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Senate

The Senate met at 12 noon and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden, abide with our lawmakers. Teach them to speak the right words at the right time. Make their speech like precious gold set in silver. May they seek to persuade with patient and gentle words. Lord, give them the wisdom to be friends of that which is eternal and abiding. Teach them reverence for the transcendent as You induce them to ascribe all good things to You.

We pray in Your precious 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 PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HAWLEY). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

LAKEN RILEY ACT—Resumed

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 5, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 5) to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to take into custody

aliens who have been charged in the United States with theft, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Thune (for Ernst/Grassley) Amendment No. 8, to include crimes resulting in death or serious bodily injury to the list of offenses that, if committed by an inadmissible alien, require mandatory detention.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask to speak in morning business for 2 or 3 minutes.

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

NATIONAL PHARMACISTS DAY

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, on Sunday, January 12, it was National Pharmacists Day. I think it is quite appropriate that we pay attention and give reward to the work that pharmacists do.

I would like to extend a warm thank-you to Iowa pharmacists for their dedication and for their service.

While we commonly know a pharmacist as someone who fills our prescription needs and educates us about medications, a pharmacist is typically the most accessible healthcare provider, and that is especially true for rural America. Do you know what? Nearly 90 percent of the U.S. population lives within 5 miles of a pharmacy.

For several Congresses, I have been leading a bipartisan effort that is called the Pharmacy and Medically Underserved Areas Enhancement Act. This bill encourages pharmacists—only where they are licensed and trained to do this—to offer healthcare services under Medicare, such as health and wellness screenings, immunizations, and diabetes management. This is necessary because, for many seniors in rural areas, it is simply easier to get to a pharmacist than it is to get to their nearest doctor.

I also know that it is vital to protect rural pharmacists from greedy pharmacy benefit managers who have

placed unfair pressures on pharmacies in recent years. In fact, I hear from a lot of Iowa pharmacists that if we don't do something about pharmacy benefit managers, we are going to continue to lose pharmacies in the small communities of rural America and particularly Iowa.

So, since 2018, I and about 65 or 70 of my colleagues have been trying to hold PBMs accountable and do that through legislation—about three different pieces of legislation—so that we can lower prescription drug prices and, in turn, keep our rural pharmacies in business. We want to do this through transparency because nobody knows what PBMs do. It is an opaque operation; yet they make up our formularies. Do they help big pharmaceutical companies or do they help the consumer? We don't know, and we need to do that. So I hope this Congress will move on some legislation to make what PBMs do transparent because with transparency comes accountability.

I am going to keep fighting for our pharmacists and our consumers.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 6

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I understand that there is a bill at the desk that is due for a second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 6) to amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit a health care practitioner from failing to exercise the proper degree of care in the case of a child who survives an abortion or attempted abortion.

Mr. THUNE. In order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I would object to further proceeding.

• This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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S197

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

LAKEN RILEY ACT

CABINET NOMINATIONS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, the Cabinet confirmation process is well underway here in the U.S. Senate. Confirmation hearings began this week with Defense Secretary nominee Pete Hegseth in the Armed Services Committee on Tuesday. Yesterday, we had six confirmation hearings—the most confirmation hearings, I might add, in a single day since 2001—and we have more happening today and tomorrow. By the time President Trump takes the oath of office on Monday, the Senate will have held hearings for 12 of his nominees, and there are plenty more to come.

Once the committees complete their work, the process will move to the floor, and we will move as quickly as possible on those votes. I hope Democrats will provide a level of cooperation that will allow us to quickly fill these positions so these nominees can begin their work for the American people.

One of the nominees being considered this week is a familiar face to us in the Senate. Yesterday, our longtime colleague Senator RUBIO found himself on the other side of the dais in the Foreign Relations Committee for his hearing to be Secretary of State. Members of that committee are well acquainted with Senator RUBIO's expertise in foreign policy. He has been a leading voice on these issues here in the Senate and on the Foreign Relations Committee since he arrived here in 2011, and yesterday, his expertise was on full display. Whether he was discussing China, the Middle East, Russia, our alliances, or anything else, our colleague demonstrated his command of international affairs.

MARCO also clearly laid out the philosophy he will bring to the job. He spoke about peace through strength, restoring American leadership, and advancing America's interests.

Our colleague is ready to step into the leadership void that the Biden administration has too often left on the world stage. In too many instances, the Biden administration has chosen to appease our enemies rather than demonstrate strength.

As yesterday made clear, we can expect Senator RUBIO to bring a moral clarity to foreign policy that has been sorely lacking in the last 4 years. That is important—moral clarity—and it has never been a challenge for MARCO RUBIO.

Take our relationship with China. The senior Senator from Florida has been a leading voice on the Chinese Communist Party's malign intentions and their implications for the United States. He has been clear-eyed about what the United States ought to do to outcompete China in this century, and

he has been outspoken in calling attention to China's human rights abuses. He was a leading voice on China's repression of its own people in Xinjiang, and he led the charge on the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act in the U.S. Senate. And he didn't stop once it became law; he made sure the legislation was being implemented properly. He called out companies suspected of using forced labor, and he advocated for the Biden administration to do a better job of vetting imports.

All of us here in the Senate know of MARCO's unwavering commitment to freedom. He has been a strong supporter of freedom fighters in Hong Kong, and he has been outspoken in his support for Taiwan as the Chinese Communist Party has grown more aggressive.

He is also a fierce defender of democracy and human rights in Latin America. His family watched their native Cuba deteriorate under a communist dictatorship, and it was conversations with his grandfather about Cuba's plight that drew Senator RUBIO into public service. So it is no surprise he is one of the strongest defenders of the rights of the Cuban people.

He is also a strong voice for democracy and justice in Venezuela. MARCO has been outspoken in his criticism of the Biden administration's appeasement of the Maduro regime, and he was a clear voice in defense of democracy as the country suffered through Maduro's corrupt election last year.

As we heard in his testimony yesterday, our colleague is focused on advancing America's interests. As he said, "Every dollar we spend, every program we fund, and every policy we pursue must be justified by the answer to three simple questions: Does it make America safer? Does it make America stronger or does it make America more prosperous?" I think that is what the American people should expect from a Secretary of State and from their government, and anybody who watched his hearing yesterday knows that is what we are going to get from MARCO RUBIO as Secretary of State.

I will have more to say about MARCO and other nominees for the Trump administration as they move through the process here in the U.S. Senate, and I look forward to hearing from each of the President's nominees in the near 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. SCHUMER. 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 Democratic leader is recognized.

PRESIDENT BIDEN'S FAREWELL ADDRESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, last night, President Biden delivered his

farewell address, reflecting on his 4 years in office, which will be remembered as one of the most productive periods in modern American history. Working alongside President Biden for the American people was the honor of a lifetime.

When President Biden took office, America was in crisis. The pandemic was surging. The economy was reeling. Our democracy was under assault. But President Biden, with good help from Senate Democrats, got right to work, and together, I am proud that we achieved one of the most ambitious legislative agendas in decades.

Working with President Biden, we created nearly 17 million new jobs, the most in a single term. We passed historic legislation, like Chips and Science—that was a baby that I nurtured—the bipartisan infrastructure law, and the Inflation Reduction Act. We lowered the cost of prescription drugs for tens of millions of Americans. We passed the first gun safety law in 30 years. We enshrined marriage equality into law. We confirmed 235 well-qualified and historic judges to lifetime appointments—more judges than any majority has confirmed in decades—and so much more.

President Biden also left America with a somber warning in his address—one that every American should listen to. He cautioned that "an oligarchy is taking shape in America of extreme wealth, power, and influence" that will threaten all the progress our country has made in the last 4 years.

President Biden is right. An oligarchy is beginning to take shape in America, and you can see it by looking at the incoming Trump administration.

Donald Trump has not even taken office yet, but many of his top advisers and Cabinet picks are extremely wealthy people with deep ties to corporate special interests. Many of these Cabinet picks seem to see the world through the eyes of a very rich and privileged individual—a very limited vision indeed. And the agenda they are pushing—tax cuts for the ultrawealthy and draconian cuts to the working class—is narrow and only furthers inequality in America.

Donald Trump's agenda would precisely benefit the oligarchy class that President Biden is warning about. The progress we have made under President Biden's leadership—lower taxes for families, more affordable healthcare, investments in infrastructure and energy—should not be undone only to assuage the desires of a limited few.

We Democrats will continue the legacy that President Biden created, continue fighting for working families, and make sure that everyone in America—not just the uberwealthy—has a fair shot.

TIKTOK

Mr. President, now on TikTok, the 170 million Americans who use TikTok are rightfully asking the same question: What will happen to the app after the ban enters into effect next week?

Today, I want to say a few words about protecting TikTok's future while also protecting America's national security at the same time.

We aren't against TikTok. We want TikTok to keep going. But we are against a Chinese company that is in cahoots with the Chinese Communist Party owning TikTok. Unfortunately, TikTok, as it exists today, has too many security risks that cannot be ignored. The law passed last year was intended to sever TikTok from the influence of the CCP while keeping the app available for Americans.

It is clear that more time is needed to find an American buyer and not disrupt the lives and livelihoods of millions of Americans, of so many influencers who have built up a good network of followers. That is why, last night, Senate Democrats tried to pass a bill that would extend the deadline to give everyone more time to come up with a workable solution, but Senate Republicans blocked our bill, which is stunning because time is running short.

We will continue to work to find a responsible solution to keeping TikTok going, protect American livelihoods, and protect against Chinese Communist Party surveillance. We must and can do all three. I have made my views clear to the current administration, and I will work with the Trump administration and with both parties to keep TikTok alive while protecting our national security.

We can all agree that we must protect Americans' privacy from the prying eyes of the Chinese Communist Party, but we also should agree it must be done in the right way, without risking content creators' livelihoods by rushing this process in a premature way. TikTok should survive but under new ownership.

CABINET NOMINATIONS

Mr. President, on nominations, this week, the American people have gotten their first real look at what is in store for them under a second Trump administration, and it is very bad news for the working and middle class. Senate Republicans, of course, are in the majority. They control, to a large extent, the final outcome of each nominee in this Chamber if they stick together. And Donald Trump's hold on Senate Republicans, as we have seen throughout the nominations process, is very, very strong.

Even so, there are two reasons why holding these hearings is extremely important regardless of outcome. First, they create a contrast between the parties. People will see what we stand for and what our Republican colleagues stand for as they support Trump's nominees. And second, the hearings create a record to hold these nominees accountable should they fail on the job down the line—which, unfortunately, I think many will, given their meager qualifications.

The contrast between whom Democrats will fight for and whom Repub-

licans will fight for is becoming exceedingly obvious, thanks to these hearings. On the Democratic side, we want answers to the things Americans are worried most about: What does Donald Trump's agenda mean for jobs, for inflation? What are Trump's tariffs going to do to people's bottom lines? Will it send prices shooting up?

And people are going to ask: Are my prescription drugs going to get more expensive? They are going to ask: Will our broken tax system become even more unfair under President Trump in a way that rigs the system for the ultrawealthy? These are the questions Americans care about. These are the things Democrats want answers to from President Trump's nominees. And in many cases, the answers are very, very troubling.

Second, even if these nominees are confirmed in the end, given that Donald Trump's hold on Senate Republicans is so absolute, the American people deserve to have a record they can reference down the line.

Candidly, many of President Trump's nominees are not fit for the job. Look at Pete Hegseth. Confirming some of these people would be a reckless roll of the dice for our country, but Republicans, under pressure from President-elect Trump, seem willing to press ahead nonetheless.

Should the time come that some of these nominees fail on the job, the hearings we are holding right now will come back to haunt our Republican colleagues because the warnings will have been there from the start. By asking tough questions, by getting nominees on the record, by establishing that many of these individuals are unfit, these hearings will have been the canary in the coal mine that warns everyone that some of these nominees are too great a risk.

So Democrats will continue to uphold our responsibility to scrutinize each nominee on the issues Americans care about. We will continue asking the tough questions because working people deserve to know whose side Donald Trump is truly on. Is it working people, like Donald Trump claims, or is it corporate special interests like his nominations all too often suggest?

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.

The Senator from Kentucky.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, earlier this week, President Biden went to the State Department and offered a final assessment of his record on foreign policy. He insisted that his leadership had "increased America's power in every dimension," that we were

"stronger at home, stronger in the world, and . . . more capable . . . than we have been in a long time."

I suspect the only people who buy that assessment were right there in the room with the President. No doubt, those watching from further afield found those remarks unconvincing. What most of us saw was a final rear-guard action to cover for an administration that has been in retreat for 4 straight years.

The President's tough talk about Putin is undone by his chronic and well-documented fear of escalation—the hesitation and half measures that kept critical tools out of Ukrainian hands when they could have made a difference. Even his most senior aides inadvertently acknowledged the truth. In a legacy-shopping column in the New York Times, Secretary Blinken and Secretary Austin say it was "steadfast American leadership" that rallied the world to "help Ukraine survive the Kremlin's imperial onslaught."

To help Ukraine survive. Not to help defeat aggression, not to help restore sovereignty, not to help degrade the power of a major adversary—just to let Ukraine's resistance languish on the slow drip of critical capabilities moving far slower than the speed of relevance.

Or take this administration's approach to the Middle East. On Monday, the President was optimistic about the prospects of defeating Iran's terror proxies and restoring credible deterrence under which Israel and its neighbors could live in peace. But absent entirely was any recognition that it was Israel, not the United States, that has created this geopolitical opportunity.

And no recognition that Israel has done so in spite of the administration's best efforts to restrain a sovereign ally's self-defense. In the 468 days since the horrors of October 7, the President's public scolding of a close ally under attack and refusal to check the growing anti-Israel streak poisoning his party have exposed his ironclad commitment to Israel as something of a hollow gesture.

This, after a disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan had given allies and partners enough reason to doubt the strength of America's word—and his administration's competence.

And behind President Biden's bluster about "winning the worldwide competition" with China is a record of paltry investment in the hard power America needs to meet aggression and to reassure our allies.

For 4 straight years, he submitted defense budget requests that failed to even keep pace with inflation, let alone the pacing threat of the PRC.

While America's primary long-term strategic competitor extended its lead in developing and producing lethal capabilities, the Biden administration focused on climate diplomacy. And its signature climate protectionism picked avoidable trade fights with allies and

partners we will need to deter or defeat Chinese aggression.

In light of the PRC's headway and closer alignment with other adversaries, America's warfighters are no better equipped today to deter and defeat aggression than we were 4 years ago and no more certain that the institutions designed to support them actually have their backs.

And from Europe to the Middle East to the Taiwan Strait, the forces that wish harm to America, to our people, to our values, to our interests, and to our allies have seized an opportunity.

On Monday, President Biden's foreign policy will end, and a new Commander in Chief will have to contend with his staggering failures. A new administration will have to clean up the mess their predecessors made of American power and American credibility.

It is no secret that the incoming national security team will take a distinctly different approach. The President-elect has expressed repeatedly his intention to reorient American national security decision making around a simple guiding principle: peace through strength. And he would be right to do so.

His administration's work must begin with restoring American hard power and bolstering our deterrent. The world they will inherit is more dangerous and more hostile to U.S. security interests than the one he left to President Biden 4 years ago.

The free world is less likely to trust our commitments, and the authoritarians convening against us are more likely to scoff at our threats. Russia, Iran, North Korea, and the PRC are finding more and more that the desire to weaken the United States and undermine the order we lead is a shared objective and one toward which they are now working together in coordination to weaken the United States.

As I have counseled the President-elect already, we cannot afford to discount this coordination. No matter how loudly others press him to embrace retreat and retrenchment, America cannot address grave threats to our interests a la carte. And as I have said repeatedly, there is no language these adversaries understand more clearly than strength.

There is no surer way to restore meaningful deterrence against them than by investing in our capacity and proving our willingness to impose devastating costs.

It is common to refer to today's challenges as the gravest America has faced since World War II, but we certainly don't invest like we believe that is the case.

So here is a good way of looking at it: Beating the axis in World War II meant spending 37 percent of our GDP on defense; in the Korean War, it took nearly 14 percent; the height of Vietnam, 9 percent; the Reagan buildup at 6 percent. Today we are spending 3 percent of GDP on the arsenal of democracy.

Peace through strength must be more than a pithy phrase—vaguely tough-sounding but functionally benign. It must instead stand for a clear and measurable commitment to rebuild the arsenal of democracy and the most lethal fighting forces in the world.

As chairman of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, I take the President-elect's commitments very seriously, and I know he knows that deterring a war is cheaper than fighting one. And I stand ready to work closely with this administration in the current urgent work ahead, rebuilding the capabilities and capacity we need in order to credibly pursue peace through strength.

That work, of course, begins with assembling an experienced and well-qualified team. The incoming administration is right to expect swift consideration of Cabinet nominations and broad deference on the confirmation of nominees whose credentials and records prove them worthy of the highest public trust and whose policy views align with the administration's goal.

Nominees whose professional experience is commensurate with the responsibilities of the office and who have demonstrated in detail their command of relevant policy will certainly have my vote. I intend to support a large slate of nominees who satisfy these conditions. In particular, I will vote to confirm nominees to senior national security roles whose record and experience will make them immediate assets, not liabilities, in the pursuit of peace through strength.

Our chance to turn the page on the damage of the Biden administration's record simply cannot come soon enough.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HAGERTY). The majority whip.

CABINET NOMINATIONS

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I come to the floor today having been in a number of hearings involving President Trump's nominees overseeing American energy dominance. I tell you, President Trump's energy nominees show that this administration that is coming in, the Trump-Vance administration, is serious about unleashing affordable, available, reliable American energy.

Doug Burgum is President Trump's nominee to be Secretary of the Department of the Interior. He is still testifying right now in the Energy Committee. He is the son of North Dakota, and his roots run deep in the West.

Chris Wright, who had his hearing yesterday, is President Trump's nominee to be the Secretary of Energy. His data-driven leadership and creativity laid the foundation for the fracking boom that we experienced in this Nation that has fueled American energy independence.

And Lee Zeldin, whom I had the privilege of introducing earlier this morning at the EPW Committee, well, he is a nominee to be the Administrator of the Environmental Protection

Agency. He is a lawyer; he is a veteran; and he is a former star Member of the House of Representatives. He is going to cut redtape. He is going to balance environmental stewardship with sensible energy production.

All three of these nominees are excellent choices to carry out President Trump's "all of the above" energy strategy. They all have my vote.

Like most Americans, President Trump and his nominees understand that energy policy is the foundation of our Nation's future and our success. It is linked directly to the prices that we pay, to the technology that we create, and to the world in which we live.

Unleashing American energy means lower prices, means more innovation at home, and it means more safety and security for our citizens.

Well, we have seen it before. Affordable, reliable energy was the rocket fuel for American security and prosperity, and we saw it during the first Trump administration. But over the last 4 years, Democrats restricted and regulated and tried to reduce American energy production, instead of unlocking its full potential. Their America-last energy strategy policies led to painfully high prices and a more vulnerable nation. I think energy was on the ballot this year, and energy won.

Fortunately, President Trump is placing a premium on energy production. He is already laying the groundwork to take the handcuffs off of American energy production. On day one, I expect the President is going to sign a blizzard of Executive orders to bring back American energy dominance. First day priorities include ending the Democrats' electric vehicle mandate, more drilling on Federal lands, and resuming exports of U.S. liquefied natural gas.

This is certainly good news for my home State of Wyoming. Wyoming is America's energy breadbasket. Oil and gas is our bread and butter. We have world-class reserves of coal. We have world-class wind. We have benefited from American energy dominance, and our Wyoming tough energy workers made it all possible. Wyoming energy workers now stand ready to unleash American energy once again.

I hear my colleagues on the other side of the aisle preach doom and gloom about energy independence. The Democrat leader here on the floor said yesterday Chris Wright, who is the President's nominee for the Secretary of Energy—he called this nominee an energy extremist. Why? Because Chris Wright believes "oil and gas make the world go round." Well, it does.

This is the depth of the Democrats' climate delusion. Oil and gas drive our economy, produce great jobs, and produce our prosperity. And because of American oil and gas, we do it cleaner; we do it safer; and we do it more reliably than anywhere else on planet Earth.

The facts could not be clearer. Since 2005, America has been responsible for

66 percent of emission reduction among developed countries. We do it better than anyone else in the world. We have reduced more emissions than the next six countries combined.

There is a reason why, and it is not because Joe Biden bribed Americans to buy solar panels or buy electric cars. No, it is American energy production, American energy dominance. It is because we unleashed affordable, available, reliable American energy. For the record, we can thank Chris Wright and the fracking boom for unleashing a lot of that energy.

In 2019, America became energy independent for the first time in 50 years. Why? How did it happen? President Trump did it. With Doug Burgum, Chris Wright, and Lee Zeldin on America's team, we are going to do it again.

(The remarks of Mr. BARRASSO pertaining to the submission of S. 140 are printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

Mr. BARRASSO. I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant executive clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, it is 4 days until President Trump will be inaugurated for the second time as President of the United States. That means we only have 4 more days of President Biden's absentee leadership, but he seems to be making the most of his final days as he goes out the door, and he certainly isn't letting it kick him on the way out.

I think the most egregious example of the abuse of power, really, that President Biden is engaged in, now that the election is over and he doesn't have to stand for a vote among the American people—so he pretty much has given them a thumb in the eye. Perhaps one of the most egregious examples of this was his pardon of his son Hunter on December 1 of last year.

Despite numerous efforts by the FBI and DOJ to protect Hunter Biden from accountability for his crimes, President Biden decided to attack his own Department of Justice and say his son was selectively and unfairly prosecuted. Well, it is hard to imagine someone thinking they were unfairly targeted when the entire government Agencies did everything they could to protect him from coming to justice.

And thanks to a diligent and careful judge who was able to expose a sweetheart deal that would have exonerated Hunter Biden previously, he was convicted of illegally possessing a firearm, and he stood charged with massive tax fraud.

President Biden said time and time again: I promise I am not going to pardon him. And then he turned around, and he did.

But he didn't stop there. He used his last days in office to go on a little pardon spree, granting clemency to 39 individuals, as well as commuting the sentences of convicted murderers on death row.

These people were convicted of crimes ranging from conspiracy to commit wire fraud in a mortgage fraud scheme to stealing government property, to signing false documents, bank theft, participating in income tax fraud, and the misuse of a Social Security number.

But the truth is, these are not victimless crimes, and they are not the sort of occurrences we want to see happening more frequently. There is a reason why our criminal justice system provides for accountability and punishment in appropriate circumstances. That is to set an example for others not to go down that path and to have some measure of accountability, which is an important part of justice.

These criminals were not the only people that got a last-minute gift from President Biden. On January 4, President Biden announced a list of 19—19—new recipients of the Presidential Medal of Freedom. This included George Soros and others.

George Soros, of course, is a billionaire philanthropist who has doled out billions of dollars for leftwing political causes, from "defund the police" movements to anti-Israel organizations, to those who promote open borders, such as we have experienced, tragically, over the last four years.

Of course, these are the same policies that have caused so much suffering and frustration among the American people, which they voted on. I believe it was a referendum on November 5. The people voted to change the direction the country was headed in because most Americans, according to public opinion polling, felt like America was on the wrong path and needed a change of course.

And now a key architect of those failed policies was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Talk about devaluing an award that is supposed to be given for extraordinary service to the country.

Of course, I support the rights of individuals to be generous with their wealth. America is one of the most generous countries in the world, and I think it is something we should be proud of.

I imagine how our colleagues on the other side of the aisle might act if Republicans honored a prominent conservative philanthropist. Do you think the media or our Democratic colleagues would applaud it in the same way? No chance. Conservative philanthropists have been not only not given Medals of Freedom, they have been subjected to endless scrutiny, including politically motivated subpoenas from our Democratic colleagues on the Judiciary Committee, just this last year. But now, Democrats are rewarding their own with the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

It is like the hearing we had this morning on the Finance Committee. Scott Bessent, the next Secretary of the Treasury, was there. We had to listen to the ranking member go on a diatribe about why it is so important that American taxpayers be exposed to a multitrillion-dollar tax increase. He said this is about tax cuts for the wealthy. But the fact of the matter is—and the nominee pointed this out—that the top 1 percent in the country pay the vast majority of income taxes. But the facts, apparently, are not all that important to our Democratic colleagues.

President Biden wasn't finished rewarding his friends with grants of clemency and Presidential honors before he left office. He also sent a parting gift to one of his favorite beneficiaries, which are radical climate activists.

I don't doubt that the climate is changing. I don't doubt humans have an impact on it. But to say this is the end-all and be-all of all of our policies, to the detriment of our economy, job creation, and so many other important issues, just strikes me as misguided.

One of the consequences is that Americans have been suffering under high prices for energy under President Biden's Presidency. Electricity prices have risen more than 30 percent. We know that these high prices are the direct result of President Biden's policies, which put climate activists in the front seat, while working families are left behind.

But the President couldn't help himself from doing more damage on the way out the door. The day after Christmas, President Biden's Energy Department finalized new climate regulations that would functionally ban almost all natural gas-powered water heaters. Why would he do something like that?

An analysis from the American Gas Association estimates that 40 percent of customers will be directly impacted by a rule with a net cost increase, since they will be required to buy a new electric water heater. The AGA notes that the households affected are largely low income and senior citizens on a fixed income, who are more likely to choose a cost-effective water heater that will now be banned under the rule.

Of course, if people want to buy a more expensive water heater with their own money, I have no objection to that. I am all for the freedom to do so. But to impose additional costs on seniors who have fixed incomes and other low-income families who are struggling to get by under the high prices and the 40-year high inflation under the Biden administration simply adds insult to injury.

But President Biden didn't stop there. Two weeks ago, the Biden administration gave the State of California permission to enforce zero-emissions rules for lawn mowers and leaf blowers. This may sound like a small thing, but it is emblematic of much bigger things, and it adds up. This rule

would prohibit the sale of new equipment under 25 horsepower or 19 kilowatts that failed to achieve “zero emissions.”

Is there no home appliance or device that is safe from this radical agenda? The Biden administration has targeted gas-powered cars, gas stoves, water heaters, and now they want to get after our lawn mowers and leaf blowers.

As I have said before, I don't have any objection to anyone who wants to improve their carbon footprint, if that is important to them, by purchasing new low-emissions lawn mowers. God bless them if they want to do that. But for working families to have to deal with this mandate, who are just trying to keep up with inflation, a new lawn mower just might not be in their budget.

Well, suffice it to say, the Biden administration is working hard on the way out the door and wreaking havoc in the process.

Mr. President, Republicans are taking note. We know that, with President Trump being sworn into office next Monday, with new majorities in the House and the Senate, things are going to change. The American people voted for change, and they are going to see a change—a change away from these radical policies and special interest pieces of legislation or regulation that hurt the vast majority of Americans for the benefit of an ideological agenda.

One of the tools we are going to be using is something called the Congressional Review Act. As the Presiding Officer knows, this is a powerful tool which allows a vote of Congress and a Presidential signature to essentially veto an administrative Agency rule. There is a timeframe. I believe it is 60 legislative days during which we can look back and essentially impose a legislative veto of that rule.

Using this mechanism, Congress can review and rescind regulations that it disapproves of, because, of course, many of these regulations are promulgated by administrative Agencies that never have to stand for election. They never have to appeal to the voters. They never have to explain themselves to the voters. They just do what they do, which is create more and more red-tape and regulation.

So I am glad we are going to be able to focus, soon after we confirm President Trump's Cabinet, on Congressional Review Act regulatory disapprovals. I plan on introducing a few of these myself so we can reverse many of the Biden administration's misguided regulations. I know other colleagues plan to do the same thing.

President Biden may have been busy over the last few months, since the November 5 election, but we are gearing up to be even busier, undoing much of the mischief that he has wrought during these last couple of months on his way out the door.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to display a framed item during my remarks.

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

NOMINATION OF PETER B. HEGSETH

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Mr. President, in these serious times, we need a serious candidate to lead our military. We need someone with merit to lead our meritocracy, someone with moral strength to be in charge of protecting our national strength.

For all these reasons and quite a few more, I will not be voting to confirm the extremely unqualified Pete Hegseth as Secretary of Defense. Our troops deserve better than a guy who was seemingly only nominated because he used to host Trump's favorite TV show on FOX News.

I have plenty to say about Mr. Hegseth and the many, many ways in which he would degrade our military readiness. It is no secret I disagreed with Trump on nearly everything during his first term. Yet I still voted to confirm both James Mattis and Mark Esper when he nominated them for this very role. The thing is, Hegseth has never led thousands of people like Mattis had. He never ran an entire Army like Esper did. No, the only thing Hegseth has ever run, he has run it into the ground. The only major organizations he has ever led, he has led into debt.

Pete Hegseth is unqualified, he is unprepared, he is unethical, and, most of all, he is unfit. Mr. Hegseth may talk about how having had dust on his boots makes him worthy of becoming Secretary of Defense. Well, as someone who left her boots in a dusty field in Iraq, let me tell you exactly why he is unfit to lead our heroes.

Mr. Hegseth likes to say that our military is a great meritocracy, and I agree with that. So let's go over his supposed merits for this role.

The Secretary of Defense oversees the Federal Government's largest Agency. They manage a \$900 billion budget, along with the 3 million servicemembers and civilians who fall under its umbrella.

During his time in uniform, Pete Hegseth never commanded a unit with more than 200 people. Meanwhile, on the civilian side, both organizations that he led went into debt. In fact, he so badly mismanaged one of them that they had to bring in a forensic accountant to clean up the mess that he had made.

That is it. Those are his only supposed qualifications to head up one of the most complex, important organizations in the world.

Listen, there are plenty of Republicans whose policies I may disagree with but whom I would vote to confirm because I know that they, too, have spent their lives working to keep our country strong and could demonstrate why they are qualified for this role. Mr. Hegseth is not one of those people.

Who knows why Donald Trump picked this guy. Maybe Hegseth's busi-

ness failures make Trump feel better about his own six bankruptcies. Maybe it is because Hegseth spent years fawning over Trump on FOX News, and Trump's dream Cabinet is a bunch of yes-men who know how to kiss up to him on TV—or maybe it is just that all of “Cadet Bone Spurs” draft dodging has left him with no clue as to what kind of leader our military needs.

Look, at his confirmation hearing on Tuesday, I gave Mr. Hegseth every opportunity to show me that I was wrong, to prove that he could do this job, that he does know the first thing—or anything—about what it takes to take on this massive responsibility of being the Secretary of Defense. I asked him basic questions that even the most junior folks working in the Pentagon would know, like naming one of the main international agreements he would be responsible for leading. He couldn't name one. I asked him to tell me just a single country in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Again, he couldn't give me one—and one of those is our longest treaty ally for 190 years—not a single one of the 10.

This was shocking—yet not surprising—from a man whose main form of policy education has come from reading the FOX News teleprompter. This was pitiful—yet predictable—from a guy who has said that we women do not belong in combat, who has dared to claim that the military is lowering its standard so that we, the poor, fragile, fairer sex—and, God forbid, us moms—can serve. Well, the only standards being lowered today are the ones for Secretary of Defense. Our female servicemembers have earned the jobs that they are in, unlike Mr. Hegseth who won't even say whether he would refuse an unlawful order.

I have next to me a framed copy of the Soldier's Creed—a poster that usually hangs over my desk here in the Senate and has done so for the last 8 years. It is the same copy that hung above my bed at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center when I spent over a year in the hospital recovering from my shoot-down. It is the same poster whose lines I read before I was wheeled into each and every one of my surgeries. It is the same one whose words were repeated over and over to myself on the days when I was in so much pain that I couldn't breathe yet was determined to fight my way back to health so I could serve again next to the buddies who saved my life. These words helped me find the strength I needed when I needed it the most because they reminded me of who I was and that I was a proud member of the greatest fighting force on the face of the Earth, whose duty it was to live up to the sacrifices of my fellow soldiers.

I would like to quote a couple of lines from the creed right now.

I will always place the mission first . . . I am disciplined, physically and mentally tough, trained and proficient in my warrior tasks.

Our troops follow these words every day as we ask them to do the hardest

thing imaginable. We ask them to leave their families, to potentially never hold their spouses' hands again, to maybe never get to see their babies take their first steps. We ask them to do all of that and then walk into enemy fire and be good enough, competent enough, qualified enough that, regardless of the threat they face, they will still be able to do their jobs. We ask them to be so ready for the mission at hand that they can still fly that helicopter, still man that ship, still fight that fire until their very last breaths.

Tell me: How can we ask these warriors to train and perform to the absolute highest standard if we are going to confirm a guy who doesn't seem to care enough to prepare to lead them in any way?

Listen, these are dangerous times on the geopolitical stage. Our adversaries are watching, waiting to see if we really will put in power someone so obviously unqualified.

Mr. Hegseth made a point of saying at Tuesday's hearing that every single warfighter should be hired based on performance, readiness, and merit. And I agree with him. However, he fails to meet every single one of those metrics. He is asking to be handed a job he is not prepared for because of his relationship with Donald Trump, but this role is too important, our troops' lives too precious to let personal ambitions get in the way of the mission at hand.

So let me close with this: Part of being a leader is knowing when you are not competent enough to do the job.

Well, Mr. Hegseth, you are not technically proficient; you are not tactically proficient; and your nomination is an insult to those brave enough to be serving our Nation. So you, sir, are a no go at this station.

I am voting no on Pete Hegseth's nomination to be Secretary of Defense. If my colleagues care more about keeping our Nation strong than genuflecting to Donald Trump, then they should have the courage to vote no as well.

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

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

S. 5

Ms. LUMMIS. Mr. President, I rise today in support of the Laken Riley Act.

Nearly a year ago, Laken Riley—a college girl more than 1,000 miles from our southern border—was jogging on her university's intramural fields. Also more than 1,000 miles from our southern border, an illegal criminal in our country brutally attacked and murdered her in broad daylight. For 18 minutes, Laken Riley—that young woman in the prime of her life, with

boundless potential—fought for her life against an assailant who never should have been in this country to begin with.

The Biden administration's open border policies served the criminal's depravity more than Laken's and her family's. In fact, they served the criminal every bit as much as they failed Laken and her family. Laken's killer easily crossed our southern border with millions of others; and when he committed several crimes and was arrested, a Biden administration-led ICE made no effort to deport him. Had he been appropriately prosecuted for his previous crimes, the Riley family would have celebrated Riley's birthday instead of mourning an empty chair. On February 22, 2024, it would have been an ordinary day for their family instead of the worst day of their lives.

No family should face the nightmare Laken's family endured, and it is our responsibility as lawmakers to correct the glaring failures in our system that led to her tragic and preventable death.

The Laken Riley Act won't bring Laken back, but it is a vehicle for turning the Riley family's pain into purpose and partnering together to protect American families. This legislation's sole goal is to hold known criminal illegal aliens accountable for their actions and enable States to bring civil charges against Federal officials who fail to uphold our immigration laws.

Like all of us serving in this body, I came to the U.S. Senate because I wanted to make a positive difference for the American people. This is one of those opportunities. We have the ability to do that right now by getting this bill to the President's desk. Let's honor Laken's legacy by passing this bipartisan legislation to protect millions of Americans across our country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

HONORING OFFICER MICHAEL HORAN

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the service and sacrifice of Greensboro Police Officer Michael Horan.

On Monday, December 23—2 days before Christmas—Officer Horan was the first officer to respond to a call of a man with a firearm at a Food Lion supermarket in Greensboro, NC. As Officer Horan entered the store and confronted the suspect, the suspect engaged in a struggle that eventually led to Officer Horan being shot and killed. The suspect fled the scene and led law enforcement on a multiple-county chase. The brave men and women from various law enforcement agencies eventually apprehended the suspect on Interstate 40.

Officer Horan personified the very best of law enforcement. Greensboro Police Chief John Thompson stated that Officer Horan was "a valued and respected member of the Greensboro Police family."

He worked for the Greensboro Police Department since 2017 and had a distin-

guished record of service with the U.S. Coast Guard. As a U.S. Coast Guard member, Officer Horan served as a law enforcement officer, tactical fast boat instructor, and search and rescue operator for the safety and security of the United States.

Even when he was off duty, he exemplified valor. In 2019, Officer Horan received a lifesaving award from the Greensboro Police Department for saving a father and son who had been caught in a rip current at a beach at Emerald Isle.

As impressive as Officer Horan was for his exemplary work, it was his job as a family man—a loving husband, father, and son.

One of his colleagues noted:

One of the main things most people would know about officer Horan, is how much he loved his family.

He loved his daughter. If you ask anybody in the department to describe him—

One friend said—

I feel like his daughter would be in the conversation.

He loved his family, and he included it in virtually every conversation he had with his colleagues.

He upheld the oath to protect and serve his community and his country. He exemplified what it means to be an extraordinary public servant, and he made the ultimate sacrifice.

My deepest condolences go out to Officer Horan's family for their tremendous loss, and my condolences go out to the community of Greensboro, which lost one of their finest, most decent public servants. We will never forget his service.

Mr. President, Officer Horan actually passed away a year ago last December. We were not in session at the time, so I thought it was appropriate to recognize the anniversary of his death, but I want to talk a little bit more.

(Mr. BUDD assumed the Chair.)

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Mr. President, since 2015, when I first took office as a U.S. Senator in my home State of North Carolina, we have tragically lost far too many law enforcement officers. In fact, we have lost 85 in the time that I have been a U.S. Senator, since 2015. This includes deaths related to law enforcement assaults, gunfire, vehicular pursuits, and duty-related illnesses.

These officers took an oath to protect and serve our communities. These heroes made the ultimate sacrifice, giving their lives to protect their communities. I will not get into all the details about each officer. What I would ask is unanimous consent to provide a list of the following officers since I have been a Member of the U.S. Senate to be printed in the RECORD.

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

Inspector Robert James Bowling, Automobile Crash, 2015; Patrol Officer Anthony E. Lossiah, Duty Related Illness, 2015; K9 Officer Timothy James Brackeen, Gunfire, 2016; Deputy Sheriff John Thomas Isenhour,

Struck by Vehicle, 2016; Major Jay Russell Memmelaar, Jr., Heart Attack, 2017; Trooper Brandon Carroll Peterson, Heart Attack, 2017; Sergeant Meggan Lee Callahan, Assault, 2017; Correction Enterprises Manager Veronica Skinner Darden, Assault, 2017; Correctional Officer Justin James Smith, Assault, 2017; Correctional Officer Wendy Letitia Shannon, Assault, 2017; Deputy Sheriff Alexis Thunder Eagle Locklear, Automobile Crash, 2018; Deputy Sheriff David Lee Sean Manning, Automobile Crash, 2018; Trooper Samuel Newton Bullard, Vehicle Pursuit, 2018; Senior Police Officer Christopher James Driver, Automobile Crash, 2018; Master Trooper Kevin Keith Conner, Gunfire, 2018; Corporal Travis Wells, Automobile Crash, 2018; Master Trooper Benjamin Derek Wallace, Heart Attack, 2018; Police Officer Jared William Franks, Automobile Crash, 2018; Police Officer Jason Barton Quick, Struck by Vehicle, 2018; K9 Officer Jordan Harris Sheldon, Gunfire, 2019; Deputy Sheriff Makeem Rictrell Brooks, Automobile Crash, 2019; Trooper Nolan James Sanders, Automobile Crash, 2020; Deputy Sheriff Sypraseuth "Bud" Phouangphrachanh, Covid19, 2020; Senior Detention Officer Alexander Reginald Pettway, Jr., Covid19, 2020; Deputy Sheriff Ryan Phillip Hendrix, Gunfire, 2020; Correctional Officer II Allen Bruce Trivett, Covid19, 2020; Correctional Sergeant II Michael Robert Flagg, Covid19, 2020; Deputy Sheriff LaKiya Louise Rouse, Covid19, 2020; Correctional Officer III Charles Warren Harris, Jr., Covid19, 2020; Lieutenant Terry Sampson, Covid19, 2020; Correctional Officer III Thomas Daniel Roberts, Jr., Covid19, 2020; Correctional Officer Joseph Lloyd Greinke, Covid19, 2020; Correctional Sergeant III Christopher Eugene Sorrenti, Covid19, 2020; Deputy Sheriff Jared Michael Allison, Automobile Crash, 2020; Police Officer Tyler Avery Herndon, Gunfire, 2020; Master Corporal Norman Odie Daye, Jr., Covid19, 2020; Police Officer Jason Nicholas Shuping, Gunfire, 2020; Associate Warden III Julian Arsenio Priest, III, Covid19, 2020; First Sergeant Timothy Lee Howell, Covid19, 2021; Correctional Lieutenant III Anthony Lynn Hardie, Covid19, 2021; Master Trooper James Brent Montgomery, Covid19, 2021; Sergeant LaShonda Owens, Covid19, 2021; Deputy Sheriff Joseph Brandon Gore, Covid19, 2021; Police Officer David Dewayne Parde, Gunfire, 2021; Deputy Sheriff Logan Shane Fox, Gunfire, 2021; Sergeant Christopher David Ward, Gunfire, 2021; Officer Robert Craig Cloninger, Heart Attack, 2021; Deputy Sheriff Dennis Wayne Dixon, Covid19, 2021; Deputy Sheriff Eric Otis Ritter, Covid19, 2021; Correctional Sergeant III Ledell Graham, Covid19, 2021; Probation/Parole Officer II Julie Ann Harper, Covid19, 2021; Police Officer Carl Lee Proper, Covid19, 2021; Captain David Edwin MacAlpine, Covid19, 2021; Police Chief Donald Hall, Covid19, 2021; Sergeant Donald William Ramey, Covid19, 2021; Lieutenant Matthew Eric Dow, Covid19, 2021; Police Officer Julio Cesar Herrera, Jr., Covid19, 2021; Master Deputy William Edward Marsh, Covid19, 2021; Lieutenant William Oscar McMurtray, III, Covid19, 2021; Correctional Lieutenant II Dennis Eugene Boykin, Covid19, 2021; Police Officer Ryan Andrew Hayworth, Vehicular Assault, 2021; Sergeant Michael Shannon McDonald, Covid19, 2021; Police Officer Mia Danielle Figueroa-Goodwin, Automobile Crash, 2021; Trooper John Sumter Horton, Struck by Vehicle, 2022; Captain Reginald Kamal Smith, Covid19, 2022; Correctional Officer III Helen Mae Smith, Heart Attack, 2022; Detective Michael W. Godwin, Covid19, 2022; Sergeant Matthew Ryan Fishman, Gunfire, 2022; Deputy Sheriff Ned P. Byrd, Gunfire, 2022; Detention Corporal Gregory Thomas Horne, Sr., Duty Related Illness, 2022; Police Officer Gabriel Jesus Torres, Gunfire,

2022; Deputy Sheriff José Angel DeLeon, Automobile Crash, 2022; Deputy Sheriff Oscar Yovani Bolanos-Anavisca, Jr., Vehicular Assault, 2022; Deputy Sheriff II Auston Smith Reudelhuber, Automobile Crash, 2023; Sergeant Russell Earl Lavarl Jones, Heart Attack, 2023; Sergeant Philip Dale Nix, Gunfire, 2023; Deputy Sheriff Christopher Johnson, Automobile Crash, 2024; Deputy U.S. Marshal Thomas M. Weeks, Gunfire, 2024; Investigator William "Alden" Elliott, Gunfire, 2024; Investigator Samuel Poloche, Gunfire, 2024; Police Officer Joshua Eyer, Gunfire, 2024; Major Michelle Lynn Quintero, Weather/Natural Disaster, 2024; Courthouse Security Deputy James "Jim" Lau, Weather/Natural Disaster, 2024; Police Officer Michael Horan, Gunfire, 2024; Master Trooper Anthony S. Godwin, Medical Condition, 2024.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, as we start the 119th Congress, my colleague from North Carolina, who is currently presiding—I think we both agree that we want to emphasize that Congress has a role in supporting and protecting our law enforcement officers across this country.

According to the National Fraternal Order of Police, in 2024, 342 officers were shot in the line of duty. Of those officers, 50 officers were tragically killed by criminals.

Unfortunately, over the past few years, we have seen shameful behavior from certain—and I hope and I pray that it is a minority of our society, but we have people out there raising money for fundraising runs called the 13.12-mile run. Mr. President, "1312" translates into "ACAB," and on their website, they proudly proclaim that "ACAB" stands for "All Cops Are Bastards." Let that sink in.

It is appalling to hear this kind of rhetoric, and it has to stop. These dangerous statements not only create distrust and disdain for our brave men and women in blue—the vast majority of whom are good, hard-working people that we all know in our communities—but it has made their job to protect and serve more difficult and more deadly.

We have to do better. We have to protect law enforcement. That is why I plan to reintroduce multiple pieces of legislation in the coming weeks.

First among them is going to be the Protect and Serve Act. It makes it a Federal crime for anyone who knowingly causes or attempts to cause bodily harm or injury to a law enforcement officer. It is amazing it is not a crime already. I hope to do so with strong bipartisan support when I file the bill and get it passed in this Congress.

We also must act to punish criminals who intentionally murder law enforcement. That is why I will also be introducing the Justice for Fallen Law Enforcement Act. This legislation would create a criminal penalty for the murder of a local, State, or Federal law enforcement officer, punishable with the death penalty or life imprisonment without parole.

I urge all Americans listening to contact your Senators and Representatives and tell them that you want to

protect law enforcement officers and support enhancing penalties for those who would do them harm.

The men and women in blue are heroes. They deserve our support. We need everyone in our communities to stand up to these people who would not want them in the community, who would not want them to respond to a 9-1-1 call. Can you imagine that? Can you imagine our communities if the logical conclusion of these people, who hate law enforcement officers so much that they proudly profess that all cops are bastards, publicly to raise money?

We need to increase awareness, and we need to make absolutely certain that every man and woman in blue knows we have their back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

NOMINATION OF PETER B. HEGSETH

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I rise today to urge my colleagues to reject Pete Hegseth as the next Secretary of Defense.

Pete Hegseth is the most unqualified nominee for Secretary of Defense in our Nation's history. At his confirmation hearing, Pete Hegseth bobbed and weaved to avoid answering just basic questions about his record, but what Hegseth failed to account for is that his entire record is damning.

I would like my Senate colleagues, people who are seriously considering voting to confirm Pete Hegseth, to think long and hard about this decision. We need a Secretary of Defense who will be ready at 2 in the morning to give life-or-death national security advice to the President. Would you trust Pete Hegseth, who has allegedly been so drunk at work events that he passed out on a bus and urinated in front of the hotel where his colleagues were staying, to answer that call?

We need a Secretary of Defense who will help us root out the problem of sexual assault in the military. Would you trust Pete Hegseth, who has been credibly accused of raping a woman and buying her silence, to protect victims of sexual assault?

We need a Secretary of Defense who will be able to manage the Nation's largest Federal Agency, one that oversees almost 3.4 million people and a budget of nearly \$850 billion a year. Would you trust Pete Hegseth, who drove a small veterans nonprofit to the brink of bankruptcy, to manage billions of our tax dollars?

The list of glaring disqualifications goes on and on. Hegseth supports requiring every senior military officer to pass a political litmus test. This politicization of the military is a slap in the face to leaders who have served their country honorably for decades.

But the point is that Pete Hegseth is not just unqualified for the role; he is a walking national security threat.

We need a Secretary of Defense who will help our country meet its recruiting goals—something we are already struggling with. Pete Hegseth has said that women in the military "shouldn't

be in combat at all.” Mr. President, 300,000 women have served in Iraq and Afghanistan since 9/11. Pete Hegseth has now insulted every one of them. That is not how a leader of the military will inspire people to join our cause.

When people are responsible for our national defense, we ask something extraordinary of them. We ask them to put their lives on the line. All three of my brothers served in the military. My oldest brother was career military. So I know how important that service is and how important it is that we pick the right person to lead our men and women in uniform.

Pete Hegseth claims that our brave women in the military are somehow lowering our standards, but it is his lack of qualifications, his lack of character, and his lack of judgment that lower the standards for Secretary of Defense.

We need a Secretary of Defense whom we can rely on to keep all of us safe. Frankly, it is hard to imagine a worse choice than Pete Hegseth.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Mr. President, the last 4 years have been nothing short of a national nightmare. The runup to the nightmare began in 2020.

After fending off a ridiculous impeachment attempt in the early months of 2020, President Trump was riding high, and the economy was booming.

Under President Trump, we saw record levels of low unemployment for all Americans, especially among Black and Hispanic Americans. Inflation, which is ultimately a tax on the paychecks of hard-working Americans, was also at record lows.

We had the most secure border in history. Dangerous terrorists, cartel members, and human traffickers weren't flooding into our country. Americans' jobs were more secure because they didn't have to compete with millions of foreigners who have entered the country the last 4 years trying to steal their jobs. The cost of buying a home was also cheaper as a result.

Under President Trump, we were energy independent. This made the cost of living more affordable for all Americans. We were able to power American homes, cars, and factories with reliable and abundant energy.

Those are just a few of the domestic successes that Americans were benefiting from under President Trump.

On the global stage, we finally had stability after decades of foreign wars. Under President Trump, there were no new wars. We were respected around the world and feared by our adversaries. Russia didn't dare invade Ukraine when President Trump was in office. NATO countries were told to pay up: Pay your bills. China wasn't imposing its will in the South China Sea or across the world. China was con-

tained, and its influence was diminishing.

Under President Trump, the Abraham Accords were signed, bringing peace to the Middle East. As we have seen the last few years, achieving peace in the Middle East was no easy feat. But President Trump achieved it, and he did it quickly. The United States and the world were in harmony.

The left couldn't stand these many successes that President Trump's administration was achieving at home and abroad, so they pulled out all stops to take him down. That is when the deep state bureaucrats and globalist organizations worked together to intensify the COVID-19 crisis. At the same time, the George Floyd riots erupted and destroyed cities across our country. Liberal DAs and politicians didn't do anything to stop it. It was absolute anarchy—total chaos orchestrated by leftwing politicians, the media, and antifa thugs.

Meanwhile, the media tried to manufacture a scandal because President Trump held up a Bible in front of a historic church, while the rioters burning the city of DC were ignored.

It was all a ploy to take down President Trump and tarnish his legacy.

Before the plot to take out the President was in full swing, we saw America achieving heights we had never ever seen before.

For a moment, the left thought they had bested Trump with the COVID sham and the Floyd riots and ultimately by rigging the election. But after controlling Biden by hiding him in the basement and then installing him as President, the Democrats were like a dog who finally caught the car. Once the Democrats took the White House, they quickly realized they didn't know how to run the country. It is not quite like running a struggle session in a Berkeley classroom or leading an HR call for a woke corporation.

The Democrats had 4 years to show the country they could govern more effectively than President Trump, but what have they done? What is one thing they have done to make our country better? I can't think of one policy, one law or directive that actually benefited the American people.

From day one, Joe Biden and KAMALA HARRIS invited foreigners to illegally enter our country. They weren't shy. Joe Biden told foreigners to “surge the border” and “You should [all] come.” While the administration opened the border, they shut down the Keystone Pipeline, making Americans pay more for groceries and gas.

The Biden administration engaged in a culture war domestically, embracing far-left ideas about sexuality, gender, and race. We have been told repeatedly over the past 4 years that men can get pregnant. And the Democrats didn't just push woke ideology on adults; they forced it on children in their classrooms and on social media.

They have supported biological men competing in women's sports. They are

perfectly OK with men sharing locker rooms and showering with girls. The Biden administration published a rule that would destroy title IX which was created to protect women and girls, all in the name of gender equity.

You know, not only did Democrats wage war on American culture, they weaponized our justice system, going after President Trump, conservatives, and anyone who dared to oppose their agenda. Just look at how they went after the January 6 protesters, proliferators with the FACE Act, parents at the school boards, and the dozens of illegal actions they took against President Trump.

The Biden administration, with the help of congressional Democrats, passed a bunch of bills with names that sound good, but actually they harm many Americans.

Take the Inflation Reduction Act, for example, one of their prize bills that they have passed in the last few years. It was a legal way to launder money to blue States to bail them out, while red States were hung out to dry.

It pumped money we don't have into the economy, causing the runaway inflation we are dealing with today. The administration was also weak on the world stage appeasing every interest but the interests of the American people. This administration was committed to cozying up to Iran by reinstating the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action as if the world wasn't already a dangerous place. Why would President Biden's administration agree to help Iran improve their nuclear facilities? It makes no sense.

This administration bent over backward for NATO, handing over billions of hard-earned American taxpayer dollars with no plan on ending the war in Ukraine. It executed a disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan that left 13 servicemembers dead, with many others severely wounded. This administration was basically asleep at the wheel.

Who was running the country? Well, it wasn't Joe Biden. It was clear from the 2020 campaign that he didn't have the mental capacity to be President. To make matters worse, he spent 570 days, 40 percent of his Presidency, on vacation. Instead, the White House was run by a committee of leftwing staffers and special interests who ultimately ran the country into the ground, and the media and the Democrats were complicit. It is truly shameful what they have done to this country in the last 4 years.

But now we are finally turning the page. We are entering a new golden age in America with President Trump's return to the White House, and this is our last chance at righting the ship the left has steered so far off course.

President Trump will return our country to the values of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. We will return to the Judeo-Christian beliefs and principles of the West that made our Nation so great. And how should the Senate help return our country to these principles?

We need to confirm every single one of President Trump's nominees as quickly as possible. We don't have time to drag our feet on any of these nominees. The Democrats never once attempted to block President Biden's Cabinet nominees. Zero Senate Democrats voted against any one of his picks—zero.

President Trump needs to be able to exercise the full power and authority of his office as soon as he is sworn in, and that requires confirming his Cabinet picks.

It will also require the issuing of Executive orders to undo anything that President Biden has done in taking congressional action to put these policies in place.

Expect a flurry of Executive orders, a new offensive idea to rebuild our broken country. Expect Executive orders on the border, on unleashing American energy, and getting DEI out of our government and out of the lives of American people.

We also need to get behind President Trump on passing one reconciliation bill that will secure our border, reignite our energy independence, and cut taxes so the American economy can boom again.

On the global stage, the Senate needs to get behind President Trump pressuring NATO, all the NATO countries, to pay their fair share. No more military handouts for European countries and no more lighting taxpayer dollars on fire on behalf of Ukraine. It is time to get this war over with.

The Senate needs to support President Trump and exert maximum pressure on Iran and other terrorist organizations wreaking havoc on the Middle East and the West.

We also need to join President Trump's commitment on shrinking the Federal Government through strong congressional action. We will do this by working closely with the Department of Government Efficiency, better known as DOGE.

We need to shrink the government, cutting the ridiculous regulations that are crushing American small businesses.

And, finally, we need to focus on accountability. We need to hold people accountable for the damage that has been done to our country. We need to support the pardon of January 6 protesters who were wrongly prosecuted and horribly treated by our justice system.

We need to step up and fight for pro-life, pro-life protesters who were persecuted by the administration under the FACE Act. We need to open investigations into DOJ Civil Rights and National Security Divisions, and that starts by confirming Kash Patel and Pam Bondi to the posts where President Trump needs them and needs them in a hurry.

We need to be aggressive in these pursuits. Senate Republicans need to demonstrate courage and will and resolve like President Trump showed on

the campaign trail. Are we willing to take a bullet for this country like President Trump did?

Are we willing to take on the fake news media who will try to undermine his everyday agenda? The job ahead of us won't be easy. The economy is in bad shape, job numbers are down, inflation is sky high. Our enemies are on the move abroad and in the interior of our country, but the American people chose President Trump and the Republicans for such a time like this.

They gave us a mandate to deliver them from the past 4 years of hell that this administration has caused. But now, it is a new day in America. The nightmare is almost over. And in a few more days, the Sun will rise in America. Greatness awaits us if we answer the call of the American people.

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

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

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA WILDFIRES

Mr. PADILLA. Mr. President, as you and everybody here knows, a little bit over a week ago, fires broke out in Los Angeles County. And some of you have reached out in the time since to offer your support, to offer your assistance, and even offer condolences for those who have perished in this significant disaster. And I want to thank you for your initial outreach.

My colleague Senator SCHIFF and I have come to the floor today to provide you all a little bit of an update and to lay a foundation on some of the key issues that we are going to need to work together on as we move forward.

And let me begin by just taking a step back for a second and acknowledging that, even before the winds increased last week, we knew that the risk of a potential large fire was high. In the midst of a historically dry season in Southern California, forecasters predicted hurricane-force winds, along with little to no humidity—essentially, a dry hurricane condition, if you can imagine that. Californians know that when there is a red flag warning, conditions are ripe for large-scale fires. But what came next, what actually materialized, would become the worst natural disaster in the history of Los Angeles: 100-mile-per-hour winds carrying burning embers from home to home, multiple simultaneous fires burning more than 12,000 structures and more than 40,000 acres.

And to give you a sense of the area I am talking about, I am talking about nearly three times the size of Manhattan. At least two dozen people have lost their lives, with more expected as search and rescue crews continue to comb through the devastation.

And over the course of the last week, I have had the opportunity to visit

command posts and meet with firefighters, had the opportunity to distribute meals to many of the victims and to see, to tour, to visit the destruction firsthand. Yes, there are survivors, people impacted from communities like the Pacific Palisades—some with names and faces that you will recognize from television and the entertainment industry. But I assure you there are also a lot of other faces and families that you won't recognize from the working-class and diverse communities throughout Los Angeles County.

It is people like a woman in Altadena who was 9 months pregnant when the Eaton fire burned down not just her home but the new nursery that she had prepared. And it is the 66-year-old man who stayed to try to protect the home that had been in his family for five decades but who was found dead with a garden hose in his hand. You can imagine his last moments. It is one of the reasons why I have been saying over and over that every house you see is really a home, and every home represents a family—a family who now mourns maybe the loss of a relative, maybe the loss of their home, or loss of irreplaceable items like family photo albums or a wedding dress or baby pictures or a loved one's red, white, and blue military burial flag.

But through the destruction, we have also seen some signs of hope, like the firefighter in the Pacific Palisades who offered to go back and save two dogs trapped while the neighborhood was still burning or a 14-year-old Avery who saw the devastation that hit her community and created a charity, Altadena Girls, to provide beauty products and clothes to her friends so that they could feel like themselves again while coping with this disaster.

Every day we hear stories like this, even in the midst of a disaster, people coming to each other's aid.

But even as I stand here today—as we stand here today—the fires are still burning, and the fight continues. Our hearts go out to all the impacted families, and they also go out to the heroic firefighters and other first responders working tirelessly through multiday shifts to put out these fires—not only the brave State and local firefighters, but I want to acknowledge the Federal firefighters too. To the State and local officials working day and night to protect our State and our communities, thank you. And I also want to acknowledge Governor Newsom for his steady hand during this time.

And we are so grateful to our neighboring States who continue to send resources. And, no, not just States that are considered blue States like Oregon and Washington, but States that many people refer to as red States like South Dakota and Wyoming and Montana and Florida, who continue to send resources with no strings attached, no conditions. This is what we do for each other. There is a reason it is called mutual aid.

And I also want to thank every one of my colleagues who, in 2023, helped me

to secure seven C-130 air tankers for California. They were surplus military aircraft that California received and paid to retrofit, the first of which is already on the scene fighting these fires as we speak.

But soon there will come a time when we need to more than just support our response to these disasters; we will need support for our recovery. And we expect Congress to support California just as Congress has been there for States across the country in their times of crisis, with no conditions and no strings attached. Because a recovery isn't just a California fight. We are truly in this together as Americans. Whether it is wildfires across the Western United States or tornados in the Midwest, ice storms in Texas, or hurricanes in the Southeast, Mother Nature does not distinguish between red States and blue States and neither should our disaster response efforts or our recovery efforts. That is why, when tragedy struck just a few months ago from hurricanes Milton and Helene, Democrats didn't demand aid be attached to some Democratic wish list of priorities. Not for a second did we think of attaching strings.

So when I hear about political jabs and insults on social media while my home State is burning, it is not distracting. It is certainly not entertaining. It is offensive, and it is dangerous. Because let's be clear, in times of crisis, California has always been there for the rest of our country. And now we expect our country to be here for California.

If Speaker JOHNSON or any Member of Congress, for that matter, is worried about the Federal debt, let me assure you: California has already paid the bill. California, as you may know, is the largest economy of any State in the nation. We are the single largest contributor of tax revenue to the Federal Treasury by far. In 2022 alone, California paid \$83 billion more to the Federal Government than it received.

So from additional disaster assistance funding to a serious conversation about disaster insurance that I am eager to continue, we are going to need everyone onboard.

And to my Republican colleagues who may be wondering whether the policy should change about no strings attached, let me remind you that this is also a fundamental matter of decency as Americans. It is the same decency that my colleague Senator SCOTT from Florida and my colleague Senator TILLIS from North Carolina have shown in their public comments this last week or that several of my California House Republican colleagues have shown by supporting our State's major disaster declaration request. They know, as we should all remember, that this is about our unity as a nation. So, yes, California will need you for the long haul.

And to President-elect Trump, I, too, invite you to tour Altadena and the Pacific Palisades, which, by the way, is

about 30 miles from your golf course in Rancho Palos Verdes. Come meet the first responders. Come meet the families that have been affected by these fires.

And, finally, I want to speak to the people of California because it is, indeed, a long road ahead. And there will be more challenges to overcome as we continue the search and rescue phase of this, as we go into the environmental remediation and debris removal, and eventually the rebuilding of homes and businesses. It is a long road, and there will be challenges to overcome indeed.

But I promise you this: There will be a day when the fires are put out, when the homes and entire communities are rebuilt better and more resilient than they have been before and the Sun will shine and the kids will smile.

Together—together—we are going to get through this.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. President, I rise today to address the Senate on behalf of the people of California. And I thank my colleague Senator PADILLA for his leadership during this time of incredible difficulty and strain for our fellow constituents.

The unimaginable has happened, and our hearts are broken—a city encircled in a blaze and a perfect storm of fire and wind and with a system stretched beyond its breaking point. A natural disaster so immense in size and scale it will dwarf any recovery and rebuilding effort since the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire.

It is that immense and impending recovery effort that I am asking—I am pleading—for your help with today.

Already, the support that you and the President have given California have helped firefighters battle the flames, helped save lives, and helped those who lost everything find shelter.

I want to express my particular appreciation for President Biden and what the administration has done, the almost immediate declaration of a disaster which unlocked important FEMA and other funding, the commitment to match—to provide, really—100 percent of Federal funding for the first 6 months of these fire mitigation efforts.

I am very grateful for what the Congress and the President have done.

This recovery is going to be measured in years, not months. Even so, we must bring a sense of urgency to the recovery and not let it linger.

When the flames are finally out, the cleanup begins in earnest, and the rebuilding moves forward with all haste. After the attention of the world has turned away from the raging inferno and its aftermath, ours in this body must not because the loss is immeasurable—lives lost, homes lost, businesses lost, neighborhoods lost, pets lost, memories lost, neighborhoods simply gone in an hour. Entire communities burned to ash. Families brought together in grief. Churches and synagogues have burned down, but their

members still gather as one because amidst the darkness and destruction, we have seen rays of hope. For when one part of our State is hurting—literally on fire—we all come together.

First responders from all across our great State and so many others rushed to Southern California. A woman I met at a Red Cross at the Pacoima evacuation site, so grateful, despite everything, for the assistance that she was receiving, for the dignity with which she was treated by these Red Cross workers—she told me she plans to set up a \$10-a-month donation from her monthly Social Security disability check. People are dropping off clothes and supplies by the thousands, so much that some of these centers are overwhelmed with people bringing material by.

That is the California way.

This is deeply personal for Senator PADILLA and myself. We know so many families impacted by these fires because they are our neighbors and friends.

I represented Altadena in the House of Representatives for decades. It is a vibrant, diverse community, a city of families, of places of worship, and of deep culture and history. When I drove through Altadena just a few days ago, the destruction was complete—entire city blocks razed. Homes, small businesses, schools gone in just a few minutes like some post-apocalyptic scene.

Driving around that area at night in which small fires still dotted the landscape amidst the rubble, it was hard to recognize what I was seeing. The place where my wife and I got married burned to the ground. So many other community institutions vanished: the Altadena Community Church, gone; the Pasadena Jewish Temple, gone, still smoldering, that temple, when I saw it, and burning inside like an eternal flame, a symbol of God's presence even amidst the unimaginable; the mountains above Altadena, once the scene of such beautiful greenery and nature, now charred beyond recognition.

Just like Altadena, much of the Palisades are just gone. Fire ripped through this community leveling entire neighborhoods. One bakery owner in Topanga described the fires that tore through her community simply as "Armageddon," charred cars, burned-out furniture block after block.

These were generational homes and neighborhoods—neighborhoods people are proud to be part of and raise their children in, now forever changed.

In Altadena, Victor Shaw was found in his house holding a garden hose. He died trying to save his home. His sister Shari barely escaped as the house went up in flames.

One man, Zaire, was separated from his sister who lived next door. Amidst the chaos, he was able to evacuate his baby and elderly mother. The next day when he returned, he found his sister's car outside her home and found her remains in the rubble. "Evelyn, why didn't you leave," he asked.

“[W]hy didn’t you leave?”

One father refused to leave the side of his son who had cerebral palsy, fighting to his last breath. The last words he said to his daughter were, “Baby, I’m getting ready to evacuate, I love you . . . Baby, I got to go, the fire’s made it to my yard.”

Anthony Mitchell is a hero.

Edgar McGregor is well known in Pasadena for his daily trash pickups in the foothills. But now, to the community, he will be known for something more. In a Facebook group post, he alerted residents 2 days before the fires to pack go-bags. When it mattered most, he typed two words: “Get out.”

“Get out.” His simple post may have saved lives.

People are surviving now but only barely hanging on.

I spoke with Patricia at one of the shelters on the West Side. She stayed a couple of nights in a motel but could no longer afford it, and her asthma was making it hard to breathe.

One firefighter, Jonathan, had been battling the blazes in the Palisades since the first night. I remember talking to this L. A. Fire Department firefighter, and he had told me he wasn’t sure he was going to make it out when he was there during the early hours of the fire. I asked him what that was like. He said: Well, there were flames in front of me and flames behind me. The water was running low. My communications were going out. He said it was “the closest thing to hell I can imagine.”

One family in Altadena who all lived on the same street lost three homes. What was once a dream to live so close to each other had turned into a nightmare.

Over the past week, we have seen firefighters—exhausted and yet unyielding—waging war to save communities and lives and property.

And in the last few days, we have seen some hopeful signs as the level of containment—particularly of the Eaton fire—has increased; more slowly, the containment of the Palisades fire. But we are not out of the woods.

We have seen neighbors helping neighbors. We have seen Angelenos opening their doors to strangers left with little more than the clothes on their back.

These are the angels who remind us that even in our darkest hours—through smoky skies and uncertain times—we do not stand alone because what makes this city of Los Angeles so extraordinary—what makes California extraordinary—is that we are not defined by our tragedies; we are defined by our response to them.

In Los Angeles, resilience is a way of life. It is what has allowed the city to rise from the devastation of earthquakes and floods and riots and fires time and again. And we are stronger, more resilient, more united, more compassionate.

This is a moment when we can and must call ourselves to the better angels

of our nature—the angels that are all around us: the paramedics who rescued and evacuated seniors from a nursing home at the edge of a fire line, the volunteers I met who showed up at a shelter ready to help before anyone even asked, the father who stayed behind to try desperately to keep his son alive.

In the coming weeks, after the fires are extinguished, we will seek answers. We must not do so for partisan gain or seeking fault; in fact, just the opposite because only with the truth about what went right and what went wrong can we arrive at solutions.

I remember talking to one woman who lost her trailer in the Palisades. She wants answers about the lack of water to fight the fires. I want to know that too. I want to know if the Federal and State resources we are fighting to procure will be enough to stop the next potential megafire. I want to know what we can do to rebuild and rebuild with speed so the neighborhoods that we lost can be reclaimed by the neighbors who have been displaced, and communities can come together once more.

I am grateful for the Governor’s efforts to streamline the permitting process so people can begin to rebuild and rebuild quickly. And I want to know if there is anything more that we can do or could have done to save more lives and more homes. We should all want that.

We should all want to rebuild because Los Angeles is one of our Nation’s great cities. And to rebuild, we will need your help without fanfare or partisan rancor.

We need your help. Just like we worked together to help rebuild New Orleans and Louisiana after Hurricane Katrina, we must do so again here. Just like after countless hurricanes struck Florida and the South, we rushed in aid. Just this year, after Hurricane Helene, FEMA is still on the ground in North Carolina helping those in its destructive path. And we won’t leave—we can’t—until the job is finished. That is what we must do here.

During my time in Congress, I have seen a lot of disaster aid bills. Never in my time have I ever considered whether an area votes red or blue. When people need help, we get them help. When people are fighting to rebuild, we help them rebuild, period. It cannot and should not change no matter who is President, no matter who is in charge of Congress, no matter who the Governor is or who their Senators are.

That is my urgent plea today. We need your help desperately.

Southern California, we will rebuild. We will. But whether we can do so quickly will depend on the actions we take in the next few months.

This big and beautiful diverse city is not just made of steel and stone but of people—people who stand together when the skies turn dark and rise together when the smoke clears.

We are going to rise again because it is who we are. And when we do, we will show the world what it truly means to be the “City of Angels.”

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California

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

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

10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE PASSAGE OF WATER FOR THE WORLD ACT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, some people in the Chamber who served in the Senate may remember my predecessor Paul Simon of Illinois. Simon was ahead of his time on so many issues, including the importance of clean drinking water and sanitation for the poorest people in the world.

He wrote a book called “Tapped Out.” He autographed this copy and gave it to me in 1998, many years ago. It certainly was not a New York Times best seller, but Paul wrote about what he said was “The Coming World Crisis in Water and What We Can Do About It.” I read this book and reflected on it over the years.

Some 30 years have passed. How many times do people talk about clean drinking water and sanitation? It is so critical to public health and so critical to development. Sometimes, we are looking for a big solution, a complex solution, when a simple solution is the first thing that is needed. Paul Simon realized that and that focusing on providing clean drinking water to some of the poorest places in the world can be transformative.

He understood that to avoid conflict between nations, to keep girls in school and reduce infant mortality, to improve health and economic opportunity, you have to provide people with access to clean water. Data supports this. Each dollar spent on clean water and sanitation returns between \$4 and \$8 in economic health and other benefits, which is why I decided to do something about it as a Member of the U.S. Senate.

I knew his family, I knew Paul, and I knew the last thing in the world he ever wanted was someone to build a statue of his image for future generations. But he would have been happy with perhaps the bill that I introduced entitled the Paul Simon Water for the World Act, legislation that built on an earlier law to improve access to clean water and sanitation around the world. Former Representative Earl Blumenauer and former Senator Bob Corker, a Republican in Tennessee, were my partners on this bipartisan effort.

Ten years ago, the legislation passed the Senate unanimously—something that is almost unimaginable today with the politics we live with—but that underscored the true urgency and importance of this issue. Not only was

this legislation the right thing to do, but it made access to clean water and sanitation for the world's poor a development priority for the United States.

As a result of the bills that I introduced with my colleagues and sustained bipartisan funding over the last 13 years, American leadership has provided first-time, sustainable access to clean water to more than 76 million people and access to sanitation to 58 million.

I can remember a visit I made years and years ago to Port-au-Prince in Haiti. It is one of the poorest places on Earth, and of course, it is in our hemisphere. A lady who is a medical doctor and administrator of a clinic wanted to show me something. They had been having trouble with waterborne illness, and a lot of people were sick. Some children were dying.

She said they then decided to build a cistern of pure water and to protect it and make sure the village could draw from that water when they needed it. She said it has changed everything. The kids aren't dying. People aren't sick. Things have improved dramatically. She walked out to show me a sewer lid and a pump on it. She said to me, We got this from the United States. It had something to do with a man named Paul Simon. I laughed almost out loud, thinking for goodness' sake. I said, How much did you have to invest in this?

She said \$15,000. That is \$15,000 that has saved lives and had made a difference, and it was in Paul's name, I was happy to report.

This is incredible work, and I want to salute my staffer Chris Homan, who has traveled around Africa and parts of Asia to see these investments. They do make a dramatic difference in the lifestyle of people, giving them dignity, giving them life, giving them a future.

Another such story is from a rural area of Ghana where these kinds of programs have already eliminated waterborne illnesses. We can see, when visited this project, that the investment—this small investment—by the United States made an affordable and sustainable infrastructure that families can use for sanitation options and safe drinking water. The two have to go hand in hand.

This investment made a project where a disabled woman lives a place where she can find dignity, as the name suggests, for she no longer has to crawl through snake-filled fields to use the river.

But this lifesaving work is far from done. As the climate crisis worsens and industrial needs increase, ensuring global access to clean water supplies is as important as ever.

The book might not have been a best seller, but the idea sure was. And I sure hope that we continue this modest investment in villages around the world that literally saves and transforms lives.

Around 2 billion people on this planet Earth still lack access to safe drinking

water, so I hope this historically important, bipartisan investment will continue long into the future ahead of us. Lives depend on it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

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Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, if you believe we should be able to detain and deport undocumented immigrants who have committed serious crimes and you took Republicans at their word that the Laken Riley Act was necessary for us to do that, you need to know that is already Federal law. We can and do already detain and deport immigrants who commit serious crimes, and we are not about to change that.

But Republicans have been ignoring the policies we already have on the books to push for a bill that, in its current form, is more extreme, expensive, and broad than it first appears. I am very concerned that without serious amendments, this bill is rife with unintended consequences and powers that could be abused.

As written, it will drastically undermine civil liberties in this country. It will throw our immigration system into absolute chaos by undermining any President's authority to shape Federal policy. It will cost tens of billions of dollars. And here is the kicker. It will end up punishing legal immigrants and diverting resources from detaining true threats to public safety.

First off, let's talk about how extremely broad the language of this bill is. Under this bill, you don't have to be found guilty of a felony to be detained and deported. That is a huge attack on due process. All you need is to be arrested or charged, regardless of whether that is something as small as shoplifting a candy bar, regardless of whether it may become clear that you are innocent, regardless of whether this happened years or even decades ago, and even regardless of whether you are a child.

So let me just underscore that because it is important. This bill has no exemption for kids, no cutoff age, no process to keep it in line with our general child welfare laws. As written, this bill appears so broad that a child could be locked up and put on a plane without their parents. With such sweeping language, I am deeply concerned the Trump administration could abuse this law to deport Dreamers or our farmworkers or other essential workers who, again, may never be convicted of a crime.

And to be fair, it is not just Trump I am worried about because this bill is an open invitation for Republican State officials to dictate individual case outcomes regardless of ICE, derail national immigration policy, and even disrupt international relations.

Under this bill as written, any State attorney general could wreck major humanitarian relief pathways like temporary protected status for Venezuelan or Ukrainian nationals. They

can seek court orders to deport individuals without signoff from ICE. And in some cases, they could sue to halt visas from entire countries.

That is a policy that, by its design, will end up punishing the people who are following the law to enter the United States legally. It could punish refugees who are fleeing violence. It could punish people who come here to engage in trade and in commerce that helps our economy grow. It could even punish American citizens if they are hoping to get a visa for their spouse.

With a Federal immigration system that is already too chaotic and complicated, just wait until any State AG can overrule ICE, undermine the President, and throw thousands of legal—legal—visa applications into limbo.

The bill also promises these lawsuits priority, which could be a huge burden on our courts. And if that weren't counterproductive enough, not only would this bill as written punish legal immigrants, it will also divert resources we need to detain genuine threats to our public safety. If ICE is required, as this bill says, to spend resources detaining nonviolent—not even convicted—shoplifting cases and the like, they will have their hands tied as resources are stretched thinner and thinner by an overwhelming number of minor cases, leaving them with fewer and fewer resources then to tackle the most serious cases.

That is especially concerning because DHS already does not have anywhere near the resources to implement this bill. ICE would need, actually, more than three times the current number of detention beds—a 265-percent increase—for this bill. It would need to execute 80 removal flights a week, almost double its current capacity, not to mention it would need to double ground transportation.

That all adds up to ICE needing to nearly double its staff, hiring over 18,000 additional people. And to give you a sense of how unrealistic that is, historically, DHS hasn't been able to onboard more than 1,000 people a year.

And to give you a sense of how expensive this is, ICE estimates it will need more than triple its budget in year one—really, closer to four times their current funding level. We are now talking up to \$83 billion for this legislation over the first 3 years to implement it. That is more than the annual budget for the entire Department of Homeland Security. That is a lot of money to spend on a bill that is going to cause chaos, punish legal immigrants, and undermine due process in America, all while drawing resources away from true threats.

Make no mistake, there are serious challenges we have at our border. There is a serious need for sensible immigration reform. But being tough on immigration does not require us to forsake our bedrock principles like due process or our moral obligation to keep children safe. It does not require us to ignore our common sense and waste crucial resources.

So while I hope to work with my colleagues to improve this bill, as I try to improve every bill that I can, I have to say, we have a long road ahead to address my deep concerns with the way this bill threatens due process and the potential for it to be abused.

So I strongly urge my colleagues to demand a far more serious amendment process on this bill, but more than that, I urge them to demand a serious, bipartisan approach to tackling immigration in an effective, humane way, one that protects our country and upholds our values.

NOMINATION OF ROBERT F. KENNEDY, JR.

Mr. President, on a very different topic, I wanted a chance to talk today about one of the nominees that is coming before us because, when I was a very young girl, the polio vaccine was approved, and to this very day, I remember my mom saying: Thank goodness. We can now send our kids to school and not have to worry they will get sick, be paralyzed, or have to live in an iron lung or worse.

The relief was overwhelming. That is why the fear is so overwhelming now that Donald Trump wants RFK, Jr.—an outright, unapologetic, anti-vax conspiracy theorist—as our Nation's Secretary of Health and Human Services.

Now, I want to be clear. I will not be shy about making my concerns quite plain with the American people. That is part of our Senate's role to advise and consent to the President's nominees. It is our job to vet these nominees and put them through a rigorous process to determine if they are qualified to serve.

That is why I met with RFK, Jr., yesterday, so I could be direct with him about my concerns with his anti-vaccine record and so I could discuss the other challenges our Nation faces where HHS has a really crucial role. I do appreciate his time, and I appreciate the opportunity to look for areas of common ground. But as I have said already, I oppose his nomination because, regardless of any other views he holds, his long history of explicitly anti-vaccine activism is utterly disqualifying.

And I am not the only one who is worried. Even Trump's former FDA Commissioner, Scott Gottlieb, has said RFK, Jr.'s agenda "will cost lives in this country."

I mean, just imagine if RFK, Jr., was Secretary when COVID struck. We still might not have vaccines. After all, he called the COVID vaccine the "deadliest vaccine ever made."

This isn't a case where we can just look for areas of agreement or hope for the best—maybe drug costs or maybe healthy food. We are talking about a conspiracy theorist who is openly antagonistic to public health and who will have tremendous authority over Americans' lives and their healthcare.

It is not asking too much to have a Secretary of Health who believes in healthy food and believes in vaccines, especially when we are already back-

sliding on vaccines and seeing real and deadly consequences.

We eliminated measles in 2000, but last year we had 16 outbreaks. Whooping cough has spiked in the country and in my home State of Washington. Polio—even polio—is making a comeback. These are dangerous diseases, and RFK, Jr., would let them spread through our communities and schools like wildfire. And as any parent knows, when a bug goes around a school, it doesn't stop there; it comes home to Mom and Dad and baby brothers and sisters, who could be at serious risks.

So I am here this afternoon to talk some truth to the American people about the stakes here and lay out the facts for anyone who might not appreciate the serious threat posed by RFK, Jr.

Maybe you think: Well, he is not talking about vaccines like polio or measles, or: He is only asking questions. Except, know this: He founded a nonprofit entirely focused on attacking vaccines. RFK, Jr.'s nonprofit has made videos promoting falsehoods about vaccines and autism and sowing distrust in vaccines, especially among the Black community.

They tried to revoke the emergency authorization for kids' COVID vaccines. They sued against measles vaccine requirements, even amid measles outbreaks.

And it is not just RFK, Jr.'s nonprofit that should raise alarm here. He has said he doesn't know if the polio vaccine caused more deaths than it prevented.

Or another example: The HPV vaccine has led to a huge drop in cervical cancer. RFK, Jr., suggested it increases cancer risk.

And let's not get cute here with excuses like, well, he is just asking questions, because when he says we need to know vaccines are safe, he is ignoring the centuries of research we have already done on these vaccines. We do know they are safe.

What is more, he has not just been asking questions. These are statements I am going to give you that RFK, Jr., has made. These are in his own words. He has said:

I do believe that autism does come from vaccines.

He said:

They get the shot, that night they have a fever of 103, they go to sleep, and three months later their brain is gone.

Again, he said the COVID vaccine was the "deadliest vaccine ever made."

These statements are not just false; they are irresponsible, and they are disqualifying. Given his track record, we cannot just hope that if RFK, Jr., finally gets power to undermine vaccines—a cause that he has, by the way, dedicated considerable time and money and effort to—that he will just give that up. That is not believable, especially when we know the lawyer helping him put together a team has tried to have 14 different vaccines pulled from the market himself—including, by the way, the polio vaccine.

And if you are thinking, well, he can't really do anything about vaccines, you need to think again. If confirmed, RFK, Jr., would have tremendous power to undermine vaccines. He could influence FDA's approval of medicine and drugs. He could directly appoint people to CDC's vaccine board, which influences vaccine coverage and costs.

He said he will fire top researchers by the hundreds and pause infectious disease research for years—a threat far beyond vaccines, I would say.

And let's not downplay the fact that, as Secretary, he would have one of the biggest megaphones in the world to spread anti-vaccine misinformation.

Maybe you are someone who thinks: So what if we have more whooping cough, or: A lot of people had measles, but they lived. I realize some people probably think like that because they have never seen the reality of these terrible diseases because vaccines have been so effective.

A nurse recently shared online what whooping cough can do to a baby, what she has watched families go through herself. I will warn you: It was soul crushing. First, the baby can't stop coughing—not even to eat, not even to breathe.

Then come seizures and strokes, then a breathing tube and a ventilator, and finally a machine to take over failing heart and lung function, and then they die. That is horrific. That is whooping cough, and it is far from the only disease at risk of a comeback. We don't want that to happen here in this country or around the globe.

Let's talk about measles. It is one of the world's most contagious diseases. It is easily spread by coughing and sneezing. It lingers in the air for hours. You are contagious 4 days before you develop a rash and 4 days after. Now, before the vaccine, millions of people caught measles annually, meaning thousands were hospitalized, hundreds died, most of them young children.

But this is not just history. Do you want to know what RFK, Jr., would do as Secretary of Health? I want you to look at Samoa. Before Samoa had a measles outbreak, he was there—he was there propping up vaccine deniers and falsely blaming deaths on the measles vaccine. After Samoa had a tremendous measles outbreak with over 100 hospitalized and at least 83 dead, mostly kids, no apology from him, no admitting he was wrong. Instead, he doubled down and wrote to the Prime Minister suggesting vaccines were part of the problem.

That is who we want to put in charge of our Nation's healthcare? What do we think is going to happen? How many outright lies are we going to tolerate? How many deaths before we realize this nonsense is dangerous?

And, look, the vaccine lies just scratch the surface here. This is someone who won't accept that HIV causes AIDS. This is someone who thinks chemicals in the water might turn people gay; he said that. This is someone

who thinks 5G wireless is being used to “control our behavior.”

This is not someone we in the U.S. Senate should be telling the American people to trust on healthcare. He is not someone we should be handing the levers of power.

For that matter, the same goes for some of Trump’s other healthcare nominees who have ignored science and promoted false conspiracy theories. His nominee to lead the CRC is an anti-abortion extremist with zero public health experience—unless you count peddling the conspiracy theory that vaccines cause autism or promoting junk healthcare plans. Then you have Dr. Oz, who has been named to lead CMS—someone who is known for pushing quack treatments and debunked junk science, who will be shaping health coverage for millions despite clear conflicts of interest.

I cannot drive home enough to the U.S. Senate: This is not a game. These are not political roles without consequence. They have real power over whether Americans can get basic information and healthcare.

I want to end on this note, and it is important. Vaccines save lives. That is not a question. It is not a slogan. It is a fact. If you cannot accept that fact; if you cannot be honest with the American people about it; if, when parents look to you, worried about their newborn, wanting to do what is best for their baby, trusting your advice as a public health leader, if you cannot tell them the same truth that centuries of science and experience tell us, which is that vaccines are safe and effective and lifesaving, then you have absolutely no business leading the Department of Health and Human Services. None. That should not be up for debate.

A vaccine denier should not be our highest ranking healthcare official.

I yield the floor.

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

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

The Senator from Wisconsin.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I think by now you have seen all kinds of different versions of this depressing chart of total U.S. debt.

Back in 1998—and we will be talking about that year—when Bill Clinton was President and we had our first budget surplus since 1969, the debt level was about \$5½ trillion.

When I arrived here in my first year in the Senate in 2011, the debt was about \$14 trillion. I ran, quite honestly, because we were mortgaging our children’s future.

I will talk a little bit about 2014 when President Obama had a certain spending level that was up to \$17½ trillion.

As recent as 2019, before the pandemic, our debt was somewhere around \$22½ trillion.

Today, our debt exceeds \$36 trillion on a path toward much higher heights.

If you look at President Biden’s final budget here, he is predicting our total debt will be \$52 trillion in 10 years. This is clearly not sustainable. As I said, this is a depressing reality.

The result of all that debt—one of the many results—was the devaluation of the dollar. A dollar you held in 1998 is only worth 51 cents today. We have basically cut the value of a dollar in half since 1998. In 2014 when President Obama was President—now the value of that dollar is only worth 74 cents. The value of the dollar prior to the pandemic, 2019, is now only worth 80 cents. That is why people can’t afford things.

This inflation caused by massive deficit spending—this is the stealth tax on every American. It is a very regressive tax. It primarily hurts people at the bottom part of the income spectrum. Wealthy individuals have stocks, and they have other assets that inflate as the dollar devalues. So, again, this harm primarily affects lower income Americans. The men and women who work are harmed by this.

This can’t go on. This is an outrage. This is a tragedy.

I just want to ask a bit of a hypothetical here before we talk about this chart. Let’s say you are an American family of four, and you are doing pretty good. You make and you spend about \$100,000 a year.

Let’s say the next year, you have a serious illness in your family, and all of a sudden, you have major medical bills totaling \$50,000. So the next year, you spend \$150,000.

Well, let’s say you get some good news. That medical condition is now solved. Your family member is healed. What would most American families do? If their income level stayed the same—around \$100,000—I don’t think they would keep spending at a \$150,000 level. They certainly wouldn’t borrow \$50,000 to maintain that spending level. They would reduce their spending level back to what it was before the illness, right? It would go back to somewhere around 100,000 bucks, maybe a little bit more based on inflation. That is not what the Federal Government did. This, I know, is shocking most Americans as I am laying out the reality of the situation. In 2019, prior to the pandemic, total Federal Government spending was \$4.4 trillion. Then we had COVID, and I think we very unwisely shut down a lot of our economy. It destroyed people’s businesses. It destroyed people’s lives, our miserable failed response to COVID. It cost a lot of money. So Washington went on a massive spending spree, and in the year of the pandemic, we spent actually closer to \$6.6 trillion.

Now, again, if it would have been like a normal family, once the pandemic passed, we would have returned to

some reasonable spending level, but we didn’t do that. The last 5 years now, we spent, on average, \$6.5 trillion. That is \$2.1 trillion more than we spent in 2019. There is no justification for that.

This last year, we spent a total of \$6.9 trillion, \$2.6 trillion—\$2.5 trillion higher than the \$4.4 trillion. Again, there is no justification for that.

So the question I have been asking is, How do we return to a reasonable, prepandemic spending level?

I will guarantee you that the people who voted for President Trump do not expect the Federal Government is going to continue spending at President Biden’s and the Democrats who have been in charge, at their spending levels. This is unacceptable. It is unsustainable.

So what I have done is, I have laid out a couple different options here. Again, I will use another analogy. Let’s say that same family of four I was talking about with an income of \$100,000, let’s say they have a baby. Now their population, their family size, has increased 25 percent. I think most people recognize that if that family of four could increase their income 25 percent, from 100,000 to 125,000, and then tack on an amount for inflation—let’s say it is 3 percent inflation—up to 128,750, I think most people would recognize now that family has been kept whole. They have been made whole. They have been able to maintain their standard of living.

Well, I think the same thing would be true for the Federal Government, for Americans living within America, you know, looking at different benefits the Federal Government bestows on Americans as it extracts our hard-earned tax dollars.

So I went back to a number of different years prior to the pandemic. I went back to 1998. Again, that was the first year we actually had a budget surplus since 1969. That is how irresponsible the government has always been. But back in 1998, what a magic moment. We actually had a budget surplus. That was under Bill Clinton. We spent \$1.7 trillion.

That is obviously too low because we have had inflation, because we have had population growth. So what I have done in each one of these scenarios here is I have taken the basic spending levels. I have increased them based on population growth and inflation, plus I exempt Social Security, Medicare, and interest. And I have plugged in President Biden’s 2025 budget amounts for Social Security, Medicare, and interest.

So the result of that analysis for 1998, for Bill Clinton’s spending level—I don’t think anybody would really argue that Bill Clinton spent too little in 1998—if you did that, the increase would be based on population and inflation, plus you use today’s 2025 Social Security, Medicare, and interest expense, you would end up with \$5.5 trillion.

Now, it is not a secret. The reason I chose 1998—I looked at all of these

years. Doing that with 1998 spending levels, if you compare that to President Biden's budgeted revenue for this year, which has not decreased because of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act—the revenue has consistently increased to \$5.5 trillion—we would have a balanced budget. What everybody says is impossible to achieve, going back to Bill Clinton's spending levels, increasing them by population and inflation and using today's Social Security, Medicare, and interest expense would balance the budget. We wouldn't have to increase the debt ceiling. We wouldn't be experiencing or threatened by more inflation.

OK. If that is too reasonable for Washington, DC, let's look at another scenario. Let's take a look at Barack Obama's—President Obama's—spending levels in 2014. Again, I don't think President Obama was spending too little in 2014. I was here. He was spending too much.

But if you take his 2014 levels, inflate them by population growth since then and inflation, using today's Social Security, Medicare, and interest, we would be spending \$6.2 trillion this year. Pretty reasonable. Not a balanced budget, but a whole lot better than the 6.9 or the \$7.3 trillion that President Biden budgeted for this year—a far more reasonable spending level.

But if you don't like that, if that is just too reasonable, too aggressive for you, just go back to 2019 when we spent \$4.4 trillion, increase it by population growth, inflation, using President Biden's Social Security, Medicare, and interest, it would be 6.5. I mean, I think that is completely unacceptable. That has been the average.

If we increase that \$2.1 above the \$4.4 trillion, it would still be a whole lot better than President Biden's 7.3 trillion or last year's spending of \$6.9 trillion.

How can anybody justify spending at this level when we were only spending \$4.4 trillion 5 years ago?

Here is what I am suggesting. Set those other scenarios aside. President Trump was just elected. Again, I don't think anybody—certainly not me. I voted for President Trump. I was not expecting President Trump, and I do not expect him, to come into office and accept and spend at President Biden's levels. So I would encourage President Trump to go back and take a look at the final budget he proposed for fiscal year 2021 and look at his estimate for spending in 2025.

So I have done the exact same thing. I am using the fiscal year 2025 estimates from his last budget, but I am using this year's Social Security, Medicare, and interest expense. If we do that, we are looking at a spending level of \$6 trillion.

So, again, we can look at individual expense items. You can take a look at defense, if you don't think we are spending enough on that, if it is too risky a world. I mean, somewhere with-

in the range of 5.5, which would literally balance our budget, up to 6, \$6.2 trillion, that is a reasonable base that we ought to include in a budget we will be passing this year, and that should drive future spending. That would reset spending levels to a far more reasonable level.

Again, let me just reemphasize, whether we use Bill Clinton's 1998 spending level, which would result in a \$5.5 trillion baseline; Barack Obama's 2014 spending levels, which would result in a baseline budget of \$6.2 trillion; or President Trump's final budget, which would result in a \$6 trillion spending level, that is a reasonable approach.

That is what families do. That is what businesses in America are forced to do. They don't just say: Spend whatever you want. Put 70 percent of our spending budget on automatic pilot. We will never look at it. We will just spend whatever we want.

That is how you bankrupt a family. That is how you bankrupt a business. That is how we are mortgaging our children's future. It has to stop.

So I am putting everybody on notice. I am on the Budget Committee. I am on the Finance Committee. I am going to insist that the budget we pass now that Republicans are in control of the Senate returns to some reasonable baseline.

Listen, I am reasonable. I will negotiate. I am not saying this is gospel; this is etched in stone. But President Trump, our majority leader, our majority leadership, House leadership, they are going to have to justify to me how you would justify spending more than these reasonable baselines.

I ran in 2010 because we were mortgaging our children's future. I remember doing parades, shouting that. "We are mortgaging our children's future." It is immoral. It has to stop. We are spending 24, 25 percent of GDP at the Federal Government level. That is not the vision of our Founding Fathers, of sovereign states where government is primarily at the State level, at the local level, where it is close to the people, where it is more efficient, it is more effective, and it is more accountable.

Now Washington is gobbling up all of our resources, borrowing these vast amounts of money, devaluing our currency. They are not solving problems. They are not reducing poverty. They are not making lives better. They are putting American lives at risk.

And as Government grows, our freedoms recede. And Americans have to understand that of all the things that have made this country great, the men and women who have worked and built this marvel of a nation, the one essential ingredient they have always used is just that, freedom. It is freedom that allowed them to dream and aspire and build and create this marvel of a country. It is freedom that will allow these young people sitting in front of me here to do the same thing.

But as long as government continues to grow, those freedoms will necessarily recede. It is a direct relationship. So we have allowed government to grow way too large. It influences far too much of our lives, negatively influences it.

We need to jealously guard our freedom. We need to jealously reclaim our freedom. And the best way to do that is to shrink the size, the scope, and the cost of the government and its influence over our lives. And the only way you do that is you have to reduce total spending by the Federal Government. This is the metric. We talk about all kinds of things. That is the metric.

And one final point: We are not going to be able to tax our way out of this. We don't have a taxation problem; we have a spending problem. I want to make my final comment, the refuting of the false narrative that we hear ad nauseam from the other side. The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act did not cause our deficits. When the CBO scored that, the score at the time it passed was that it was going to reduce revenue and increase our deficits by \$1.5 trillion. And CBO then after passage, I think April of 2018, projected out revenue for 10 years. If you take a look at that revenue from 2018 to 2024, we actually have the actual results. They projected about \$27 trillion worth of revenue over that 7-year period. The actual amount of revenue we raised from 2018 to 2024 was \$28.7 trillion. We beat CBO's estimate by \$1.7 trillion. So if the original score is 1.5 trillion—it was—in 7 years, we actually beat their estimate by 1.7. We paid for that tax cut in 7 years, plus \$200 billion.

And we had the severe COVID recession in the middle of that. So don't believe anybody that tells you that Tax Cuts and Jobs Act caused our deficits. They didn't. They paid for themselves in less than 7 years and then some.

We have a spending problem in this country. There is no justification for going from \$4.4 trillion to \$6.5 trillion, and now we are at 6.9 with no end in sight.

This is immoral, what we are doing to our children. We have got to get this under control, and this is about as good a rationale, as good a justification for setting some dollar limit and using the budget process unlike we have ever used it before, not just for being able to pass some kind of reconciliation package with a mere majority vote but actually use the budget the way American families and American businesses do to set the spending limits.

And then ask our committees and the chair of our committees to take those budget caps seriously and figure out how they can structure spending, how they can structure these programs to actually live within those budget caps, and, again, if they actually used Bill Clinton's 1998 spending level and inflate it the way I have done here, actually balance the budget.

That is what the people who came out in November voting for President

Trump, that is their goal. That is their expectation. I suggest we live up to their expectations.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. RICKETTS). The Senator from Kansas.

TRIBUTE TO TOM BRANDT

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, for the past 8 years, I have benefited from the service, hard work, and loyalty of my communications director and deputy chief of staff Tom Brandt.

Tom has worked in three congressional offices and is well-known and respected in the Senate by reporters, staffers, and my colleagues. His career as a staffer on Capitol Hill is concluding, and I am sad about that; but he will continue serving the American people as he pursues one of his other passions, and that is a passion for space exploration and NASA.

I want to express my gratitude to him for his service to the people of Kansas and to me. Tom is from Oakland Park, KS, and comes from a long line of Kansans. He embodies Kansas values of hard work, determination, and generosity, and I know he learned these traits from his role models, his parents Carl and Nancy Brandt.

You have raised a great son, and I thank you for that.

His career on Capitol Hill began in Missouri Senator Roy Blunt's office, first in the House and then in the U.S. Senate. He earned Roy's trust early on as a driver. That is how we often meet some of our best members of our staff. And he, too, maintained a relationship with Roy during his tenure here in the U.S. Senate. I asked Roy to tell me something about Tom, and he said:

Tom Brandt came to work for me in the House and was such an asset that I asked him to join our Senate press team. Tom always understood how to take advantage of the moment and the value of a clear message. I know Senator MORAN and his office will miss Tom when he leaves as much as we did.

Tom's career took him to work on various campaigns and, eventually, back to Capitol Hill where he worked for Kansas Congresswoman Lynn Jenkins during her time as the House GOP conference vice chair.

It was in her office that Tom was able to first pursue his passion for NASA. Lynn provided me with some thoughts, in her words, that she wanted to share about Tom:

Tom is one of my all-time favorite coworkers.

When I asked her—this is me talking now—when I asked her whether I should hire Tom Brandt, she said: He is the best I ever hired.

He is hardworking, honest, intelligent, kind and funny. Tom has a deep appreciation for his home State of Kansas and served it extremely well in his time in my office.

That is Lynn Jenkins speaking.

But, in many ways, it was his penance, as you see Tom is perhaps the worst kind of traitor a native Kansan can be—he chose to attend college at the University of Missouri. Tom's interest in NASA and space policy is lifelong.

Again, Congresswoman Jenkins speaking.

Years ago, when he worked as my communications director, he requested to handle my office's space legislative portfolio. Given I represented a district with no NASA presence and didn't serve on any committee of jurisdiction, no one [in our office actually handled that topic.] In response, my Chief of Staff told Tom, "Sure, go for it, but it never comes up." Tom did take it and immediately reached out to NASA staff. Soon after, he set up my office's first of many interactions with NASA.

That is the end of Lynn Jenkins' quote.

After working in the House and private sector, Tom began working in our office in 2017. It became evident to me early on that one of Tom's greatest strengths is his ability to quickly build friendships and collaborations. He can quickly put folks at ease with his warm smile and personality. I always thought that smile, he was smirking at me every time I saw him. I got accustomed to that smile as something much better than a smirk.

He will take the time to talk with frustrated constituents to assure them they have been heard and that he will do his best to help. And Tom always follows through on his promises.

The relationships he formed over the years expands from everyone—House Members, U.S. Senators, staff in both places—and these relationships have aided Tom in his work.

Early on in his time in my office, he took a trip to Taiwan and established relationships with officials he met in the Taiwanese Government, and he maintained those relationships after returning home. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Taiwan generously offered to send face masks and personal protection equipment to the United States. Tom reached out to his individual friends he had made, and he asked them if any of that equipment could be sent to Kansas to help the hospitals that were in desperate need. Tom's request resulted in Taiwan sending 100,000 surgical masks to Kansas.

In a moment of great need, Tom found a way to bring help and aid to the people of his home State.

In his role as communications director—I expected a lot of press to be sitting in the Gallery, but I see none. In his role as communications director, Tom has been a steadying hand helping me untangle my own thoughts and express my positions in a way that is more clear and winsome.

When I have had to speak after taking an unpopular stand or something that had caused me to be misunderstood—either on policy or legislation—Tom always had my back, advocating for me and my positions, even when he had to face the anger of those who disagreed.

He has helped clear the way for tough but important legislation. I would highlight one, the Empowering Olympic and Amateur Athletes Act that was born out of our investigation into the abuses of gymnasts and other American athletes.

He has shown compassion toward veterans suffering from illnesses as the result of their service, and we worked together to pass the PACT Act to help those who had encountered Agent Orange and burn pit victims.

And he has always shown grit and determination, working through the night on many occasions, helping me find exactly the right words to say to express my position to my constituents and the world.

As an Eagle Scout, Tom lives by the Eagle Scout motto: "Be prepared." He is always prepared with the right answer and for the tough questions from reporters, like the time a reporter reached out to see if "Senator JERRY MORAN was playing golf with Vice President Pence." Tom, in all his wisdom, responded, "Mike Pence golfs?"

Again, he has the gift to communicate.

While I congratulate Tom on his new job at NASA, his absence will be felt not only by me and by our team but by his many friends and colleagues on Capitol Hill.

Tom, we will miss your communications and policy expertise, your humorous quips and one-liners, your loyalty to the Kansas City Chiefs and Red Friday, and, above all, your friendship and passion for making the world a better place for Kansans and Americans.

I will miss, Tom, our nearly daily walks as I come over here to vote. It is a difficult job to be a comms director for a Senator who almost always shies away about visiting with reporters. Thanks for helping me explain my errors and celebrating our accomplishments. You had no responsibility for the errors and a great deal to do with the accomplishments.

Thank you for doing your job so well—pretty good for a Mizzou grad.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUESTS—AMENDMENTS

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I have come to the floor to talk about the impact of the Laken Riley bill upon children here in the United States of America and to suggest that we have a debate over several amendments designed as to how to more appropriately treat our children who reside here in the United States so we do not end up doing significant injury to them, which I very much believe is going to be the result if we proceed without some changes.

But let me start just by noting that my thoughts are—as I think the thoughts of every Senator are—with Laken Riley's family.

Whenever there is a tragedy—no tragedy should happen, whether it is perpetuated by a citizen or it is perpetuated by an immigrant. Americans should be safe in their communities. It is absolutely clear that we need comprehensive, commonsense immigration reform.

Here in the Senate, Democrats and Republicans worked together back in

2013 to pass just such a bill—an enormous investment in border security 12 years ago, approved in this body by Democrats and Republicans together. That bill never got a hearing in the House of Representatives. So I hope we will, in fact, try to resurrect the spirit that inspired us 12 years ago in this coming year for comprehensive reform.

This particular bill is very troubling in how it impacts children. I am troubled that a bill of such consequence and, quite frankly, legal complexity was brought to the floor without going through a committee. Really, here in the Senate, the way to do responsible work on complicated, consequential bills is to have them go before a committee so the committee can bring in all the experts necessary to resolve disputes and misunderstandings about how the bill might work. From that common understanding, needed reforms can be implemented. But here on the floor of the Senate, where often only one or two of us are here at a time, there is no such consideration. We can't bring experts to the floor here to resolve these issues.

My colleague from Alabama is here today, and when I propose that we consider certain amendments, I anticipate that she is going to object, although I will try to persuade her otherwise with the logic of my presentation. But I would say that the core point stands that this bill is consequential, it is complicated, and the potential impact on children is dramatic. So let's work to prevent something really awful from happening here in our country because I know that is not the intent of my colleague.

This bill as written requires ICE officers to detain individuals who have neither been charged nor convicted of a crime—neither charged nor convicted. Children imprisoned without being charged or convicted of a crime—that is what this bill does.

In the current system, children can be, in fact, detained, but it is at discretion on the front end and discretion on the back end to understand the whole of the circumstances. Is the individual a flight risk? Does the individual pose a risk to the community? Are we talking about an assault with a deadly weapon or are we talking about grabbing and eating an apple while walking down the aisle of a grocery store? That discretion is obliterated in this bill.

If a 5-year-old girl in either of our States—I am from Oregon, and Senator BRITT from Alabama—gets hungry and grabs that apple, the Laken Riley Act says that young girl, if arrested, must be put into an ICE prison—must be, without discretion—and there is no provision in the bill to get that girl out. There is no required review.

This is an obliteration of everything we understand about due process. A child arrested but never charged because there was, in fact, in the end, no evidence—no conviction because since there is no evidence, there is no trial—is still sitting in prison without recourse, in an ICE prison.

This is not the America I know, and I don't believe this is the America my colleagues across the aisle want. So I come here to say let's work together to fix this bill. That is what we are looking to do today.

I have three amendments. I will explain each of the amendments before I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment so that the amendment can, in fact, be debated and voted on.

The first amendment excludes children from this bill. If the idea is that mandatory detention should apply to adults, then let's exclude children. Children would still be subject to potential detention that exists under the current law at the discretion—in fact, under current law, they can be detained with discretion even just for an arrest, before they have been charged or convicted, but there is discretion involved.

I know of no case in which there has been permanent, mandatory imprisonment of a child who has only been arrested and never charged and never convicted in the entire history of the United States of America, and we are about to change that. That is wrong.

So, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment so I can offer my amendment No. 73; that there be up to 15 minutes for debate on the amendment; and that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate vote on the amendment without further intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mrs. BRITT. Reserving the right to object, Mr. President, with all due respect to my colleague from Oregon, he voted against even proceeding to this bill. Now he is attempting to force amendments onto the bill outside of the bipartisan amendment process that we are working through.

Look, I get it. I understand the frustration when your caucus is working and your bill doesn't get called up to be voted on. But the truth is, we are working diligently to make sure that all voices are heard.

I also find it really interesting because for the past 4 years under the failed Biden-HARRIS administration's open border policies, I have not seen one bill be brought to the floor from this side of the aisle to really focus on what is happening to children as a result of these policies.

If you look at our wide-open border, we have had over 468,000 unaccompanied children come across our border in the last 4 years. When you look at the numbers that HHS has put out, they admit to losing at least 85,000 children. Where has the outrage been?

My colleagues and I on this side of the aisle have been diligently bringing this to the forefront time and time again, even holding our own version of a hearing because we couldn't get our

Democratic colleagues to shine light on this. How dare they step out of line with Biden and HARRIS and their open border policy and agenda. How dare they. They should have. We did, and we will continue to make sure that we speak up for these kids.

When you look at what is happening to migrant children being trafficked, in many cases, from drug trafficking, to sex trafficking, to stories that are absolutely gut-wrenching and heart-breaking, something has to be done, and it begins with making sure that we have accountability and that we are taking criminals off our streets.

It is not just migrant children who have paid the price for the failed policies of this last administration; it is American children as well.

Look at 12-year-old Jocelyn Nungaray in Texas, who was brutally raped and murdered by two men who never should have been here. Look at Laken Riley, who last Friday would have celebrated her 23rd birthday had she still been on this Earth. Had this bill been enacted, Laken Riley would still be alive.

This bill is a lifesaving bill. This bill protects children.

We are going to continue to fight to expose the detrimental impact of the Biden-Harris open border policies, and we on this side of the aisle look forward to joining with those on the other side of the aisle who are willing to make commonsense, targeted reforms to keep Americans safe.

Because of that, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. My colleague laid out quite a set of factors there, but let's not blur the picture. The picture is this: A child came here when they were 2 months old. They have been here for 12 years or 14. They walk out of a store with a group of children. A police officer thinks they saw them put something into their pocket and arrests them. It turns out they didn't put anything into their pocket. Nothing was in there, but they have been arrested. Now ICE is required to indefinitely imprison that child—that child in Alabama who was going to be a great, outstanding member of their school and of their community—sentencing that child, with no charge, no conviction, no crime, to prison. We know exactly what harm that type of imprisonment does.

That is what this amendment is about. I can't take on all of the other issues, but I will say that last year, we had a bipartisan group develop a comprehensive bill, and my colleagues across the aisle blocked it from coming to the floor. But that was last year's debate.

This is a bill that has a purpose, but I don't think the purpose is to wrongly, indefinitely, mandatorily imprison innocent children. So I would ask my colleague, while you are objecting now, let's continue this conversation because it is that important to fairness in America.

There is a legal difference of opinion currently, so I am just going to describe that. It was sold on the House side by saying that there is a settlement called the Flores settlement which will continue to protect children and prevent this from happening—an innocent child indefinitely detained in prison with no review process.

But let's turn to the counsel for Flores. The counsel for Flores has put out a detailed statement. I have a copy. I understand that other lawyers may have other opinions, but these are the experts.

They say: The Flores settlement does not apply to undocumented children in the community. It applies only to children detained in Federal immigration custody by DHS under Customs and Border Protection or Immigration and Customs Enforcement in certain circumstances and so on and so forth. "Neither the Flores Settlement, nor any other existing legal protection, would prevent undocumented children from being mandatorily detained by ICE under the Laken Riley Act" as it is currently written.

It goes on to note and explain that the Flores settlement is a consent decree, and law, Federal law, trumps consent decrees.

It goes on to say that "children, including toddlers, are not exempted from the Laken Riley Act" and that "24 states have no minimum age for prosecuting children," meaning you can be arrested at any age, even a toddler.

So I will ask my colleague not, again, to consider granting consent for this amendment, but I would ask that you work with me to explore this topic and see if we can fix this problem to our mutual satisfaction so we don't do harm to children, if you would consider doing that.

Mrs. BRITT. I will always work with you to talk about how we can help children—always.

Mr. MERKLEY. Thank you.

We are in the same hallway over in the Hart Building.

Mrs. BRITT. Neighbors.

Mr. MERKLEY. I look forward to cooperating on many topics, but this is perhaps the most important one at the moment.

A second amendment that I have creates some of the flexibility that exists in current law that doesn't exist under this bill. It requires DHS to employ what is referred to as the best interest standard for the child. This is a standard that is used in virtually every single State in the foster care and child service industry.

And so the amendment reads—it is nice to have very short amendments. It requires DHS to only detain children in a manner consistent with the best interest of the child and that does not abrogate, modify, or replace protections for children in applicable Federal law, regulation, court orders, and decrees—in other words, preserving the flexibility that exists in current law,

which means could be detained but that a judge can consider the totality of the circumstances, the level of the crime, whether or not there is a flight risk, whether or not there is a potential harm to the community.

The best interest standard seems like an appropriate thing to apply when we are, in fact, collectively striving for the best interest of the children.

So I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment so that I may offer up amendment No. 72; that there be up to 15 minutes for debate on the amendment; and that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate vote on the amendment without further intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Alabama.

Mrs. BRITT. Mr. President, reserving my right to object, we have repeatedly confirmed with ICE that all existing consent decrees would continue to apply. This amendment addresses something the bill doesn't do.

And as I have said, the Laken Riley Act would protect kids. It is bipartisan; it is targeted; and it is common sense. That is why we want to keep it that way. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I do disagree with my colleague because this bill eliminates the flexibility in the current system to consider the totality of the circumstances, and restoring the best interest standard that every State is intimately familiar with is remedying the lack of flexibility in the bill as it is written.

But again, we will continue this conversation. I view coming to the floor and having this dialogue as kind of a way for us to do something that is too rare—way too rare—here in the Senate. We rarely have these types of conversations in front of the American people, and I think it is important we have them, especially when there is some value—that maybe we share the same value but have different interpretations of how that value will be impacted. I am sure we share the same value on trying not to do kids wrong. That is why I value this dialogue with my colleague, and I hope it will lead to the opportunity to resolve these issues.

I have a third amendment, and the third amendment is related to another aspect of the way children are affected, including American citizen children.

Imagine the parent who goes to work who is accused—I don't know—of stealing a tool out of the factory, and so he is arrested or she is arrested. And now, under this bill, that adult has to be locked up—no flexibility on the front end—even though it turns out that they did not steal the tool; they had nothing in their bag that they had with them. The officer thought they did; they didn't. They never get charged. They never get convicted so there is no trial. They are charged. But that par-

ent who has maybe one, two, three, four American citizen children at home waiting for them—they come home from school, and no parent comes home. They have to be locked up under this bill.

So we are not just talking about an impact in this bill on immigrant children. We are talking about an impact on citizen children. Now, I care about both, but I just want to note that there has been a conversation about this bill as if it only affects immigrants. No, it affects American citizens too. It affects spouses who might be American citizens. It certainly affects the children who are likely American citizens.

So this amendment says that if an adult with children under 17 is subject to the mandatory detention that currently has no end, no back end to it, has no ability to appeal—it is permanent detention, permanent imprisonment—that if they have children at home, after 30 days, there would be a court proceeding to consider whether or not the conditions should exist for release after the normal set of issues are considered, such as is this person a danger to the community; is this person a flight risk; can they be released with bail—the same things we have now—because back at that home are a bunch of children, maybe noncitizen children, maybe citizen children, but a bunch of children who are going: My parent never came home. I am not just a latchkey kid with a parent coming home at 10 p.m. because that is when their shift ends; I am a kid who doesn't know what the hell to do now, and my life has been shattered.

So this would create the opportunity for that flexibility that exists in current law after 30 days of mandatory detention. I think it is an appropriate way to address the potential for impact that I am sure no one intended in writing this bill, which was to leave a bunch of children back in a home with no parent and no support.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment so that I can offer amendment No. 71; that there be up to 15 minutes for debate on the amendment; and that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate vote on the amendment without further intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Alabama.

Mrs. BRITT. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, we have heard a lot of things that are untruthful about this bill today. First off, no one's due process is taken with regard to their immigration proceeding that may be moving and the ability to see the criminal proceeding through to the end.

At the end of the day, we have to make a decision, and that is the decision that is in front of my colleagues right now. Are we going to protect open border policies or are we going to protect kids?

I mean, we are seeing, even in this conversation about carveouts and

whatnot—you have got teen migrant gangs running rampant in New York City, allegedly running theft rings, with children as young as 11.

Think about what you do when you think about each one of these things we have discussed today. If you were to carve out a certain kid or a certain age, you don't make that kid safer; you make them a greater target for the drug cartels, for the people looking to move crime.

We have to make sure that we are taking a commonsense approach to this. And at the end of the day, if you don't commit a crime, you are going to be good.

So I am here today to say it is time to pass the Laken Riley Act. It is past time to do that—having a commonsense, targeted approach that, no, does not fix everything.

I hear my colleague's frustration with regard to regular order of last year. I would like to echo that. You think about what we are dealing with right now. We have had over 11 million people come across the border under the Biden-Harris administration. Some people say that number is much higher. There are at least 2 million that came across the border that we don't know who they are, where they are going, or what their intentions are.

You look at the nondetained docket we have here in our country—7.8 million. You look at those who have been given their due process—1.4 million have been issued their final orders of removal, meaning they have been given their due process, and we have said: You have no legal right to be here.

We have got to do better at tackling every bit of that, and doing better starts today. We are not only going to do right by Laken Riley and her legacy; we are going to do right by the children of this country, making it safer and more secure. That is exactly what this bill does. It is a bipartisan piece of legislation, and we must keep it strong and keep it that way.

So on that, Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I was hoping those last two words weren't "I object." But this is an important issue that has been raised, and we need to look carefully because there is no intention to leave a houseful of children home alone when the parent poses no flight risk, has committed no crime, poses no risk to the community, and those children are being harmed.

In fact, I do take factual dispute with a few of my colleague's points. She noted that no due process had been taken. When you eliminate the discretion on the front end, you change due process. A judge can no longer say this person is no flight risk, no risk to the community, has children at home, so we will put a high bond. They will absolutely show up. We know where all their relatives are. And that will be best because, if the person is subse-

quently charged, they will be there for trial.

That due process is stripped away on the front end. There is due process in existence now on the back end, where a person can challenge their detention and whether or not they should be there.

In fact, during the previous Trump administration, there were children who were released with such challenges, but that is taken away. So, yes, due process is dramatically changed, with a huge impact on children.

And my colleague mentioned that we don't want children to be targeted for gangs. Amen to that. Who is more of a target for gangs than children left alone in the home because their parent has been unjustly imprisoned? That does exactly the opposite of what my colleague wants to achieve.

So I know this conversation will continue; at least, I hope it will. We are now under a filed cloture motion, which means the majority intends to close debate probably on Monday, and yet one Democratic amendment has been heard—one. The majority leader has said he wants to do things differently; that he wants there to be an amendment process.

The amendment process I saw when I first came to this Senate consisted of standing up and saying: I have a relevant, germane amendment. I am asking for the existing amendment to be set aside so that mine can be brought up, which puts it in a queue for consideration. People can study it. And then you go to a whole series of votes on all those things that are in that queue.

We did this on Dodd-Frank. We did this on ObamaCare. I think we should do it here because the consequences are high. But if that can't be done, then I would ask my colleague who has worked so hard on this particular bill to take a look at whether the Republican side will agree to hear these amendments and vote on them. They may be voted down, but I think they are important.

I think it is extremely important that kids not be wrapped up in this. They can currently be detained, but it is with discretion of the circumstances. I think it is particularly important that we have a standard for children in terms of their best interest. I think it is particularly important that we have a way, after a few weeks, to have some look at whether children who have been left home alone—and if the circumstances are appropriate and there is no flight risk, the circumstances are appropriate and there is no community risk—to help address that situation or we are harming children this was never meant to harm.

So I ask for my Republican colleagues to consider providing an opportunity because they—it takes 100 percent. Every single Senator has to agree to hear an amendment.

We used to have the Senate code. The Senate code was: I won't object to your amendment. You don't object to mine. They are on the topic before us.

These are on the topic before us. These are not some crazy thing. These are addressing core due process issues that affect children. So I would ask that at least they get some discussion for the possibility of consideration.

I thank my colleague from Alabama for coming and hearing me out as well as—I am not really thanking you for objecting, but I am thanking you in the spirit in which I think you want to do the right thing.

And I will keep striving to convince you that the right thing here is we should debate these amendments.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

TRIBUTE TO KATHLENE ROWELL

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, it is nearing the end of the week, and normally, that is when I come down to the Senate floor to do my weekly—I try to make it weekly—Alaskan of the Week speech.

Now, I know for the pages, this is their favorite speech of the week. You get to hear about Alaska; you get to hear about some great Alaskan doing some great stuff. I usually try to give a little update about what is going on in our great State because it is always something interesting. And then I encourage people watching on TV: Come on up to Alaska; you are going to have the trip of a lifetime if you do it.

So today the Alaskan of the Week is someone very special to me and my wife. I am going to talk in detail about all she has done for our State. Her name is Kathlene Rowell. And she has worked for me in Alaska going on 15 years. The Presiding Officer understands that as a former Governor, where you have great staff that do amazing things, not just for you and your team but for the whole State.

Her title in the office has been deputy State director, but she has been so much more than that. She has literally been the glue that has kept my whole team together, not just since I have been in the Senate but even before I became a Senator.

So I am going to talk about Kathlene real quick here in a minute as the Alaskan of the Week. She so much deserves it. Just wanted to mention a few things.

We are all, of course, praying for the people impacted by the fires in California. We are all ready to stand by to help. The States are coming together. My State is certainly a State that understands natural disasters, and, you know, even in Alaska right now, Anchorage just last week—didn't make any news down here—was hit with hurricane-force winds on Sunday, up to 130 miles an hour. A lot of people—hundreds—were without power, a lot of property damage. So, you know, we are thinking about our Alaskan colleagues who were hit by that hurricane—there is no other word—typhoon.

And, of course, praying for everybody in Los Angeles. You know, with a State and population that big, we all know people. I have a good college roommate

buddy of mine Tom McMillin, my two sisters-in-law Janine and Jennifer, they are all being real negatively impacted by that. So we are thinking about them.

In Alaska, I always like to give an update. The Sun is actually coming back. We hit the winter solstice. In Anchorage, we are gaining about 4 minutes of sun a day; in Fairbanks, we are gaining about 5 minutes of sun a day; and in about a week, January 22, the Sun will rise again in Utqiagvik, AK—Barrow, AK—the top of North America. That will be the first time the sun comes up over the horizon in 2 months. So they get a dark winter, and it is cold up there.

The Iditarod, the Last Great Race, is coming up March 2. If you are thinking about coming to Alaska, don't think just this summer. Come up in the winter, too; it is great. So that is a little bit of update to tell what is going on.

Now, back to Kathlene Rowell, the rock in our office whose last day—oh, it breaks my heart, breaks my wife Julie's heart. Her last day was yesterday.

So little bit of background about Kathlene. She moved with her family to Alaska from Chicago when she was 3 years old. Her father worked in the oil fields and had been commuting to Alaska, Illinois, Chicago—back and forth. He thought it was time for the family to come together, so they settled in beautiful Eagle River, AK, a gorgeous—and I mean gorgeous—patriotic community, mountainous community right outside of Anchorage.

Kathlene went to Chugiak High. Go Mustangs. She was an excellent, driven student. Anyone who knows Kathlene knows that “excellence” is her motto. Everything she does is excellent.

But we got confirmation from her good friend Robyn Engibous—on my staff, my deputy chief of staff here in DC—who went to school with Kathlene and remains very close, that, yes, Kathlene was a straight-A student. We knew that. She showed horses. She worked at the coffee shop in Eagle River called Jitters, a mainstay in that great community. She excelled academically.

Went to college first in Colorado, then in Washington State. Did a semester with the National Outdoor Leadership, which she loved, and then came back to Alaska, finished up, and graduated from Alaska Pacific University which, very importantly, she did well there. But really, really importantly, she met her husband Ben who is a great guy. Great guy. They are a great couple.

So that is Kathlene's early background. She then worked in the parks division, division of parks and rec, right at the department of natural resources. That is when I first met her. I was the new commissioner at DNR—we call it DNR in Alaska; that covers everything in Alaska. We worked in the same building. I was a brandnew commissioner, and I was looking for a spe-

cial assistant—a young, smart, talented, special assistant—as the commissioner of the department of natural resources.

Now, this is a big job, right? If Alaska were its own country, it would be the envy of the world in terms of resources, strategic location, critical minerals, our military, you name it. DNR has a lot of responsibility over all these things.

Matter of fact, not to go on a tangent here, but I had an op-ed in the Wall Street Journal today titled “Greenland Is Nice, but Alaska Is Better.” Goes into all this stuff about how great Alaska is.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Wall Street Journal Op-Ed, “Greenland Is Nice, but Alaska Is Better,” be printed in the RECORD at the end of my remarks. Just to give you a sense of our great State there.

So I needed a special assistant. And I was looking at all these resumes and these lawyers and stuff, and here, for the young pages, this is the value of what they call an elevator speech. You have heard of an elevator speech, right? You have to make a pitch; you have to make it quick. So I am getting on the elevator, Kathlene at the time she is probably mid, early twenties. She is very young-looking, so then she looked a lot younger than her early twenties.

And she gets on the elevator, and, boy, oh, boy, it was the elevator pitch: Commissioner Sullivan, I understand you are looking for a special assistant.

The elevator is going up, all these people are listening; I believe I have the qualities, the hard work, the ethics, the commitment to excellence to be your special assistant. I would like to come by your office and interview.

Boom, the door opens. I was like, dang, that was impressive. Elevator pitch. So she made that. Came in, interviewed, and I am like, I am hiring her—none of these gung ho, high-falutin lawyers; I am going to put my trust in this young Alaskan. And, boy, oh, boy, I am so glad I did. It was the best elevator pitch I have ever seen.

Kathlene rolled up her sleeves and learned everything she could, and before you knew it, she was running the department of natural resources, which in Alaska is the giant organization of hundreds and hundreds of people, the key to our economy.

She was working with my other special assistant John Katchen. She was hugely essential to the things we got done at our department of natural resources. We negotiated against ExxonMobil for a giant natural gas deal. You want to talk about a tough thing. Exxon brings in like 25 lawyers to negotiate against a group of 3 of us, right? We took them down.

She organized summits. She helped us redo our State's oil tax regime, which is creating a big spur of development right now. Kathlene was essential in all of this, bringing more producers up to Alaska, a great teammate. Her heart was in serving our State.

Fast-forward a few years, I am going to run for the U.S. Senate—not an easy run. A lot of good Republicans in the primary. There was a Democrat incumbent here; that is never easy. And the first person I said I am going to hire on my campaign team, first person, was Kathlene.

Now, it was a risk. She had a 1-year-old at home at the time, Benjamin, who is now joined by his brother Niles. By the way, Kathlene is a great mom. Her boys are now 12 and 8. When she first started working for me, she had no kids. She has got a beautiful family with her husband Ben and her two wonderful boys.

But it was a risk. She had a great State job, and she is going to, you know, join this guy throwing his hat in the ring. You know, I am not so sure it was looking like an easy deal, but she left her easy—not easy—her secure State job, the first person I hired on my campaign. Organized it. Traveled. And I am pretty sure I would not have won without Kathlene's great work. That was in 2014.

And then she stayed in our office in Alaska, became the deputy State director. And you know how it is, she has been with me and my team, my wife, longer than any other staff member, and she has done an incredible job.

Now, we all know how important staff are, both here in DC and especially back home. They work hard. Let's face it, you know, government jobs aren't always the best: You certainly could probably be making more money in the private sector; the hours can be grueling. But great staff, they are vital to what we do.

They are vital to the work that we get done here in the Senate, in DC, and really vital back home where the work they do for our constituents and the places they travel to are essential. They are essential.

And here is a big thing: As you know, the help that our offices back home do to work for the people we are honored to represent is vital because there are so many giant Federal Agencies—Social Security, the VA, IRS, the Department of Defense, Immigration—that are giant labyrinths that people don't know how to get through.

Our Federal Government can be unwieldy and often unforgiving. So when Alaskans need help on all those things—Social Security checks; VA benefits, we are the State with more veterans per capita than any State in the country; Medicare; the IRS comes screwing up something—they come to us and we work on these cases.

This is a rough number, but since I have been in office, our Alaska staff has worked on more than 12,000 of these cases, and they are really complicated and take hours and hours. We always have at least one person attached to these cases, something they will always remember, and their lives are impacted by whether they are resolved in a good way or bad way.

And as I am sure you probably believe, you don't always hear about this

part of the job of representing people in our great Republic; but in my view, it is probably the best part of the job because you have a direct impact on someone you represent, and you can literally change their lives.

We do that, we put our heart and soul into it, but nobody has put their heart and soul into it more than Kathlene. She has made all of this happen, 12,000 cases.

Now, I also have a fantastic director of constituent services in Anchorage, Carrie Keil, who has completed more than 3,600 of these cases herself. She is amazing. But here is what Carrie said about Kathlene: Kathlene is at the helm of the ship. She is the captain of the ship. She makes all of this possible. She is a master communicator. Her loyalty and integrity to the people of Alaska are unmatched.

That is what you want with great staff.

Margaret Sharpe, she runs our Mat-Su Valley regional area, our regional director, Margaret, who does a great job. She calls Kathlene our hero: She is our conscience. She is the gatekeeper of decorum. She is all about kindness and respect. She keeps all of us kind.

Isn't that a great compliment? That is from Margaret on my team.

Elena Spraker, another great member of my team, our Kenai regional director on the Kenai Peninsula. Covers Kodiak as well. Elena does a great job. She says that she has never worked with anyone with more skills than Kathlene. Elaina says, "Kathlene is our rock," and I agree. That is so true.

You know, in our line of work, in elected jobs, whether Governors or commissioners or Senators, we all know that certain people have an impact that goes way beyond just the work that they do, and Kathlene is one of those. She has worked so hard, often at the sacrifice of time with her beautiful boys and family and her husband. But she set the bar so high on professionalism, in excellence, in everything she does that everybody around her—in our Anchorage office, in our Alaska offices, in our DC offices—everybody around her, myself included, gets lifted up and made better and has improved by being in Kathlene's orbit. Those are special people, and that is what Kathlene is.

Now, she has been a loyal employee, certainly to me and my wife Julie. There was a little going-away party for her back home in Anchorage, 2 days ago. Fortunately, Julie was able to make it. But throughout all, it is not just loyalty to us. It is to the people of Alaska, to helping people, to helping our State move forward.

And, as I said, yesterday was Kathlene's last day. She is going to bring these same skills to a really great credit union in Anchorage—their gain, our loss—but she is always going to be a member of Team Sullivan.

Kathlene, we all say staff is like family here, but Kathlene truly is like family for me and my wife Julie. We

definitely would not have gotten this far without her. We are going to miss her terribly.

So, Kathlene, thank you. Thanks for your great work. Good luck in your new job. From the bottom of my heart and Julie's heart, thanks for all you have done for me and Julie, our office, our State, our country. And, of course, I hope you are honored by one of the most prestigious awards anyone can get in America by being our "Alaskan of the Week."

Congratulations, Kathlene. Godspeed. There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From The Wall Street Journal, Jan. 15, 2025]

OP-ED: GREENLAND IS NICE, BUT ALASKA IS BETTER

(By Sen. DAN SULLIVAN)

There's been a lot of talk about President-elect Trump's idea of buying Greenland. But one U.S. state offers all of Greenland's benefits: Alaska. The problem is that the Biden administration has spent its time trying to turn the Last Frontier into a giant national park rather than recognizing it as a great strategic asset.

Greenland would provide the U.S. a gateway to the Arctic. But America is already an Arctic nation thanks to Alaska. The Russians and Chinese know my state is at the forefront of great-power competition. In the past two years, there have been 12 air incursions into the state's air-defense identification zone, including an unprecedented joint Russian-Chinese strategic bomber operation, and large-scale joint Russian-Chinese naval task forces in our waters.

Greenland plays an important part in missile-defense and early-warning networks, but the cornerstone of America's missile defense is Alaska. Any missiles launched by Russia, China or North Korea against the U.S. would likely fly over the state. That's why it hosts the vast majority of America's radar systems and ground-based missile interceptors. To create an Iron Dome for America—a priority of Mr. Trump—we need to add to our national ballistic-missile interceptor capability in Alaska and build a robust layered missile defense and space-based missile sensor capability.

Greenland is rich in minerals and energy reserves. Alaska is even richer. Our state holds an estimated 40 billion barrels of oil and roughly 235 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. In one field alone, Prudhoe Bay, Alaska reinjects into a reservoir for oil-production purposes as much natural gas each day as Oregon, Washington and California consume.

Alaska also has a wealth of metals and other minerals, some of which are essential for our national defense, economy and renewable-energy sector. President Biden worked to keep them in the ground. The first Trump administration approved a road needed to access one of America's richest mineral deposits, the Ambler Mining District in Alaska's Interior. The Biden administration killed that road last June. Then Mr. Biden traveled to Angola to announce \$600 million to build a railroad to help that country market its critical minerals.

Buy Greenland? Sure, if the price is right and the Danes are willing to sell. But as Mr. Trump prepares to unleash Alaska's potential again, it's worth remembering what the father of the U.S. Air Force, Gen. Billy Mitchell, once said: "I believe . . . whoever controls Alaska controls the world. I think it is the most strategic place in the world."

Mr. SULLIVAN. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS RULES OF PROCEDURE

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, rule XXVI, paragraph 2, of the Standing Rules of the Senate requires each committee to adopt rules to govern the procedure of the committee and to publish those rules in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD not later than March 1 of the first year of each Congress. Today, the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs adopted committee rules of procedure.

Consistent with standing rule XXVI, I ask unanimous consent to have a copy of the rules of procedure of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

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

RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

PURSUANT TO RULE XXVI, SEC. 2, STANDING RULES OF THE SENATE

RULE 1. MEETINGS AND MEETING PROCEDURES OTHER THAN HEARINGS

A. Meeting dates. The Committee shall hold its regular meetings on the first Wednesday of each month, when the Congress is in session, or at such other times as the Chair shall determine. Additional meetings may be called by the Chair as the Chair deems necessary to expedite Committee business. (Rule XXVI, Sec. 3, Standing Rules of the Senate.)

B. Calling special Committee meetings. If at least three Members of the Committee desire the Chair to call a special meeting, they may file in the offices of the Committee a written request therefor, addressed to the Chair. Immediately thereafter, the clerk of the Committee shall notify the Chair of such request. If, within 3 calendar days after the filing of such request, the Chair fails to call the requested special meeting, which is to be held within 7 calendar days after the filing of such request, a majority of the Committee Members may file in the offices of the Committee their written notice that a special Committee meeting will be held, specifying the date and hour thereof, and the Committee shall meet on that date and hour. Immediately upon the filing of such notice, the Committee chief clerk shall notify all Committee Members that such special meeting will be held and inform them of its date and hour. (Rule XXVI, Sec. 3, Standing Rules of the Senate.)

C. Meeting notices and agenda. Written notices of Committee meetings, accompanied by an agenda, enumerating the items of business to be considered, shall be sent to all

Committee Members at least one week in advance of such meetings. The written notices required by this Rule may be provided by electronic mail. In the event that unforeseen requirements or Committee business prevent sufficient notice of either the meeting or agenda, the Committee staff shall communicate such notice and agenda, or any revisions to the agenda, as soon as practicable by telephone or otherwise to Members or appropriate staff assistants in their offices.

D. Open business meetings. Meetings for the transaction of Committee or Subcommittee business shall be conducted in open session, except that a meeting or series of meetings on the same subject for a period of no more than 14 calendar days may be closed to the public on a motion made and seconded to go into closed session to discuss only whether the matters enumerated in clauses (1) through (6) below would require the meeting to be closed, followed immediately by a record vote in open session by a majority of the Committee or Subcommittee Members when it is determined that the matters to be discussed or the testimony to be taken at such meeting or meetings—

(1) will disclose matters necessary to be kept secret in the interests of national defense or the confidential conduct of foreign relations of the United States;

(2) will relate solely to matters of Committee or Subcommittee staff personnel or internal staff management or procedure;

(3) will tend to charge an individual with crime or misconduct, to disgrace or injure the professional standing of an individual, or otherwise expose an individual to public contempt or obloquy or will represent a clearly unwarranted invasion of the privacy of an individual;

(4) will disclose the identity of an informer or law enforcement agent or will disclose any information relating to the investigation or prosecution of a criminal offense that is required to be kept secret in the interests of effective law enforcement;

(5) will disclose information relating to the trade secrets of financial or commercial information pertaining specifically to a given person if—

(A) an Act of Congress requires the information to be kept confidential by Government officers and employees; or

(B) the information has been obtained by the Government on a confidential basis, other than through an application by such person for a specific Government financial or other benefit, and is required to be kept secret in order to prevent undue injury to the competitive position of such person; or

(6) may divulge matters required to be kept confidential under other provisions of law or Government regulations. (Rule XXVI, Sec. 5(b), Standing Rules of the Senate.) Notwithstanding the foregoing, whenever disorder arises during a Committee or Subcommittee meeting that is open to the public, or any demonstration of approval or disapproval is indulged in by any person in attendance at any such meeting, it shall be the duty of the Chair to enforce order on the Chair's own initiative and without any point of order being made by a Member of the Committee or Subcommittee; provided, further, that when the Chair finds it necessary to maintain order, the Chair shall have the power to clear the room, and the Committee or Subcommittee may act in closed session for so long as there is doubt of the assurance of order. (Rule XXVI, Sec. 5(d), Standing Rules of the Senate.)

E. Prior notice of amendments. It shall not be in order for the Committee, or a Subcommittee thereof, to consider any amendment in the first degree proposed to any measure under consideration by the Committee or Subcommittee unless a written

copy of such amendment has been delivered to each Member of the Committee or Subcommittee, as the case may be, and to the office of the Committee or Subcommittee, no later than: (1) 5:00 p.m. five calendar days before the meeting for a first degree amendment in the nature of a substitute proposed by the manager of the measure, (2) 5:00 p.m. two calendar days before the meeting for a first degree amendment, or (3) an earlier deadline, by consent of the Chair and Ranking Minority Member of the Committee or Subcommittee, which may include second degree amendments, in the case where notices are provided earlier than the deadline required in paragraph C. The written copy of amendments required by this Rule may be provided by electronic mail. This subsection may be waived by a majority of the Members present, or by consent of the Chair and Ranking Minority Member of the Committee or Subcommittee. This subsection shall apply only when at least 5 calendar days written notice of a session to mark-up a measure is provided to the Committee or Subcommittee.

F. Meeting transcript. The Committee or Subcommittee shall prepare and keep a complete transcript or electronic recording adequate to fully record the proceeding of each meeting whether or not such meeting or any part thereof is closed to the public, unless a majority of the Committee or Subcommittee Members vote to forgo such a record. (Rule XXVI, Sec. 5(e), Standing Rules of the Senate.)

RULE 2. QUORUMS

A. Reporting measures and matters. A majority of the Members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum for reporting to the Senate any measures, matters or recommendations. (Rule XXVI, Sec. 7(a)(1), Standing Rules of the Senate.)

B. Transaction of routine business. One-third of the membership of the Committee shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of routine business, provided that one Member of the Minority is present. For the purpose of this paragraph, the term "routine business" includes the convening of a meeting and the consideration of subpoenas or any business of the Committee other than reporting to the Senate any measures, matters or recommendations. (Rule XXVI, Sec. 7(a)(1), Standing Rules of the Senate.)

C. Taking testimony. One Member of the Committee shall constitute a quorum for taking sworn or unsworn testimony. (Rule XXVI, Sec. 7(a)(2) and 7(c)(2), Standing Rules of the Senate.)

D. Subcommittee quorums. Subject to the provisions of sections 7(a)(1) and (2) of Rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Subcommittees of this Committee are authorized to establish their own quorums for the transaction of business and the taking of sworn testimony.

E. Proxies prohibited in establishment of quorum. Proxies shall not be considered for the establishment of a quorum.

RULE 3. VOTING

A. Quorum required. Subject to the provisions of subsection (E), no vote may be taken by the Committee, or any Subcommittee thereof, on any measure or matter unless a quorum, as prescribed in the preceding section, is actually present.

B. Reporting measures and matters. No measure, matter or recommendation shall be reported from the Committee unless a majority of the Committee Members are actually present, and the vote of the Committee to report a measure or matter shall require the concurrence of a majority of those Members who are actually present at the time the vote is taken. (Rule XXVI, Sec. 7(a)(1) and (3), Standing Rules of the Senate.)

C. Proxy voting. Proxy voting shall be allowed on all measures, matters, and routine business before the Committee, or any Subcommittee thereof, provided:

(1) When the Committee, or any Subcommittee thereof, is voting to report a measure or matter, proxy votes shall be allowed solely for the purpose of recording a Member's position on the pending question. Proxy votes are not included in the vote tally when reporting the measure or matter.

(2) Proxy voting shall be allowed only if the absent Committee or Subcommittee Member has been informed of the matter on which the Member is being recorded and has affirmatively requested that the vote be so recorded.

(3) All proxies shall be in writing and shall contain sufficient reference to the pending matter as is necessary to identify it and to inform the Committee or Subcommittee as to how the Member establishes the vote to be recorded thereon. (Rule XXVI, Sec. 7(a)(3) and 7(c)(1), Standing Rules of the Senate.)

D. Announcement of vote. (1) Whenever the Committee by roll call vote reports any measure or matter, the report of the Committee upon such a measure or matter shall include a tabulation of the votes cast in favor of and the votes cast in opposition to such measure or matter by each Member of the Committee. (Rule XXVI, Sec. 7(c), Standing Rules of the Senate.)

(2) Whenever the Committee by roll call vote acts upon any measure or amendment thereto, other than reporting a measure or matter, the results thereof shall be announced in the Committee report on that measure unless previously announced by the Committee, and such announcement shall include a tabulation of the votes cast in favor of and the votes cast in opposition to each such measure and amendment thereto by each Member of the Committee who was present at the meeting. (Rule XXVI, Sec. 7(b), Standing Rules of the Senate.)

(3) In any case in which a roll call vote is announced, the tabulation of votes shall state separately the proxy vote recorded in favor of and in opposition to that measure, amendment thereto, or matter. (Rule XXVI, Sec. 7(b) and (c), Standing Rules of the Senate.)

E. Polling. (1) The Committee, or any Subcommittee thereof, may poll (a) internal Committee or Subcommittee matters including the Committee's or Subcommittee's staff, records and budget; (b) steps in an investigation, including issuance of subpoenas, applications for immunity orders, and requests for documents from agencies; and (c) other Committee or Subcommittee business other than a vote on reporting to the Senate any measures, matters or recommendations or a vote on closing a meeting or hearing to the public.

(2) Only the Chair, or a Committee Member or staff officer designated by the Chair, may undertake any poll of the Members of the Committee. If any Member requests, any matter to be polled shall be held for meeting rather than being polled. The chief clerk of the Committee shall keep a record of polls; if a majority of the Members of the Committee determine that the polled matter is in one of the areas enumerated in subsection (D) of Rule 1, the record of the poll shall be confidential. Any Committee Member may move at the Committee meeting following the poll for a vote on the polled decision, such motion and vote to be subject to the provisions of subsection (D) of Rule 1, where applicable.

F. Naming postal facilities. The Committee will not consider any legislation that would name a postal facility for a living person with the exception of bills naming facilities after former Presidents and Vice Presidents of the United States, former Members

of Congress over 70 years of age, former State or local elected officials over 70 years of age, former judges over 70 years of age, or wounded veterans. The Committee will not consider legislation that would name a postal facility unless it has the support of both Senators in the delegation of the state in which the facility is located.

G. Technical and conforming changes. A Committee vote to report a measure to the Senate shall also authorize the Committee Chair and Ranking Member by mutual agreement to make any required technical and conforming changes to the measure.

RULE 4. PRESIDING AT MEETINGS AND HEARINGS

The Chair shall preside at all Committee meetings and hearings except that the Chair shall designate a temporary Chair to act in the Chair's place if the Chair is unable to be present at a scheduled meeting or hearing. If the Chair (or a designee) is absent 10 minutes after the scheduled time set for a meeting or hearing, the Ranking Majority Member present shall preside until the Chair's arrival. If there is no Member of the Majority present, the Ranking Minority Member present, with the prior approval of the Chair, may open and conduct the meeting or hearing until such time as a Member of the Majority arrives.

RULE 5. HEARINGS AND HEARING PROCEDURES

A. Announcement of hearings. The Committee, or any Subcommittee thereof, shall make public announcement of the date, time, and subject matter of any hearing to be conducted on any measure or matter at least one week in advance of such hearing, unless the Committee, or Subcommittee, determines that there is good cause to begin such hearing at an earlier date. (Rule XXVI, Sec. 4(a), Standing Rules of the Senate.)

B. Open hearings. Each hearing conducted by the Committee, or any Subcommittee thereof, shall be open to the public, except that a hearing or series of hearings on the same subject for a period of no more than 14 calendar days may be closed to the public on a motion made and seconded to go into closed session to discuss only whether the matters enumerated in clauses (1) through (6) below would require the hearing to be closed, followed immediately by a record vote in open session by a majority of the Committee or Subcommittee Members when it is determined that the matters to be discussed or the testimony to be taken at such hearing or hearings—

(1) will disclose matters necessary to be kept secret in the interests of national defense or the confidential conduct of foreign relations of the United States;

(2) will relate solely to matters of Committee or Subcommittee staff personnel or internal staff management or procedure;

(3) will tend to charge an individual with crime or misconduct, to disgrace or injure the professional standing of an individual, or otherwise expose an individual to public contempt or obloquy or will represent a clearly unwarranted invasion of the privacy of an individual;

(4) will disclose the identity of an informer or law enforcement agent or will disclose any information relating to the investigation or prosecution of a criminal offense that is required to be kept secret in the interests of effective law enforcement;

(5) will disclose information relating to the trade secrets of financial or commercial information pertaining specifically to a given person if—

(A) an Act of Congress requires the information to be kept confidential by Government officers and employees; or

(B) the information has been obtained by the Government on a confidential basis,

other than through an application by such person for a specific Government financial or other benefit, and is required to be kept secret in order to prevent undue injury to the competitive position of such person; or

(6) may divulge matters required to be kept confidential under other provisions of law or Government regulations. (Rule XXVI, Sec. 5(b), Standing Rules of the Senate.)

Notwithstanding the foregoing, whenever disorder arises during a Committee or Subcommittee meeting that is open to the public, or any demonstration of approval or disapproval is indulged in by any person in attendance at any such meeting, it shall be the duty of the Chair to enforce order on the Chair's own initiative and without any point of order being made by a Member of the Committee or Subcommittee; provided, further, that when the Chair finds it necessary to maintain order, the Chair shall have the power to clear the room, and the Committee or Subcommittee may act in closed session for so long as there is doubt of the assurance of order. (Rule XXVI, Sec. 5(d), Standing Rules of the Senate.)

C. Full Committee subpoenas. The Chair, with notice to the Ranking Minority Member of the Committee, is authorized to subpoena the attendance of witnesses at a hearing or deposition or the production of memoranda, documents, records, or any other materials. A written notice of intent to issue a subpoena shall be provided to the Ranking Minority Member, or staff officers designated by the Ranking Minority Member, by the Chair or a staff officer designated by the Chair, immediately upon such authorization, and no subpoena shall be issued for at least 72 hours, excluding Saturdays and Sundays, from delivery, unless the Ranking Minority Member waives the 72 hour waiting period or unless the Chair certifies in writing to the Ranking Minority Member of the Committee that, in the Chair's opinion, it is necessary to issue a subpoena immediately. When the Committee or Chair authorizes subpoenas, subpoenas may be issued upon the signature of the Chair or any other Member of the Committee designated by the Chair.

D. Witness counsel. Counsel retained by any witness and accompanying such witness shall be permitted to be present during the testimony of such witness at any public or executive hearing or deposition to advise such witness while the witness is testifying, of the witness's legal rights; provided, however, that in the case of any witness who is an officer or employee of the Government, or of a corporation or association, the Committee Chair may rule that representation by counsel from the Government, corporation, or association or by counsel representing other witnesses, creates a conflict of interest, and that the witness may only be represented during interrogation by staff or during testimony before the Committee by personal counsel not from the Government, corporation, or association or by personal counsel not representing other witnesses. This subsection shall not be construed to excuse a witness from testifying in the event the witness's counsel is ejected for conduct that prevents, impedes, disrupts, obstructs or interferes with the orderly administration of the hearings; nor shall this subsection be construed as authorizing counsel to coach the witness or answer for the witness. The failure of any witness to secure counsel shall not excuse such witness from complying with a subpoena or deposition notice.

E. Witness transcripts. An accurate electronic or stenographic record shall be kept of the testimony of all witnesses in executive and public hearings. The record of a witness's testimony whether in public or executive session shall be made available for

inspection by the witness or the witness's counsel under Committee supervision; a copy of any testimony given in public session or that part of the testimony given by the witness in executive session and subsequently quoted or made part of the record in a public session shall be provided to any witness at the witness's expense if the witness so requests. Upon inspecting that transcript, within a time limit set by the Chair, a witness may request changes in the transcript to correct errors of transcription and grammatical errors; the Chair or a staff officer designated by the Chair shall rule on such requests.

F. Impugned persons. Any person whose name is mentioned or is specifically identified, and who believes that evidence presented, or comment made by a Member of the Committee or staff officer, at a public hearing or at a closed hearing concerning which there have been public reports, tends to impugn the person's character or adversely affect the person's reputation may:

(a) File a sworn statement of facts relevant to the evidence or comment, which statement shall be considered for placement in the hearing record by the Committee;

(b) Request the opportunity to appear personally before the Committee to testify in the person's own behalf, which request shall be considered by the Committee; and

(c) Submit questions in writing which the person requests be used for the cross-examination of other witnesses called by the Committee, which questions shall be considered for use by the Committee.

G. Radio, television, and photography. The Committee, or any Subcommittee thereof, may permit the proceedings of hearings which are open to the public to be photographed and broadcast by radio, television or both, subject to such conditions as the Committee, or Subcommittee, may impose. (Rule XXVI, Sec. 5(c), Standing Rules of the Senate.)

H. Advance statements of witnesses. A witness appearing before the Committee, or any Subcommittee thereof, shall provide electronically a written statement of the witness's proposed testimony at least 2 calendar days prior to the witness' appearance, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays in which the Senate is not in session. This requirement may be waived by the Chair and the Ranking Minority Member following their determination that there is good cause for failure of compliance. (Rule XXVI, Sec. 4(b), Standing Rules of the Senate.)

I. Minority witnesses. In any hearings conducted by the Committee, or any Subcommittee thereof, the Minority Members of the Committee or Subcommittee shall be entitled, upon request to the Chairman by a Majority of Minority Members, to call witnesses of their selection during at least 1 day of such hearings. (Rule XXVI, Sec. 4(d), Standing Rules of the Senate.)

J. Swearing in witnesses. In any hearings conducted by the Committee, the Chair or the Chair's designee may swear in each witness prior to their testimony.

K. Full Committee depositions. Depositions may be taken prior to or after a hearing as provided in this subsection.

(1) Notices for the taking of depositions shall be authorized and issued by the Chair, with notice to the Ranking Minority Member of the Committee. Written notice of intent to issue a deposition notice shall be provided to the Ranking Minority Member, or staff officers designated by the Ranking Minority Member, by the Chair or a staff officer designated by the Chair, immediately upon such authorization, and no deposition notice shall be issued for at least 72 hours, excluding Saturdays and Sundays, from delivery, unless the Ranking Minority Member

waives the 72 hour waiting period or unless the Chair certifies in writing to the Ranking Minority Member of the Committee that, in the Chair's opinion, it is necessary to issue a deposition notice immediately. Committee deposition notices shall specify a time and place for examination, and the name of the Committee Member or Members or staff officer or officers who will take the deposition. Unless otherwise specified, the deposition shall be in private. The Committee shall not initiate procedures leading to criminal or civil enforcement proceedings for a witness' failure to appear or produce unless the deposition notice was accompanied by a Committee subpoena.

(2) Witnesses may be accompanied at a deposition by counsel to advise them of their legal rights, subject to the provisions of Rule 5D.

(3) Oaths at depositions may be administered by an individual authorized by local law to administer oaths. Questions shall be propounded orally by a Committee Member or Members or staff. If a witness objects to a question and refuses to testify, the objection shall be noted for the record and the Committee Member or Members or staff may proceed with the remainder of the deposition, or may, at that time or at a subsequent time, seek a ruling by telephone or otherwise on the objection from the Chair. If the Chair overrules the objection, he or she may order and direct the witness to answer the question.

(4) The Committee shall see that the testimony is transcribed or electronically recorded (which may include audio or audio/video recordings). If it is transcribed, the transcript shall be made available for inspection by the witness or the witness's counsel under Committee supervision. The witness shall sign a copy of the transcript and may request changes to it, which shall be handled in accordance with the procedure set forth in subsection (E). If the witness fails to sign a copy, the staff shall note that fact on the transcript. The individual administering the oath shall certify on the transcript that the witness was duly sworn in their presence, the transcriber shall certify that the transcript is a true record of the testimony, and the transcript shall then be filed with the chief clerk of the Committee. The Chair or a staff officer designated by the Chair may stipulate with the witness to changes in the procedure; deviations from this procedure which do not substantially impair the reliability of the record shall not relieve the witness from the witness's obligation to testify truthfully.

RULE 6. COMMITTEE REPORTING PROCEDURES

A. Timely filing. When the Committee has ordered a measure or matter reported, following final action, the report thereon shall be filed in the Senate at the earliest practicable time. (Rule XXVI, Sec. 10(b), Standing Rules of the Senate.)

B. Supplemental, Minority, and additional views. A Member of the Committee who gives notice of an intention to file supplemental, Minority, or additional views at the time of final Committee approval of a measure or matter shall be entitled to not less than 3 calendar days excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays in which the Senate is not in session, in which to file such views, in writing, with the chief clerk of the Committee. Such views shall then be included in the Committee report and printed in the same volume, as a part thereof, and their inclusion shall be noted on the cover of the report. In the absence of timely notice, the Committee report may be filed and printed immediately without such views. (Rule XXVI, Sec. 10(c), Standing Rules of the Senate.)

C. Notice by Subcommittee Chair. The Chair of each Subcommittee shall notify the Chair of the Committee in writing whenever any measure has been ordered reported by such Subcommittee and is ready for consideration by the full Committee.

D. Draft reports of Subcommittees. All draft reports prepared by Subcommittees of this Committee on any measure or matter referred to it by the Chair shall be in the form, style, and arrangement required to conform to the applicable provisions of the Standing Rules of the Senate, and shall be in accordance with the established practices followed by the Committee. Upon completion of such draft reports, copies thereof shall be filed with the chief clerk of the Committee at the earliest practicable time.

E. Impact statements in reports. All Committee reports, accompanying a bill or joint resolution of a public character reported by the Committee, shall contain (1) an estimate, made by the Committee, of the costs which would be incurred in carrying out the legislation for the then current fiscal year and for each of the next 5 years thereafter (or for the authorized duration of the proposed legislation, if less than 5 years); and (2) a comparison of such cost estimates with any made by a Federal agency; or (3) in lieu of such estimate or comparison, or both, a statement of the reasons for failure by the Committee to comply with these requirements as impracticable, in the event of inability to comply therewith. (Rule XXVI, Sec. 11(a), Standing Rules of the Senate.)

Each such report shall also contain an evaluation, made by the Committee, of the regulatory impact which would be incurred in carrying out the bill or joint resolution. The evaluation shall include (a) an estimate of the numbers of individuals and businesses who would be regulated and a determination of the groups and classes of such individuals and businesses, (b) a determination of the economic impact of such regulation on the individuals, consumers, and businesses affected, (c) a determination of the impact on the personal privacy of the individuals affected, and (d) a determination of the amount of paperwork that will result from the regulations to be promulgated pursuant to the bill or joint resolution, which determination may include, but need not be limited to, estimates of the amount of time and financial costs required of affected parties, showing whether the effects of the bill or joint resolution could be substantial, as well as reasonable estimates of the recordkeeping requirements that may be associated with the bill or joint resolution. Or, in lieu of the foregoing evaluation, the report shall include a statement of the reasons for failure by the Committee to comply with these requirements as impracticable, in the event of inability to comply therewith. (Rule XXVI, Sec. 11(b), Standing Rules of the Senate.)

RULE 7. COMMITTEE CONFIDENTIALITY

Any Senator, officer, or employee of the Senate who shall disclose the secret or confidential business or proceedings of the Senate, including the business and proceedings of the committees, subcommittees, and offices of the Senate, shall be liable, if a Senator, to suffer expulsion from the body; and if an officer or employee, to dismissal from the service of the Senate, and to punishment for contempt. (Rule XXIX, Sec. 5, Standing Rules of the Senate.)

RULE 8. SUBCOMMITTEES AND SUBCOMMITTEE PROCEDURES

A. Regularly established Subcommittees. The Committee shall have three regularly established Subcommittees. The Subcommittees are as follows:

PERMANENT SUBCOMMITTEE ON INVESTIGATIONS

SUBCOMMITTEE ON DISASTER MANAGEMENT, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, AND CENSUS

SUBCOMMITTEE ON BORDER MANAGEMENT, FEDERAL WORKFORCE, AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS

B. Ad hoc Subcommittees. Following consultation with the Ranking Minority Member, the Chair shall, from time to time, establish such ad hoc Subcommittees as the Chair deems necessary to expedite Committee business.

C. Subcommittee membership. Following consultation with the Majority Members, and the Ranking Minority Member of the Committee, the Chair shall announce selections for membership on the Subcommittees referred to in paragraphs A and B, above.

(1) The Chair and Ranking Minority Member shall serve as nonvoting *ex officio* members of the subcommittees on which they do not serve as voting members.

(2) Any Member of the Committee may attend hearings held by any subcommittee and question witnesses testifying before that Subcommittee, subject to the approval of the Subcommittee Chair and Ranking Member.

D. Subcommittee meetings and hearings. Each Subcommittee of this Committee is authorized to establish meeting dates and adopt rules not inconsistent with the rules of the Committee except as provided in Rules 2(D) and 8(E).

E. Subcommittee subpoenas. Each Subcommittee is authorized to adopt rules concerning subpoenas which need not be consistent with the rules of the Committee; provided:

(1) A written notice of intent to issue the subpoena shall be provided to the Chair and Ranking Minority Member of the Committee, or staff officers designated by them, by the Subcommittee Chair or a staff officer designated by the Subcommittee Chair immediately upon such authorization, and no subpoena shall be issued for at least 2 calendar days, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays in which the Senate is not in session, from delivery to the appropriate offices, unless the Chair and Ranking Minority Member waive the notice period or unless the Subcommittee Chair certifies in writing to the Chair and Ranking Minority Member that, in the Subcommittee Chair's opinion, it is necessary to issue a subpoena immediately.

F. Subcommittee budgets. During the first year of a new Congress, each Subcommittee that requires authorization for the expenditure of funds for the conduct of inquiries and investigations, shall file with the chief clerk of the Committee, by a date and time prescribed by the Chair, its request for funds for the two (2) 12-month periods beginning on March 1 and extending through and including the last day of February of the 2 following years, which years comprise that Congress. Each such request shall be submitted on the budget form prescribed by the Committee on Rules and Administration, and shall be accompanied by a written justification addressed to the Chair of the Committee, which shall include (1) a statement of the Subcommittee's area of activities, (2) its accomplishments during the preceding Congress detailed year by year, and (3) a table showing a comparison between (a) the funds authorized for expenditure during the preceding Congress detailed year by year, (b) the funds actually expended during that Congress detailed year by year, (c) the amount requested for each year of the Congress, and (d) the number of professional and clerical staff members and consultants employed by the Subcommittee during the preceding Congress detailed year by year and the number of such personnel requested for each year of

the Congress. The Chair may request additional reports from the Subcommittees regarding their activities and budgets at any time during a Congress. (Rule XXVI, Sec. 9, Standing Rules of the Senate.)

RULE 9. CONFIRMATION STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES

A. Standards. In considering a nomination, the Committee shall inquire into the nominee's experience, qualifications, suitability, and integrity to serve in the position to which the nominee has been nominated. The Committee shall recommend confirmation, upon finding that the nominee has the necessary integrity and is affirmatively qualified by reason of training, education, or experience to carry out the functions of the office to which the nominee was nominated.

B. Information concerning the Nominee. Each nominee shall submit the following information to the Committee:

(1) A detailed biographical resume which contains information relating to education, employment, and achievements;

(2) Financial information, in such specificity as the Committee deems necessary, including a list of assets and liabilities of the nominee and tax returns for the 3 years preceding the time of the person's nomination, a list of any federal funding or awards sought or received or participation in other federal programs for the 10 years preceding the time of the person's nomination, and copies of other relevant documents requested by the Committee, such as a proposed blind trust agreement, necessary for the Committee's consideration; and

(3) Copies of other relevant documents the Committee may request, such as responses to questions concerning the policies and programs the nominee intends to pursue upon taking office. At the request of the Chair or the Ranking Minority Member, a nominee shall be required to submit a certified financial statement compiled by an independent auditor. Information received pursuant to this subsection shall be made available for public inspection; provided, however, that tax returns shall, after review by persons designated in subsection (C) of this rule, be placed under seal to ensure confidentiality.

C. Procedures for Committee inquiry. The Committee shall conduct an inquiry into the experience, qualifications, suitability, and integrity of nominees, and shall give particular attention to the following matters:

(1) A review of the biographical information provided by the nominee, including, but not limited to, any professional activities related to the duties of the office to which the person is nominated;

(2) A review of the financial information provided by the nominee, including tax returns for the 3 years preceding the time of the person's nomination;

(3) A review of any actions, taken or proposed by the nominee, to remedy conflicts of interest; and

(4) A review of any personal or legal matter which may bear upon the nominee's qualifications for the office to which the person is nominated. For the purpose of assisting the Committee in the conduct of this inquiry, a Majority investigator or investigators shall be designated by the Chair and a Minority investigator or investigators shall be designated by the Ranking Minority Member. The Chair, Ranking Minority Member, other Members of the Committee, and designated investigators shall have access to all investigative reports on nominees prepared by any Federal agency, including access to the report of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The Committee may request the assistance of the U.S. Government Accountability Office and any other such expert opinion as may be necessary in con-

ducting its review of information provided by nominees.

D. Report on the Nominee. After a review of all information pertinent to the nomination, a confidential report on the nominee shall be made in the case of judicial nominees and may be made in the case of non-judicial nominees by the designated investigators to the Chair and the Ranking Minority Member and, upon request, to any other Member of the Committee. The report shall summarize the steps taken by the Committee during its investigation of the nominee and the results of the Committee inquiry, including any unresolved matters that have been raised during the course of the inquiry.

E. Hearings. The Committee shall conduct a public hearing during which the nominee shall be called to testify under oath on all matters relating to the nominee's suitability for office, including the policies and programs which the nominee will pursue while in that position. No hearing shall be held until at least 3 calendar days after the following events have occurred: The nominee has responded to prehearing questions submitted by the Committee; and, if applicable, the report described in subsection (D) has been made to the Chair and Ranking Minority Member, and is available to other Members of the Committee, upon request.

F. Action on confirmation. A mark-up on a nomination shall not occur on the same day that the hearing on the nominee is held. In order to assist the Committee in reaching a recommendation on confirmation, the staff may make an oral presentation to the Committee at the mark-up, factually summarizing the nominee's background and the steps taken during the pre-hearing inquiry.

G. Application. The procedures contained in subsections (C), (D), (E), and (F) of this rule shall apply to persons nominated by the President to positions requiring their full-time service. At the discretion of the Chair and Ranking Minority Member, those procedures may apply to persons nominated by the President to serve on a part-time basis.

RULE 10. PERSONNEL ACTIONS AFFECTING COMMITTEE STAFF

In accordance with Rule XLII of the Standing Rules of the Senate and the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 (P.L. 104-1), all personnel actions affecting the staff of the Committee shall be made free from any discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, state of physical handicap, or disability.

RULE 11. APPRISAL OF COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The Chair and Ranking Minority Member shall keep each other apprised of hearings, investigations, and other Committee business.

RULE 12. PER DIEM FOR FOREIGN TRAVEL

A per diem allowance provided a Member of the Committee or staff of the Committee in connection with foreign travel shall be used solely for lodging, food, and related expenses and it is the responsibility of the Member of the Committee or staff of the Committee receiving such an allowance to return to the United States Government that portion of the allowance received which is not actually used for necessary lodging, food, and related expenses. (Rule XXXIX, Paragraph 3, Standing Rules of the Senate.)

LAKEN RILEY ACT

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I appreciate that we are beginning an amendment process on S. 5 in the Senate. I hope we continue with that proc-

ess, as there are still significant improvements to be made to this bill. We must keep our communities safe and prioritize detention of violent offenders, and our focus must be on the most effective path to achieve that goal.

I have introduced, along with Senator KAINE, an amendment that directly addresses the circumstances that led to the tragic murder of Laken Riley without creating a system that diverts resources away from the detention and deportation of violent offenders. I have also offered an amendment that makes clear that the apprehension and deportation of convicted violent offenders should be our highest enforcement priority.

Yesterday, I voted against the Cornyn amendment, which would expand the category of offenses under which individuals are detained following an arrest only, not a conviction or even an indictment. While I appreciate the seriousness of those crimes, this would continue to take resources from detention and deportation of those who pose the greatest threat to our communities and who are actually convicted.

I also voted for an amendment proposed by Senator COONS that would strike the section of the underlying bill that allows States attorneys general to sue the Federal Government when they disagree with any of the thousands of complex immigration enforcement decisions ICE and CBP make every day. Conflicting lawsuits in State courts around the country would paralyze our immigration enforcement system, ultimately jeopardizing public safety. I am disappointed that this amendment failed to pass.

I urge my colleagues to work in a bipartisan way to improve this bill to keep our communities safe while ensuring that our immigration enforcement officials can focus on the greatest public safety risks.

REMEMBERING ELISE J. BEAN

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I rise today to acknowledge the life and contributions of one of the Senate's truly outstanding staff persons: Elise J. Bean. Elise, who worked for almost 30 years for Senator Carl Levin on various subcommittees of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, died on January 14 at the age of 68. She started in the Senate as an attorney/investigator on the Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management and ended as staff director of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations (PSI), leaving when Senator Levin retired. Having chaired PSI in the 118th Congress, I am personally grateful that this historic subcommittee continues to benefit from the powerful and enduring legacy that Elise left.

Anyone who knew Elise would tell you that there was no one like her. She was an institution of congressional oversight. During nearly three decades in the Senate, Elise drove some of the

Chamber's most significant investigations and, thereafter, was a force behind the Levin Center for Oversight and Democracy for a decade. There, she relentlessly promoted bipartisan, fact-based oversight. Elise embraced the notion that Congress is not only capable of high-quality oversight and, in doing so, would turn the tide of history toward fairness and equality.

In the days when Elise ran the PSI staff from its basement office in Dirksen, she led by example, spending long hours at her massive wooden desk, with tall stacks of reports and research lining the perimeter and posterboard hearing exhibits leaning on the walls. She was an irrepressible advocate for better financial policies by exposing wrongdoing, corruption, money laundering, tax avoidance, and all manner of form-over-substance abuses. She got there by way of the facts, hard work, and bipartisanship. PSI's reports were heavy tomes, accompanied by additional volumes of documentary evidence. She was undeterred in seeking the truth, such as when she worked every day through the DC Snowpocalypse of 2009–2010 in PSI's offices interviewing witnesses, lest PSI's ongoing financial crisis inquiry fall behind. For her many investigative and other achievements, she has been honored on a global scale—by the Washingtonian, the National Law Journal, the International Tax Review, and more.

In her 2018 book, "Financial Exposure," Elise joked about regularly drinking Manhattans with Republican colleagues—which was true—but her across-the-aisle attitude was real. Elise invited bipartisan involvement in every stage of PSI's investigations, leading to a final product that was often bipartisan. Her work paved the way for passage of bipartisan legislation, such as the Sarbanes-Oxley Act, the CARD Act of 2009, the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, and corporate transparency reforms, to name just a few.

"Well, why not?" Elise would often say. She was not cowed by power or distracted by really anything. She would teach you, too, as she did for hundreds of law clerks and staff, if you were willing to work—seriously work. And for people who wanted to be in public service, she made good on the promise of doing something important to contribute to the common good by being a constructive teacher and mentor. She also taught classes, published studies and a book, and started a law journal. Through the Levin Center, she hosted oversight boot camps for the next generation of staffers and was a regular lifeline for advice.

Elise was generous not just in her work, but also in her sense of fun and warmth for so many people in her circle. Elise threw parties for any reason at all—to recognize staff milestones, a holiday, a Friday, or because the azaleas blooming in spring were lovely. She was devoted to her family, including her husband Paul and her sons

Jacob and Joey, and delighted in getting to know the families of her staff and friends. She looked for the good in people, in our government, and created more good in the world. Those who knew her will cherish and strive to continue her legacy.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

REMEMBERING REVEREND PAUL D. MOONEY

• Mr. BANKS. Mr. President, on January 10, 2025, Indiana lost a remarkable man of faith with the passing of Rev. Paul D. Mooney of Indianapolis.

Reverend Mooney was born in Noblesville, IN, in 1943, and was raised on his parents' farm in rural Hancock County. From an early age, Paul's exceptional gift for communication was evident. As a teenager, he hosted his own radio show and graduated as president of his high school class. But God had even greater plans for his life. As Reverend Mooney often advised, "Don't plan your life, because you'll underplan what God has for you."

Reverend Mooney's parents pastored a small church in Indianapolis, where a young Paul helped with the youth ministry. He married his beloved Micki in 1963, and together, they embarked on a lifelong ministry journey, pastoring thriving churches in Michigan and Indiana.

Throughout his ministry, Reverend Mooney was entrusted by his colleagues in the United Pentecostal Church International (UPCI) to serve as superintendent of both the Michigan and Indiana districts. He was later elevated to assistant general superintendent of the international fellowship, which encompasses more than 5 million constituents. He traveled the world, inspiring leaders with his trademark positivity and his legendary storytelling abilities.

Reverend Mooney dedicated much of his life to training and inspiring young people for ministry. As president of Indiana Bible College and Calvary Christian School for over 30 years, he impacted thousands of graduates who are now serving in ministry around the world.

A trusted friend and counselor to Governors, mayors, and legislators in Indiana, Reverend Mooney was a vital source of strength and wisdom for Hoosier leaders. His heart for the people of Indiana will be long remembered. He devoted his life and ministry to serving and loving all people, and he will be greatly missed.

I offer my deepest condolences to Reverend Mooney's children Jonathan, Adena, Jaye, and their families and his many friends around the world who join me in celebrating the life of this great man.●

TRIBUTE TO TREVICK UDELHOVEN

• Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, today I have the distinct honor of recognizing

4-year-old Trevick Udelhoven of Fergus County as Montanan of the Month for his courage that is larger than life as he battles a life-threatening seizure disorder.

Trevick is your typical Montana cowboy, who loves spending time on the farm, being outdoors and cheering on his beloved Montana State University Bobcats. Sadly, he has recently had to put a pause on farm life to receive care from the Seattle Children's Hospital to receive treatment for his Febrile Infection-Related Epilepsy Syndrome, also known as FIRES. This diagnosis is an extremely rare neurological condition that can affect even the healthiest of adults and children.

Despite the obstacles he has faced, Trevick continues to demonstrate his grit and determination every step of the way. While he suffered brain damage as a result of his seizures, Trevick is working hard in physical, occupational, and speech therapy sessions to regain his strength and abilities. This type of perseverance deserves to be celebrated and cheered for, just as Trevick has always cheered on his Bobcats.

Between Trevick's courage and his incredible support system—his parents Dillon and Lexi and four siblings—he is bound for great things and serves as an inspiration to all. My prayer is that God would continue to bless and heal this little cowboy so that he can get back to the Treasure State.

It is my distinct honor to recognize Trevick Udelhoven for his strength and bravery, in and out of the hospital. Know that Montana is rooting you on, just as you cheered for the Bobcats all season. Keep fighting, Trevick; you make Montana proud.●

TRIBUTE TO HARRY DENDY

• Mrs. HYDE-SMITH. Mr. President, it is my pleasure to recognize Harry Dendy as he retires from the sales committee of the Dixie National Sale of Junior Champions. Each year, hundreds of young agriculture enthusiasts gather at the State fairgrounds in Jackson, MS, to show their livestock at this sale. Mr. Dendy has attended every sale since 1975, making this year's sale on February 6 his 50th.

The Dixie National Sale of Junior Champions consistently raises money for 4-H and Future Farmers of America scholarships and programs that shape Mississippi youth to become the State's agriculture leaders. The sale and the programs it supports enable youth to develop both the technical knowledge and soft skills that they will need to become professionals working to feed and clothe the world. There is hardly any better way for youth to learn essential life skills like patience, persistence, hard work, and personal responsibility than by working with livestock.

Mr. Dendy has been a cornerstone of this sale for decades, and his hard work and support have been essential to the

sale's success in youth development. Mr. Dendy's passion for agriculture and its future has been evident throughout his entire life. He first joined 4-H in Chickasaw County, MS, at the age of 10 and later worked for the Farm Credit System for 33 years. He served multiple roles on the 4-H Foundation Board of Trustees and was instrumental in the development of the Mississippi 4-H Learning Center and Pete Frierson 4-H Museum. He was inducted into the National 4-H Hall of Fame in 2011.

I look forward to watching the future of the Dixie National Sale of Junior Champions continue to grow on the foundation that Mr. Dendy has laid. Mr. Dendy leaves behind big shoes to fill, but I am confident his legacy will continue to inspire the sale and its youth toward success for decades to come.●

TRIBUTE TO CONNIE PALACIOZ

● Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. President, today, I rise to honor and recognize Ms. Connie Palacios, who will be celebrating her 100th birthday today.

Connie's work as a riveter for Boeing during WWII and her pivotal role in the restoration of the B-29 Superfortress "Doc" have left an indelible mark on the history of aviation. Her dedication and perseverance embody the values that define Kansas and our Nation, and her remarkable achievements and service to our country are certainly deserving of recognition in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

Connie's journey is one of resilience and determination, demonstrating the power of teamwork and perseverance. Her efforts on the assembly line during the war, alongside her partner Jerri Warden, a trailblazing moment in its own right, exemplify her unwavering spirit and commitment to forging new paths, despite the challenges of the era. The legacy she has built will continue to inspire future generations, enriching the cultural fabric of Kansas and beyond.

As she celebrates this milestone, I take this moment to express my deep gratitude for the work she has done. It is individuals like Connie who truly make our country great.

Once again, congratulations, Connie, on reaching this incredible milestone. Your contributions to the aviation industry and to our Nation will never be forgotten.

I now ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Connie for all that she has accomplished, as well as in wishing her a happy 100th birthday.●

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message from the President of the United States was communicated to the Senate by Ms. Kelly, one of his secretaries.

PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

REPORT RELATIVE TO THE ISSUANCE OF AN EXECUTIVE ORDER THAT TAKES ADDITIONAL STEPS TO DEAL WITH THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY WITH RESPECT TO SIGNIFICANT MALICIOUS CYBER-ENABLED ACTIVITIES DECLARED IN EXECUTIVE ORDER 13694 OF APRIL 1, 2015—PM 8

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs:

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*) (IEEPA), I hereby report that I have issued an Executive Order that takes additional steps to deal with the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13694 of April 1, 2015 (Blocking the Property of Certain Persons Engaging in Significant Malicious Cyber-Enabled Activities), as amended by Executive Order 13757 of December 28, 2016 (Taking Additional Steps to Address the National Emergency With Respect to Significant Malicious Cyber-Enabled Activities), and further amended by Executive Order 13984 of January 19, 2021 (Taking Additional Steps To Address the National Emergency With Respect to Significant Malicious Cyber-Enabled Activities).

Significant malicious cyber-enabled activities continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States. To address this continuing national emergency and protect against the growing and evolving threat of malicious cyber-enabled activities against the United States and United States allies and partners, including the increasing threats by foreign actors of unauthorized access to critical infrastructure, ransomware, and cyber-enabled intrusions and sanctions evasion, section 9 of the Executive Order I have issued updates the criteria to be used by the Secretary of the Treasury in designating a person for sanctions for engaging in specified malicious cyber-enabled activities and related conduct.

I am enclosing a copy of the Executive Order I have issued.

JOSEPH R. BIDEN, Jr.
THE WHITE HOUSE, January 16, 2025.

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 1:09 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. All, 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. 33. An act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide special rules for

the taxation of certain residents of Taiwan with income from sources within the United States.

H.R. 144. An act to provide that the Federal Reports Elimination and Sunset Act of 1995 does not apply to certain reports required to be submitted by the Tennessee Valley Authority, and for other purposes.

H.R. 164. An act to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to authorize Federal agencies to provide certain essential assistance for hazard mitigation for electric utilities, and for other purposes.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 33. An act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide special rules for the taxation of certain residents of Taiwan with income from sources within the United States; to the Committee on Finance.

H.R. 144. An act to provide that the Federal Reports Elimination and Sunset Act of 1995 does not apply to certain reports required to be submitted by the Tennessee Valley Authority, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

H.R. 164. An act to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to authorize Federal agencies to provide certain essential assistance for hazard mitigation for electric utilities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

S. 6. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit a health care practitioner from failing to exercise the proper degree of care in the case of a child who survives an abortion or attempted abortion.

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-82. A communication from the Associate Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Plan Approval; Washington; Olympic Region Clean Air Agency, Recreational Fires" (FRL No. 12243-02-R10) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2025; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-83. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Plan Approval; Arizona; Maricopa County Air Quality Department" (FRL No. 10024-03-R9) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2025; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-84. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Plan Revisions; California;

Feather River Air Quality Management District" (FRL No. 11647-02-R9) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2025; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-85. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Plan Revisions; Arizona; Maricopa County Air Quality Department" (FRL No. 12130-02-R9) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2025; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-86. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Excess Emissions During Periods of Startup, Shutdown, and Malfunction; Partial Withdrawals of Findings of Failure To Submit State Implementation Plan" ((RIN2060-AW38) (FRL No. 12161-03-OAR)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2025; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-87. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Plan Approval; Missoula, Montana, Air Rule Revisions" (FRL No. 12252-02-R8) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2025; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-88. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Plan Approval; Missoula, Montana Oxygenated Fuels Program Removal, Carbon Monoxide, Limited Maintenance Plan" (FRL No. 12257-02-R8) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2025; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-89. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Review of Final Rule Reclassification of Major Sources as Area Sources Under Section 112 of the Clean Air Act; Correction" (FRL No. 4908.3-02-OAR) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2025; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-90. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Civil Monetary Penalty Inflation Adjustment" (FRL No. 5906.9-01-OECA) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2025; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-91. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants: National Perchloroethylene Air Emission Standards for Dry Cleaning Facilities Technology Review" ((RIN2060-AV44) (FRL No. 8391-01-OAR)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2025; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-92. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "National Volatile Organic Compound Emission Standards for Aerosol Coatings Amendments" ((RIN2060-AU94) (FRL No. 7966-03-OAR)) received in the Office of the

President of the Senate on January 13, 2025; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-93. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Fuels Regulatory Streamlining Amendments" ((RIN2060-AV26) (FRL No. 8513-01-OAR)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2025; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-94. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "State Implementation Plan Submittal Deadlines and Implementation Requirements for Reclassified Nonattainment Areas Under the Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards" ((RIN2060-AW25) (FRL No. 11817-02-OAR)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2025; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-95. A communication from the Federal Register Liaison, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Guidance on Clean Electricity Low-Income Communities Bonus Credit Amount Program" (RIN1545-BR26) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2025; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-96. A communication from the Acting Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Department of State 2025 Civil Monetary Penalties Inflationary Adjustment" (RIN1400-AF90) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2024; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-97. A communication from the Acting Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a notification of intent to provide assistance to Ukraine under drawdowns previously directed under section 506(a)(1) of the FAA, including for self-defense and border security operations; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-98. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act, the certification of a proposed license for the export of defense articles, including technical data, and defense services to Denmark in the amount of \$50,000,000 or more (Transmittal No. DDTC 24-075); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-99. A communication from the Regulations Coordinator, National Institutes of Health, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Privacy Act; Implementation" (RIN0925-AA69) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 14, 2024; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-100. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Appeal Procedures for Recoupment of Awards, Bonuses, or Relocation Expenses Awarded for Approved for all Employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs" (RIN3206-AO69) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2025; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-101. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Prevailing Rate Systems; Change in Criteria for Defining Appropriated

Fund Federal Wage System Wage Areas" (RIN3206-AO69) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2025; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

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. CRAMER (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. DAINES, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. MORAN, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. ROUNDS, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. HOEVEN, and Mr. COONS):

S. 106. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide Medicare coverage for all physicians' services furnished by doctors of chiropractic within the scope of their license, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. TILLIS (for himself and Mr. BUDD):

S. 107. A bill to amend the Lumbee Act of 1956; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Mr. SCHMITT:

S. 108. A bill to make members of the Chinese Communist Party and their family members ineligible for F or J visas, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CASSIDY (for himself, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. WICKER, Mrs. BRITT, and Mr. TUBERVILLE):

S. 109. A bill to require the Secretary of the Interior to conduct certain offshore lease sales under the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. SULLIVAN (for himself and Ms. HIRONO):

S. 110. A bill to amend the Federal Credit Union Act to exclude extensions of credit made to veterans from the definition of a member business loan; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. SCOTT of Florida:

S. 111. A bill to provide that the Secretary of Commerce shall not issue an interim or final rule or Secretarial Amendment that includes an area or bottom closure in the South Atlantic for species managed under the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region until the South Atlantic Great Red Snapper Count study is complete and the data related to that study is integrated into the stock assessment; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mrs. BLACKBURN (for herself, Mr. DAINES, Mr. RISCH, Mr. SHEEHY, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. MORAN, and Mr. TILLIS):

S. 112. A bill to amend section 235(b)(2)(C) of the Immigration and Nationality Act to require the implementation of the Migrant Protection Protocols; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. HYDE-SMITH:

S. 113. A bill to require the appropriate Federal banking agencies to establish a 3-year phase-in period for de novo financial institutions to comply with Federal capital standards, to provide relief for de novo rural community banks, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mrs. BLACKBURN:

S. 114. A bill to provide for enhanced Federal, State, and local assistance in the enforcement of the immigration laws, to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act,

and to authorize appropriations to carry out the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CRUZ (for himself, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mrs. BRITT, and Mrs. CAPITO):

S. 115. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to establish a criminal penalty for unauthorized access to Department of Defense facilities; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself and Mr. CRUZ):

S. 116. A bill to rename the medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Dallas, Texas, as the "Eddie Bernice Johnson VA Medical Center"; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. CRUZ (for himself, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mrs. BRITT, Mr. BUDD, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. DAINES, Mr. HAWLEY, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. LEE, Mr. RISCH, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mr. SHEEHY, and Mr. JOHNSON):

S. 117. A bill to provide remedies to members of the Armed Forces discharged or subject to adverse action under the COVID-19 vaccine mandate; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Ms. CORTEZ MASTO (for herself, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. MARKEY, and Mr. MERKLEY):

S. 118. A bill to require additional disclosures relating to donations to the Presidential Inaugural Committee, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. RISCH (for himself, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. DAINES, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. SHEEHY, Mr. RICKETTS, Mr. MULLIN, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, and Mr. CRAPO):

S. 119. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to discontinue the collection by the Federal Government of firearm transaction records of discontinued firearms businesses, to require the destruction of such already collected records, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CASSIDY (for himself and Mr. PADILLA):

S. 120. A bill to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to establish a pilot program for the construction of temporary disaster assistance housing, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. LANKFORD (for himself, Ms. ERNST, and Mr. COONS):

S. 121. A bill to extend the statute of limitations for violations relating to pandemic programs to be 10 years; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BANKS (for himself, Mr. BUDD, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. SHEEHY, Mr. CRAPO, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. MULLIN, and Mr. RISCH):

S. 122. A bill to amend the Revised Statutes to codify the defense of qualified immunity in the case of any action under section 1979, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. VAN HOLLEN (for himself, Mr. MURPHY, and Mr. BLUMENTHAL):

S. 123. A bill to authorize for a grant program for handgun licensing programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. MORAN (for himself, Mr. TUBERVILLE, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. BANKS, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. SHEEHY, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. RICKETTS, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mr. RISCH, and Mr. GRAHAM):

S. 124. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for disciplinary procedures for supervisors and managers at the Department of Veterans Affairs and to mod-

ify the procedures of personnel actions against employees of the Department, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. HAWLEY:

S. 125. A bill to end the use of taxpayer funds for entities that perform, provide referrals for, or provide funding for, abortions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. SCHATZ (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. PADILLA, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. Kaine, Ms. WARREN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. HEINRICH, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 126. A bill to increase the rates of pay under the statutory pay systems and for prevailing rate employees by 4.3 percent, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. FETTERMAN (for himself, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. ROUNDS, and Ms. SMITH):

S. 127. A bill to establish a whole-home repairs program for eligible homeowners and eligible landlords, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. LEE (for himself, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. COTTON, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. TUBERVILLE, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. SCHMITT, Mr. RISCH, and Mr. SULLIVAN):

S. 128. A bill to amend the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 to require proof of United States citizenship to register an individual to vote in elections for Federal office, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Mr. CRUZ (for himself, Mr. DAINES, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. RICKETTS, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. HAWLEY, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, and Mr. CRAMER):

S. 129. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to eliminate the application of the income tax on qualified tips through a deduction allowed to all individual taxpayers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. WELCH, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MURPHY, Ms. SMITH, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. WARNER, Mr. WYDEN, and Mr. BENNET):

S. 130. A bill to reform the antitrust laws to better protect competition in the American economy, to amend the Clayton Act to modify the standard for an unlawful acquisition, to deter anticompetitive exclusionary conduct that harms competition and consumers, to enhance the ability of the Department of Justice and the Federal Trade Commission to enforce the antitrust laws, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. KELLY (for himself and Mrs. BLACKBURN):

S. 131. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to create a tax credit for nurse preceptors; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. CORTEZ MASTO (for herself, Mr. KENNEDY, Mrs. BLACKBURN, and Mr. VAN HOLLEN):

S. 132. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the rules for postponing certain deadlines by reason of disaster; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. PADILLA (for himself, Mr. SULLIVAN, and Mr. SHEEHY):

S. 133. A bill to modify the fire management assistance cost share, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. Kaine (for himself, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. WHITEHOUSE,

Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. KING, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, Mr. FETTERMAN, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. WARNER, Mr. PADILLA, and Ms. ALSOBROOKS):

S. 134. A bill to place limitations on accepting positions from the competitive service, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. PADILLA (for himself, Mr. DAINES, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. SHEEHY, and Mr. HEINRICH):

S. 135. A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide for special base rates of pay for wildland firefighters, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself and Mr. MERKLEY):

S. 136. A bill to lift the trade embargo on Cuba, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. DAINES (for himself, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mr. COTTON, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. RISCH, Mr. WICKER, Mr. CRAMER, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. BUDD, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. SHEEHY, Mr. RICKETTS, Mrs. BRITT, Mr. LANKFORD, Ms. ERNST, Mr. SCHMITT, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. HOEVEN, and Mr. TILLIS):

S. 137. A bill to amend title 41, United States Code, to prohibit the Federal Government from entering into contracts with an entity that discriminates against firearm or ammunition industries, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. SHEEHY (for himself, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. WARNOCK, Mr. BUDD, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. WELCH, Mr. SCHMITT, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. MORENO, Ms. ROSEN, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. 138. A bill to require each enterprise to include on the Uniform Residential Loan Application a disclaimer to increase awareness of the direct and guaranteed home loan programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. KING, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. MORAN, Ms. BALDWIN, Ms. CANTWELL, and Mr. CRAMER):

S. 139. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize and extend the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Prevention and Services program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. BARRASSO (for himself, Mr. DAINES, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. SHEEHY, and Mr. RISCH):

S. 140. A bill to address the forest health crisis on the National Forest System and public lands, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. CASSIDY (for himself, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. WARNOCK, and Mr. YOUNG):

S. 141. A bill to identify and address barriers to coverage of remote physiologic devices under State Medicaid programs to improve maternal and child health outcomes for pregnant and postpartum women; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BARRASSO (for himself, Mr. SHEEHY, Mr. RISCH, Ms. SMITH, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. WARNOCK, Mr. BENNET, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Mr. CRAPO):

S. 142. A bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to wildland firefighters in recognition of their strength, resiliency, sacrifice, and

service to protect the forests, grasslands, and communities of the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. CRUZ (for himself, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. SHEEHY, Mr. TUBERVILLE, Mr. BUDD, Mr. SCHMITT, Mrs. BRITT, Mr. RICKETTS, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. LEE, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. RISCH, Mr. TILLIS, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, and Mr. HOEVEN):

S. 143. A bill to amend the Clean Air Act to repeal the natural gas tax; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. MORAN (for himself, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. ERNST, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. RICKETTS, and Mr. GRASSLEY):

S. 144. A bill to amend the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 with respect to the definition of biofuels and sustainable aviation fuel, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. RISCH (for himself, Mr. WICKER, Mr. COTTON, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. HAGERTY, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Ms. ERNST, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. CASSIDY, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mrs. BRITT, and Mr. ROUNDS):

S. 145. A bill to require the redesignation of Ansarallah as a foreign terrorist organization; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. CRUZ (for himself, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BARRASSO, Ms. ROSEN, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, Mr. BUDD, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. WICKER, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. CURTIS, Mr. SHEEHY, Mr. WARNOCK, Mr. HEINRICH, and Mr. PETERS):

S. 146. A bill to require covered platforms to remove nonconsensual intimate visual depictions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. COONS, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. SMITH, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. WYDEN, Ms. HIRONO, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. WARNOCK, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. BENNET, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. PADILLA, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Ms. SLOTKIN):

S. Res. 28. A resolution honoring the service of women in combat roles in the Armed Forces; to the Committee on Armed Services.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 6

At the request of Mr. LANKFORD, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 6, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit a health care practitioner from failing to exercise the proper degree of care in the case of a child who survives an abortion or attempted abortion.

S. 30

At the request of Mr. SCHMITT, the name of the Senator from Missouri

(Mr. HAWLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 30, a bill to require each agency to repeal 3 existing regulations before issuing a new regulation, and for other purposes.

S. 50

At the request of Ms. ERNST, the names of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD) and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BUDD) were added as cosponsors of S. 50, a bill to prohibit the intentional hindering of immigration, border, and customs controls, and for other purposes.

S. 84

At the request of Ms. ERNST, the names of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. FETTERMAN) and the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 84, a bill to require U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement to take into custody certain aliens who have been charged in the United States with a crime that resulted in the death or serious bodily injury of another person, and for other purposes.

S. 92

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. HAWLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 92, a bill to require Senate approval before the United States assumes any obligation under a WHO pandemic agreement and to suspend funding for the WHO until such agreement is ratified by the Senate.

S. 103

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 103, a bill to amend the Protecting Americans from Foreign Adversary Controlled Applications Act to extend the deadline by which TikTok must be sold in order to avoid being banned.

S.J. RES. 1

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. HAWLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 1, a joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relative to limiting the number of terms that a Member of Congress may serve.

AMENDMENT NO. 8

At the request of Ms. ERNST, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. FETTERMAN) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 8 proposed to S. 5, a bill to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to take into custody aliens who have been charged in the United States with theft, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 15

At the request of Mr. BENNET, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. HICKENLOOPER) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 15 intended to be proposed to S. 5, a bill to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to take into custody aliens who have been

charged in the United States with theft, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 19

At the request of Mr. BENNET, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. HICKENLOOPER) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 19 intended to be proposed to S. 5, a bill to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to take into custody aliens who have been charged in the United States with theft, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 53

At the request of Mr. Kaine, the names of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. WARNOCK) and the Senator from Delaware (Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 53 intended to be proposed to S. 5, a bill to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to take into custody aliens who have been charged in the United States with theft, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, his name was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 53 intended to be proposed to S. 5, *supra*.

AMENDMENT NO. 54

At the request of Mr. COONS, the names of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN), the Senator from Nevada (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. GALLEGO) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 54 intended to be proposed to S. 5, a bill to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to take into custody aliens who have been charged in the United States with theft, and for other purposes.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. BARRASSO (for himself, Mr. DAINES, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. SHEEHY, and Mr. RISCH):

S. 140. A bill to address the forest health crisis on the National Forest System and public lands, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I want to turn to a separate matter, and I think all of us are heartbroken by what we see happening in Los Angeles with the devastating fires. There has been a horrific loss of life, of homes, and businesses due to these California fires, and the loss is just staggering.

As we speak, firefighters, first responders—including the Wyoming National Guard—are working around the clock to keep residents safe. I am grateful for their heroic efforts.

As they do their job, we here in the Senate need to do ours, and there are a lot of questions that need to be answered. One of my biggest questions is: How do we prevent that next wildfire from happening? Well, when it comes to the environment, liberal politicians want to control what car we drive, what kind of stove we cook on, how long we can take in the shower. Yet

they neglect our forests. They put up roadblocks to forest management tools that work. They have done that legislatively. They have done it with regulations as well.

What is especially crazy is that these restrictions are made in the name of protecting the environment, an environment that they are hurting. Nothing could be worse for the environment than massive wildfires. And as a result, our public lands have turned into tinderboxes, and it is because of policies that we have seen come out of this body, this administration, Democrat administrations prior to that.

And Wyoming is no stranger to wildfires. This past fire season was especially devastating in Northern Wyoming. I was on the frontlines thanking the firefighters in Wyoming this summer. We had the House Draw fire in Johnson County, the Elk fire that spanned Johnson and Sheridan Counties.

To put this into perspective, in Southern California, we saw about 40,000 acres burn in just over a week—40,000 acres. In Wyoming, it was over 275,000 acres. Now, you might not have heard about this since Wyoming has one of the smallest populations. It actually is the smallest population State in the country. Our population is clearly just a fraction of Los Angeles, but these were big fires. Yet we can learn lessons from each other on how to prevent the next fire.

In the Senate, I have been working to promote effective forest management practices at every level. So today I have introduced a bill called the Wildfire Prevention Act. My bill allows Agencies to treat more acres and remove more redtape to better protect our forests and our fellow Americans. It sets clear standards and clear expectations for forest management that we currently lack in this country. It provides the tools for the Agencies for the prevention and preparation for the next time, and it requires a lot more openness about the limits and the challenges that we face on these important issues.

This is about protection, not punishment. It is about protecting the people, protecting our clean air. And as long as America lacks proper forest management, then we are going to continue to see terrible costly tragedies like what we are seeing today in California and we saw this past summer in Wyoming. With better forest management, we can lessen the damage of forest fires.

The Federal Government can and will help Californians rebuild. California needs to rebuild with resilience. They need to rebuild with a commitment of preventing a similar fire in the future.

We have seen massive mismanagement. Anybody watching the interviews with the Governor of California, the fire chief in California, the mayor of L.A. will say there has been massive mismanagement, gross incompetence by the elected leadership in California. This needs to change to protect the

people who live there from the terrible mistakes in judgments of these elected officials.

It is not a crisis that we can solve ourselves or that will solve itself. My bill will make us better prepared to fight fires in the future.

It should be attached to any disaster relief that goes to California.

Mr. BARRASSO. 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. 140

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 “Wildfire Prevention Act of 2025”.

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

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

Sec. 2. Definitions.

TITLE I—ACCOMPLISHMENTS OVER RHETORIC

Sec. 101. Accelerating treatments on Federal land.

Sec. 102. Annual reports.

Sec. 103. Transparency in hazardous fuels reduction activity reporting.

Sec. 104. Regional forest carbon accounting.

Sec. 105. Wildland fire performance metrics.

TITLE II—FOREST MANAGEMENT

Sec. 201. Vegetation management, facility inspection, and operation and maintenance relating to electric transmission and distribution facility rights-of-way.

Sec. 202. Timber sales on National Forest System land.

Sec. 203. Categorical exclusion for high-priority hazard trees.

Sec. 204. Intervenor status.

Sec. 205. Utilizing grazing for wildfire risk reduction.

TITLE III—CULTURAL CHANGE IN AGENCIES

Sec. 301. Mandatory use of existing authorities.

Sec. 302. Public-private wildfire technology deployment and testbed partnership.

Sec. 303. Repeal of FLAME reports.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) FEDERAL LAND.—The term “Federal land” means—

(A) land of the National Forest System; and

(B) public lands (as defined in section 103 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1702)), the surface of which is administered by the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the Bureau of Land Management.

(2) HAZARDOUS FUELS REDUCTION ACTIVITY.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The term “hazardous fuels reduction activity” means any vegetation management activity to reduce the risk of wildfire, including mechanical treatments and prescribed burning.

(B) EXCLUSION.—The term “hazardous fuels reduction activity” does not include the awarding of a contract to conduct any activity described in subparagraph (A).

(3) NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The term “National Forest System” has the meaning given the term in section 11(a) of the Forest and Rangeland

Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. 1609(a)).

(B) EXCLUSION.—The term “National Forest System” does not include any forest reserve not created from the public domain.

(4) SECRETARY CONCERNED.—The term “Secretary concerned” means—

(A) the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service, with respect to Federal land described in paragraph (1)(A); and

(B) the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the Bureau of Land Management, with respect to Federal land described in paragraph (1)(B).

(5) WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE.—The term “wildland-urban interface” has the meaning given the term in section 101 of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6511).

TITLE I—ACCOMPLISHMENTS OVER RHETORIC

SEC. 101. ACCELERATING TREATMENTS ON FEDERAL LAND.

(a) BASELINE TREATMENTS FOR FUELS REDUCTION AND FOREST HEALTH.—For Federal land, the Secretary concerned shall determine—

(1) for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023—

(A) the number of acres mechanically thinned, for acres commercially thinned and for acres pre-commercially thinned; and

(B) the number of acres treated by prescribed fire; and

(2) the average of the numbers described in subparagraphs (A) and (B) of paragraph (1) over the period of fiscal years 2019 through 2023.

(b) ANNUAL GOALS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—For Federal land for fiscal year 2025 and each fiscal year thereafter, the Secretary concerned shall establish annual—

(A) mechanical thinning goals for acres commercially thinned and for acres pre-commercially thinned; and

(B) prescribed fire goals.

(2) REQUIREMENTS.—

(A) FISCAL YEARS 2025 AND 2026.—For each of fiscal years 2025 and 2026, the goals established under subparagraphs (A) and (B) of paragraph (1) shall be not less than the number of acres described in subsection (a)(2).

(B) FISCAL YEARS 2027 AND 2028.—For each of fiscal years 2027 and 2028, the goals established under subparagraphs (A) and (B) of paragraph (1) shall be not less than 20 percent more than the number of acres described in subsection (a)(2).

(C) FISCAL YEAR 2029 AND SUBSEQUENT FISCAL YEARS.—For fiscal year 2029 and each fiscal year thereafter, the goals established under subparagraphs (A) and (B) of paragraph (1) shall be not less than 40 percent more than the number of acres described in subsection (a)(2).

(c) REGIONAL ALLOTMENTS.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the Secretary concerned shall assign annual acreage allotments for mechanical thinning and prescribed fire on Federal land, categorized by National Forest System region or by State, as appropriate.

(d) PUBLICATION.—The Secretary concerned shall make publicly available the data described in subsections (a), (b), and (c), including by publishing that data on the website of the Forest Service and the website of the Bureau of Land Management.

(e) SAVINGS PROVISION.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to supersede or conflict with any other provision of law, including—

(1) section 40803(b) of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (16 U.S.C. 6592(b)); and

(2) the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1131 et seq.).

(f) **APPLICABILITY OF NEPA.**—The establishment of annual goals under subsection (b)(1) and the assignment of regional allotments under subsection (c) shall not be subject to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.).

SEC. 102. ANNUAL REPORTS.

Not later than September 30, 2025, and annually thereafter, the Secretary concerned shall publish on a public website of the Forest Service and a public website of the Bureau of Land Management the following information with respect to the Federal land during the preceding fiscal year:

(1) The number of acres treated pursuant to section 40803(b) of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (16 U.S.C. 6592(b)).

(2)(A) The number of acres mechanically thinned;

(B) the number of acres treated by prescribed fire; and

(C) whether the number of acres described in subparagraphs (A) and (B) met or exceeded the acres described in section 101(b)(2).

(3) Any limitations or challenges, including litigation or delays in the preparation of environmental documentation, that hindered the Secretary concerned from meeting or exceeding the annual goals established under section 101(b)(1), if applicable.

(4) The number of acres that have undergone a regeneration harvest.

(5) The number of acres described in subparagraphs (A) and (B) of paragraph (2) and paragraph (4) that are in an area identified as having—

(A) the expectation that, without remediation, at least 25 percent of standing live basal area greater than 1 inch in diameter may die over a 15-year time frame due to insects and diseases, as depicted on the National Insect and Disease Composite Risk Map; or

(B) a very high or high wildfire hazard potential.

(6) The number of acres described in subparagraphs (A) and (B) of paragraph (2) and paragraph (4) that use either of the following streamlined authorities for environmental review:

(A) A categorical exclusion.

(B) An emergency action authority of the Secretary concerned.

(7) The number of acres described in subparagraphs (A) and (B) of paragraph (2) and paragraph (4) with respect to which partners are used to carry out the work through—

(A) a good neighbor agreement under section 8206 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (16 U.S.C. 2113a);

(B) a master stewardship agreement;

(C) a contract or agreement entered into under the Tribal Forest Protection Act of 2004 (25 U.S.C. 3115a); or

(D) a stewardship end-result contract.

SEC. 103. TRANSPARENCY IN HAZARDOUS FUELS REDUCTION ACTIVITY REPORTING.

(a) **INCLUSION OF HAZARDOUS FUELS REDUCTION REPORT IN MATERIALS SUBMITTED IN SUPPORT OF THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary concerned shall include in the materials submitted in support of the President's budget pursuant to section 1105 of title 31, United States Code, a report describing—

(A) for each of fiscal years 2025 through 2030, the number of acres of Federal land on which the Secretary concerned carried out hazardous fuels reduction activities during each of the preceding 6 fiscal years, as assessed by the Secretary concerned using—

(i) the methodology of the Secretary concerned in effect on the day before the date of enactment of this Act; and

(ii) the methodology described in paragraph (2); and

(B) for fiscal year 2031 and each fiscal year thereafter, the number of acres of Federal land on which the Secretary concerned carried out hazardous fuels reduction activities during each of the preceding 6 fiscal years, as assessed by the Secretary concerned using the methodology described in paragraph (2).

(2) **REQUIREMENTS.**—For purposes of the reports required under paragraph (1), the Secretary concerned shall—

(A) in determining the number of acres of Federal land on which the Secretary concerned carried out hazardous fuels reduction activities during each fiscal year covered by the report—

(i) record acres of Federal land on which hazardous fuels reduction activities were completed during each such fiscal year; and

(ii) record each acre described in clause (i) once in the report with respect to a fiscal year, regardless of whether multiple hazardous fuels reduction activities were carried out on such acre during such fiscal year; and

(B) with respect to the acres of Federal land recorded in the report, include information on—

(i) which such acres are located in the wildland-urban interface;

(ii) the level of wildfire risk (high, moderate, or low) on the first and last day of each fiscal year covered by the report;

(iii) the types of hazardous fuels reduction activities completed for such acres, delineating between whether such activities were conducted—

(I) in a wildfire managed for resource benefits; or

(II) through a planned project;

(iv) the cost per acre of hazardous fuels reduction activities carried out during each fiscal year covered by the report;

(v) the region or System unit in which the acres are located; and

(vi) the effectiveness of the hazardous fuels reduction activities on reducing the risk of wildfire.

(3) **TRANSPARENCY.**—The Secretary concerned shall make each report submitted under paragraph (1) publicly available on the website of the Department of Agriculture and the Department of the Interior, as applicable.

(b) **ACCURATE DATA COLLECTION.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary concerned shall implement standardized procedures for tracking data relating to hazardous fuels reduction activities carried out by the Secretary concerned.

(2) **ELEMENTS.**—The standardized procedures required under paragraph (1) shall include—

(A) regular, standardized data reviews of the accuracy and timely input of data used to track hazardous fuels reduction activities;

(B) verification methods that validate whether such data accurately correlates to the hazardous fuels reduction activities carried out by the Secretary concerned;

(C) an analysis of the short- and long-term effectiveness of the hazardous fuels reduction activities on reducing the risk of wildfire; and

(D) for hazardous fuels reduction activities that occur partially within the wildland-urban interface, methods to distinguish which acres are located within the wildland-urban interface and which acres are located outside the wildland-urban interface.

(3) **REPORT.**—Not later than 14 days after implementing the standardized procedures required under paragraph (1), the Secretary concerned shall submit to Congress a report that describes—

(A) such standardized procedures; and

(B) program and policy recommendations to Congress to address any limitations in tracking data relating to hazardous fuels reduction activities under this subsection.

SEC. 104. REGIONAL FOREST CARBON ACCOUNTING.

Not later than September 30, 2025, and every 3 years thereafter, the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service, shall—

(1) using data from the forest inventory and analysis program, determine the net forest carbon balance on the land in the National Forest System of each Forest Service region, including whether the National Forest System land is—

(A) a carbon source; or

(B) a carbon sink; and

(2) publish the information described in paragraph (1) on the website of the Forest Service.

SEC. 105. WILDLAND FIRE PERFORMANCE METRICS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary concerned shall submit to the committees of Congress described in subsection (c) a report on existing key performance indicators and potential outcome-based performance measures to reduce wildfire risk on Federal land.

(b) **INCLUSIONS.**—The report submitted under subsection (a) shall identify solutions to track the implementation and effectiveness of hazardous fuels reduction activities and forest restoration treatments, including strategies—

(1) to track whether land management activities are reducing wildfire hazards and ways to quantify and track acres in maintenance status;

(2) to track place-based and locally led outcomes;

(3) to standardize national-level monitoring measures;

(4) to quantify catastrophic wildfire risk reduction;

(5) to identify modeling and data challenges that are preventing the transition to annual wildfire risk mapping updates; and

(6) to integrate advanced technologies or a combination of technologies and analyses that will benefit the quality of information reported.

(c) **COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS DESCRIBED.**—The committees of Congress referred to in subsection (a) are—

(1) the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate;

(2) the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate;

(3) the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives; and

(4) the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives.

TITLE II—FOREST MANAGEMENT

SEC. 201. VEGETATION MANAGEMENT, FACILITY INSPECTION, AND OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE RELATING TO ELECTRIC TRANSMISSION AND DISTRIBUTION FACILITY RIGHTS-OF-WAY.

(a) **HAZARD TREES WITHIN 50 FEET OF ELECTRIC POWER LINE.**—Section 512(a)(1)(B)(ii) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1772(a)(1)(B)(ii)) is amended by striking “10” and inserting “50”.

(b) **PERMITS AND AGREEMENTS WITH OWNERS AND OPERATORS OF ELECTRIC TRANSMISSION OR DISTRIBUTION FACILITIES.**—Section 512 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1772) is amended—

(1) in the section heading, by striking “MANAGEMENT” and inserting “MANAGEMENT”;

(2) by redesignating subsections (j) and (k) as subsections (k) and (l), respectively; and

(3) by inserting after subsection (i) the following:

“(j) PERMITS AND AGREEMENTS WITH OWNERS AND OPERATORS OF ELECTRIC TRANSMISSION OR DISTRIBUTION FACILITIES.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—In any special use permit or easement on National Forest System or Bureau of Land Management land provided to the owner or operator of an electric transmission or distribution facility, the Secretary concerned may provide permission to cut and remove trees or other vegetation from within the vicinity of the electric transmission or distribution facility without requiring a separate timber sale, if that cutting and removal is consistent with—

“(A) the applicable plan;

“(B) the applicable land and resource management plan or land use plan; and

“(C) other applicable environmental laws (including regulations).

“(2) USE OF PROCEEDS.—A special use permit or easement that includes permission for cutting and removal described in paragraph (1) shall include a requirement that, if the owner or operator of the electric transmission or distribution facility sells any portion of the material removed under the permit or easement, the owner or operator shall provide to the Secretary concerned any proceeds received from the sale, less any transportation costs incurred in the sale.

“(3) EFFECT.—Nothing in paragraph (2) shall require the sale of any material removed under a permit or easement that includes permission for cutting and removal described in paragraph (1).”

SEC. 202. TIMBER SALES ON NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM LAND.

Section 14(d) of the National Forest Management Act of 1976 (16 U.S.C. 472a(d)) is amended, in the first sentence, by striking “\$10,000” and inserting “\$55,000”.

SEC. 203. CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION FOR HIGH-PRIORITY HAZARD TREES.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) HIGH-PRIORITY HAZARD TREE.—The term “high-priority hazard tree” means a standing tree that—

(A) presents a visible hazard to people or Federal property due to conditions such as deterioration of or damage to the root system, trunk, stem, or limbs of the tree, or the direction or lean of the tree, as determined by the Secretary;

(B) is determined by the Secretary to be highly likely to fail and, if it failed, would be highly likely to cause injury to people or damage to Federal property; and

(C) is—

(i) within 300 feet of a National Forest System road with a maintenance level of 3, 4, or 5;

(ii) along a National Forest System trail; or

(iii) in a developed recreation site on National Forest System land that is operated and maintained by the Secretary.

(2) HIGH-PRIORITY HAZARD TREE ACTIVITY.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The term “high-priority hazard tree activity” means a forest management activity that mitigates the risks associated with high-priority hazard trees, which may include pruning, felling, and disposal of those high-priority hazard trees.

(B) EXCLUSIONS.—The term “high-priority hazard tree activity” does not include—

(i) any activity conducted in a wilderness area or wilderness study area;

(ii) any activity for the construction of a permanent road or permanent trail;

(iii) any activity conducted on Federal land on which, by Act of Congress or Presidential proclamation, the removal of vegetation is restricted or prohibited;

(iv) any activity conducted in an area in which activities described in subparagraph (A) would be inconsistent with the applicable land and resource management plan; or

(v) any activity conducted in an inventoried roadless area.

(3) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Agriculture.

(b) CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall develop a categorical exclusion (as defined in 111 of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4336e)) for high-priority hazard tree activities.

(2) ADMINISTRATION.—In developing and administering the categorical exclusion under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall—

(A) comply with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.); and

(B) apply the extraordinary circumstances procedures under section 220.6 of title 36, Code of Federal Regulations (or successor regulations), in determining whether to use the categorical exclusion.

(3) PROJECT SIZE LIMITATION.—A project carried out using the categorical exclusion developed under paragraph (1) may not exceed 3,000 acres.

SEC. 204. INTERVENOR STATUS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of a civil action relating to a qualified project described in subsection (b), a unit of local government or an Indian Tribe shall be—

(1) entitled to intervene, as of right, in any subsequent civil action; and

(2) considered to be a full participant in any settlement negotiation relating to the qualified project if the unit of local government or Indian Tribe, as applicable, intervenes.

(b) DESCRIPTION OF QUALIFIED PROJECT.—A qualified project referred to in subsection (a) is a project that—

(1) is located on Federal land adjacent, or with sufficient minimum contacts, as determined by the Secretary concerned, to the land under the jurisdiction of the unit of local government or Indian Tribe, as applicable;

(2) has been approved by the Secretary concerned; and

(3)(A) reduces the risk posed by wildfire, insect, or disease; or

(B) generates revenue from the harvesting of timber.

SEC. 205. UTILIZING GRAZING FOR WILDFIRE RISK REDUCTION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary concerned shall develop and submit to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate and the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives a strategy to analyze and identify opportunities to use livestock grazing as a wildfire risk reduction tool on Federal land, consistent with the laws applicable to the Secretary concerned.

(b) INCLUSIONS.—The strategy developed under subsection (a) shall include an analysis of—

(1) opportunities—

(A) to increase the use of any authorities applicable to livestock grazing, including modifications to grazing permits or leases to allow variances;

(B) to use targeted grazing to reduce hazardous fuels;

(C) to integrate advanced technologies to dynamically adjust livestock placement;

(D) to increase the use of livestock grazing to eradicate invasive annual grasses and as a post-fire restoration and recovery strategy, as appropriate; and

(E) to facilitate and expedite the temporary use of vacant allotments during extreme weather events or natural disasters; and

(2) any other opportunities determined to be appropriate by the Secretary concerned.

(c) EFFECT ON EXISTING GRAZING PROGRAMS.—Nothing in this section affects—

(1) any livestock grazing program carried out by the Secretary concerned as of the date of enactment of this Act; or

(2) any statutory authority for any program described in paragraph (1).

TITLE III—CULTURAL CHANGE IN AGENCIES

SEC. 301. MANDATORY USE OF EXISTING AUTHORITIES.

Not later than 3 years after the date of enactment of this Act, with respect to each unit of Federal land that contains land described in section 102(5), the Secretary concerned shall use not fewer than 1 of the following streamlined authorities for environmental review:

(1) Section 603(a) of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6591b(a)).

(2) Section 605(a) of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6591d(a)).

(3) Section 606(b) of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6591e(b)).

(4) Section 40806(b) of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (16 U.S.C. 6592b(b)).

(5) Section 40807 of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (16 U.S.C. 6592c).

(6) Section 207 of the Wildfire Suppression Funding and Forest Management Activities Act (16 U.S.C. 6591c note; Public Law 115-141).

SEC. 302. PUBLIC-PRIVATE WILDFIRE TECHNOLOGY DEPLOYMENT AND TESTBED PARTNERSHIP.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES.—The term “appropriate committees” means—

(A) the Committees on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, Energy and Natural Resources, and Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate; and

(B) the Committees on Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives.

(2) COVERED AGENCY.—The term “covered agency” means—

(A) each Federal land management agency (as defined in section 802 of the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (16 U.S.C. 6801));

(B) the Department of Defense;

(C) the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration;

(D) the United States Fire Administration;

(E) the Federal Emergency Management Agency;

(F) the National Aeronautics and Space Administration;

(G) the Bureau of Indian Affairs; and

(H) any other Federal agency involved in wildfire response.

(3) COVERED ENTITY.—The term “covered entity” means—

(A) a private entity;

(B) a nonprofit organization; and

(C) an institution of higher education (as defined in section 101 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001)).

(4) PILOT PROGRAM.—The term “Pilot Program” means the deployment and testbed pilot program established under subsection (b).

(5) SECRETARIES.—The term “Secretaries” means the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior, acting jointly.

(b) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretaries, in coordination with the heads of the covered agencies, shall establish a deployment and testbed pilot program for new and innovative wildfire prevention, detection, communication, and mitigation technologies.

(c) FUNCTIONS.—In carrying out the Pilot Program, the Secretaries shall—

(1) incorporate the Pilot Program into an existing interagency coordinating group on wildfires;

(2) in consultation with the heads of covered agencies, identify key technology priority areas with respect to the deployment of wildfire prevention, detection, communication, and mitigation technologies, including—

(A) hazardous fuels reduction activities or treatments;

(B) dispatch communications;

(C) remote sensing and tracking;

(D) safety equipment; and

(E) common operating pictures or operational dashboards; and

(3) connect each covered entity selected to participate in the Pilot Program with the appropriate covered agency to coordinate real-time and on-the-ground testing of technology during wildland fire mitigation activities and training.

(d) **APPLICATIONS.**—To participate in the Pilot Program, a covered entity shall submit to the Secretaries an application at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretaries may require, which shall include a proposal to test technologies specific to key technology priority areas identified under subsection (c)(2).

(e) **PRIORITIZATION OF EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES.**—In selecting covered entities to participate in the Pilot Program, the Secretaries shall give priority to covered entities developing and applying emerging technologies that address issues identified by the Secretaries, including artificial intelligence, quantum sensing, computing and quantum-hybrid applications, augmented reality, and 5G private networks and device-to-device communications supporting nomadic mesh networks, for wildfire mitigation.

(f) **OUTREACH.**—The Secretaries, in coordination with the heads of the covered agencies, shall make publicly available the key technology priority areas identified under subsection (c)(2) and invite covered entities to apply to test and demonstrate their technologies to address those priority areas.

(g) **REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.**—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, and each year thereafter for the duration of the Pilot Program, the Secretaries shall submit to the appropriate committees a report that includes the following with respect to the Pilot Program:

(1) A list of participating covered entities.

(2) A brief description of the technologies tested by such covered entities.

(3) An estimate of the cost of acquiring the technology tested in the Pilot Program and applying it at scale.

(4) Outreach efforts by Federal agencies to covered entities developing wildfire technologies.

(5) Assessments of, and recommendations relating to, new technologies with potential adoption and application at-scale in the wildfire prevention, detection, communication, and mitigation efforts of Federal land management agencies (as defined in section 802 of the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (16 U.S.C. 6801)).

(h) **TERMINATION.**—The Pilot Program shall expire on the date that is 7 years after the date of enactment of this Act.

SEC. 303. REPEAL OF FLAME REPORTS.

Section 502 of the FLAME Act of 2009 (43 U.S.C. 1748a) is amended—

(1) by striking subsection (h); and

(2) by redesignating subsection (i) as subsection (h).

By Mr. BARRASSO (for himself, Mr. SHEEHY, Mr. RISCH, Ms. SMITH, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. WARNOCK, Mr. BENNET, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Mr. CRAPO):

S. 142. A bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to wildland fire-

fighters in recognition of their strength, resiliency, sacrifice, and service to protect the forests, grasslands, and communities of the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

Mr. BARRASSO. 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. 142

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 “Wildland Firefighters Congressional Gold Medal Act”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) Wildland fires have increased in intensity and severity over the 30-year period preceding the date of enactment of this Act, causing catastrophic destruction to homes, infrastructure, and valuable Federal, State, and private lands. More than 1,000,000,000 acres of land across the United States are at risk of wildfire, including approximately 117,000,000 acres of Federal land that have been identified as high or very high risk for wildfire potential.

(2) The Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs collectively employ more than 18,700 wildland firefighters to combat wildfires across millions of acres of public and private lands each year, while thousands more workers and volunteers serve as State, local, and contract wildland firefighters.

(3) As the wildland-urban interface expands, wildfires increasingly find their way out of the backcountry and into the backyards of communities across the United States. Wildland firefighters are evolving their skillsets, tactics, and strategies to address the growing threat of wildfire in the 21st century.

(4) While the protection of life and property remains a top priority, wildland firefighters also have an important role in responsible forest management and conservation. Wildland firefighters perform prescribed burns and other forest management activities, including timber harvests, contribute to healthy forests, and reduce catastrophic wildfire risk.

(5) Each wildland firefighter is specialized and trained to work in dynamic and extraordinarily dangerous environments. Wildland firefighters routinely work long days while on a 2-week rotation, often sleeping in inhospitable conditions.

(6) According to the Forest Service, firefighters generally work 16-hour days while fighting a fire, and they typically exceed 2,500 operational hours in a 6-month period.

(7) Wildland firefighter crews are all-hazards frontline emergency responders that use any means necessary to protect life and property while responding to floods, hurricanes, pandemics, and acts of terrorism.

(8) Engine and hand crews, the primary firefighting workforce, come in varying sizes and modules that can be tailored to fit the specific needs and terrain obstacles that each fire presents.

(9) Interagency hotshot crews are highly skilled mobile hand crews with elite knowledge about fire suppression tactics.

(10) Pilots and aerial fire suppression crews take to the skies with air tankers and heli-

copters to drop water and fire retardant, supporting decision-makers on the ground.

(11) Aerially-delivered firefighters, including helitack crews and smokejumpers, exit helicopters and jump from planes into remote and difficult-to-reach areas, providing quick and targeted fire suppression and emergency medical short-haul extraction. These fire personnel provide oversight and direct action on initial and extended attack incidents.

(12) Wildland firefighters in the United States also answer the call to fight wildfires internationally. During the record-setting fires in Australia in 2020, the United States sent 362 firefighters to help. During Canada's historic 2023 fire season, more than 2,000 Federal wildland firefighters answered the call.

(13) As of the date of enactment of this Act, the United States maintains mutual assistance and cooperation agreements for wildland firefighting efforts with Canada, Mexico, Australia, New Zealand, and Portugal.

(14) The increases in the severity of wildfires and in annual fire season active months have also increased the demand for wildland firefighters and associated employees. Recruitment and retention of wildland firefighters has been a national issue for many years.

(15) Wildland firefighters put their lives on the line to keep the people of the United States safe, and some pay the ultimate sacrifice to do so. Between January 1, 2019, and January 1, 2025, 98 wildland firefighters have lost their lives fighting fires. Acute and secondary effects from wildfire, such as wildfire smoke exposure, are directly linked to tens of thousands of firefighter and civilian deaths each year.

(16) June 30 to July 6 of each year is recognized as a Week of Remembrance to honor the fallen wildland firefighters who sacrificed their lives to protect the wildlands of the United States.

(17) National Wildland Firefighter Day is held annually on July 2 to recognize all who are devoted to wildland firefighting.

(18) The exemplary efforts of wildland firefighters are deserving of recognition, and it is appropriate and proper to honor those who have previously served, as well as current and future firefighters. Wildland firefighters showcase principles of duty, respect, and integrity in every aspect of service. Each firefighter exhibits strength, resiliency, and grit to protect the forests, grasslands, and communities of the United States. Wildland firefighters do not shy away from dangerous situations, but instead risk life and limb to help others. The outstanding accomplishments of these brave individuals continue an unparalleled legacy of public service.

SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.

(a) **PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.**—The Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President pro tempore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements for the presentation, on behalf of Congress, of a single gold medal of appropriate design in honor of wildland firefighters, collectively, in recognition of their strength, resiliency, sacrifice, and service to protect the forests, grasslands, and communities of the United States.

(b) **DESIGN AND STRIKING.**—For purposes of the presentation described in subsection (a), the Secretary of the Treasury (referred to in this Act as the “Secretary”) shall strike a gold medal with suitable emblems, devices, and inscriptions, to be determined by the Secretary, in consultation with the National Interagency Fire Center.

(c) **DISPOSITION OF MEDAL.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Following the presentation of the gold medal under subsection

(a), the gold medal shall be given to the National Interagency Fire Center, where the gold medal shall be displayed, as appropriate, and made available for research.

(2) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the National Interagency Fire Center should ensure that the display and availability of the medal described in paragraph (1) be at appropriate locations, particularly locations associated with wildland firefighters.

SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.

The Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in bronze of the gold medal struck under section 3, at a price sufficient to cover the costs thereof, including labor, materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses.

SEC. 5. STATUS OF MEDALS.

(a) NATIONAL MEDALS.—The medals struck under this Act are national medals for purposes of chapter 51 of title 31, United States Code.

(b) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of sections 5134 and 5136 of title 31, United States Code, all medals struck under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic items.

SEC. 6. AUTHORITY TO USE FUND AMOUNTS; PROCEEDS OF SALE.

(a) AUTHORITY TO USE FUND AMOUNTS.—There is authorized to be charged against the United States Mint Public Enterprise Fund such amounts as may be necessary to pay for the costs of the medals struck under this Act.

(b) PROCEEDS OF SALES.—Amounts received from the sale of duplicate bronze medals authorized under section 4 shall be deposited into the United States Mint Public Enterprise Fund.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 28—HONORING THE SERVICE OF WOMEN IN COMBAT ROLES IN THE ARMED FORCES

Mrs. MURRAY (for herself, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. COONS, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. SMITH, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. WYDEN, Ms. HIRONO, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. WARNOCK, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. BENNET, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. PADILLA, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Ms. SLOTKIN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services:

S. RES. 28

Whereas women have honorably served in the Armed Forces with distinction since the Revolutionary War;

Whereas the Department of Defense announced the opening of all military occupations and specialties to women in December 2015;

Whereas women have received numerous commendations for their service in combat since September 2001, including Bronze Stars and Silver Stars;

Whereas, since September 11, 2001, approximately 3,000 women have earned Combat Action Badges and Combat Action Ribbons; and

Whereas women in the Armed Forces serve in special forces units, including as Army Rangers, Air Force Special Operators, and in the Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the contribution, bravery, and sacrifices of women serving in combat roles in the Armed Forces; and

(2) encourages the continued celebration of the achievements of women in the Armed Forces to inspire future generations.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 79. Mr. KELLY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 5, to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to take into custody aliens who have been charged in the United States with theft, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 80. Mrs. BLACKBURN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 5, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 81. Mr. SCHMITT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 5, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 82. Ms. HIRONO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 5, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 83. Ms. HIRONO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 5, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 84. Mr. MURPHY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 5, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 85. Ms. HIRONO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 5, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 86. Mr. PAUL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 5, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 87. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 5, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 88. Mr. KING (for himself and Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 5, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 89. Mr. KENNEDY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 5, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 90. Mr. BENNET submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 5, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 91. Mr. HAWLEY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 8 proposed by Mr. THUNE (for Ms. ERNST (for herself and Mr. GRASSLEY)) to the bill S. 5, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 92. Mr. PAUL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 5, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 79. Mr. KELLY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 5, to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to take into custody aliens who have been charged in the United States with theft, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 3, line 8, strike the end quote and final period and insert the following:

“(4) COOPERATION ON JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS; REQUEST FOR RELEASE.—

“(A) COOPERATION.—The Secretary of Homeland Security shall establish rules for cooperating with requests from a Federal, State, Tribal or local official and for complying with court orders to ensure that any alien in the custody of the Department of Homeland Security who is required to appear in a court for another matter in which the alien is a defendant, victim, witness, potential witness, or person cooperating with an investigation of a major criminal activity, including proceedings for an offense described in paragraph (1)(E), is transported or transferred by an officer or employee of the Department for such court proceeding.

“(B) RELEASE.—Any alien being held in custody pursuant to an arrest or charge described in paragraph (1)(E) who is acquitted or not otherwise convicted of such charge within 90 days after the alien's first day of detention shall be entitled to a hearing to challenge the basis for the alien's custody under paragraph (1)(E) or to request to be released under subsection (a)(2).”

SA 80. Mrs. BLACKBURN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 5, to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to take into custody aliens who have been charged in the United States with theft, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____ STATE AUTHORIZATION FOR ASSISTANCE IN THE ENFORCEMENT OF IMMIGRATION LAWS ENCOURAGED.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Beginning on the date that is 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, a State, or a political subdivision of a State, that has in effect a statute, policy, or practice that prohibits law enforcement officers of the State, or of a political subdivision of the State, from assisting or cooperating with Federal immigration law enforcement in the course of carrying out the officers' routine law enforcement duties may not receive any of the funds that would otherwise be allocated to the State under section 241(i) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1231(i)).

(b) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section may be construed to require law enforcement officials from States, or from political subdivisions of States, to report or arrest victims or witnesses of a criminal offense.

(c) REALLOCATION OF FUNDS.—Any funds that are not allocated to a State, or to a political subdivision of a State, due to the failure of such State, or of the political subdivision of such State, to comply with subsection (a) shall be reallocated to States, or to political subdivisions of States, that comply with such subsection.

SA 81. Mr. SCHMITT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 5, to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to take into custody aliens who have been charged in the United States with theft, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

Beginning on page 2, line 19, strike the end quote and semicolon and all that follows through “have the meaning” on page 3, line 1, and insert the following: “or arson”;

(2) by redesignating paragraph (2) as paragraph (4); and

(3) by inserting after paragraph (1) the following:

“(2) DEFINITION.—For purposes of paragraph (1)(E), the terms ‘burglary’, ‘theft’, ‘larceny’, ‘shoplifting’, and ‘arson’ have the meanings

SA 82. Ms. HIRONO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 5, to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to take into custody aliens who have been charged in the United States with theft, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 3, line 8, strike the period and insert the following: “; and

(4) by adding at the end the following:

“(5) PROTECTIONS FOR VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided by subparagraph (C), paragraphs (1)(E) and (3) shall not apply with respect to an alien if the alien is a victim or witness in an active human trafficking investigation or makes a credible claim that the alien is a victim of or witness to human trafficking.

“(B) EXAMPLES.—Examples of circumstances in which paragraphs (1)(E) and (3) do not apply with respect to an alien include if—

“(i) a Federal, State, or local law enforcement agency informs the Secretary that the alien may be a victim of human trafficking;

“(ii) the arrest or charges described in paragraph (1)(E) were based on acts committed under duress or as the result of force, fraud, or coercion, or based on information furnished solely by a human trafficker; or

“(iii) the alien has been approved for relief under section 101(a)(15)(T) or has a bona fide petition pending pursuant to such section.

“(C) EXCEPTION.—Notwithstanding subparagraph (A) or (B), paragraphs (1)(E) and (3) shall apply with respect to an alien if the Secretary determines that the alien is a threat to public safety or national security.”.

SA 83. Ms. HIRONO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 5, to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to take into custody aliens who have been charged in the United States with theft, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 3, line 8, strike the period and insert the following: “; and

(4) by adding at the end the following:

“(5) PROTECTIONS FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE OR HUMAN TRAFFICKING.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided by subparagraph (C), paragraphs (1)(E) and (3) shall not apply with respect to an alien if the alien is a victim or witness in an active domestic violence or human trafficking investigation or makes a credible claim that the alien is a victim of or witness to domestic violence or human trafficking.

“(B) EXAMPLES.—Examples of circumstances in which paragraphs (1)(E) and (3) do not apply with respect to an alien include if—

“(i) a Federal, State, or local law enforcement agency informs the Secretary that the alien may be a victim of domestic violence or human trafficking, and the arrest or charges described in paragraph (1)(E) were based on acts committed under duress or as the result of force, fraud, or coercion, or based on information furnished solely by an abuser or human trafficker;

“(ii) the alien has received a certification pursuant to section 214(p) certifying that the

alien is a victim of or witness to domestic violence;

“(iii) the alien has an approved or bona fide petition pending for immigration relief pursuant to section 101(a)(51) or another provision of this Act based on being battered or subjected to extreme cruelty by a current or former spouse, partner, parent, son, or daughter; or

“(iv) the alien has been approved for relief under section 101(a)(15)(T) or has a bona fide petition pending pursuant to such section.

“(C) EXCEPTION.—Notwithstanding subparagraph (A) or (B), paragraphs (1)(E) and (3) shall apply with respect to an alien if the Secretary determines that the alien is a threat to public safety or national security.”.

SA 84. Mr. MURPHY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 5, to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to take into custody aliens who have been charged in the United States with theft, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 3, between lines 8 and 9, insert the following:

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 236(c)(1)(E) of the Immigration and Nationality, as added by this section, shall take effect upon the earlier of—

(A) the date on which the Secretary of Homeland Security certifies to the appropriate congressional committees that sufficient Federal funds are available to carry out such section 236(c)(1)(E); or

(B) the first day of a fiscal year for which sufficient Federal funds have been appropriated to carry out such section 236(c)(1)(E).

(2) CONTENTS.—The certification described in paragraph (1)(A) shall include a detailed list of the amounts and programs, including any congressionally-directed spending, that are necessary to carry out such section 236(c)(1)(E).

SA 85. Ms. HIRONO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 5, to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to take into custody aliens who have been charged in the United States with theft, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 3, line 8, strike the period and insert the following: “; and

(4) by adding at the end the following:

“(5) PROTECTIONS FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided by subparagraph (C), paragraphs (1)(E) and (3) shall not apply with respect to an alien if the alien is a victim or witness in an active domestic violence investigation or makes a credible claim that the alien is a victim of or witness to domestic violence.

“(B) EXAMPLES.—Examples of circumstances in which paragraphs (1)(E) and (3) do not apply with respect to an alien include if—

“(i) the alien has received a certification pursuant to section 214(p) certifying that the alien is a victim of or witness to domestic violence;

“(ii) the alien has an approved or bona fide petition pending for immigration relief pursuant to section 101(a)(51) or another provision of this Act based on being battered or subjected to extreme cruelty by a current or former spouse, partner, parent, son, or daughter; or

“(iii) a Federal, State, or local law enforcement agency informs the Secretary that the alien may be a victim of domestic violence, and the arrest or charges described in paragraph (1)(E) were falsely made, based on acts committed under duress or as the result of force, fraud, or coercion, or based on information furnished solely by an abuser.

“(C) EXCEPTION.—Notwithstanding subparagraph (A) or (B), paragraphs (1)(E) and (3) shall apply with respect to an alien if the Secretary determines that the alien is a threat to public safety or national security.”.

SA 86. Mr. PAUL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 5, to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to take into custody aliens who have been charged in the United States with theft, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

Beginning on page 2, strike line 7 and all that follows through page 3, line 8, and insert the following:

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) in subparagraph (C), by striking “, or” and inserting a semicolon; and

(B) by inserting after subparagraph (D) the following:

“(E)(i) is inadmissible under paragraph (6)(A), (6)(C), or (7) of section 212(a); and

“(ii) is charged with, is arrested for, is convicted of, admits having committed, or admits committing acts which constitute the essential elements of any burglary, theft, larceny, shoplifting, or assault of a law enforcement officer offense, a crime of domestic violence, or any crime that results in death or serious bodily injury to another person; or

“(F) is unlawfully present in the United States and who has voted in a Federal election in violation of section 611 of title 18, United States Code,”;

(2) by redesignating paragraph (2) as paragraph (4); and

(3) by inserting after paragraph (1) the following:

“(2) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of paragraph (1)(E)—

“(A) the terms ‘burglary’, ‘theft’, ‘larceny’, ‘shoplifting’, ‘assault of a law enforcement officer’, and ‘serious bodily injury’ have the meanings given such terms in the jurisdiction in which the acts occurred; and

“(B) the term ‘crime of domestic violence’ has the meaning given such term in section 237(a)(2)(E)(i).

“(3) DETAINER.—The Secretary of Homeland Security shall—

“(A) issue a detainer for an alien described in subparagraph (E) or (F) of paragraph (1); and

“(B) if the alien is not otherwise detained by Federal, State, or local officials, shall effectively and expeditiously take custody of the alien.”.

SA 87. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 5, to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to take into custody aliens who have been charged in the United States with theft, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 2, line 21, strike “(4)” and insert “(5)”.

On page 3, line 8, strike the end quote and final period and insert the following:

“(4) EXCEPTION.—The requirement to take into custody an alien described in paragraph

(1)(E) shall not apply if such detention would result in the release of an alien determined to be a more serious public safety threat or flight risk.”.

SA 88. Mr. KING (for himself and Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 5, to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to take into custody aliens who have been charged in the United States with theft, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 2, strike lines 15 through 19 and insert the following:

“(ii) has been convicted of burglary, theft, larceny, shoplifting, or assault of a law enforcement officer.”;

SA 89. Mr. KENNEDY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 5, to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to take into custody aliens who have been charged in the United States with theft, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of the bill, add the following:

SEC. 4. CONTEMPT AUTHORITY OF IMMIGRATION JUDGES.

(a) **SHORT TITLE.**—This section may be cited as the “Empowering Immigration Courts Act”.

(b) **IN GENERAL.**—Section 240(b)(1) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1229a(b)(1)) is amended by striking the last sentence and inserting the following: “The immigration judge is authorized to sanction, by fine, any conduct constituting contempt of the judge’s authority under this Act, in accordance with section 401 of title 18, United States Code.”.

SA 90. Mr. BENNET submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 5, to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to take into custody aliens who have been charged in the United States with theft, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end, add the following:

SEC. ____ . CLARIFICATION WITH RESPECT TO CERTAIN ALIENS WHO CAME TO THE UNITED STATES AS CHILDREN AND ALIENS WHO ARE 16 YEARS OF AGE OR YOUNGER.

Section 236(c) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1226(c)), as amended by this Act, is further amended by adding at the end the following:

“(5) **EXCLUSIONS.**—

“(A) **IN GENERAL.**—An alien described in subparagraph (B) shall not be subject to custody or detention under paragraph (1)(E).

“(B) **ALIEN DESCRIBED.**—An alien described in this subparagraph is any alien who—

“(i) (I) has been granted deferred action pursuant to the deferred action for childhood arrivals program described in the memorandum of the Department of Homeland Security entitled ‘Exercising Prosecutorial Discretion with Respect to Individuals Who Came to the United States as Children’ issued on June 15, 2012;

“(II) has been granted deferred action pursuant to the final rule of the Department of Homeland Security entitled ‘Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals’ (87 Fed. Reg. 53152 (August 30, 2022)); or

“(III) is 16 years of age or younger; and

“(ii) is charged with, is arrested for, admits having committed, or admits committing acts which constitute the essential elements of any burglary, theft, larceny, or shoplifting offense.”.

SA 91. Mr. HAWLEY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 8 proposed by Mr. THUNE (for Ms. ERNST (for herself and Mr. GRASSLEY)) to the bill S. 5, to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to take into custody aliens who have been charged in the United States with theft, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

In lieu of the matter proposed to be inserted, insert the following:

“(i) is charged with, is arrested for, is convicted of, admits having committed, or admits committing acts which constitute the essential elements of any burglary, theft, larceny, shoplifting, or assault of a law enforcement officer offense, a crime of domestic violence, a felony crime against a minor, or any crime that results in death or serious bodily injury to another person.”;

(2) by redesignating paragraph (2) as paragraph (4); and

(3) by inserting after paragraph (1) the following:

“(2) **DEFINITIONS.**—For purposes of paragraph (1)(E)—

“(A) the terms ‘burglary’, ‘theft’, ‘larceny’, ‘shoplifting’, ‘assault of a law enforcement officer’, ‘felony’, and ‘serious bodily injury’ have the meanings given such terms in the jurisdiction in which the acts occurred; and

“(B) the term ‘crime of domestic violence’ has the meaning given such term in section 237(a)(2)(E)(i).

SA 92. Mr. PAUL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 5, to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to take into custody aliens who have been charged in the United States with theft, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

Beginning on page 2, strike line 7 and all that follows through page 3, line 8, and insert the following:

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) in subparagraph (C), by striking “, or” and inserting a semicolon; and

(B) by inserting after subparagraph (D) the following:

“(E)(i) is inadmissible under paragraph (6)(A), (6)(C), or (7) of section 212(a); and

“(ii) is charged with, is arrested for, is convicted of, admits having committed, or admits committing acts which constitute the essential elements of any burglary, theft, larceny, shoplifting, or assault of a law enforcement officer offense, or any crime that results in death or serious bodily injury to another person; or

“(F) is unlawfully present in the United States and who has voted in a Federal election in violation of section 611 of title 18, United States Code.”;

(2) by redesignating paragraph (2) as paragraph (4); and

(3) by inserting after paragraph (1) the following:

“(2) **DEFINITIONS.**—For purposes of paragraph (1)(E), the terms ‘burglary’, ‘theft’, ‘larceny’, ‘shoplifting’, ‘assault of a law enforcement officer’, and ‘serious bodily injury’ have the meanings given such terms in the jurisdiction in which the acts occurred; and

“(3) **DETAINER.**—The Secretary of Homeland Security shall—

“(A) issue a detainer for an alien described in subparagraph (E) or (F) of paragraph (1); and

“(B) if the alien is not otherwise detained by Federal, State, or local officials, shall effectively and expeditiously take custody of the alien.”.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I have six 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 in open session and executive session during the session of the Senate on Thursday, January 16, 2025, at 10 a.m., to vote on committee rules and procedures and to conduct a hearing on a nomination.

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, January 16, 2025, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing on a nomination.

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

The Committee on Environment and Public Works is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, January 16, 2025, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing on a nomination.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

The Committee on Finance is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, January 16, 2025, at 10:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing on a nomination.

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

The Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, January 16, 2025, at 9 a.m., to conduct a business meeting and a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, January 16, 2025, at 10:15 a.m., to conduct a hearing on a nomination.

NOTICE: REGISTRATION OF MASS MAILINGS

The filing date for the 2024 fourth quarter Mass Mailing report is Monday, January 27, 2025. An electronic option is available on Webster that will allow forms to be submitted via a fillable PDF document. If your office did no mass mailings during this period, please submit a form that states “none.”

Mass mailing registrations or negative reports can be submitted electronically at http://webster.senate.gov/secretary/mass_mailing_form.htm or e-mailed to OPR_MassMailings@sec.senate.gov.

For further information, please contact the Senate Office of Public Records at (202) 224-0322.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT
AGREEMENT

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the filing deadline with respect to second degree

amendments to Calendar No. 1, S. 5, be at 9:45 a.m. on Friday, January 17.

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

ORDERS FOR FRIDAY, JANUARY 17,
2025

Mr. THUNE. I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned until 9:30 a.m. on Friday, January 17; that following the prayer and pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed expired, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day,

and the Senate resume consideration of Calendar No. 1, S. 5; further, that at 10 a.m. the Senate vote on the motion to invoke cloture on Calendar No. 1, S. 5.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M.
TOMORROW

Mr. THUNE. Mr. 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 5:56 p.m., adjourned until Friday, January 17, 2025, at 9:30 a.m.