property from American businesses, threatens its neighbors in the Pacific, and oppresses the Chinese people, this noble body benefits from Members like Congressman CHABOT who harbor an unwavering commitment to freedom, democracy, and America's national security.

On the home front he has worked tirelessly to improve the lives of his constituents including passing and overseeing the Paycheck Protection Program as Ranking Member of the Small Business Committee and securing millions of dollars in funding for projects around Cincinnati and Warren County, Ohio, over the years.

I greatly admire Congressman CHABOT for his leadership and dedication to quintessential American principles and priorities. I value our years together co-chairing the Congressional Taiwan Caucus. His efforts have made a lasting mark on this body, and with the colleagues that had the honor of serving beside him. As one of many grateful for his decades of service to the American people, and to the country whose values he so ably and passionately advanced, I thank Congressman CHABOT for selflessly striving to expand freedom, democracy, and respect for human rights.

HONORING COMMISSIONER DENISE LANDMAN

HON. FREDERICA S. WILSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Madam Speaker, from the 24th District of the great State of Florida, I rise today to honor Denise Landman for her stellar service and contributions as Commissioner of the City of Aventura.

Someone once said this about local government, "when you are in local government, you are on the ground, and you are looking into the eyes and hearts of the people you are there to serve. It teaches you to listen; it teaches you to be expansive in the people with whom you talk to; and that engagement gives you political judgment."

It is this same standard of leadership and approach that has distinguished her success at the City of Aventura. With input given from passionate public servants like Commissioner Landman, Aventura is certain to have a bright future guided by a grounded approach to local governance, cooperation, and investment in the well-being of this community achieved during her tenure in office as a Commissioner.

Madam Speaker please join me in honoring Commissioner Denise Landman for the completion of her term in office, her time, her commitment, and outstanding contribution representing the residents of the City Aventura.

HONORING MAJOR KATIE LUNNING

HON. ILHAN OMAR

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Ms. OMAR. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor and commend Major Katie Lunning of the 133d Airlift Wing upon receiving the Distinguished Flying Cross medal for her extraordinary service as a flight nurse during Operation Allies Refuge. For her exceptional service and achievements, Major Lunning joins a

small list of women in the U.S. Service, and only the second flight nurse to receive this award.

Her courageous efforts, among many others last year, resulted in hundreds of lives being saved. Major Lunning embodies the courage and dedication we all want as a servicemember for our country. Her tireless efforts and commitment to providing safety to critically injured and ill patients in times of need is a testament to how dedicated Major Lunning is to be serving her country. She deserves the utmost admiration and recognition for her continuous efforts in having provided high quality service by monitoring, stabilizing, and treating patients in transit.

It is with great pleasure and honor I recognize Major Lunning for her outstanding efforts in saving and evacuating civilians and military members from Afghanistan. Her service to this country shows the courage, bravery, and sacrifice it takes to enter the unknown with great risk to her own life to save civilians and military members in dangerous environments. I express my deepest sense of gratitude for her valiant service to our Nation and those worldwide.

HONORING WILLIAM ''JOE JOE'' DICKSON

HON. ABIGAIL DAVIS SPANBERGER

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Ms. SPANBERGER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize William ''Joe Joe'' Dickson for the building security service he has provided to Virginia's Seventh Congressional District Office over the past 8 years.

Since 2014, Mr. Dickson has ensured the safety and security for 3 Members of Congress, including myself, and my predecessors Representative Eric Cantor and Representative Dave Brat. In his role, he has kept a watchful eye on our offices and our staff, allowing us to safely focus on serving the constituents of the Seventh Congressional District.

Mr. Dickson consistently and selflessly goes above and beyond his job description to ensure that my district staff and constituents are safe and feel welcome when entering our office building. He has become a friend to us all, greeting my staff each morning with a smile. His jovial nature and compassion for my team is evidence that he has genuine care for the well-being of those around him.

His dedicated protection and service to the office of the Seventh Congressional District is well deserving of commendation and celebration. Madam Speaker, please join me in thanking William ''Joe Joe'' Dickson on his 8 years of service to the Seventh Congressional District.

HONORING THE SERVICE AND DEDICATION OF THE PROFESSIONAL STAFF OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE CLIMATE CRISIS

HON. KATHY CASTOR

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Madam Speaker, today I rise to recognize the service and dedication of the majority professional staff of the Select Committee of the Climate Crisis. As any Member of Congress knows, the unsung heroes are those working behind the scenes. With little fanfare and recognition, the long hours and personal sacrifices our staff makes are indispensable to the success of a Member or committee.

For the last 4 years, I have had the distinct pleasure to serve as Chair for this Select Committee. During this time, I have been fortunate to have worked with so many talented individuals.

Our professional staff comes from all backgrounds, spanning the gamut of personal and professional experiences. This staff banded together as a team, and their record of success speaks for itself.

From Day 1, this team took to heart the words of Speaker NANCY PELOSI, that this Select Committee was not just an academic exercise but intended to deliver a roadmap of real policy achievements to tackle the challenge of a generation. Behind the scenes, the Select Committee staff built bridges to work closely with the incredible staffs of all the standing committees in the Congress, they reached across the spectrum of outside groups and advisors to foster new partnerships and forge compromise, while keeping our goals at the forefront of policy. In many ways the team served as a climate think tank for House Democrats, identifying ''Climate Wins'' and expanding the understanding of the climate crisis in all areas of policy and legislation.

As a result of their tireless work, the majority staff released a groundbreaking 2020 Climate Crisis Action Plan that has been called the most comprehensive climate policy plan ever in U.S. politics, which included a suite of 715 policy recommendations. And just this month, at the end of our tenure, the staff released a new report, Solving the Climate Crisis 2022: Key Accomplishments and Additional Opportunities. This 2nd report outlines the enormous record of success and progress, noting the more than 300 recommendations from 2020 that are now codified into federal law, the 430 plus that have passed the House under Speaker PELOSI's leadership, and outlining the necessary steps forward in future years for the Congress to continue to tackle the climate crisis.

The staff always had as its compass that solving the climate crisis must be guided by science, rooted in justice, and powered by American workers. Undoubtedly their work will help make communities more resilient to the impacts of the climate crisis, create good-paying local jobs, slash energy bills, uplift disadvantaged communities, and position America to lead the emerging clean economy.

I would like to take a moment to specifically recognize our majority staff director, Dr. Ana Unruh Cohen. Over the better part of the last 20 years, Ana has dedicated her work in the Congress to tackling the climate crisis, both in the House and Senate. Her deep knowledge of policy, collaborative spirit, and sharp political awareness was critical to the Select Committee's effectiveness and success. Her tireless leadership is an inspiration for us all.

I would also like to recognize all our staffers, past and present, during the 116th and 117th Congresses:

Alison L. Cassady, Deputy Staff Director.

Eric S. Fins, Deputy Staff Director.

Fatima Maria Ahmad, Senior Counsel.

Loyle Campbell, Rosenthal International Relations Fellow.

Grace Chan, Professional Staff.

Sydney Devitt, Digital Assistant.

Ebadullah Ebadi, Policy Assistant.

Melvin Félix, Communications Director.

Javier Gamboa, Senior Professional Staff.

Dana Gansman, Clerk and Director of Operations.

Jacob Hicks, Digital Director.

Aaron Huertas, Communications Director.

Rebecca Jablonski-Diehl, Senior Professional Staff.

Mackenzie L. Landa, Counsel.

Jakob Lindaas, Ph.D., Professional Staff.

Raleigh L. Martin, Ph.D., AGI/AAAS Congressional Science Fellow.

Samantha A. Medlock, CFM, Senior Counsel.

Mariah A. Morrison, Digital Production Specialist.

Sebastian Pons, Staff Assistant.

Zachary D. Pritchard, Ph.D., ASME Congressional Science & Engineering Fellow.

Abigail Regitsky, Ph.D., Professional Staff.

Rachel St. Louis, Operations and Press Assistant.

In addition, the Select Committee benefited from the support and wisdom of Kenneth Russell DeGraff, Senior Policy Advisor to Speaker PELOSI.

Thank you is not enough. These staffers have heeded the call to service, and for that I, and the American people, are eternally grateful. As this Select Committee comes to a close and the staff turns to their next chapter, I have no doubt they will continue to work every day to make a difference and be successful in whatever they turn to next.

RECOGNIZING BRANDON DEREK WILLIAMS

HON. BETH VAN DUYNE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Ms. VAN DUYNE. Madam Speaker, on behalf of a grateful nation and the Citizens of the Twenty-Fourth District of Texas, the 2022 Congressional Veteran Commendation is hereby presented to Brandon Derek Williams, Staff Sergeant, United States Air Force, of Euless, Texas for the honorable service he performed while serving in the Armed Forces of the United States of America and for his continued service to his community.

Mr. Williams enlisted in the U.S. Air Force in 2001, serving as an aerospace maintenance specialist working on numerous large aircraft, like the C–5 and C–17. While stationed at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base he supported

global airlift operations during the height of the War on Terror. He transferred to the reserves in 2004, attaining the rank of Staff Sergeant.

The selflessness Mr. Williams demonstrated in the U.S. Air Force continues with his service to his community. He currently serves as the Service Officer for American Legion Post 379 in Euless, helping connect veterans to resources and organizations that can assist with a variety of benefits and services as well as organizing events for the Legion post. He also volunteers with several veterans organizations including the Westlake Military Veterans Network and GallantFew.

Mr. Williams' service is consistent with the finest traditions of the United States Air Force and reflects great credit upon himself, the State of Texas, and the United States of America.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SYLVIA R. GARCIA

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Ms. GARCIA of Texas. Madam Speaker, I would have voted yea had I been present for Roll Call 524, Bill Number S. 3905 on December 14, 2022.

HONORING COMMISSIONER MARC NAROTSKY

HON. FREDERICA S. WILSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Madam Speaker, from the 24th District of the great State of Florida, I rise today to honor Marc Narotsky for his stellar service and contributions as Commissioner of the City of Aventura.

Someone once said this about local government, ''when you are in local government, you are on the ground, and you are looking into the eyes and hearts of the people you are there to serve. It teaches you to listen; it teaches you to be expansive in the people with whom you talk to; and that engagement gives you political judgment.''

It is this same standard of leadership and approach that has distinguished his success at the City of Aventura. With input given from passionate public servants like Commissioner Narotsky, Aventura is certain to have a bright future guided by a grounded approach to local governance, cooperation, and investment in the well-being of this community achieved during his tenure in office as a Commissioner.

Madam Speaker, please join me in honoring Commissioner Marc Narotsky for the completion of his term in office, his time, his commitment, and outstanding contribution representing the residents of the City Aventura.

RECOGNIZING THE LIFE AND SERVICE OF DAVID KANE

HON. JOSEPH SEMPOLINSKI

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Mr. SEMPOLINSKI. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and service of my constituent, David Kane.

Dave, who has lived a distinguished life, will be 93 in March 2023.

During the Korean War, he served in the U.S. Military's 3rd Right Aviation Section on the 38th Parallel.

Dave continued his public service as a corrections officer in Dannemora, New York, and worked on the levees around Elmira, New York.

Dave is a loving husband to his wife, Beverly, and father to his daughter, Peggy. He is an outstanding citizen of New York's 23rd Congressional District and is worthy of praise.

HONORING CHIEF ANDREW WHITE

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Chief Andrew White of the Clearlake Police Department in recognition of his outstanding career in public safety.

Mr. White was born in Walnut Creek, California. After receiving a Bachelor of Arts degree in Organizational Management and Information Technology, he attended the Sherman Block Supervisory Leadership Institute. Mr. White began his career in law enforcement as a police cadet and dispatcher for the City of Napa. He served for 16 years as an officer with the Suisun City Police Department, rising to the rank of Commander. In July 2018, he became the Chief of Police for the City of Clearlake. Mr. White also serves on the State of California 911 Advisory Board and represents the California Peace Officers Association on the California Law Enforcement Telecommunications Advisory Committee.

As Chief, Mr. White made significant changes to department spending and advocated for facility and equipment upgrades to better serve his community. This included a new city phone system, new servers and programs for code enforcement, and the city's first automated license plate reader system. During his tenure, crime rates within the city of Clearlake have reached historic lows and department retention has been at an all-time high. Additionally, Mr. White has worked tirelessly to improve cross-departmental relationships in an effort to improve response time and service to the area.

Mr. White is a devoted husband to Charlotte White and father of Blake, Madison, Gavin and Brooklyn. He and his wife have fostered 18 children since 2009 and currently foster Junior, Theo, and Ollie.

Madam Speaker, I thank Mr. White for his selfless service and commitment to the people of Clearlake. His efforts have undoubtedly made our community a safer place to live. Therefore, it is fitting and proper that we honor him here today.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF BRODERICK RAYFEL CRAWFORD

HON. SHARICE DAVIDS

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Ms. DAVIDS of Kansas. Madam Speaker, it is with profound sadness that I rise today to mourn the passing of Mr. Broderick Rayfel Crawford, who passed away on November 27, 2022. Mr. Crawford was a consummate servant leader and his dedication to the people of Wyandotte County touched countless lives. He leaves behind a family and community that will miss him greatly.

Mr. Crawford's passion for health and his compassion for others manifested early in his childhood, when he would care for his mother after surgeries, act as medic for his six siblings, and become the problem-solver for the community children his mother helped. He graduated from the University of Kansas in 1985 and began to pursue a career as an infectious disease specialist, first as a clinic supervisor at the University of Kansas Medical Center and later at Saint Luke's Health System.

His medical work inspired a lifelong commitment to improving health equity in his community of Wyandotte County. From community health to food and nutrition to housing and transportation, Mr, Crawford was a tireless advocate, activist, and organizer. He served on over 25 task forces in the Kansas City area, using his voice to unwaveringly demand better for his community.

Mr. Crawford was deeply involved with the New Bethel Church, where he was a Deacon and beloved member of the congregation. He worked with members of the church to create programs that would address community health and health inequities in Kansas City, Kansas, including pushing for pastors to take the lead in congregation health. He also served as Community Health Director, then Executive Director, and ultimately President of the New Bethel Church Community Development Corporation. In this role, he acquired funding for numerous health initiatives in the Douglas-Sumner neighborhood and the greater Kansas City area.

Mr, Crawford also recognized the disparate impact of COVID–19 on minority communities. He co-founded the Wyandotte County Health Equity Task Force to respond to the pandemic public health crisis, and he was an early advocate for equitable COVID testing and vaccine access.

Madam Speaker, please join me in honoring the well-lived life of Mr. Broderick Crawford. Mr. Crawford saw people in his community who needed help and chose to dedicate his life to service. Though his absence will be keenly felt, his memory lives on in his legacy: the programs he started, the lives he saved, the volunteers he inspired, and the countless people whose lives he touched.

HONORING THE DEDICATED SERVICE OF COLLEEN KENNEDY

HON. STEVEN M. PALAZZO

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Mr. PALAZZO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize a former member of my congressional staff, Colleen Kennedy of Ocean Springs, Mississippi. For 5 and a half years, Colleen served as an essential member of my D.C. team, ending her time in my office as the Communications Director. Colleen has always had a passion for helping others, and it was through her experiences following Hurricane Katrina that she decided to pursue a career that allowed her to serve her home state of Mississippi

Colleen arrived in Washington in 2016 to serve as an intern in my office. She was then hired as Staff Assistant. Colleen continued to get more involved in serving the state of Mississippi when she joined the Mississippi Society of Washington, D.C., as a board member, it was her way of bringing pieces of home to our nation's capital.

Colleen was promoted to Legislative Assistant, where she volunteered to handle my office's flood insurance policy portfolio, a significant undertaking. Colleen led a coalition of Republicans in the House in stopping rate increases, defeating harmful flood insurance reforms in the House. Without her leadership, expertise, or dedication, nearly 65,000 south Mississippians would face more expensive premiums. Colleen stepped up to tackle a long-standing issue from the Affordable Care Act that would have negatively impacted hospitals in the state of Mississippi and the care available to Mississippians.

Colleen was passionate about legislative issues, but her true talent was communications roles. From being a press assistant to ending as the Communications Director, Colleen thrived being the spokesperson for myself and south Mississippi.

I am so grateful for all her great work for south Mississippi, from mailers, letters, meetings, tele-town halls, interviews, social media, and legislative portfolios. Colleen always served with integrity, loyalty, and passion, often sharing our inside saying of ''vote right'' as I left for votes. South Mississippi was her home for decades and will always hold a special place in her heart. And knowing her, there's only one way to conclude these remarks, vote right.

HONORING MAYOR ENID WEISMAN

HON. FREDERICA S. WILSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Madam Speaker, from the 24th District of the great State of Florida, I rise today to honor Enid Weisman for her stellar service and contributions as Mayor of the City of Aventura.

Someone once said this about local government, ''when you are in local government, you are on the ground, and you are looking into the eyes and hearts of the people you are there to serve. It teaches you to listen; it teaches you to be expansive in the people with whom you talk to; and that engagement gives you political judgment.''

It is this same standard of leadership and approach that has distinguished her success at the City of Aventura. With input given from passionate public servants like Mayor Weisman, Aventura is certain to have a bright future guided by a grounded approach to local governance, cooperation, and investment in the well-being of this community achieved during her tenure in office as a mayor.

Madam Speaker, please join me in honoring Mayor Enid Weisman for the completion of her term in office, her time, her commitment, and outstanding contribution representing the residents of the City Aventura.

Daily Digest

HIGHLIGHTS

Senate agreed to the motion to concur in the amendment of the House of Representatives to the amendment of the Senate to H.R. 7776, James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act.

Senate agreed to the motion to concur in the amendment of the House of Representatives to the amendment of the Senate to H.R. 1437, Further Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act.

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S7207–S7269

Measures Introduced: Twenty-nine bills and three resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 5264–5292, and S.J. Res. 67–69. **Pages S7251–52**

Measures Reported:

S. 419, to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide for a full annuity supplement for certain air traffic controllers. (S. Rept. No. 117–260)

S. 1350, to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to establish a national risk management cycle, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. (S. Rept. No. 117–261)

S. 3897, to require the reduction of the reliance and expenditures of the Federal Government on legacy information technology systems, with amendments. (S. Rept. No. 117–262)

S. 4328, to modify the fire management assistance cost share, with amendments. (S. Rept. No. 117–263)

S. 4477, to amend title 31, United States Code, to require agencies to include a list of outdated or duplicative reporting requirements in annual budget justifications, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. (S. Rept. No. 117–264)

S. 4816, to require the Archivist of the United States to submit to Congress a comprehensive plan for reducing the backlog of requests for records from the National Personnel Records Center, with an amendment. (S. Rept. No. 117–265)

S. 4930, to prohibit Federal procurement from companies operating in the Russian Federation, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. (S. Rept. No. 117–266)

S. 1541, to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to require the Federal Communications Commission to ensure just and reasonable charges for telephone and advanced communications services in correctional and detention facilities, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute.

S. 1628, to amend the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 to strengthen protections relating to the online collection, use, and disclosure of personal information of children and minors, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute.

S. 3405, to require the Federal Communications Commission to issue a rule providing that certain low power television stations may be accorded primary status as Class A television licensees, with an amendment.

S. 3663, to protect the safety of children on the internet, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute.

S. 4101, to require the Secretary of Commerce to provide training and guidance relating to human rights abuses, including such abuses perpetrated against the Uyghur population by the Government of the People's Republic of China.

S. 4237, to establish and maintain a coordinated program within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration that improves wildfire, fire weather, fire risk, and smoke related forecasting, detection, modeling, observations, and service delivery, and to address growing needs in the wildland-urban interface, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute.

S. 4321, to amend the Save Our Seas 2.0 Act to improve the administration of the Marine Debris

Foundation, to amend the Marine Debris Act to improve the administration of the Marine Debris Program of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, with an amendment.

S. 4802, to authorize appropriations for the Coast Guard, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. **Page S7251**

Measures Passed:

Enrollment Correction: Senate agreed to H. Con. Res. 121, directing the Clerk of the House of Representatives to make a correction in the enrollment of the bill H.R. 7776. **Page S7237**

Enrollment Correction: Senate agreed to H. Con. Res. 123, providing for a correction in the enrollment of H.R. 1437. **Page S7242**

BOLIVAR Act: Senate passed S. 688, to prohibit contracting with persons that have business operations with the Maduro regime, after agreeing to the following amendment proposed thereto: **Page S7265**

King (for Scott (FL)) Amendment No. 6543, in the nature of a substitute. **Page S7265**

Enhanced Use Lease Pilot Program: Senate passed S. 2793, to authorize the Administrator of General Services to establish an enhanced use lease pilot program, after agreeing to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute. **Pages S7265–66**

30th Anniversary of Operation Provide Comfort: Senate agreed to S. Con. Res. 16, commemorating the 30th anniversary of Operation Provide Comfort, after agreeing to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute, and the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute to the preamble. **Pages S7266–67**

Rebecca Trimble: Senate passed H.R. 681, for the relief of Rebecca Trimble. **Page S7267**

Immigration and Nationality Act: Committee on the Judiciary was discharged from further consideration of S. 5168, to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to include aliens passing in transit through the United States to board a vessel on which the alien will perform ship-to-ship liquid cargo transfer operations within a class of nonimmigrant aliens, and the bill was then passed. **Page S7267**

Congratulating the Northern Arizona University Lumberjacks: Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation was discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 865, commending and congratulating the Northern Arizona University Lumberjacks men's cross country team for winning the 2022 National Collegiate Athletic Association Cross Country National Championship, and the resolution was then agreed to. **Page S7267**

War Crimes Rewards Expansion Act: Senate passed H.R. 4250, to amend the State Department Basic Authorities Act of 1956 to provide for rewards for the arrest or conviction of certain foreign nationals who have committed genocide or war crimes. **Page S7267**

Trafficking Victims Protection Act: Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions was discharged from further consideration of H.R. 7181, to amend the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 to direct the Secretary of Transportation to seek to provide for the posting of contact information of the national human trafficking hotline in the restrooms of each aircraft, airport, over-the-road bus, bus station, passenger train, and passenger railroad station operating within the United States, and the bill was then passed. **Pages S7267–68**

STREAM Act: Committee on Energy and Natural Resources was discharged from further consideration of S. 3957, to amend the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act to make certain activities eligible for grants from the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund, and the bill was then passed, after agreeing to the following amendment proposed thereto: **Page S7268**

King (for Barrasso) Amendment No. 6542, in the nature of a substitute. **Page S7268**

VA Peer Support Enhancement for MST Survivors Act: Committee on Veterans' Affairs was discharged from further consideration of H.R. 2724, to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide for peer support specialists for claimants who are survivors of military sexual trauma, and the bill was then passed. **Page S7268**

House Messages:

Further Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act: By 71 yeas to 19 nays (Vote No. 399), Senate agreed to the motion to concur in the amendment of the House of Representatives to the amendment of the Senate to H.R. 1437, making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2023, by the order of the Senate of Thursday, December 15, 2022, 60 Senators having voted in the affirmative, and after taking action on the following motions and amendments proposed thereto:

Rejected:

By 45 yeas to 47 nays (Vote No. 397), Scott (FL) motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill, with Scott (FL) Amendment No. 6540, to rescind certain funding provided to the Internal Revenue Service

under section 10301 of Public Law 117–169 and to protect American small businesses, gig workers, and freelancers by repealing the burdensome American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 transactions reporting threshold. (A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that the motion, having failed to achieve 60 affirmative votes, was not agreed to.)

Pages S7219–26, S7237–42

By 35 yeas to 56 nays (Vote No. 398), Lee motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill, with Lee Modified Amendment No. 6541, in the nature of a substitute. **Page S7241**

Withdrawn:

Schumer motion to refer the bill to the Committee on Appropriations, with instructions, Schumer Amendment No. 6536, to add an effective date. **Page S7220**

Schumer motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill, with Schumer Amendment No. 6534, to add an effective date. **Page S7220**

During consideration of this measure today, Senate also took the following action:

By 75 yeas to 20 nays (Vote No. 393), Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to consideration of the House message to accompany the bill.

Pages S7219–20

Schumer Amendment No. 6537 (to (the instructions) Amendment No. 6536), to modify the effective date, fell when Schumer motion to refer the bill to the Committee on Appropriations, with instructions, Schumer Amendment No. 6536 (listed above) was withdrawn.

Schumer Amendment No. 6538 (to Amendment No. 6537), to modify the effective date, fell when Schumer Amendment No. 6537 (to (the instructions) Amendment No. 6536) (listed above), fell.

Page S7220

Schumer Amendment No. 6535 (to Amendment No. 6534), to modify the effective date, fell when Schumer motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill, with Schumer Amendment No. 6534 (listed above) was withdrawn. **Page S7220**

James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act: By 83 yeas to 11 nays (Vote No. 396), Senate agreed to the motion to concur in the amendment of the House of Representatives to the amendment of the Senate to H.R. 7776, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2023 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, by the order of the Senate of Thursday, December 15, 2022, 60 Senators having voted in the affirmative, and taking action on the following motions and amendments proposed thereto:

Rejected:

By 40 yeas to 54 nays (Vote No. 395), Johnson motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill, with Johnson Amendment No. 6526 (to the House amendment to the Senate amendment), to provide remedies to members of the Armed Forces discharged or subject to punishment under the COVID–19 vaccine mandate. (A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that the motion, having failed to achieve 60 affirmative votes, was not agreed to.) **Pages S7213–19, S7226–37**

Withdrawn:

Sullivan motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill, with Sullivan Amendment No. 6522 (to the House amendment to the Senate amendment), to amend the Camp Lejeune Justice Act of 2022 to appropriately limit attorney's fees. **Page S7227**

Schumer motion to refer the bill to the Committee on Armed Services, with instructions, Schumer Amendment No. 6516, to add an effective date. **Page S7232**

Schumer motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill, with Schumer (for Manchin) Amendment No. 6513 (to the House amendment to the Senate amendment), to provide for American energy security by improving the permitting process. **Page S7233**

During consideration of this measure today, Senate also took the following action:

Schumer Amendment No. 6517 (to (the instructions) Amendment No. 6516), to modify the effective date, fell when Schumer motion to refer the bill to the Committee on Armed Services, with instructions, Schumer Amendment No. 6516 (listed above), was withdrawn. **Page S7232**

Schumer Amendment No. 6518 (to Amendment No. 6517), to modify the effective date, fell when Schumer Amendment No. 6517 (to (the instructions) Amendment No. 6516), fell. **Page S7232**

By 47 yeas to 47 nays (Vote No. 394), three-fifths of those Senators duly chosen and sworn, not having voted in the affirmative, Senate rejected the motion to close further debate on Schumer motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill, with Schumer (for Manchin) Amendment No. 6513 (to the House amendment to the Senate amendment) (listed above). **Pages S7232–33**

Schumer Amendment No. 6515 (to Amendment No. 6513), to add an effective date, fell when Schumer motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill, with Schumer (for Manchin) Amendment No. 6513 (to the House amendment to the Senate amendment), was withdrawn.

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Nominations—Agreement: A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that at approximately 3 p.m., on Monday, December 19, 2022, Senate begin consideration of the nomination of Martin J. Gruenberg, of Maryland, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation for a term of six years; that at a time to be determined by the Majority Leader, in consultation with the Republican Leader, Senate vote, without intervening action or debate, on confirmation of the nomination; that if the nomination is confirmed, Senate consider the following nominations, en bloc: Travis Hill, of Maryland, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation for a term of six years, and to be Vice Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation; Jonathan McKernan, of Tennessee, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation; Martin J. Gruenberg, of Maryland, to be Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation; and Kimberly Ann McClain, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Development; and that Senate vote on confirmation of the nominations, en bloc, without intervening action or debate.

Page S7268

Nominations Confirmed: Senate confirmed the following nominations:

By 76 yeas to 20 nays (Vote No. EX. 392), Musetta Tia Johnson, of Virginia, to be a Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces for a term of fifteen years to expire on the date prescribed by law. **Pages S7207–13**

Kendra Davis Briggs, of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of fifteen years.

Errol Rajesh Arthur, of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of fifteen years.

Leslie A. Meek, of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of fifteen years.

Carl Ezekiel Ross, of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of fifteen years.

Laura E. Crane, of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of fifteen years.

Veronica M. Sanchez, of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of fifteen years.

Vijay Shanker, of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the District of Columbia Court of Appeals for the term of fifteen years.

Kathleen Ann Kavalec, of California, to be Ambassador to Romania.

Jessica Davis Ba, of the District of Columbia, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire.

Henry C. Leventis, of Tennessee, to be United States Attorney for the Middle District of Tennessee for the term of four years.

Michael D. Black, of Ohio, to be United States Marshal for the Southern District of Ohio for the term of four years.

Catrina A. Thompson, of North Carolina, to be United States Marshal for the Middle District of North Carolina for the term of four years.

7 Air Force nominations in the rank of general.

2 Army nominations in the rank of general.

9 Marine Corps nominations in the rank of general.

1 Navy nomination in the rank of admiral.

Routine lists in the Air Force, Army, Marine Corps, Navy, and Space Force. **Pages S7268–69**

Messages from the House: **Pages S7248–49**

Executive Communications: **Pages S7249–51**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S7252–53**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S7253–60**

Additional Statements: **Pages S7247–48**

Amendments Submitted: **Page S7260**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Pages S7264–65**

Privileges of the Floor: **Page S7265**

Record Votes: Eight record votes were taken today. (Total—399)

Pages S7213, S7219, S7233–34, S7236, S7240–42

Adjournment: Senate convened at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 10:02 p.m., until 3 p.m. on Monday, December 19, 2022. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Acting Majority Leader in today's Record on page S7268.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

CFPB SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT TO CONGRESS

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's Semi-Annual Report to Congress, after receiving testimony from

Rohit Chopra, Director, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

PLASTIC WASTE

Committee on Environment and Public Works: Subcommittee on Chemical Safety, Waste Management, Environmental Justice, and Regulatory Oversight concluded a hearing to examine the impact of plastic use and identifying solutions for reducing plastic waste, after receiving testimony from John Peterson Myers, Environmental Health Sciences, Crozet, Virginia; Judith Enck, Beyond Plastics, Poestenkill, New York; Matt Seaholm, Plastics Industry Association, Washington, D.C.; and Eric Hartz, Nexus Circular, Atlanta, Georgia.

RUSSIAN ACTIVITY ACROSS AFRICA

Committee on Foreign Relations: Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health Policy received a closed briefing on Russian activity across Africa from Nicholas Berliner, Deputy Assistant Secretary of European and Eurasian Affairs, and Ervin Massinga, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of African Affairs, both of the Department of State.

PROMOTING HEALTHY AND AFFORDABLE FOOD

Special Committee on Aging: Committee concluded a hearing to examine promoting healthy and affordable food for older Americans, after receiving testimony from Jeremy Everett, Baylor University Collaborative on Hunger and Poverty, Waco, Texas; Temitope Aiyejorun Walker, Georgia Department of Human Services, Atlanta; Tom Gilroy, East Cooper Community Outreach, Mount Pleasant, South Carolina; and Elayne Masters, Gibsonia, Pennsylvania.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 40 public bills, H.R. 9567–9606; and 4 resolutions, H.J. Res. 103; and H. Res. 1525–1527, were introduced. **Pages H9901–03**

Additional Cosponsors: **Page H9904**

Reports Filed: Reports were filed today as follows:

H.R. 2641, to amend the Reclamation Project Act of 1939 to authorize pumped storage hydropower development utilizing multiple Bureau of Reclamation reservoirs (H. Rept. 117–644);

H.R. 2415, to amend the Energy Policy Act of 2005 to require the Secretary of the Interior to establish a program to permanently plug, remediate, and reclaim orphaned wells and the surrounding lands and to provide funds to States and Tribal Governments to permanently plug, remediate, and reclaim orphaned wells and the surrounding lands, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 117–645);

Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress. Final Report Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress (H. Rept. 117–646); and

H. Res. 1475, of inquiry requesting the President and directing the Secretary of Defense to transmit to the House of Representatives any record created on or after January 21, 2021, under the control of the President or the Secretary, respectively, that refers to the Department of Defense and includes certain terms and phrases relating to gender, adversely, with an amendment (H. Rept. 117–647). **Page H9901**

Guest Chaplain: The prayer was offered by the Guest Chaplain, Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II, Greenleaf Christian Church, Goldsboro, North Carolina. **Page H9857**

VA Employee Fairness Act: The House passed H.R. 1948, to amend title 38, United States Code, to modify authorities relating to the collective bargaining of employees in the Veterans Health Administration, by a yea-and-nay vote of 219 yeas to 201 nays, Roll No. 530. **Pages H9863–66**

Pursuant to the Rule, an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 117–71 shall be considered as adopted. **Page H9863**

H. Res. 1518, the rule providing for consideration of the bills (H.R. 1948), (S. 3905), (S. 4003), the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 1437), and the Senate amendments to the bill (H.R. 2617) was agreed to yesterday, December 14th. Puerto Rico Status Act: The House passed H.R. 8393, to enable the people of Puerto Rico to choose a permanent, nonterritorial, fully self-governing political status for Puerto Rico and to provide for a transition to and the implementation of that permanent, nonterritorial, fully self-governing political status, by a yea-and-nay vote of 233 yeas to 191 nays, Roll No. 529. **Pages H9859–63, H9867–82**

Rejected the McClintock motion to recommit the bill to the Committee on Natural Resources, by a yea-and-nay vote of 209 yeas to 217 nays, Roll No. 528. **Pages H9880–82**

Pursuant to the Rule, an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 117–74 shall be considered as adopted, in lieu of the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Natural Resources now printed in the bill. **Page H9867**

H. Res. 1519, the rule providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 8393) was agreed to by a yea-and-nay vote of 217 yeas to 201 nays, Roll No. 527, after the previous question was ordered without objection. **Pages H9859–63**

Senate Referrals: S. 1143 was held at the desk. S. 2135 was held at the desk. S. 3429 was held at the desk. S. 4460 was held at the desk. S. 4893 was held at the desk. **Pages H9885–86**

Senate Message: Message from the Senate received today appears on pages H9885–86.

Quorum Calls—Votes: Four yea-and-nay votes developed during the proceedings of today and appears on pages H9862–63, H9880–81, H9881–82, and H9882–83.

Adjournment: The House met at 9 a.m. and adjourned at 4:18 p.m.

Committee Meetings

EXAMINING UVALDE: THE SEARCH FOR BIPARTISAN SOLUTIONS TO GUN VIOLENCE

Committee on the Judiciary: Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security held a hearing entitled ''Examining Uvalde: The Search for Bipartisan Solutions to Gun Violence''. Testimony was heard from Roland Gutierrez, State Senator, Texas; and public witnesses.

FITARA 15.0

Committee on Oversight and Reform: Subcommittee on Government Operations held a hearing entitled ''FITARA 15.0''. Testimony was heard from Chris DeRusha, Federal Chief Information Security Officer and Deputy National Cyber Director for Federal Cybersecurity, Office of Management and Budget; Jason Gray, Chief Information Officer, U.S. Agency for International Development; Carol C. Harris, Director, Information Technology and Cybersecurity, Government Accountability Office; and Jennifer Franks, Director, Information Technology and Cybersecurity, Government Accountability Office.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR MONDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2022

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Rules and Administration: to hold an oversight hearing to examine the U.S. Capitol Police, 3:30 p.m., SR–301.

House

No hearings are scheduled.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

3 p.m., Monday, December 19

Senate Chamber

Program for Monday: Senate will begin consideration of the nomination of Martin J. Gruenberg, of Maryland, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.

Senators should expect a 5:30 p.m. roll call vote on confirmation of the nomination of Martin J. Gruenberg or in relation to the Omnibus Appropriations bill.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

9:30 a.m., Friday, December 16

House Chamber

Program for Friday: House will meet in Pro Forma session at 9:30 a.m.

Extensions of Remarks, as inserted in this issue

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