United States of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 113th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 159 WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, JUNE 4, 2013 No. 77

House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
June 4, 2013.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MO BROOKS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2013, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes each, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

HOUSTON FIREFIGHTERS KILLED FIGHTING HOTEL FIRE

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, when there is a blaze, when there is a fire, when there is an explosion, when someone has an emergency medical problem, the firefighter—the EMT rush in. That is what they do. While others flee danger, the firefighter with sirens, red lights, horns, red and white trucks charge into the jaws and midst of danger. Sometimes the danger is overwhelming and firefighters are injured and some are killed.

This has been a tragic year in Texas for firefighters. On April 17 in West, Texas, 10 firefighters were killed while putting out the fire at a fertilizer plant that had exploded.

Last Friday, in the heat of the Texas noonday Sun, a restaurant on the highly traveled Southwest Freeway caught fire. Then with the high winds, the fire spread to a nearby hotel. Houston firefighters arrived at the scene in minutes. They heard screams from citizens, and they rushed into the hotel to find potential trapped guests.

The hotel suddenly became a hellish inferno. First, the two-alarm, then a five-alarm fire. It took over 2 hours to get the fires under control. While the firefighters were in the hotel looking for people who stayed there, the roof of the hotel collapsed, trapping and killing four firefighters. Thirteen others were injured—some critically.

These are photographs of the four firefighters, Mr. Speaker:

Engineer Operator EMT, Robert Bebee, right here. He was 41 years of age. He's a graduate from Dobie High School, and he was a firefighter at Station 51. He started his career at the Houston Fire Department in August of 2001. His cousin, Joshua Gandara, said when he heard his cousin died, he knew why. ''I knew he was saving somebody else.'' ''That's him. He always put people first before himself, anybody's needs before his own needs.''

Over here on the far left, photograph Mr. Speaker, is Anne Sullivan. She was 24 years of age. She was assigned to Station 58. She grew up in Sugar Land, Texas. She was just 5 feet 2 inches tall. Anne knew she wanted to be a firefighter since the day she graduated from high school. She had just graduated from the Houston Fire Department Academy in April. Anne was an avid soccer player, cross-country runner, and she ran 10 miles a day. Her father, Jack Sullivan, was in his car on the way home from work Friday when he heard on the radio about the fire. He realized the fire was in the same area where his daughter Anne worked. He wasn't sure whether or not she was involved and hoped with all his might it wouldn't be her. Then came the terrible news that four firefighters had been killed in the blaze. He started to cry. When he pulled up to his home, the emergency vehicle parked in front of his house said it all. Anne, 24, was one of the fallen firefighters.

Firefighter Captain EMT Matthew Renaud, 35 years of age. He graduated from North Shore Senior High School. He was an 11-year veteran of the fire department. Station 51 was where he was assigned. He was close to Bebee. He transferred to Station 51 to work with him because they were like brothers.

And then firefighter EMT Robert Garner, 29 years of age, Station 68. He had previously served in the United States Air Force; and since he finished serving, he wanted to be a firefighter in Houston. He did two tours of duty in Iraq. Garner's dad once told him: ''Use your training because God will be with you.'' He awoke his dad that morning when he walked out of the house to go to work. That was the last time he saw his father.

Mr. Speaker, Houston is the third largest fire department in the United States. It is the busiest. This is the most tragic event in the history of the Houston Fire Department. So tomorrow at Reliant Stadium, an estimated 30,000 citizens, firefighters, police officers, and other people will pay tribute to these amazing firefighters. They were the best we have in Houston, and we are saddened that they are gone; but we thank the good Lord that such people ever lived.

And that's just the way it is.

I insert into the RECORD the 10 firefighters killed in West, Texas, on April 17, 2013.

Printed on recycled paper.

FIREFIGHTERS KILLED IN WEST, TEXAS, EXPLOSION—APRIL 17, 2013

(1) Morris Bridges, Jr., 41, West, Texas Volunteer Fire Department.
(2) Perry Calvin, 37, Merkel, Texas Fire Department.
(3) Firefighter Jerry Chapman, 26, Abbott, Texas Fire Department.
(4) Cody Dragoo, 50, West, Texas Volunteer Fire Department.
(5) Captain Kenneth Harris, 52, Dallas, Texas Fire-Rescue.
(6) Jimmy Matus, 52, West, Texas Volunteer Fire Department.
(7) Joey Pustejovsky, 29, West, Texas Volunteer Fire Department.
(8) Firefighter Cyrus Reed, 29, Abbott, Texas Fire Department.
(9) Kevin Williams Sanders, 33, Bruceville-Eddy, Texas Volunteer Fire Department.
(10) Douglas Snokhous, 50, West, Texas Fire Department.
(11) Robert Snokhous, 48, West, Texas Volunteer Fire Department.
(12) William ''Buck'' Uptmor, Jr., 45, West, Texas Volunteer Fire Department.

TAX REFORM

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

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to come together and improve our broken, misguided, and convoluted tax system. The time is right for tax reform.

We currently spend $1 trillion through the Tax Code each year, all of which is off budget, meaning it is not scrutinized each year by appropriators. Once a tax break is written into the Tax Code, it usually remains, unlike discretionary programs which are reexamined for their necessity each year. To put this in perspective, $1 trillion would be the single largest government spending program—larger than the Pentagon's budget, larger than Social Security, and larger than Medicare or Medicaid.

As we desperately search for ways to reduce the deficit, we are making deep and painful cuts to discretionary spending. All the while, we are spending more than $1 trillion through the Tax Code with little oversight.

I have introduced a bipartisan bill with Congressman RENACCI, which would bring greater transparency and oversight to such expenditures. But in addition to greater oversight, we also need reform. While many of these tax expenditures incentivize worthwhile behavior, such as homeownership and increased savings and investment, there are others, such as the yacht interest deduction, which clearly need to be reconsidered. We are cutting the funding for the National Institutes of Health, Head Start, and Meals on Wheels, while subsidizing yachts.

Let's put this into perspective. If one of my constituents takes out a loan to buy a car to get to work or take the kids to school, the interest on that loan is not tax deductible; but if they were to go out and buy a yacht, the interest on that loan would be tax deductible.

Clearly, it's time to reexamine our Tax Code and get our priorities in order. I have a bill that would end this tax break for yachts. But rather than tackling these tax breaks individually, we need a wholesale rewrite of the Tax Code.

Our Tax Code is the product of years of small tweaks and layers of changes. We need to step back and ask ourselves: If we were to start over and rewrite the Tax Code today, what would it look like? With such limited resources, what do we need? What behavior should we be incentivizing?

Due in part to years of additions and changes, our current Tax Code is deeply recessive. According to a report released last week by the Congressional Budget Office, the richest 20 percent of households in America receive over 50 percent of the tax breaks. The top 1 percent benefited the most, receiving approximately 17 percent of all funds flowing from tax breaks.

It's time for a reexamination of our Tax Code: Who benefits from it? How much do we spend? What are our priorities?

Not only is it time for reform because of our fiscal situation; but at a time of frequent partisan gridlock, tax reform is one area where the two sides seem to agree. Members from both sides of the aisle have said tax reform is essential.

I commend Chairman CAMP and his counterpart in the Senate, Chairman BAUCUS, for their efforts to reform our Tax Code. I hope they will continue their bipartisan work and give the two Houses a package of reforms we can live with.

□ 1010

I have no illusion this will be simple or that everyone will like everything in the package, but that's the beauty of democracy—we don't have to agree on everything, but everyone's voice has to be heard. We have to compromise, and in the end, we vote. I hope we get to vote on a tax reform package that is big, bipartisan and balanced—and soon—because reforming our Tax Code will save us billions, lower tax rates, and help reduce the deficit. As we sit down to address our fiscal woes, everything has to be on the table, including the trillion dollars we spend each year on tax expenditures.

EGYPT

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

Mr. WOLF. News broke today that an Egyptian court sentenced dozens of NGO workers, including the son of Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood, our former colleague, to jail, for their involvement with prominent pro-democracy organizations.

Beginning with the December 2011 raids and throughout the course of the so-called ''investigation'' involving Freedom House, the National Democratic Institute and the International Republican Institute have been a highly politicized charade. Prior to their closure, these organizations carried out important and legitimate programs to help support citizen participation in the Egyptian transition process—the very essence of democracy and America's greatest export.

I was in Egypt in February and heard firsthand that the Egyptian Government's handling of this case is symptomatic of a broader crackdown on civil society. This was a sham trial from the start. If this decision stands, not a penny more of U.S. taxpayer money should go to the Muslim Brotherhood-led government in Cairo.

I call on President Obama and Secretary of State Kerry to personally raise this travesty of justice with the Egyptian President, Mr. Morsi, and I would urge every Member of the House and Senate to send a letter to the Egyptian Government protesting what took place yesterday in Cairo.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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

Mr. BERA of California. Today, I rise to celebrate our core values, American values, of religious freedom and tolerance. These are values that our Founders held sacred, and they are core to our Constitution.

In that light, this year across this country and across the globe, we are celebrating the 150th anniversary of the birth of Swami Vivekananda. Born in India, he was known as Hinduism's Ambassador to the West. Many say he was the first Hindu monk to visit the U.S., spreading that same message of religious freedom and tolerance. Today, my friends from the Hindu American Foundation are here in Washington, D.C., for their annual meeting. As they visit Members of this body, they will be carrying that same message of religious freedom and tolerance.

As someone who was raised in a culturally Hindu household, I was taught by my parents to honor and exhibit this same message of respect and tolerance for all religions and faith traditions. That's why, as an adult, I am part of the Unitarian Universalist tradition, a faith tradition that is rooted with our Founding Fathers and includes John Adams as one of its members, and it's this tradition that was embraced by Swami Vivekananda.

So on this 150th anniversary of his birth, let's celebrate his message of religious freedom and tolerance, and let's remember the core values that our Founding Fathers wrote into our Constitution. Let's celebrate our individual freedom of thought and faith, which was captured in this quote by Swami Vivekananda:

> Dare to be free; dare to go as far as your thoughts lead; and dare to carry that in your life.

THE AFGHANISTAN-IRAQ WAR

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

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, like all Members of Congress during the Memorial week break, I had two occasions to give different types of recognition speeches to the families of those who gave loved ones who never came back from war; so therefore I had several opportunities in eastern North Carolina, the home of Camp Lejeune Marine Base and Cherry Point Marine Corps Air Station.

Every time I would make the comment that it was time to bring our troops home from Afghanistan and that it was time to stop paying the crook named Karzai, who is the President of Afghanistan, truthfully, Mr. Speaker, I would get strong applause; and many times after the speeches, people would come up to me and say, We agree with you. It's time to stop spending this money in Afghanistan. It's time to start spending the money in America and to let the Afghans take care of themselves.

Mr. Speaker, probably a couple of weeks ago, I spoke on the floor of the House, and probably other Members had seen the article that was in The New York Times in which the CIA acknowledged that, after 10 years, they had been giving hundreds of millions of dollars to Karzai in cash. In that same article, Karzai was interviewed, and one of his comments was that of ''an easy source of petty cash.'' Karzai wants to continue to get an easy source of petty cash—tens of millions of dollars going to Karzai in order to prop him up until the Taliban takes Afghanistan over. When I think about the number of young men and women being killed in Afghanistan to prop up this corrupt leader, it reminds me of another tragedy in recent American history—the tragedy of the unnecessary war in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, this past week, in being home, I watched three times on HBO a movie called ''Taking Chance,'' which is the true story of Lieutenant Colonel Michael Strobl's journey to escort the body of PFC Chance Phelps, a fellow marine who died in Iraq, from Dover Air Force Base to the young man's funeral in Wyoming. It is a beautiful story of love, of pain, and of concern. I hope that Members of Congress as well as the American people will get a chance to see the movie called ''Taking Chance.'' It's a true story. In that story about Taking Chance home, it is a beautiful understanding of the pain and the love of those at Dover Air Force Base who receive the remains from Afghanistan and who take care of those remains. It is absolutely heartwrenching to see the love that these people have for those who have given their lives for this country.

Mr. Speaker, after seeing this movie and then reading in the papers that Iraq is falling apart, I would like to say to Mr. Rumsfeld and to the previous administration: thank you for getting us into this unnecessary war. Mr. Rumsfeld, you were wrong. You said that Iraqi oil was going to pay for the war. No. The Chinese are benefiting.

This is another article in The New York Times in which it says that China is the biggest winner. According to this article, the Chinese buy almost half of the oil produced in Iraq.

Again, the previous administration got us into an unnecessary war. In fact, a Defense Department official from the Bush administration said:

> We lost out. The Chinese had nothing to do with the war, but from an economic standpoint, they are benefiting from it, and our Fifth Fleet and Air Forces are helping to assure their supply.

Even worse, we are borrowing this Chinese money to fund this corrupt leader.

I hope that Congress will wake up. Next week, we will be debating the armed services bill. I am on that committee. I have worked across the aisle with my friends on the Democratic side to cut the funding for Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I have this photograph of a flag-draped coffin. It could have been PFC Chance Phelps' coffin—it's not, but it could have been—or it could have been the coffin of 4,400 other servicemen and women who died in Iraq.

God, please continue to bless our men and women in uniform. God, continue to bless America; and please, God, let us never forget the sacrifices made by so many in these wars that are unnecessary and in these wars that are necessary.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. As a reminder, Members should address their remarks to the Chair.

SMALL BUSINESS TAX EQUITY ACT

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Since 1996, when California voters legalized the medical use of marijuana, the movement has spread across America. Over the last 17 years, 19 States and the District of Columbia have been pioneering therapy involving the medical use of marijuana.

It has long been recognized that marijuana had therapeutic values which were utilized with chemotherapy patients to mitigate or to stop the constant nausea. People have used it to deal with chronic paralyzing pain. There is now a wide range of therapeutic uses, from a system of multiple sclerosis to helping some of our veterans with PTSD.

□ 1020

A million people seek treatment that is perfectly legal under their State laws. What is not legal is for these hundreds of legitimate businesses providing a product that is important to a million people to be able to treat their business expenses like every other business and be able to deduct them from their operating income for tax purposes.

Decades ago, a drug dealer attempted to deduct the cost of his yacht and his weapons as a business expense. Congress, understandably, responded in 1982 by making expenses associated with dealing in a controlled substance ineligible for a deduction. That fixed the drug dealer, but it is has now ensnared hundreds of legitimate businesses operating under State law, by the way, laws usually approved by a vote of the people. As a result, they cannot now deduct entirely legitimate business operating expenses; they cannot claim the work opportunity tax credit if they hire a veteran; and they cannot depreciate their American-made irrigation equipment. The deduction for the construction or operating costs of a facility that they may want to revitalize is not allowed. As a result, these small businesses end up paying an effective tax rate that is double or triple the 15 percent to 30 percent that would normally be associated with the profits on most businesses. Their effective tax rates often are 60 percent to 75 percent.

Washington and Colorado are about to begin operation of businesses for the recreational adult use of marijuana authorized by their voters last fall. The situation is thus to become more complex and a burden even greater for more emerging small businesses.

We don't have to penalize hundreds of legitimate small businesses across the country to deal with a drug dealer. I'm introducing bipartisan legislation, the Small Business Tax Equity Act of 2013. Any business under this act that operates under State law would be able to deduct legitimate expenses for their business.

We shouldn't impose punitive double, triple, or quadruple ordinary rates because Congress has not modernized either the Federal drug laws or the Tax Code. We should not force them to discontinue a vital service for a million Americans or drive it underground or, frankly, encourage evasion by punitive taxes that are unjustified or unnecessary.

Let's bring this out of the shadows and encourage these small businesses to be treated fairly. It's entirely possible that we will end up actually collecting more revenue, fostering more respect for the law, and ensuring a vital supply of medical marijuana for more than a million people who depend upon it.

BAD DECISIONS

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

Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to talk

about a couple of unrelated topics, except that they both are examples of officials in positions of power overreacting to situations and making very bad decisions as a result.

Mr. Speaker, when I read that a 5-year-old boy in Calvert County, Maryland, had been suspended from school for 10 days simply for showing a toy cap gun to his friend on the school bus, I was shocked and saddened. I became even sadder when I read the little boy was questioned for over 2 hours by school officials before his parents were called, and the boy uncharacteristically wet his pants during this interrogation. His mother said later this boy was all boy and all about rocks, frogs, and cowboys.

This interrogation was ridiculous, and a 10-day suspension was ridiculous overkill. I wondered if these school officials who did this to this little boy had lost their common sense and human decency. I am now pleased that the situation has been partially rectified by cutting the 10-day suspension back to the 3 days he has already served, and I hope the parents' request to remove the incident from the boy's school records are granted.

Rigid one-size-fits-all solutions almost never work and frequently lead to very bad, very unfair solutions. I hope that school boards all across this country will at least come to their senses and do away with so-called ''zero tolerance policies,'' especially when it comes to very small children, and especially 5-year-old boys who simply want to be boys.

A second topic that I wanted to mention today, Mr. Speaker, is about the Dodd-Frank law. The Dodd-Frank law has produced many thousands of pages of rules, regulations, and red tape in a misguided attempt to rein in abuses by some of the Nation's biggest banks; however, as is the case with most Federal regulations, this law ended up hurting the smallest banks in this Nation and, thus, helping the big banks to get even bigger.

Listen to these words from a columnist from the Washington Times:

> It's been 3 years since the Senate passed the Dodd-Frank financial reform legislation.
>
> So far, the effects are not what Washington promised. More than 200 smaller banks have failed in the wake of Dodd-Frank.
>
> Does it comfort them that politicians proclaim smaller banks were exempt from the market distortions lawmakers created?
>
> Since community banks are being forced to stay below the asset threshold forced on them by Dodd-Frank, they are lending less and making less.
>
> This further strains banks and limits job growth.
>
> We have learned once again that whenever Washington announces new regulations, hold on to your wallet.

Increasing Federal regulations, Mr. Speaker, always end up helping extremely Big Business, but makes it even harder for our smallest businesses to survive. We have this Big Government, Big Business duopoly in this Nation, and I hope those who continue to vote for bigger and bigger government realize that all they're really helping are the extremely big giants in any industry and they're hurting the small- and medium-sized businesses. I hope that this trend will at least slow down so we don't run more small- and medium-sized businesses out of existence in this Nation.

Now, finally, as I hadn't intended to say anything, Mr. Speaker, but my friend, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES), spoke about the very unnecessary wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. He was 100 percent correct. I admire his courage in speaking out in the way that he has done.

Unfortunately, the Armed Services Committee is about to produce a bill that continues this war funding at the rate of $85 billion for the war in Afghanistan just to continue in other overseas situations like in Iraq where we happen to have had the most deadly month in May that we've had in several years.

The situations are not getting better, and this country will be far better off when we start putting our own people and our own country first and stop trying to be the policemen for the world and start doing things that need to be done in this country.

CLIMATE CHANGE

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

Ms. CHU. I rise today to bring much-needed attention to a serious threat to our Nation: climate change.

There are those of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle that routinely dismiss this threat or brush it under the rug as normal or even false, but the true consequences of climate change are not lost on the American people.

Extreme weather is real. From monster tornados destroying Oklahoma, to Hurricane Katrina destroying the Jersey shore, to wildfires raging out of control in the West, climate change is not an issue that we can put off.

As Environment Task Force chair on the House Sustainable Energy and Environment Coalition, this issue is extremely important to me. In fact, it should be important to all of us because we all bear the cost. Climate change does not have geographic boundaries and it does not discriminate on whom it wreaks havoc.

If you do not believe that climate change is a threat or that the costs are real today, let me share with you a few facts:

In 2011 and 2012, there were 25 extreme weather events affecting 43 States.

In 2013, we have already started with an early and intense wildfire season in my home of southern California.

□ 1030

Extreme weather events in 2011 and 2012 caused $188 billion in economic damage and cost American taxpayers $136 billion. That is nearly $1,000 per individual taxpayer, or the equivalent of approximately a 2 percent tax increase. And these are low estimates. Literally thousands of heat, rain, and snow records were broken.

My State of California is particularly vulnerable to wildfires. In the previous decade, the average size of these wildfires was 89 acres. But in 2012, the average size was 165 acres, nearly double. And 9.2 million acres, mostly in the western U.S., were burned. And in the last 5 years, fires have been more damaging and more costly than ever before.

Other regions are vulnerable to floods, droughts, hurricanes, and tornadoes. Just recently, while storm waters were inundating homes in one part of our country, ships were unable to navigate the Mississippi River due to extremely low water levels. These are facts we cannot afford to ignore.

It is true that changes in the Earth's climate have occurred cyclically over eons. But human activity has accelerated these changes, fundamentally jeopardizing our environment. And, we do not have eons to fix it. We rely on this environment for water, air, food and so much economic activity. We cannot turn a blind eye to climate change. Instead, we need to start preparing for it and work harder to stop it. That's why I call on Congress to stop the attacks on our environment and finally pass legislation to reduce greenhouse gas and carbon pollution.

MISHANDLING OF COMPETITIVE BIDDING PROCESS

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise to voice my serious concern with Medicare's implementation of the durable medical equipment, prosthetics, orthotics, and supplies competitive bidding program.

Despite strong congressional concern about the need for further transparency, the lack of binding bids during the contract process, and the improper vetting of the financials of many firms that have been awarded contracts, Medicare still plans to move forward with implementing round two of the program on July 1.

We learned that Medicare awarded contracts under the program to dozens of firms that do not have the proper credentials to serve these contracts. In other words, leaving Medicare beneficiaries without the needed access to the durable medical equipment that allows them to live with dignity during times of disease and disability.

Unfortunately, CMS has created a situation where servicing these contracts will either violate State licensure requirements or leave contracts unfulfilled, again leaving beneficiaries and consumers without access to the

health care equipment that they need. Furthermore, unqualified bids from firms that are unlicensed to service contracts create significant distortions of the bid prices in every bidding area nationwide.

I'm extremely concerned that mishandling of the bidding process is going to have a devastating impact on Medicare beneficiaries. This is a serious issue that warrants a full review of the process and a delay of round two until this fatally flawed program is fixed.

I encourage my colleague to join me and Congressman BRUCE BRALEY in cosigning a letter to the Medicare administrator requesting an administrative delay of the durable medical equipment competitive bidding program. This is absolutely necessary to ensure that older adults have access to the equipment that they require to live at home with independence and dignity. It also is about jobs as one of the unintended consequences, I believe, but it is still a devastating consequence regarding how the implementation of round two will continue to see the loss of small businesses all throughout this great Nation. And so I just encourage my colleagues to join Congressman BRALEY and I in signing this letter to the Medicare administrator.

HOW MANY MORE CHILDREN HAVE TO DIE?

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

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, it has now been almost 6 months since the tragedy of Newtown. The American response to that tragedy was quick and overwhelming. And yet, we have done nothing to prevent such a tragedy from happening again.

In fact, many of my colleagues here in this institution seem all too ready to forget Newtown and the gun violence epidemic that is devastating families and communities across our country every single day.

According to Slate's gun-death tracker, an estimated 4,620 people have died as a result of gun violence in America since Newtown—4,620 people.

In 12 U.S. States, gun deaths now outpace auto deaths.

A new analysis from the Violence Policy Center found that in 2010, there were 31,672 firearm deaths and 35,498 motor vehicle deaths, compared with 1999, when there were 28,000 firearm deaths and 42,000 motor vehicle deaths, which is startling considering more than 90 percent of the American households own a car while less than one-third of American households own a gun.

We require auto manufacturers to include safety features like seatbelts and airbags, and to pass crash safety tests, and lives are being saved as a result.

By 2015, gun deaths will outnumber auto deaths on a national scale. Think about that. More gun deaths than auto deaths, and we require all these precautions and restrictions on manufacturers to make sure our cars are safe and we do nothing—nothing—when it comes to gun manufacturers. Think about that. Mandatory safety measures, and auto manufacturers can be held liable for defects in their products. We expect cars to be built safely, but when it comes to guns, a product designed to kill, manufacturers have been given a free pass. They can't be held liable for the deaths and destruction their products may cause. We don't even require gun manufacturers to make guns child-safe.

How many more children have to die as a result of senseless gun violence and avoidable gun accidents? New York Times columnist Joe Nocera is producing a weekly ''Gun Report'' that compiles gun deaths and injuries from around the country. I'm going to read a few of the recent posts since Newtown that deal specifically with children.

A 2-year-old boy is dead after an accidental self-inflicted gunshot wound. Trenton Mathis shot himself in the face with a 9-millimeter pistol in a house in Cherokee County, Texas, while at home with his great-grandmother.

A 6-year-old girl was shot in the leg by her father during a boisterous party in Federal Heights, Colorado.

Joshua Johnson, 4, was playing with a gun at a Memphis apartment complex when it went off. He was pronounced dead at the scene.

A Garland, Texas, toddler was fatally shot in his home in what police are calling a tragic accident. Three-year-old John O'Brien was shot in the head with a handgun in front of his mother, father, and two young sisters. He was taken to Children's Medical Center in Dallas, where he later died from his injuries.

The 4-year-old son of a Jackson County, Michigan, sheriff's deputy accidentally shot and killed himself. Authorities say it happened around 5 p.m. in the deputy's home.

Michael Easter, a 3-year-old boy in Liberty Township, Michigan, died after he accidentally shot himself in the head while alone in his parents' bedroom. Police are unsure how the boy gained access to the gun. Michael was home with his mother and two sisters at the time.

A 3-year-old toddler accidentally shot himself in the head with a relative's gun but was listed in stable condition at a Nashville, Tennessee, hospital.

A teen boy accidentally shot and killed his 12-year-old brother in Orlando, Florida. The shooting happened at home in the Lake Nona area. Investigators said they are working to determine what led to the shooting.

A dad accidentally shot his son dead as he cleaned his gun in the family's living room. Christopher Stanlane, 34, was wiping down a loaded weapon in his home in Fairmont, North Carolina, when it discharged. His 10-year-old son, Christopher Stanlane, Jr., was watching television, and was struck in the back of his head with a bullet. His 8-year-old daughter was also in the room. The boy was pronounced dead at the scene.

How many more children have to die before Congress acts?

□ 1040

MORE CAN BE DONE FOR VETERANS ACROSS THE NATION

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

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to talk about the veterans' disability backlog, but this time on a positive note.

First I want to thank Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Committee Chair JOHN CULBERSON and Ranking Member SANFORD BISHOP for their work on the fiscal year 2014 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs appropriations bill and for including report language that my California colleague, Representative PAUL COOK, and I recommended to address the backlog of claims at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Our veterans are heroes, and they deserve the benefits they've earned. The VA has set a goal of processing all disability claims within 125 days by the year 2015. This is an ambitious goal that deserves our attention as the agency works to meet its self-imposed deadline.

Unfortunately, too many VA regional offices across the country are underperforming by failing to process benefits claims for veterans in a timely manner. Recent data indicates that it takes 552 days, on average, for a claim to be processed at the VA's Oakland regional office, which serves the veterans in my district. This is unacceptable. While I'm pleased that the VA has made a concerted effort to improve accuracy and timeliness at the Oakland RO, more can be done for veterans across the Nation.

The VA has made a genuine effort to help veterans suffering from Agent Orange, posttraumatic stress, and to recognize the special needs of women veterans, among others. In addition, the VA recently announced it would mandate overtime at its regional offices and place a priority on claims pending for more than 1 year.

However, we must hold the VA accountable for its results. Additional oversight and accountability will not only benefit our Nation's veterans and their families, but it will allow Congress to ensure the VA has the resources it needs to properly support our heroes.

In addition to these efforts, I was joined by a bipartisan group of colleagues in requesting that the VA submit quarterly reports for each regional office where disability claims are pending for an average of 200 days or more.

These reports must outline any progress the RO has made as well as the steps it's taking to reduce the backlogs, such as hiring more claims processors or requiring additional training.

I am pleased that this language was included in the committee report accompanying H.R. 2216. This is a move in the right direction as Congress continues its oversight of the VA to improve the lives of our veterans.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF FOUR FALLEN HOUSTON FIREFIGHTERS

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise with a very sad duty and, as well, an appreciation to my colleagues from Texas who joined me yesterday with a 1-minute request of silence, commemoration of the four fallen firefighters in Houston, Texas.

First responders belong to all of us, no matter where they live. When a devastating incident occurs that causes them to lose their lives, we all feel the pain and sadness for them and the families that mourn them.

We in Texas recently lost a number of firefighters in West, Texas. Now, sadly, I come today to acknowledge the loss of four firefighters in the Houston Fire Department in the city of Houston: Matthew Renaud, Robert Bebee, Robert Garner, and Anne Sullivan. Unfortunately, these wonderful people lost their lives in a fire where they were fighting to save the lives of others.

The mission of firefighters is constantly with courage and commitment and compassion, and today I recount the history of the Houston firefighters and fire department.

March 14, 2012, was the last time the city of Houston lost a firefighter in the line of duty when Senior Captain Thomas Dillon died. 1929 marked the last time more than two firefighters lost their lives in the line of duty, when Edgar Grant and Harry Oxford and John Little were killed when their engine was struck by a train.

But on May 31, just a few days ago, 2013, a 5-alarm fire, just after noon, at the location of a motel and restaurant, is now the most deadly fire in the history of the 118 years of the Houston City Fire Department.

Sadly, Captain EMT Matthew Renaud of Station 51, Engineer Operator EMT Robert Bebee of Station 51, Firefighter EMT Robert Garner of Station 68, and Probationary Firefighter Anne Sullivan of Station 68 died in the line of duty.

All we can see as we look to the heavens is that we hope that they will rest in peace. But they were our brothers and our sisters.

Anne Sullivan of Station 68 was a gifted athlete who played soccer and was a cross-country runner, focused her life's ambition upon graduating from high school to become a firefighter and began her quest by joining the Wharton County Junior College Fire Academy. After graduation, she became a student at the Houston Fire Department Academy, while also previously doing work in another jurisdiction.

Whereas, Firefighter EMT Robert Garner of Station 68 was proud to call himself a Houston firefighter who sought out this honor after leaving the United States Air Force, where he honorably served his country and completed two tours of duty in Iraq and his fire department career at the Val Jahnke Fire Academy.

Captain Matthew Renaud, who served the Houston Fire Department for 11½ years, joined the Houston Fire Department in October of 2001 and was assigned to Station 51 upon graduation from the academy and awarded the Unit Meritorious Medal for saving a female who had been trapped in an apartment.

And Engineer Operator EMT Robert Bebee of Station 51 graduated from Dobie High School in southwest Houston in 1990 and began his fire department career at the fire academy on August 6, 2001, but served the majority of his career at Station 51.

Over the last couple of days, I've visited the command station, logistics, and the firemen's union, and then went to Fire Station 51.

To Fire Stations 51 and 68, we offer our deepest sympathy in understanding that your brothers and sister have been lost. But today we also pay tribute, because the members of the Texas delegation will be introducing a resolution in honor of these heroes. And we're reminded of their words and the words in the Fireman's Creed, that their work is to save lives, the lives of men, the lives of women, but it is God's work.

Those fallen heroes were engaged in God's work, for they were looking for lost souls that might have been in that building, that horrific, horrible fire that has seen thousands of Houstonians go by to pay tribute; and thousands more to go by and pay tribute at Fire Stations 51 and 68 and also to acknowledge Local 341.

Tomorrow, Houston will grieve together and, as well, I want them to know that the Members of the United States Congress grieve with them as we introduce this resolution.

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 49 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

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

PRAYER

Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami, Kauai Aadheenam Hindu Monastery, Kapaa, Hawaii, offered the following prayer:

May today's session of the House of Representatives, to which Americans rightly turn for leadership, be abundantly blessed by the Lord Supreme.

Through personal introspection, a collaborative heart, and by God's all-pervasive grace, may the Members present here, despite differing views and staunchly held convictions, find the wisdom to craft mutually acceptable solutions to our Nation's challenges.

The tragic Boston Marathon bombings, still vivid in all our minds, implore us to advocate the humanity of a nonviolent approach in all of life's dimensions. Hindu scripture declares, without equivocation, that the highest of high ideals is to never knowingly harm anyone.

May we here in this Chamber, and all the people of our great Nation, endeavor to face even our greatest difficulties with an unwavering commitment to seek out and to find nonviolent solutions.

Peace, peace, peace to us, and peace to all beings.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. COTTON led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

> I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

WELCOMING SATGURU BODHINATHA VEYLANSWAMI

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, Congresswoman TULSI GABBARD and I are proud to have the opportunity to welcome Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami, the spiritual leader and head of Kauai's Hindu monastery. He has come here today to give the opening prayer on the Hindu American Foundation's 10th Annual Capitol Hill Advocacy Day, and he is a true leader in the Hindu community.

Satguru has been head of the monastery since 2001, and works to spread

the principles of peace and inclusiveness around the community. Additionally, his achievements have international reach. Not only does he oversee the Himalayan Academy's various publications, he serves as a publisher of the international magazine Hinduism Today.

Furthermore, Satguru dedicates his time to cultivating the religious instruction of Hindu youth around the world through producing a series of books that teach Hinduism's ethical restraints, and teach religious observances as well.

Thank you, Satguru, for your opening prayer.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

HONORING THE MEMORY AND SACRIFICE OF CODY CARPENTER AND JOEL CAMPORA

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

Mr. COTTON. Today, on behalf of a grateful State, I rise to honor Scott County Sheriff Cody Carpenter and Arkansas Game and Fish wildlife officer Joel Campora, who died heroically last week trying to save their fellow Arkansans from flash floods.

Sheriff Carpenter leaves behind a wife and four children. Officer Campora leaves behind a wife and two daughters. Along with my fellow Arkansans, I want to express my deepest condolences to their families, their communities, and their brothers and sisters in law enforcement.

But even as we mourn their deaths and console their loved ones, let us also honor their sacrifice and courage. Sheriff Carpenter and Officer Campora died in the line of duty protecting their fellow citizens. John 15:13 says:

> Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

These men volunteered for duty that can call for that ultimate sacrifice every day. Now that they have laid down their lives, I join my State and my country in mourning and celebrating their cherished memory.

JOBS NOW ACT

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

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it has now been 884 days; no serious jobs bill yet.

I'm proud to announce a powerful alternative to this shameful inaction. Today, I am again introducing the Jobs Now Act, a bill that would give local officials the resources and flexibility they need to retain, hire, and train workers immediately.

If this sounds like some left-wing idea, I ask you to consider who served as the key initiator and advocate for the CETA program on which this legislation is based: President Richard Milhous Nixon.

I have no doubt that many Americans hearing me today benefited—either directly or indirectly—from CETA.

Mr. Speaker, let's return to the days when investing in job creation and human potential was a bipartisan cause. Let's bring this important bill to the floor for a vote.

Our mantra in this Congress should be jobs, jobs, jobs.

DEAL WITH THE DEBT NOW

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, this week the national debt reached an unprecedented record of over $16.85 trillion. Such a figure is so mind-boggling that I will make this simple. This means that every person in the United States now owes $53,329 to pay down the debt, and every U.S. taxpayer's debt share is now $148,186.

With a debt at such high levels, it is not surprising that we are still experiencing an anemic 2 percent growth rate, which has produced the lowest job participation rate in 30 years. The ever-rising public debt threatens to drive up interest rates, crowd out private investment, and increase inflation. The implications will be severe and pronounced for all Americans, but most especially for the poor, the elderly, and the middle class.

Mr. Speaker, if we don't deal with the debt now, the debt will deal with us.

□ 1210

LET'S BRIDGE THE INFRASTRUCTURE GAP

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

Ms. HAHN. Mr. Speaker, last month we saw two bridges in this country collapse in 1 week. If that fact doesn't get us to act, maybe this one will:

According to the Federal Highway Administration, over 70,000 bridges nationwide have been ''deemed structurally deficient.'' That's one in nine bridges.

Congress can't continue to kick this can down the road on this critical issue. That's why I've called on my colleagues on the Transportation Committee to hold hearings to focus on the state of our Nation's bridges.

Last week we had the Special Freight Transportation Panel in southern California on a 3-day fact-finding trip to see how businesses rely on our transportation arteries, bridges, highways, ports to grow and sustain the trade industry and our global economy.

When we invest in our infrastructure, we create a future with good-paying jobs; a strong, thriving economy; and an efficient, safe transportation system.

We have Americans who need work. We have an infrastructure that needs fixing. Let's bridge that gap.

THE NORTH FORK WATERSHED PROTECTION ACT

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

Mr. DAINES. Mr. Speaker, as a fifth-generation Montanan and sportsman, I know how special the Treasure State is. Our State's rivers and mountains and our outdoor heritage are an important part of every Montanan's way of life and play an important part in our State's economy.

It's important that we work together to protect these valuable resources so that future generations can enjoy them for years to come. The North Fork Watershed, on the western slope of Glacier National Park, is critical to our State's outdoor heritage and the tourism economy in the Flathead Valley.

Efforts to protect the North Fork Watershed, like the North Fork Watershed Protection Act, is a good example of how we can work together to put Montana first. That's why I'm introducing legislation to protect this valuable resource, while also ensuring that current recreational uses, livestock management, and forest management in this region are maintained.

I'm glad to be part of this important, bipartisan effort in leading the charge in the House to achieve the goals that the Flathead community supports.

IT'S TIME FOR COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM

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

Mr. SWALWELL of California. I rise today to ask Speaker BOEHNER to recognize that the time is now for this House to take up comprehensive immigration reform.

I spent all of last week on an innovation road show. I went up and down Silicon Valley—and I have northern Silicon Valley in my district—and I listened to the job creators, I listened to the innovators. And one message is clear: we have unfilled jobs here in America that require immigration fixes, require increasing the H–1B visas so that we can create jobs behind high-skilled immigrants.

We know that Silicon Valley was built on a three-legged stool: access to capital, brain trusts, and a risk-taking culture. And we know that immigrants

build jobs behind them. They have that brain trust. They have that risk-taking culture. Forty percent of the largest companies in America were built by immigrants or the children of immigrants.

It's time to also put the 11.5 million Americans who are undocumented on a pathway to citizenship. I've been on the ground. I've talked to the innovators, and I hear their cry.

The time is now. So for the sake of our economy, and the sake of our communities, the right thing to do is to put these undocumented immigrants on a path to citizenship and to make sure that we can take high-skilled workers from across the world, put them in our country, and create thousands of new jobs behind them.

SEQUESTRATION AND THE TOBYHANNA ARMY DEPOT

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

Mr. MARINO. Last week, thousands of my constituents felt even more pain as a result of the President's sequestration when Tobyhanna Army Depot began to furlough over 5,000 of its civilian employees.

One constituent called my office and asked, ''How are we supposed to afford our mortgage if my husband is not allowed to work? There must be a more logical way to cut the budget.''

Well, Mr. Speaker, that is what I would like to know. Why can the President jet around the country to play golf on the taxpayers' dime when the hardworking families cannot make ends meet?

The House acted twice last year to replace the sequestration with more commonsense solutions, but the Senate refused to consider these bills. They even rejected a measure that would have given the administration more flexibility in implementing these cuts.

Because of the President's insistence and the Senate's inaction, these families will now face even more financial uncertainty, struggling to pay their bills instead of earning a steady paycheck.

Mr. Speaker, the people of the 10th Congressional District have had enough of the President's rhetoric, and they have certainly had enough of his sequestration. It's time that the President started working for the American people.

PROJECT LABOR AGREEMENTS

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

Mr. KILMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of a policy that allows Federal agencies to determine whether it makes sense for certain construction projects to have project labor agreements, PLAs, which are agreements between owners, including Federal agencies, and workers that establish worksite conditions.

Federal agencies are currently empowered to consider PLAs as a means of reducing on-the-job conflicts, saving money, speeding up construction, and improving efficiency and worker safety. Unfortunately, this body will soon consider removing this tool from our construction toolbox.

While they may not always be the answer on complex projects, PLAs make it more likely that a project will be done right the first time, on time, and on budget. That's why some of the most successful companies in the world, including Boeing, in my State, use a similar model for construction. It's why the Department of Energy uses a PLA at Hanford, and the Department of Energy has a PLA at the Explosives Handling Wharf in Kitsap County in my district.

PLAs are open to all companies, union and nonunion, who see the value of this tool. At a time when we're looking to rein in wasteful spending, PLAs can be a successful model in improving and promoting high-quality, cost-efficient construction.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF OUR FIRST RESPONDERS

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

Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, last week I had the pleasure of spending time with first responders and public safety personnel in my district. I toured facilities in seven counties, meeting with the men and women who are the first line of defense, the ones who go into danger rather than run away from it, the folks who are so critical to the safety of our citizens.

I believe it's important for our first responders to know that their hard work and sacrifice are appreciated. As one final step of this tour, I'd like to extend my deepest appreciation and gratitude to all those whom I did not get to personally speak with last week. On behalf of South Carolina's Third District, and Americans all across the country, we thank you for everything that you do.

Mr. Speaker, it is also with great sadness that I rise today in honor of the fallen first responders, many of whom are volunteers, who gave their lives in Houston, Texas, and West, Texas, recently. May the Members of this House honor the memory and heroism of every first responder who has lost their life serving this great Nation.

May God bless the families of the fallen. And I ask every American to remember them in your thoughts and prayers.

May God continue to bless the United States of America with heroes such as these.

COLLEGE AFFORDABILITY

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

Mr. CARNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss the urgent need to make college more affordable. As the father of a rising college freshman, I have renewed appreciation for the astronomical cost of college.

On July 1, the problem will get even worse. Interest rates on Federal student loans are set to double; and that's why I cosponsored the Student Loan Relief Act, which would extend the current, lower rates for 2 more years.

Last month, I voted against a proposal that would have increased rates with the extra money raised going to the Federal Government. Balancing the budget on the backs of our college students is just plain wrong.

The amount of money Americans owe in student loans is greater than the amount we owe in credit card debt. This is a serious problem with serious consequences, and it's getting worse.

The future of our country, we know, depends on the ability of our young people to compete in this global economy. This means making it easier to go to college, not harder.

I urge my colleagues to support legislation that will keep interest rates low and make college more affordable.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF STAFF SERGEANT BOBBY BRIDGET AND MR. AND MRS. STEVE MASSA

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

Mr. PITTENGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay honor and tribute to three wonderful North Carolina heroes, Army Staff Sergeant Bobby Bridget, and his neighbors back home, Steve and Pat Massa.

Sergeant Bridget served us in Afghanistan with three tours. During that time, his job was to go find IEDs and then take those IEDs and dismantle them to protect his fellow soldiers.

Meanwhile, his neighbors back home, Pat and Steve Massa, they would take care of his lawn, they would do the errands around the house to make sure that their neighbor could go and serve his country and defend our freedoms.

Well, the rest of the story is, Mr. Speaker, that the Massas, during this time, were going through their own challenges. They had cancer surgeries; they had cancer treatments. It was a very difficult, emotional time; yet they did what it took to take care of their neighbor.

We're grateful for the service of Sergeant Bridget and particularly grateful for the wonderful neighbors that he had in the Massas.

May God richly bless these people.

□ 1220

REPEAL SEQUESTRATION

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

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, it has now been more than 2 months since across-the-board sequestration cuts were enacted, devastating so many important programs that Americans rely upon. Instead of working together to find compromise to fully reverse these automatic, indiscriminate spending cuts, House Republicans have voted for the Ryan budget, leaving these cuts in place and hurting our economy, just to gain political points.

This is not President Obama's sequestration. The GOP effort to make sequestration a reality shows they are ready and willing to take our economy backwards at a time when Americans are desperate to move the Nation forward. In fact, sequestration will cost 750,000 jobs this year alone.

House Democrats want sequestration repealed and replaced with a combination of revenue and cuts. The President has proposed $2 in spending cuts for every $1 of revenue. But Republicans remain dug in. Republicans refuse to address 70,000 children who could lose Head Start. They refuse to address the SNAP program, which is very important to feed the elderly and children. Republicans refuse to address the cuts to NIH and other very important programs.

We must work together. We must repeal sequestration.

VISIT OF PRESIDENT OF BURMA TO THE U.S.

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, the visit a couple of weeks ago of Burma's President, with the surrounding high-level honors, was a little disturbing. This leader's regime has engaged in well-documented horrific attacks against the various ethnic minority groups in his country—ethnic cleansing of minority groups.

When looking to the future of the country, President Thein Sein said last year that the ethnic youth should ''hold laptops'' and ''try to live a good life.'' Laptop computers are going to suddenly erase the effects of years of violence, racism, rape, and decimation by the ruthless military? I don't think so.

We must stand firmly with the minority ethnic groups in protecting their rights and ensuring justice is done for all the violence perpetrated by the Burmese military before we rush in to extracting resources and applauding democracy gains with no record of results.

And to the minority ethnic groups of Burma, many of us still stand with you.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE UPCOMING HURRICANE SEASON

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

Mr. PETERS of California. I rise today as chair of the Climate Task Force in the House Sustainable Energy and Environment Coalition. June 1 marked the start of hurricane season, and this is a reminder that we must start planning ahead for extreme weather that we now face regularly, while also recognizing the cost of inaction.

Taxpayers spent $136 billion on disaster relief in just the last 2 years. However, FEMA estimates that every $1 spent on planning, preparation, and prevention yields the Nation $4 in future benefits. We are facing harsher droughts, deadlier heat waves, more severe storms, and, in San Diego, increasingly intense wildfires. In 2012 alone, wildfires burned 9.2 million acres in the United States, an area larger than the States of Delaware, Rhode Island, and Connecticut combined.

There's no clear national plan for how to make our society more resilient in the face of extreme weather. This is unacceptable. We deserve better. Developing a planning structure for community resiliency is necessary. It will reduce Federal spending, save lives, and it's what Washington could do more of. We must act now.

FOCUSING ON SOLUTIONS

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

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to serve in the House, where we're continuing to work on the American peoples' priorities: encouraging job creation, growing our economy, and stopping policies that hurt American families.

Already this year, we voted to create tens of thousands of jobs and move toward North American energy independence by passage of Keystone pipeline legislation.

We've also voted to save jobs from policies that hurt our economic growth by passing a budget that will balance in 10 years and repealing the President's health care law that is already costing jobs.

In addition, we've worked to expand opportunities for all Americans by passing legislation that allows for a better trained workforce in removing barriers to help balance the needs of family time and work.

Our focus is on solutions—not blame and excuses—to help encourage a healthy and prosperous economy, to create jobs, and to expand opportunities for all Americans.

IN HONOR OF HOUSTON FIREFIGHTERS

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

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor the Houston firefighters who lost their lives and were injured battling a deadly five-alarm blaze.

Every year, our Houston Firefighters Pension Board holds a memorial service to honor all firefighters, but especially those who gave their lives in the service as firefighters. I have attended many of those services over the years.

Last Friday, May 31, the deadliest fire in the 118-year history of the Houston Fire Department broke out in southwest Houston. Unfortunately, four brave firefighters lost their lives performing their duties. Captain Matthew Renaud, Engineer Operator Robert Bebee, Firefighter Robert Garner, and Firefighter Anne Sullivan tragically fell during the fire. Many firefighters were injured, including Engineer Operator Anthony Livesay, EMT Robert Yarbrough, EMT Foster Santos, Engineer Operator and Paramedic Marcus Hernandez, and Captain William Dowling. These firefighters were injured and died trying to save people in a motel unit.

Our hearts and our prayers go out to their families and friends. Being the grandson and nephew of a family of Houston firefighters, I understand the sacrifice their loved ones made. We shall never forget their heroic efforts to keep us safe.

WHERE ARE THE JOBS?

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

Mr. POSEY. Where are the jobs?

I'll tell you where they're not. They're not created or seemingly even encouraged by the U.S. Department of Commerce. The Department is still bullying small mom-and-pop businesses to complete lengthy, time-consuming, and expensive questionnaires about their personal business; but they don't have time to answer my questions about the need, the justification, or the actual use of the information in those questionnaires.

A letter received by a constituent just yesterday threatens that if they don't get their economic census back within 2 weeks, they will refer their case to general counsel. How can constituents trust this agency when even the formerly independent IRS is now used as a partisan tool to punish people the administration does not like?

If the Department of Commerce really cared about improving our commerce, they would leave our mom-and-pops alone to make a living, creating jobs.

ANNIVERSARY OF PASSAGE OF TITLE IX

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

Ms. GABBARD. Mr. Speaker, 41 years ago, President Nixon signed the landmark Title IX legislation into law, giving girls and boys equal opportunities in sports. But what many people don't know is that there was a 5-foot, 2-inch Japanese American woman from Hawaii who was behind this law. While she may not have been a contender for the WNBA, she laid the groundwork for women to participate in sports at every level. She was a fierce fighter for equal treatment and rights for women and held the seat in Congress which I'm privileged to hold today.

Congresswoman Patsy Mink led the way to create equal opportunities for women and girls with her landmark Title IX bill. She grew up wanting to be a doctor and was rejected from over a dozen medical schools in the 1940s simply for being a woman. She went on to attend law school and dedicated her life to battling the status quo.

Title IX is a mere 37 words, but over the last 40 years it has made an incredible impact in the lives of young women around the country. Today girls can play basketball, volleyball, golf, tennis, or even football. Patsy opened the door for these opportunities. Many young women have walked through this door, paving the way for great athletes everywhere.

GET OUR ECONOMY GOING AGAIN

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

Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, as many have heard me say on the floor of this Chamber many times before, we have a tremendous opportunity to revitalize America's economy through domestic energy production. We can create jobs, lower energy costs, and become energy independent. We simply need to seize that opportunity. And to do that, we need this administration and its Federal agencies to be partners in progress rather than roadblocks to prosperity. Job creation does not mean hiring more bureaucrats, and ''no'' should be the answer of last resort after all other avenues have failed.

Two weeks ago, the Department of Energy approved one of many requested permits to export liquefied natural gas. Given that a recent study showed that exporting liquid natural gas can lead to over 200,000 U.S. jobs, it's time for the Department of Energy to approve the rest of the applications and let the market drive our success. Cut the red tape for job creators. And if we embrace a path to energy independence, one that allows the market to pick winners and losers rather than Washington, D.C., we'll get our economy going again.

□ 1230

ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I am a strong advocate for the First Amendment and for the freedom of the press. I believe that there is no question of the sanctity of that provision, even to the extent of being a strong supporter of the SHIELD Act so many years ago, and now joining my colleagues, Congressmen TED POE and JOHN CONYERS and others, on legislation to provide that armor.

But I will not stand by while malicious and unsubstantiated attacks go against a very fine and outstanding public servant, and that is the Attorney General of the United States of America, Eric Holder. I was in the Judiciary Committee when he was asked a question about whether or not he had prosecuted or intended to prosecute anyone in the press. And his words were very clear:

> We have a long way to go to prosecute the press. You've got to go a long way. With regard to the potential prosecution of the press for the disclosure of material, that is not something I have been involved in or heard of or would think would be wise to do.

That is what Holder said in the hearing. Holder did not have anything to do with prosecuting anyone, and that particular affidavit or subpoena was in 2010. The Justice Department has not charged or prosecuted anybody in the press. Stop the malicious attacks on Eric Holder and the President of the United States of America. Enough is enough.

INEXCUSABLE IRS ACTIONS

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

Mrs. HARTZLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the inexcusable actions taken by the IRS. Their decision to target conservative groups based on their political beliefs transcends party politics and represents an indefensible abuse of power. These actions indicate that the agency was operating with political agendas in mind—and not the best interests of the American people—and that must change.

We must refuse to tolerate this egregious behavior, and we must provide major oversight into the IRS so the American people remain protected and can trust that the Tax Code will treat them fairly.

The American people demand answers—not just an apology—from the Internal Revenue Service. That is why Congress, the House Ways and Means Committee, and the Oversight and Government Reform Committee have led, and will continue to lead, vigorous and thorough investigations into this issue, seek out those responsible, and ensure that they are held accountable for their actions.

Federal Government officials should implement the law fairly, not abuse their power for political gain.

HONORING THE LIFE AND MEMORY OF CAPTAIN BRANDON L. CYR

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

Mr. HULTGREN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and memory of a true American hero, Captain Brandon L. Cyr.

Yesterday morning, I was humbled to attend Brandon's interment at Arlington National Cemetery. Standing on that hallowed ground surrounded by Brandon and his fallen comrades is a sobering testament to the sacrifice of those who gave their lives in the defense of freedom.

Brandon was killed in the line of duty when the plane he was commanding was shot down over Afghanistan on April 27, 2013.

A distinguished officer, accomplished pilot and dedicated friend, Brandon received the Meritorious Service Medal, five Air Medals and the Air Force Achievement Medal. At the time of his death, Brandon had logged 1,700 flight hours—900 of those in combat. Brandon enters into the honored company of those who, in the words of Abraham Lincoln, ''gave the last full measure of devotion'' so ''that this Nation might live.''

It is with heartfelt gratitude that I recognize Brandon, his family, and American veterans and their families everywhere for their service and dedication to this Nation.

OBAMACARE

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

Mr. STUTZMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of 600 people in Fort Wayne, Indiana, who are earning smaller paychecks today because of ObamaCare. Just last week, the largest school district in Indiana, Fort Wayne Community Schools, announced it would cut the hours of 610 part-time cafeteria workers and teachers' aides. These are hardworking folks who play a vital role in the education of our children. Officials running schools across Indiana and the Nation are beginning to realize these unsustainable costs and are taking similar measures to comply with its mandate.

Mr. Speaker, we know now that President Obama's claim that ''under ObamaCare if you like your health care you can keep it'' was false. Now we know that ObamaCare is also hurting the very people it was meant to help.

Employees in school districts across the country deserve certainty and security, and they don't have it. Americans are being crushed by the cost of

the Affordable Care Act. We must repeal ObamaCare and start over for the sake of Americans and our Nation's children.

RECREATIONAL FISHING AND HUNTING

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

Mr. HOLDING. Mr. Speaker, Americans are struggling to find jobs in our economy, so we must take advantage of the opportunities for job growth where and whenever they arise. And today I want to highlight the positive economic impact of recreational fishing and hunting.

Mr. Speaker, nationwide, sportsmen contribute over $3 billion of State and Federal revenue annually through hunting and fishing licenses, fees, and excise taxes.

In my home State of North Carolina, hunters and anglers produced over 35,000 jobs in 2011—more than the combined employment of the two largest private employers in the State. Sportsmen and -women generated $249 million in State and local taxes in 2011—enough to support the salaries of over 6,000 police and sheriff's patrol officers.

I rise today to support this important industry and what it is doing for my home State. Hunting, fishing, boating, and other recreational sports foster growth in our economy and create jobs.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

JUNE 4, 2013.

Hon. JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker, The Capitol, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on June 4, 2013 at 11:00 a.m.:

That the Senate passed with an amendment H.R. 588.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS,
Clerk.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on the motion to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Any record vote on the postponed question will be taken later.

RUTH MOORE ACT OF 2013

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 671) to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the disability compensation evaluation procedure of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for veterans with mental health conditions related to military sexual trauma, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 671

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 ''Ruth Moore Act of 2013''.

SEC. 2. REPORTS ON CLAIMS FOR DISABILITIES INCURRED OR AGGRAVATED BY MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA.

(a) ANNUAL REPORTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter VI of chapter 11 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''§ 1164. Reports on claims for disabilities incurred or aggravated by military sexual trauma

''(a) REPORTS.—Not later than December 1, 2014, and each year thereafter through 2018, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on covered claims submitted during the previous fiscal year.

''(b) ELEMENTS.—Each report under subsection (a) shall include the following:

''(1) The number of covered claims submitted to or considered by the Secretary during the fiscal year covered by the report.

''(2) Of the covered claims listed under paragraph (1), the number and percentage of such claims—

''(A) submitted by each sex;

''(B) that were approved, including the number and percentage of such approved claims submitted by each sex; and

''(C) that were denied, including the number and percentage of such denied claims submitted by each sex.

''(3) Of the covered claims listed under paragraph (1) that were approved, the number and percentage, listed by each sex, of claims assigned to each rating percentage.

''(4) Of the covered claims listed under paragraph (1) that were denied—

''(A) the three most common reasons given by the Secretary under section 5104(b)(1) of this title for such denials; and

''(B) the number of denials that were based on the failure of a veteran to report for a medical examination.

''(5) The number of covered claims that, as of the end of the fiscal year covered by the report, are pending and, separately, the number of such claims on appeal.

''(6) For the fiscal year covered by the report, the average number of days that covered claims take to complete beginning on the date on which the claim is submitted.

''(7) A description of the training that the Secretary provides to employees of the Veterans Benefits Administration specifically with respect to covered claims, including the frequency, length, and content of such training.

''(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

''(1) The term 'covered claims' means claims for disability compensation submitted to the Secretary based on a covered mental health condition alleged to have been incurred or aggravated by military sexual trauma.

''(2) The term 'covered mental health condition' means post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, depression, or other mental health diagnosis described in the current version of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders published by the American Psychiatric Association that the Secretary determines to be related to military sexual trauma.

''(3) The term 'military sexual trauma' means, with respect to a veteran, psychological trauma, which in the judgment of a mental health professional, resulted from a physical assault of a sexual nature, battery of a sexual nature, or sexual harassment which occurred during active military, naval, or air service.''.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

''1164. Reports on claims for disabilities incurred or aggravated by military sexual trauma.''.

(3) INITIAL REPORT.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to Congress an initial report described in section 1164 of title 38, United States Code, as added by paragraph (1), by not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act. Such initial report shall be in addition to the annual reports required under such section beginning in December 2014.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs should update and improve the regulations of the Department of Veterans Affairs with respect to military sexual trauma by—

(1) ensuring that military sexual trauma is specified as an in-service stressor in determining the service-connection of post-traumatic stress disorder by including military sexual trauma as a stressor described in section 3.304(f)(3) of title 38, Code of Federal Regulations; and

(2) recognizing the full range of physical and mental disabilities (including depression, anxiety, and other disabilities as indicated in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders published by the American Psychiatric Association) that can result from military sexual trauma.

(c) PROVISION OF INFORMATION.—During the period beginning on the date that is 15 months after the date of the enactment of this Act and ending on the date on which the Secretary updates and improves regulations as described in subsection (b), the Secretary shall—

(1) provide to each veteran who has submitted a covered claim or been treated for military sexual trauma at a medical facility of the Department with a copy of the report under subsection (a)(3) or section 1164 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a)(1), that has most recently been submitted to Congress;

(2) provide on a monthly basis to each veteran who has submitted any claim for disability compensation or been treated at a medical facility of the Department information that includes—

(A) the date that the Secretary plans to complete such updates and improvements to such regulations;

(B) the number of covered claims that have been granted or denied during the month covered by such information;

(C) a comparison to such rate of grants and denials with the rate for other claims regarding post-traumatic stress disorder;

(D) the three most common reasons for such denials;

(E) the average time for completion of covered claims;

(F) the average time for processing covered claims at each regional office; and

(G) any information the Secretary determines relevant with respect to submitting a covered claim;

(3) in addition to providing to veterans the information described in paragraph (2), the Secretary shall make available on a monthly basis such information on a conspicuous location of the Internet website of the Department; and

(4) submit to Congress on a monthly basis a report that includes—

(A) a list of all adjudicated covered claims, including ancillary claims, during the month covered by the report;

(B) the outcome with respect to each medical condition included in the claim; and

(C) the reason given for any denial of such a claim.

(d) MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA DEFINED.—In this section:

(1) The term ''covered claim'' has the meaning given that term in section 1164(c)(1) of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a)(1).

(2) The term ''military sexual trauma'' has the meaning given that term in section 1164(c)(3) of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a)(1).

SEC. 3. EXTENSION OF ROUNDING DOWN OF PERCENTAGE INCREASES OF RATES OF CERTAIN EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE.

(a) MONTGOMERY GI BILL.—Section 3015(h)(2) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking ''fiscal year 2014'' and inserting ''fiscal year 2019''; and

(2) by striking ''fiscal year 2013'' and inserting ''fiscal year 2018''.

(b) SURVIVORS' AND DEPENDENTS' EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE.—Section 3564(b) of such title is amended—

(1) by striking ''fiscal year 2014'' and inserting ''fiscal year 2019''; and

(2) by striking ''fiscal year 2013'' and inserting ''fiscal year 2018''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) and the gentleman from Maine (Mr. MICHAUD) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and add any extraneous material they may have on H.R. 671, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. I yield myself such time as I might consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 671, as amended, will demand that the Department of Veterans Affairs place an immediate and concerted focus upon updating and improving its regulations for processing claims based upon military sexual trauma, commonly known as MST.

Reported incidences of military sexual trauma have risen markedly in recent years, a disturbing trend affecting both women and men serving in the military. I have spoken with many servicemembers who have suffered MST, and one sentiment is commonly echoed—these servicemembers feel a sense of betrayal and lack of trust. They have said that they feel betrayed by their fellow military attacker; and, without proper handling of the crime, they also feel betrayed by their command and their service branch.

The Department of Defense must take the lead on this issue and must address military sexual assault and trauma throughout the ranks in the strongest possible terms. Additionally, our veterans who have suffered military sexual trauma who live with this sense of betrayal must be confident that they will not be further traumatized by the Department of Veterans Affairs when they seek necessary and proper assistance.

Survivors of MST must not be subjected to outdated and antiquated regulations of the Department.

□ 1240

VA's approach to claims of MST and its processing thereof require immediate and thoughtful review, and that is the intent of H.R. 671, as amended.

I want to thank Congresswoman PINGREE for bringing this important bill to the committee. And I commend Subcommittee Chairman RUNYAN and Ranking Member TITUS for their bipartisan work on bringing this bill to the floor today.

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

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

I wholeheartedly support H.R. 671, the Ruth Moore Act of 2013. This bill was introduced by my colleague and good friend of mine from the State of Maine, Congresswoman CHELLIE PINGREE. It is named after a constituent of mine, Ruth Moore.

This important legislation seeks to better serve those men and women who have become victims of military sexual trauma. This legislation makes clear that we expect the VA to update its regulations in regards to military sexual trauma, which we believe are outdated and do not reflect the needs of those who are living through this awful experience. This bill would encourage the VA to update its regulations to ensure that military sexual trauma is specified as an in-service stressor and that those updated regulations also recognize the full range of physical and mental disabilities that may result.

Mr. Speaker, VA did the right thing by our Vietnam veterans exposed to Agent Orange by updating their regulations. We expect VA to also do the right thing by veterans who have been suffering from military sexual trauma.

H.R. 671, as amended, contains language to ensure VA follows through on the requirement to do better by those who have suffered military sexual trauma. It will dramatically increase the reporting requirements of VA in the event that these regulations are not updated within 15 months in an appropriate manner.

Let's be clear: Congress disagrees with VA's assessment that MST is being adjudicated effectively. We expect VA to take a good, hard look at this issue and update its regulations in a timely fashion. We will be watching, and we will be having oversight hearings to make sure that the reporting requirements are upheld.

I would urge my colleagues to support passage of H.R. 671, the Ruth Moore Act.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I yield as much time as he might consume to the subcommittee chairman of Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. RUNYAN).

Mr. RUNYAN. Thank you, Chairman MILLER, for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 671, as amended, is known as the Ruth Moore Act of 2013.

As chairman of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs, I am pleased once again that our subcommittee worked in a productive and bipartisan manner on this important bill for our Nation's servicemembers. I also applaud the leadership shown by Ms. PINGREE in sponsoring this legislation.

Military sexual trauma is a terrible act, a betrayal of trust, and it is not to be tolerated. Furthermore, those veterans who were victimized by their fellow servicemembers are entitled to VA assistance, and they are entitled to a fair and thoughtful review of their claims.

Thus, H.R. 671, as amended, sets stringent reporting requirements and urges the Department of Veterans Affairs to make necessary changes to their regulations on military sexual trauma to ensure their fair review.

I strongly support H.R. 671, as amended, and I urge my colleagues to also support this bill.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I would like to yield 5 minutes to the author of the bill, the gentlewoman from my home State of Maine, Congresswoman CHELLIE PINGREE.

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. Mr. Speaker, first, I want to thank my colleague from Maine, Mr. MICHAUD, for his time, for his leadership on the Veterans' Affairs Committee, and for sharing his brave constituent, Ruth Moore, with me.

I also want to thank Chairman MILLER for his bipartisan work on this bill, as well as subcommittee chair, Mr. RUNYAN, and Ms. TITUS, the ranking member, for their work on this issue as well. Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker, lately it has been hard to escape the news about the crisis of sexual assault in the military. Senior military personnel charged with preventing sexual assault are themselves investigated or arrested for the very same thing.

A new Pentagon report showing 26,000 men and women were sexually assaulted in the military last year—up 35 percent. And only about one in 10 of those assaults were reported, and even fewer ended up with a prosecution. In fact, the Pentagon says that every week—every single week—400 sexual assaults go unreported.

But even though we've heard much more about this problem lately, in no way is it a new problem. Almost every day I hear from another veteran who is the survivor of sexual assault in the military. Men and women of all ages, from every branch of the service, from every era. I have heard from survivors of sexual assault from World War II, the war in Afghanistan, and every conflict and every era in between.

There is no question that we have to get to the root of the problem, that we have to reform the legal service and

change the culture so sexual assault in the military is no longer tolerated and is thoroughly prosecuted.

But the sad fact remains: even if sexual assault in the military ended today, even if a woman or man in uniform was never raped again, there would still be tens of thousands of veterans who survived a sexual assault and suffer a disability because of it, but still can't get veterans disability benefits that they are owed.

That's why we need this bill, the Ruth Moore Act. This bill doesn't create any new benefits for survivors of sexual assault. This bill doesn't give any special treatment to the survivors of sexual assault. This bill just levels the playing field and makes it easier for those survivors to get the benefits they are owed.

A few years ago, the Department of Veterans Affairs acknowledged that too many combat veterans were suffering from PTSD and they were being denied benefits because it was too difficult to document what happened to them on the battlefield. So the VA made a commonsense change. They said if you were in combat and a VA doctor gives you a diagnosis of PTSD, and if an examiner links that diagnosis to the combat you experienced, then you are eligible for benefits.

The Ruth Moore Act asks the VA to do the same thing for victims of military sexual assault. If a VA doctor gives a veteran a diagnosis of a mental health condition and there is a medical link to the sexual assault, then the VA will have to qualify the veteran for service-related disability benefits.

Currently, the VA requires ''secondary markers'' to show the sexual assault occurred. Those secondary markers—statements from relatives or friends or a supervisor—are often hard to come by, especially for veterans who suffered an assault years or even decades ago. In the case of combat-related PTSD, those secondary markers are no longer required and the sworn statement of a veteran is sufficient. The same reform should apply to survivors of sexual assault.

We named this bill after a very brave woman from Maine. Ruth Moore was in the Navy when she was 19, serving her country. At a base in the Azores she was raped. When she reported it, she was told to keep quiet, and then she was raped again. For 23 years she fought for the benefits she was owed. Her records were tampered with, she was diagnosed with mental illness, and her life fell apart. After decades of fighting, Ruth was finally given the benefits we owed her, and slowly she has put her life back together.

When I met her in my office in Maine 2 years ago, she could barely tell her story. Her friends, her neighbors, even many of her loved ones didn't know what had happened to her. But bit by bit, Ruth has rebuilt her trust of people in positions of responsibility to the point where she came here to Washington and testified before the Veterans' Affairs Committee—a very brave woman.

But there are thousands and thousands of Ruth Moores out there who have been fighting for their benefits for years or even for decades. As survivors of sexual assault, they have suffered and sacrificed enough. We can make the process of getting the benefits they are owed a little bit simpler.

I urge my colleagues to support this important bill.

□ 1250

Mr. MILLER of Florida. I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MICHAUD. At this time, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. NEGRETE MCLEOD).

Mrs. NEGRETE MCLEOD. Thank you, Ranking Member MICHAUD.

Mr. Speaker, today, I rise in support of H.R. 671, the Ruth Moore Act of 2013.

This bill specifies military sexual trauma as a type of stressor for posttraumatic stress disorder. This is an important step forward in assuring that the VA gives full consideration for disability claims originating from sexual violence committed against military personnel while they serve our country.

As a cosponsor of H.R. 671 and as a member of the Military Sexual Assault Prevention Caucus, I believe we must support our veterans who may confront challenges upon returning to civilian life. This includes obtaining compensation for violence committed by a fellow servicemember.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, we are ready to close if the ranking member is ready as well, so I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

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

In closing, today, we can take a meaningful step to ensure the VA better serves veterans who were subject to sexual trauma while serving in our military. These veterans' disabilities were not the result of fire from the enemy, and they were not the result of injury incurred during training. They were the result of the armed services' continual failure to systematically address the culture of sexual assault in the military.

This situation is unacceptable and unconscionable, and we must act. With this legislation, we hope to ensure that the VA helps these disabled veterans. We have a duty to make the lives of these men and women a little better. They never should have had to deal with these events in the service of our Nation anyway, so I encourage my colleagues to support this legislation.

I also want to thank the chairman of the full committee and the chairman of the subcommittee and their staffs for their hard work in bringing this bill before the floor for us to vote on today. I know the committee staffs on both sides of the aisle have worked very hard to amend this bill so that it's acceptable to both sides of the aisle. I thank the chairman for all his hard efforts, not only on this legislation, but also on legislation as it affects veterans and their families throughout the country.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I think the words speak for themselves as well as the comments that have been made here on the floor. I would just close with this: that I urge all of my colleagues to support the Ruth Moore Act. I support H.R. 671, as amended, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. BROWNLEY of California. Mr. Speaker, as Ranking Member of the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Health—and an original co-sponsor of the bill—I would like to express my wholehearted support for H.R. 671 and to urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this critical legislation.

I would also like to thank my colleague from Maine for introducing this important bill.

It is absolutely intolerable for any servicemember to be subjected to sexual assault while serving in our nation's armed forces.

It is also unacceptable that veterans are being denied treatment at the VA because they don't have adequate proof that the assault happened.

Under existing VA policies, a lack of military documentation and inconsistencies among VA regional offices have resulted in veterans, like Ruth Moore, being denied disability benefits.

For 23 years Ruth was told by the VA that she did not provide enough evidence proving the assault happened.

Instead of receiving the high quality VA care and benefits she had earned immediately upon separation, she had to fight and wait for over two decades for benefits.

Again, I urge my colleagues to vote for H.R. 671 to correct this injustice.

Mrs. KIRKPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I submit this statement in support of H.R. 671, the Ruth Moore Act of 2013, introduced by Rep. CHELLIE PINGREE of Maine.

This legislation makes it easier for veterans to receive benefits for disabilities (PTSD) that stem from sexual assaults. The Pentagon reports that the number of sexual assaults in the military has grown from 19,000 to 26,000 since last year. One in 3 servicewomen report having been sexually assaulted, but an estimated 86 percent of assaults are never reported.

Our military is a source of great strength and national pride, and we should expect nothing less than the highest standards of conduct, from rank and file troops to the upper echelons of leadership.

We must eradicate the criminal, violent acts of sexual assault, and we must remove institutional barriers that allow perpetrators to go unpunished and victims to be revictimized.

I agree with the provision of H.R. 671, which asks the Department of Veterans Affairs to lower the burden of proof to receive benefits. Currently, servicewomen are required to provide secondary evidence to show that the trauma occurred—a burden not required for other combat-related claims.

Let's stand up for our brave servicewomen by building a better system—one that honors and affirms them as members of the mightiest military force on the globe.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 671, Ruth Moore Act of 2013. This bill will right a wrong in our veterans' compensation process for those servicemembers suffering from military sexual trauma.

One of the problems we have when trying to help veterans victimized by their superiors is lack of information about how often it happens and how many veterans are victims.

This bill requires the VA to collect and report on many aspects of those who are suffering from MST, but are unable to get relief from the VA.

The VA will be required to provide on a monthly basis its progress with regards to military sexual trauma of every veteran that has applied for benefits or has been treated at a VA facility. This update shall include: The three most common reasons for denial, the average time for completion of these claims, the average time for processing MST claims and how MST compares to other PTSD claims.

We cannot know how to begin to treat and compensate victims of Military Sexual Trauma until we know more about this disability.

I fully support this legislation and urge its passage by the House.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 671, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title was amended so as to read: ''A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress an annual report on claims for disabilities incurred or aggravated by military sexual trauma, and for other purposes.''.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2216, MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2014; AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2217, DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2014

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 243 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 243

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2216) making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. Points of order against provisions in the bill for failure to comply with clause 2 of rule XXI are waived. During consideration of the bill for amendment, the chair of the Committee of the Whole may accord priority in recognition on the basis of whether the Member offering an amendment has caused it to be printed in the portion of the Congressional Record designated for that purpose in clause 8 of rule XVIII. Amendments so printed shall be considered as read. When the committee rises and reports the bill back to the House with a recommendation that the bill do pass, the previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. At any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2217) making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. Points of order against provisions in the bill for failure to comply with clause 2 of rule XXI are waived except for section 563. During consideration of the bill for amendment, the chair of the Committee of the Whole may accord priority in recognition on the basis of whether the Member offering an amendment has caused it to be printed in the portion of the Congressional Record designated for that purpose in clause 8 of rule XVIII. Amendments so printed shall be considered as read. When the committee rises and reports the bill back to the House with a recommendation that the bill do pass, the previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 3. Pending the adoption of a concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2014, the provisions of House Concurrent Resolution 25, as adopted by the House, shall have force and effect in the House as though Congress has adopted such concurrent resolution, and the allocations of spending authority printed in Tables 11 and 12 of House Report 113-17 shall be considered for all purposes in the House to be the allocations under section 302(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Florida is recognized for 1 hour.

□ 1300

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the rule and the two underlying bills.

House Resolution 243 provides for an open rule for consideration of H.R. 2216, the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act of 2014, and H.R. 2217, the Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act of 2014.

This rule provides ample opportunities for Members from both the minority and majority to participate in the debate, and it does not limit the number of amendments that may be considered, so long as the amendments comply with the rules of the House.

My colleagues from both sides of the aisle agree that these appropriation acts for fiscal year 2014 are the products of an open, collaborative, and bipartisan process.

They provide critical funding for military construction, housing, schools, and medical facilities for our servicemembers and their families, important veteran programs, the protection and security of our airports, seaports and national border, and disaster relief efforts. They also reduce duplication, improve oversight, encourage efficiency, and increase coordination of services.

Mr. Speaker, these bills address nonpartisan issues that affect every one of us. The seamless operation of these agencies and programs and projects will benefit all Americans.

Let me first address H.R. 2216, the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act of 2014.

This fiscally sound bill funds programs that are necessary to keep our promises to our veterans and to train, equip, house, and support the brave men and women in uniform, as well as their families.

This bill provides over $73 billion in discretionary funding, which is $1.4 billion above the enacted fiscal year 2013 level. It continues to provide advanced funding that was approved in fiscal year 2013 for veteran medical care and funds programs to reduce the staggering backlog which severely delayed the process of veteran benefits claims. This advance funding will ensure that our veterans have full access to medical care regardless of where we stand in the annual appropriation process.

H.R. 2216 funds military construction projects, including family housing, military medical facilities, and Department of Defense education facilities. It also funds critical VA medical services and provides for a unified electronic health record system to integrate Department of Defense and Veterans Affairs health records.

Currently, our veterans must physically present a hard copy of their DOD health records at their VA appointments, and physicians are unable to look up the patient's medical history if a patient does not have their records with them. This bill addresses this frustrating and inefficient process and will begin to replace an archaic paper record system with an electronic system that will ensure our veterans will be efficiently served and receive the care they need and deserve.

Next, I'd like to talk about and highlight a few of the important provisions in H.R. 2217, the Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act of 2014. This bill is essential to protect the security of our national borders and the safety and well-being of all Americans.

This bill provides $38 billion in discretionary funding for the Department of Homeland Security, which includes funding for 21,370 Border Patrol agents and nearly 22,800 Customs and Border Protection officers—the largest totals in history. It also directs U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement to train agents to identify and assist victims of human trafficking and directs ICE to increase spending on human trafficking and smuggling investigations.

H.R. 2217 also provides funding for FEMA to ensure our Nation is prepared to provide disaster relief and funds the Coast Guard.

Finally, I'd like to reiterate that these bills strengthen our national security and continue the well-being of our brave servicemembers, their families, and other veterans. They also recognize that our growing debt threatens the stability and safety of our Nation, and for this reason these bills make recommendations to reduce bureaucratic inefficiencies, duplication, and overhead.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this rule and the underlying legislation. The Appropriations Committee has worked hard to provide us with two fiscally responsible appropriation bills that will meet the housing construction and medical needs of our military and provide support to their families. They will keep our promises to America's veterans, and they will enhance our national security.

I encourage my colleagues to vote ''yes'' on the rule and ''yes'' on the underlying bills, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I'd also like to thank my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Florida, the former Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives, who clearly championed there and here, likewise, regular order.

Mr. Speaker, this rule provides for consideration of H.R. 2216 and H.R. 2217, as outlined by my colleague from the other side, two appropriations measures that fund military construction and family housing projects, the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Homeland Security.

Once again, my friends on the other side are using this particular rule as yet another attempt to deem and pass the controversial budget offered by our colleague PAUL RYAN.

This is exactly what they did in April of last year when they reneged on their promises in the Budget Control Act and also during consideration of H.R. 5326, the Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations for fiscal year 2013.

My Republican colleagues have been calling for regular order; however, both the House and the Senate each passed a budget this year and regular order would have them go to conference to negotiate a budget for the 113th Congress. But instead of appointing conferees, the Speaker of the House and the House Republican leadership are deeming the Ryan budget passed.

□ 1310

Someone in a graphic that I saw said they're deeming the impossible deem.

I, as one exemplar, should know, having served on the Rules Committee in the majority when we were going forward. We did consider deem and pass, and we learned along the way that that was going to skew the process. Therefore, we retreated from that, and I would urge my friends, the Republicans, to do likewise.

They would rather see, it appears, greater military spending, at the expense of vital programs that millions of Americans rely on, than work with Democrats to replace the sequester and properly fund our Nation's government.

Now, I'm not going through the litany of all the things that the sequester has cut and the problems that it has caused. Most people know that. But the Meals on Wheels program has been the one put forward, and I just think it is plain dumb and crazy to not take care of older people in our society. Never mind all the ideology, all the deficit, all the other hawk talk, who cares when someone that is a grandmother goes to sleep hungry because we didn't do what we should have done and that we passed a foolish sequester that has caused these problems.

As a result, we're working with different budget target levels. In the House, it is $0.966 trillion and approximately $1.07 trillion for the Senate, which both sides agreed upon in the Budget Control Act of 2011.

These differences are important. The reductions imposed by the House 302(b) allocations mean greater cuts for agencies and programs that already face difficult budget decisions due to sequestration. The two funding bills coming before us for consideration this week, along with those for defense and the legislative branch, are the only ones expected to receive an increase over the 2013 post-sequester levels. This means that we'll be forced to sacrifice health care, environment, education, transportation, and other important spending priorities in order to meet the new overall reductions required by the sequester.

Furthermore, the appropriation for Military Construction and Veterans Affairs is the only budget with a 302(b) allocation that is higher than pre-sequestration funding levels, whereas funding for Homeland Security, in my opinion, is unacceptably low in some areas, and the bill is encumbered by very, very troublesome riders, and I would urge the Members of the House to look carefully at those riders.

Consequently, the 302(b) allocation would provide a 22 percent reduction to the pre-sequestration budget for health care, education, and labor programs. In my opinion, that's just plain outrageous.

Republicans are again asking—I'm fond of saying in the Rules Committee that when I was 11 and 12 years old, my favorite radio program that my grandmother would let me listen to on Saturdays was a program called ''Let's Pretend.'' Little did I know 65 years later that I would be in an august body that is also in and of itself sitting around with people pretending that things are happening that are not happening.

Republicans are asking us to pretend that the Ryan budget is law, when in fact it is not. This unilateral action is a formula for conflict, and I predict for you that that's what we'll have. While I appreciate the spirit of bipartisanship, and those gentlemen who came yesterday, Mr. PRICE and Mr. BISHOP, the ranking members, and Judge CARTER and his counterpart did an exceptional job, as did JOHN CULBERSON, in showing this body that there can be bipartisan efforts. They did so, and I would hope that would serve for the rest of appropriations and for this body to take notice that people can work together when they try. And that bipartisanship led to the funding levels contained in both of these bills that we are considering under this rule. It is regrettable that it was not extended to the entire process.

Simply put, the framework within which we are considering these bills—the Ryan budget that House Republicans have deemed as passed—is a nonstarter.

Administration folks said yesterday that unless this bill passes the Congress in the context of an overall budget framework that supports our recovery and enables sufficient investments in education, infrastructure—and a footnote right there: Do we need to be reminded about the bridge that fell in the State of Washington, about the number of bridges in this Nation that are in disrepair and have been in disrepair? When Bill Clinton became President, he advocated that there were 14,000 bridges in need of repair, and he asked for a little bit of money that we should have allocated then. Now we have thousands of bridges in disrepair, and we are going about a process like this ignoring them.

Where do we get the innovation at NIH for the health needs that are coming and the technological needs that are coming? How do we protect national security for our economy to be able to compete in the future?

The President's senior advisers indicated that they would recommend to the President that he veto H.R. 2216 and H.R. 2217, and any other legislation that implements the House deemed budget framework. As I've said time and again, this is no way to run a budget process, and no way to conduct the business of the House of Representatives.

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

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I just want to remind everyone that we're talking about a rule here. And this rule, different from those that were proposed in the Congresses before I got here, in the 111th Congress, is an open rule. It allows for amendments. If there are those who do not like what's in these bills, they can do everything that they need to do in an amendment and get 218 votes and pass it, and it'll change. If this bill needs perfecting, either one of these bills need perfecting, they can be perfected.

I believe that is as close to regular order as we can get. If we can come down to this floor, offer an amendment, get an opportunity to debate that amendment, have our say, hopefully get the votes to pass it, change the bill, that's the way this process should work.

This rule provides for that. It provides for two very well-thought-out appropriation bills, which may have flaws. But if there are flaws, whether you're a Republican or Democrat, come on down. Once we pass this rule, we'll be taking those bills up one at a time. And any amendment, as long as it's within the germaneness rules of this House, can be offered. We would welcome that. I think both sides would welcome that.

That's why when both of these bills came out of committee, there were glowing reports, both from the minority report and from the majority report. They are well-thought-out bills. They are well-done bills. They are bipartisan. They're done in an open and collaborative way, in an open, real, and regular order process. So for those reasons, I think this is a great rule because it sets forward the opportunity of people on this floor, no matter who they are, from a freshman to a senior Member, from Republican to Democrat, from moderate, liberal, and conservative, no matter who they are, to offer amendments to these bills, both of them. And if they get a majority vote, they can pass them. So I think that to me is an open process. That's also regular order.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, my colleague began by saying that's as close to regular order as we can get. I would tell him, close, but no cigar.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to yield 2½ minutes to my very good friend from New York, Mrs. LOWEY, who has been on the Appropriations Committee at times when we didn't deem things and we did, in fact, pass appropriations measures.

□ 1320

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to this rule, which would deem the discretionary spending levels in the Ryan budget as law.

The Ryan budget endorses sequestration, is unrealistic, unworkable, economically misguided. The Senate and the White House are using a different set of numbers.

By adopting the rule and the Ryan budget and breaking caps in the Budget Control Act which passed this body, we guarantee gridlock. The House majority will pass a small number of bills at roughly the President's requested levels, but will be unable to get bipartisan support for the remaining bills.

It would also jeopardize our economic recovery. Europeans are experiencing the limits of austerity in the midst of a fragile recovery. We should invest more in education, biomedical research, transportation infrastructure, clean energy and other initiatives that grow our economy and create jobs. Instead, the deeming resolution would take a step back, all but ensuring significant reductions.

To turn off the sequester, ensure the House's relevance in the process, and pass reasonable bills, Democrats offered in committee a motion to postpone consideration of subcommittee allocations until a budget resolution could be conferenced.

And I do want to say this, and I would like to say this to my friend, the distinguished Chair on the other side of the House, there has been a call for a budget resolution on the Senate. They did a budget resolution on the Senate that has been requested by my good friends on the other side of the aisle. That budget resolution passed.

However, I know the ranking member of the House Budget Committee, CHRIS VAN HOLLEN, has called for a conference, went to the Rules Committee five times and said, Let's have a conference so we can move forward. That was denied.

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. I yield the gentlewoman an additional 1 minute.

Mrs. LOWEY. So, my colleagues, with a balanced deficit reduction plan, we could establish an alternative allocation that would sufficiently fund our priorities and allow us to follow regular order for the appropriations process.

Instead of my friends engaging today in a futile process—it's just a futile exercise—the House should abide by the discretionary caps in the Budget Control Act. Turn off the sequester before we consider spending bills.

My friends, vote ''no'' on the rule.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mrs. LOWEY, just before you leave, you have just an additional few seconds. Will the gentlelady yield to me?

Mrs. LOWEY. I would be delighted to yield to the gentleman.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. I just want to say, in addition to the fact that CHRIS VAN HOLLEN came to the Rules Committee five times, HARRY REID has offered eight times to go to conference and Republicans have blocked it. And I just want that to be understood, because later on we're going to hear somebody stand up here and say it's Democrats that are holding it up, and it's not.

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

Mrs. LOWEY. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. I yield the gentlewoman an additional 30 seconds.

Mrs. LOWEY. I just want to make a point to my friend on the other side of the aisle: the bill before us today is a bipartisan bill. There was strong support on both sides of the aisle. The chair and the ranking member worked together in a collegial way because this bill is so important for our country.

The problem here is, after this bill and Homeland Security, there's nothing left. Education, National Institutes of Health are in a bill that's going to be cut 22 percent.

So, my friend, the issue is not these bills today; it's the process and the fact there isn't a complete plan in place.

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I've been in this process a long time, not necessarily here, but in other venues, and what I have found is what's before you is before you, and what comes later may or may not come later.

But I would say this to the gentlelady, that what we have here are two bills that are bipartisan bills, and they have a great deal of input from both sides. They came out of committee with a strong vote, with both Republicans and Democrats.

And so my thought is: here we are. We're here. We're addressing this particular issue. Now, when these other bills come to the floor of the House, before they get here they're going to pass through the Rules Committee, too, these appropriation bills. I will do everything I can to make them open, also, so that anybody that wants to amend them or perfect them has the opportunity.

I believe in an open process. I believe that Members, no matter how long it takes, should have the opportunity to say their piece. And no matter what your philosophy is, no matter what your party is, no matter what your position is, no matter what your rank is, if you're 435th it doesn't really matter, you should have an opportunity to present your case.

And so, these are these two bills. We have talked about the fact that we're

going to have an open process here, and people want to perfect these bills; then great, offer an amendment. When the other appropriation bills come, that'll be the time to talk about them. But when they do, just know this: I'm going to be one that is going to be pressing hard to have open rules for them, also.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, at this time I'm very pleased to yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), my very good friend, the minority whip of the House of Representatives.

Mr. HOYER. I thank my friend.

Mr. Speaker, what's before us is before us. What's before us is a rule, not the MilCon bill, not Homeland Security.

What's before us is the bill. And what does the bill do?

It doesn't have an open process. It doesn't allow us an amendment. Mr. VAN HOLLEN wanted to have an amendment and say let's go to conference on the budget; let's decide what these numbers ought to be. No, it's our way or the highway.

You've passed a budget. You're going to stick with those numbers. They won't work. You know they won't work. That's why you don't go to conference, because Mr. RYAN knows he couldn't make a deal that he could bring back to this House and your side would vote for, I tell my friend on the Rules Committee.

So what's before us is before us, a ratification of sequester, which starts with ''S,'' which stands for ''stupid.'' It is a terrible process. It is an irrational, commonsense-defying process.

And yet my Republican friends continue to demand that we mark to figures that were contrary to the understanding, agreement—deal, if you want—that we made.

In August of 2011, we made a deal and we said these are going to be the numbers, and the ink was not dry on the paper until such time as you violated that agreement. And the Ryan budget violates it once again and is $91 billion, almost 9 percent, less than the deal we made.

What's before us is before us, the gentleman says. What's before us is the rule to ratify the sequester.

Now, your side blames the President for it. The President doesn't want the sequester. We don't want the sequester. Mr. VAN HOLLEN, who's sitting here, doesn't want the sequester, and he's tried to offer amendments to obviate the sequester and hasn't been allowed to have those amendments on the floor, I tell my friend on the Rules Committee.

And I congratulate him for his position, but he ought to allow the Van Hollen amendment so the House can, in fact, work its will, so that we can, in fact, have a process that will work.

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. I yield the gentleman an additional 1 minute.

Mr. HOYER. Now, my friend says he's been here for some time and he's participated in another legislative body. Well, I've been here for a long time myself, as the gentleman knows, some 33 years, and 12 years in the Maryland Senate, President of the Senate for the last 4 I was there. So I've been around for some years myself.

The fact is, I will tell the gentleman, there is no possibility you're going to consider all 12 bills because, as the gentlelady said, you're going to run out of money. Why? Because you're front-loading that which you like, and that which you're not too happy about is going to be not only breaking the agreement we made, but far below your own budget numbers because you didn't want to mark to your 966 with this bill.

□ 1330

Why? Because you want to make sure the veterans were taken care of. God bless you. I agree with that. But there's only X number of dollars in that pot, and somebody's going to lose.

What the President is saying is let's consider them all together. That's what we ought to be doing. Reject this bill, reject this sequester, reject this deeming resolution, and let us have a rule that makes common sense for our country.

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Again, I will reiterate the fact that it is what is before us. We cannot get to these two bipartisan, well-thought-out, well-debated, well-collaborated pieces of legislation which deal with some issues that are very, very important without passing a rule to allow us to do that. That's what this rule does. It deals with those two bills. No, those two bills aren't before us, but this rule is the gateway to get to those bills. How are we going to get there? We're going to pass this rule. Once we get there, what are we going to do? We're going to have an open process—one that has been foreign until the Republicans took control of this legislature—foreign, no matter what your standing in this body was.

There were closed bills after closed bills after closed bills after closed bills that came up. Was there an opportunity to amend it, to perfect it, to do anything with it? Absolutely not. But that's not the way it is now. If we pass this rule, we're going to get to a process that allows every Member to come down to this floor and offer an amendment, debate that amendment, and have the possibility of passing that amendment.

So, yes, there are other issues, there are other appropriations, there are other bills that will be coming to this floor at some point in time. And at that time we can debate them. But right now, this is the issue before us. These two very important bills—and very much agreed-on bills—are only going to be taken up on this floor if this rule passes.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. May I inquire how much time is remaining on both sides.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS) has 13½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Florida (Mr. WEBSTER) has 19 minutes remaining.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased and privileged at this time to yield 3 minutes to my friend, the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO).

Ms. DELAURO. I rise in strong opposition to this rule, which aims to approve the House majority's inadequate appropriations allocation level for 2014, a level that is over $90 billion below that of the Senate and the President and violates the agreement that we all voted on a year ago, Democrats and Republicans, in the Budget Control Act to increase that funding above the number that they present to us today.

The budget reflects our values, reflects our priorities, and our responsibilities to the people that we represent. It is our job to make sure that that is the case. And yet for the third time in 3 years, this House majority has put forward a reckless and ideological funding level that ensures that our government cannot even meet its most basic responsibilities to the American people.

Under this House majority's plan, we will see cuts that are deeper than the indiscriminate across-the-board cuts. The funding for the Labor, Education, and Health and Human Services is drastically cut. And this rule accepts those cuts made to the program this year and then it multiplies that by four in 2014. What are those cuts? Where do they fall? And if enacted, the wrong choices will cause incalculable damage. They severely weaken these critical programs that protect public health and safety, that promote and develop our workforce, training programs, education, Pell Grants, Meals on Wheels, special education, and biomedical research so that people can live. It affects our seniors, our veterans, our middle class, and our most vulnerable families.

I, along with Congressman VAN HOLLEN and others, have offered legislation that cuts $30 billion from the Federal deficit and replaces the deep and indiscriminate cuts for the next 2 years with a more balanced and a targeted approach. That's the direction we should be moving in—keeping up with our fundamental responsibilities to the families who have elected us to stand up for them.

Rather than going down this path, the House majority should appoint budget conferees and do its job and negotiate with the Senate. Our appropriations chairman claims to want to undo sequestration. Yet rather than showing leadership, the House majority fails to address the sequester and create conditions for another budget crisis down the road.

We hear so much talk from this majority about regular order. What does that mean? The House passes a bill, the Senate passes bill, they work out their differences, they get it to the President, and the President signs the bill. Well, Mr. Speaker, where is the regular order? It is autocracy.

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. I yield the gentlelady an additional 30 seconds.

Ms. DELAURO. No more games. I urge all of my colleagues to vote against this disastrous funding level. Let's work together to fix the sequester and get us back on the path to economic growth. This is our top priority. It must be our top priority. And this House of Representatives needs to show the American people that it can lead.

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to reiterate again the benefits of these two bills that we're going to be debating if we pass this rule. They provide critical funding for military construction, housing, schools, and medical facilities for our servicemembers and their families, as well as important veterans programs. They protect security for our airports, seaports, and national border, as well as disaster relief efforts. They also reduce duplication, improve oversight, encourage efficiency, and increase coordination of services.

If there were one provision in a bill that would push you over the edge of voting for or against something, it would be the idea of getting rid of this old paperwork. I've had someone come and tell me that they had gotten a tetanus shot, I think, about 3 weeks before they got out of the service. Once they got out, they went to the VA and they forgot to take the record with them. So they had no proof. They went to the VA and they said, You're going to have to get a tetanus shot. He says, Wait a minute, I've already gotten one. You don't have that record? No. And if you don't have it with you, we don't know. Because you can tell us you had one 3 months ago, but that doesn't matter.

We need to do it. This one bill gets rid of that process and says we're going to move towards a modern system of electronically transferring these records. There's so many good things in these two bills; it's just pretext for the fact that this rule needs to be approved.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. If we defeat the previous question, we'll offer an amendment to the rule that strikes the provision of the rule that deems the passage of the Ryan budget and will allow the House to consider the resolution calling on Speaker BOEHNER to proceed to conference on the budget.

It is time for the majority to follow regular House procedure by immediately requesting a conference and appointing conferees to negotiate a fiscal 2014 budget resolution conference agreement with the Senate.

To discuss our proposal, I'm very pleased to yield 5 minutes to my good friend, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN).

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I thank my friend, Mr. HASTINGS.

I've been listening to Mr. WEBSTER. And if I were Mr. WEBSTER, I'd be doing exactly what he's doing, which is focusing on the underlying bills: the spending bill to support our veterans, to support military construction, and homeland security.

□ 1340

But as others have pointed out, the vote before us is not on those underlying bills. It's on the rule. And everybody needs to understand that what's at play here is a scheme to use the rules to affect not just the veterans budget, but to affect other parts of our budget.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, I find it especially cynical that our colleagues would use the spending bills on veterans and military construction as the vehicle to pass their budget levels which will result in dramatic cuts to the parts of the budget that fund our kids' education and that fund the investments in science and research to find cures and treatments to things like cancer, because we know the Appropriations Committee has already set out what the levels for those categories to the budget will be. And do you know what they are? A $30 billion cut below the sequester level to the parts of the budget that fund our kids' education and that fund that scientific research.

So, yes, this is the rule for two particular bills. They are good bills. The veterans bill is a good bill. But the rule, ladies and gentlemen, has embedded in it the Republican budget levels for the overall budget process. And that's going to hurt education for the kids of those veterans and the family members of those veterans who have diseases whose funding for research is going to be dramatically cut. A 20 percent cut below the sequester level, that's what you're adopting in this rule, a 20 percent cut for the category of the budget on education.

Now, why are we here? We're supposed to have a budget process. The House passed a budget. I don't like the budget, but it passed a budget. The Senate passed a budget. Under the rules of the Congress, in fact, as a matter of law, the House and Senate are supposed to have completed a conference committee by April 15. That was quite a while ago. In fact, it's been over 70 days since the Senate passed a budget and the House passed a budget.

Now, we don't have a House-Senate conference committee report. Why might that be? Well, it turns out that the Speaker of the House has refused to appoint conferees to work with the Senate to come up with a budget. Now, our Republican colleagues beat up for years on the Senate for not having a budget. I can understand that complaint. But the Senate has a budget now, and yet our Republican colleagues refuse to go to conference.

You made a big deal about ''no budget, no pay.'' Guess what? We don't have a budget. We have a House budget and we have a Senate budget, but we don't have a Federal budget, and yet everybody is getting paid. What happened to that?

Now, why would we not want to go to conference? Mr. Speaker, just today in the United States Senate, PATTY MURRAY, the chairwoman for the Budget Committee, for the 11th time tried to get consent to go to conference to work these differences out in a transparent way, blocked by a Republican Senator.

Here is what Senator MCCAIN has had to say about the whole process, because I would urge our colleagues to listen to him. This is a quote from Senator MCCAIN:

> I think it's insane for Republicans who complained for 4 years about HARRY REID not having a budget and now we're not going to agree to conference? That is beyond comprehension for me.

And I think it's beyond comprehension for the American people. Why are you sitting on the budget?

So what are we doing in this rule? This rule says let's pretend. Let's make believe that the House and Senate went to conference, and let's pretend that they agree, except let's pretend that they agreed on the House budget numbers, the numbers that would cut the part of the budget that deals with our kids' education by over 20 percent. Let's pretend that because we don't want to go through the normal process. That's what this rule does. It's a total fake. And it's a fake because of the refusal to work these issues out in a transparent manner for the American people.

So, the previous question is a very simple statement. It just says let's comply with the law which says a conference committee was supposed to have met and completed action by April 15; let's at least start down the process of complying with the law. It says that it is the sense of the House of Representatives that the Speaker should follow regular House procedure and immediately request a conference and appoint conferees to negotiate a fiscal year 2014 budget resolution so we can have a real Federal budget, not a fake budget, which is what you're calling for in this rule under the guise of saying let's just fund our veterans.

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. As I said, Mr. Speaker, I find it especially cynical that we would use a good bill to provide spending and support to our veterans as the vehicle to impose this scheme on the Congress which will have terrible, negative effects on other parts of the budget.

Do you know that while this Congress was away, I don't know if people

saw it, but down in Fort Bragg, the home of the 82nd Airborne, they just said that teachers who were going to teach the kids of our servicemen and -women are going to be furloughed for 5 days this fall—for 5 days this fall. So we want to replace the sequester. Let's go to conference and get it done.

I urge my colleagues who said they want a transparent process to vote for our measure.

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes of my time to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WOODALL).

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend and colleague from Florida for yielding me the time.

I hadn't anticipated coming down here today, Mr. Speaker. I came down to listen, but I hadn't anticipated coming down to speak. And I will say to my friend from Maryland his words struck me, because twice in his presentation he said, you know, I think it's especially cynical that we're using this process to bring forward two bills that in a bipartisan way we agree on.

I would say to my friend with a heavy heart, Mr. Speaker, that I think it's especially cynical, since we both know these bills need to be passed, to describe what is happening here in any terms other than that which is exactly necessary in order to get these bills passed.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. WOODALL. Let me get this off my chest, and I'd be happy to yield to my friend. I would be happy to yield when I'm done, because I have a copy of the rule here.

And the gentleman was in the Rules Committee last night, and the gentleman knows this is what section 3 provides, that pending the adoption of a concurrent resolution on the budget, we're going to move forward, pending the adoption.

Now, my friend knows, Mr. Speaker, how hard it is to find that agreement. And the reason my friend knows is because I voted for the Budget Control Act in August of 2011, which put my friend and five other Members of the House, it was six House Members, six Senate Members, six Republicans, six Democrats, it put them in a room together for August, September, October, and November with the entire Federal budget over the next 100 years in front of them, allowing them to choose anything they wanted to to agree on to let us move forward as a nation.

Do you know what, Mr. Speaker? Collectively they agreed on not one dollar. I don't fault my friend for that. I know my friend was working as hard as my friend could possibly work to find agreement. But finding agreement is hard. What we're talking about finding agreement with, Mr. Speaker, this comes from The Washington Post editorial page. It's entitled, ''The Democrats' complacent budget plan.'' It says:

> Partisan in tone and complacent in substance, the budget scores points against the Republicans and reassures the party's liberal base but deepens these Senators' commitment to an unsustainable policy agenda.

This is what it is that we're trying to find agreement on. Now, my friend from Maryland knows, in fact, he may have even brought it to my attention yesterday, a letter directing the chairman of the Rules Committee, on which I sit, Mr. Speaker, from the chairman of the Budget Committee, also on which I sit, that's signed by Chairman PAUL RYAN. It says this, over PAUL RYAN's signature:

> I want to emphasize that this is a request for an interim measure while the Committee on the Budget continues to work towards an agreement with the Senate on a budget resolution for the coming fiscal year.

And I would, with your permission, Mr. Speaker, I would ask my friend from Maryland, does he doubt the chairman's word when the chairman says this is an interim solution until we find agreement?

I'd be happy to yield to my friend.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. My colleague, what I know are the facts, which is just today, as I said on the floor, the chairwoman of the Senate Budget Committee, for the 11th time, said to Mr. RYAN, Let's go to conference so we can work out these differences in a public way. And she was blocked over here just like we've been blocked over here.

Mr. WOODALL. Reclaiming my time, the gentleman knows that Chairman RYAN has no control over the inside workings of the United States Senate, and Chairman RYAN did not block what was going on in the United States Senate. The United States Senators were blocking it.

I would ask the gentleman again: Does the gentleman doubt the chairman's word? I understand that the gentleman is frustrated about process, and goodness knows, as someone who supports open rules, I'm frustrated with process, too. We have that in common. But notwithstanding that process, what I have here is a letter from a man which you and I both support—and ''support,'' I mean we believe in his integrity. And he tells us that he is working towards a solution and that what we're doing here today is just an interim step to get these bills that we all agree are so very important, we all agree are so very important, the interim step to get these moving down the process.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. WOODALL. I would yield to ask the gentleman does he disagree with the commitment made by the chairman? And I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I'm not questioning the integrity of the chairman of the Budget Committee.

This is not just about process. As I indicated, you adopt this rule and you're essentially applying a 20 percent cut below sequester to the part of the budget that deals with our kids' education and science and research. So this is way beyond process.

□ 1350

So this is way beyond process.

Mr. WOODALL. Reclaiming my time, I would say to the gentleman that's just not the case.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. That is the case. The gentleman should go read the Appropriations Committee 302(b) allocations.

Mr. WOODALL. I'm aware of the Appropriations Committee 302(b) allocations. And what I'm aware of, Mr. Speaker, is that we have to have those allocations to begin the process. The gentleman is talking about where we are going to finish the process on October 1. I'm trying to get it started today. The gentleman knows that we can't get started.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Will the gentleman yield?

Why are those levels at the levels they are? Would the gentleman answer that question?

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

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman an additional 2 minutes.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for yielding.

I want to quote what one of my Democratic colleagues quoted last night in the Rules Committee, and that's Federalist Paper No. 58, written by James Madison for the Independent Journal back on February 20, 1788. And he said this:

> This power over the purse may, in fact, be regarded as the most complete and effectual weapon with which any constitution can arm the immediate representatives of the people, for obtaining a redress of every grievance, and for carrying into effect every just and salutary measure.

Because that's the constitutional responsibility of this body, Mr. Speaker, to appropriate these dollars. This process of appropriations, this constitutional responsibility, cannot begin until we have some numbers against which to budget and appropriate.

What my chairman on the Budget Committee has asked is that as an interim step, and an interim step only, we adopt these numbers today on bills about which we all agree. What is cynical, Mr. Speaker, is that these are things on which we all agree, and we're using this as a position to talk about other issues about which we disagree.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Will the gentleman yield, because we don't agree on cutting the kids' education budget?

Mr. WOODALL. As my friend knows from his time having to negotiate on the joint select, what we'll call the supercommittee, my friends at The Washington Post go on to say:

> In short, this document—

Talking about the budget passed by the Senate.

> —gives voters no reason to believe that Democrats have a viable plan for—or even a responsible public assessment of—the country's long-term fiscal predicament.

Now, I will say, Mr. Speaker, that gives me great concern about whether

we will be able to reach agreement with the Senate. As my friend from Maryland knows, Mr. Speaker, the House budget reduces spending by trillions of dollars and the Senate budget increases spending even more. In many years, it spends more than even the President requested.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. WOODALL. As my friend from Maryland knows, we keep tax revenues the same and the Senate increases taxes by almost $1 trillion.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I just want to know why you're afraid to go to conference. Why is that? That's what this is about.

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to yield 2 minutes to my very good friend from California, Ms. BARBARA LEE.

Ms. LEE of California. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the gentleman for yielding.

Let me just say, first, as a member of both the Appropriations and the Budget Committees, I rise in strong opposition to this rule. The allocations provided under this rule will savage vital programs that protect the public health and safety, promote and develop our workforce, and educate the next generation of Americans.

Sequester cuts are already hitting low-income families throughout our country and also in my congressional district in my home State of California. And every single household in America, especially the millions of Americans who are struggling still to find a job, these cuts are hitting them disproportionately.

Our economy cannot afford these cuts. Hungry children do not deserve these cuts. Students who depend on Pell Grants, TRIO, and Head Start do not deserve these cuts. And certainly, our seniors and our veterans do not deserve these cuts.

The Military Construction-Veterans bill on the floor this week assumes the sequester cuts have been replaced. Why in the world can't we do this for the other bills as well? We all know that the allocation for the rest of the subcommittees will make it nearly impossible to fund education, senior programs, infrastructure, and job creation. While all of us believe it is important to keep the government functioning, governing by a continuing resolution is really no way to run the Federal Government, and that is exactly what course we are on unless we come to some agreement.

The majority claims that they care about the middle class and the poor, yet these cuts really do begin to erode the middle class and force more people into poverty. So it's time for Congress to reject these draconian cuts and replace the sequester with a bipartisan agreement on the budget resolution to create jobs and to lift the economy for all.

Enough is enough, Mr. Speaker. We need to vote ''no'' on the rule, and we need to go back to the drawing board.

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, that last discussion was worth paying the price to come here. But I would like to say this, to bring it back to where we are, and that is:

We have before us a rule. This rule is going to be the gateway—the gateway—to an open process. That open process, when it opens up, is beautiful to behold. We have two bills that will be heard. Both of those bills are going to be able to be amended by any Member that would like to do it. And to me, that is what I have searched for, and I think it's a great thing.

We have the opportunity to come to this floor, agree or disagree, but in the end we will produce a product that was put together by a bipartisan group of members of two different committees of the Appropriations Committee. And it went through the regular process. Bringing it to the floor with an open rule is the regular process. That is why I'm supporting this rule, because the rule gives the gateway to us doing those bills.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I would advise my colleague that I have no further speakers, and I'm prepared to close. So I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I guess I have to ask the question at the beginning that Mr. VAN HOLLEN has persisted in asking, and I as well and others: Why are you afraid to go to conference? I have no idea why you can't do that and follow the regular order.

I agree with my colleague that this bipartisan measure is a very good thing that we are bringing here, but I also agree with other speakers that when we finish doing these two bills—and I predict for my friend that we will not reach a single other measure of appropriations for the reason that if you're going to cut 22 percent from everything else and you're going to hold harmless the things that you and I like, then be assured we are in serious trouble as the appropriations process moves forward.

We have a responsibility to implement a budget framework that supports programs which help Americans provide for their families, to stay in their homes, and remain competitive in the global economy. The Ryan budget picks winners and losers, and we are picking two winners today, and we are going to have 11 losers on down the road.

''Deem and pass'' did not work the last Congress, it didn't work when Democrats thought that they could try it, and it ain't gonna work now. It is long past time that House Republicans work together with Democrats in conference, just as these two committees did, to negotiate a budget and put an end to the devastating sequester.

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

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

There was no objection.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' and defeat the previous question. I urge a ''no'' vote on the rule, and I'm prepared to yield back the balance of my time after I ask the question one more time: Why are you afraid to go to conference?

I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1400

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to submit two letters into the RECORD.

The first letter is from the Budget Committee chairman, PAUL RYAN. In his letter, Chairman RYAN asks the Rules Committee to follow standard practice by addressing budget enforcement pending a conference report on the budget resolution. To prevent greater uncertainty and further delays in the appropriations process, House Resolution 243 will include a provision and does include a provision that adopts the House-passed budget resolution, H. Con. Res. 25, as an interim budget enforcement measure until an agreement may be reached with the Senate on the budget resolution for the coming fiscal year.

I would like to read an excerpt from that letter. This is from Chairman RYAN to Chairman SESSIONS, who is the Rules Committee chairman:

> As you know, the budget passed by the House reduces spending by $4.6 trillion and achieves balance in 2023—all without raising taxes on the American people. In contrast, the budget resolution adopted by the Senate raises taxes by over $900 billion, increases spending by $265 billion and never balances. While I continue to work with my Senate counterpart to find common ground, we have not yet been able to reach agreement.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Will the gentleman yield on that point?

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Let me finish this first.

Another part of that reads:

> Until such time as we are able to reach agreement and consistent with the practice in previous years when the House and Senate have been delayed in completing action on a budget resolution, I am asking that the rule include a provision that adopts the House-passed budget resolution as an interim budget enforcement measure that will allow the appropriations process to proceed without further delay.

The second letter is just a response from Representative SESSIONS, who is the chair of the Rules Committee, acknowledging that the rule would include the requested interim budget enforcement measure.

I yield to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN).

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I just have a simple question, which is: How is it that we are going to get agreement from the House and the Senate in a conference

committee if the Speaker of the House continues to refuse to go to conference? How are we going to get that agreement?

The reason we don't have a conference committee budget report and you have to use this device is that there is no conference, and the reason there is no conference is that our Republican colleagues in the House refuse to appoint conferees, which is why we want to pass this amendment and let the Members vote on whether or not we go to conference.

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. I reclaim my time and will not yield any more time after this.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I am not involved in that process. However, I can tell you this: I was a speaker at one point in time in a different body and at a different time in my career. Even if a conference committee has not been formed, there are discussions that go on. Then, eventually, there will be a conference committee, and things work out, but it doesn't necessarily mean that nothing is happening. I think things are happening. I think they are working on solutions. We have to have a solution at some point in time, and that's happening.

This resolution provides for an open rule to allow all Members to offer their ideas and to debate them through regular order. Two underlying bills fund necessary programs that train, equip, house, and support the brave men and women who sacrificially defend our freedoms, and the bills also support their families. Our debt of gratitude to these individuals does not expire when they retire, as the legislation also funds important programs to provide benefits and medical care for our veterans. Additionally, the legislation equips our Coast Guard and supports the individuals who guard our borders, secure our airports and seaports, and who respond to natural disasters.

However, we would be doing a great disservice, Mr. Speaker, to future generations if we were to fail to consider the effect our current spending will have on the future fiscal health and safety our Nation. For that reason, these bills reduce costs, require the coordination of medical care and ensure the efficient operation of those critical programs so that we may continue to support those who protect us.

I encourage my colleagues to join me in voting in favor of this rule and in the passage of the underlying bills.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET,
Washington, DC, May 31, 2013.

Hon. PETE SESSIONS,
Chairman, Committee on Rules,
The Capitol, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Yesterday you announced that the Committee on Rules will meet on June 3 to report a rule to govern the floor consideration of the first appropriations bills for fiscal year 2014. I am writing to ask that you include in that rule a provision providing for the enforcement of the concurrent resolution on the budget as passed by the House (H. Con. Res. 25) until such time as the House adopts a conference report on the budget for fiscal year 2014.

As you know, the budget passed by the House reduces spending by $4.6 trillion and achieves balance in 2023—all without raising taxes on the American people. In contrast, the budget resolution adopted by the Senate raises taxes by over $900 billion, increases spending by $265 billion, and never balances. While I continue to work with my Senate counterpart to find common ground, we have not yet been able to reach agreement.

Until such time as we are able to reach agreement and consistent with the practice in previous years when the House and Senate have been delayed in completing action on a budget resolution, I am asking that the rule include a provision that adopts the House-passed budget resolution as an interim budget enforcement measure that will allow the appropriations process to proceed without further delay.

Pursuant to the authority provided in the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 and in title VI of the House-passed concurrent resolution on the budget and consistent with longstanding practice, once the House passes the rule adopting the House-passed budget resolution, as the Budget Committee Chairman I intend to file the allocations and adjustments in the Congressional Record to put in force such concurrent resolution.

To ensure the Rules Committee and House members have full transparency on the budget levels that would be enforced, enclosed are the relevant budget aggregates and committee allocations that I will file if the House adopts the rule. The House-passed budget resolution was based on CBO February budget projections and estimates. The funding levels for global war on terror (GWOT)/overseas contingency operations (OCO) and for veterans programs were based on an extrapolation of the President's budget request from last year. Because the House acted on the budget resolution before CBO had completed its updated budget projections and before the President had submitted his fiscal year 2014 budget request, the resolution provided authority for the Chairman to adjust the relevant levels in the resolution to reflect CBO's updated budget projections and the President's request for GWOT/OCO and veterans advance appropriations. The adjustments for CBO's updated baseline will be limited to changes due to updated technical estimates. Now that we have CBO's revised baseline projections and the President's budget request, it is possible to update the levels in the House-passed budget resolution to reflect this updated information. Enclosed are tables showing aggregate budget and committee allocations that will be used for budget enforcement purposes.

I want to emphasize that this is a request for an interim measure while the Committee on the Budget continues to work toward an agreement with the Senate on a budget resolution for the coming fiscal year. The nation's fiscal problems cannot be addressed solely through the appropriations process and the budget remains the critical vehicle for identifying a solution.

To ensure full transparency as to my intent should this request be granted, I ask that you include this letter and the enclosures in the Rules Committee's record of consideration of the rule. I appreciate your consideration. If there are any questions, please contact Paul Restuccia, Chief Counsel of the Committee on the Budget.

Sincerely,

PAUL D. RYAN,
Chairman.

Enclosures.

BUDGET AGGREGATES

(On-budget amounts, in millions of dollars)

	Fiscal year	
	2014	2014–2023
Current Aggregates:		
Budget Authority	2,755,317	[1]
Outlays	2,810,979	[1]
Revenues	2,310,972	31,089,081

[1] Not applicable because annual appropriations acts for fiscal years 2015–2023 will not be considered until future sessions of Congress.

ALLOCATION OF SPENDING AUTHORITY TO HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

(In millions of dollars)

	2014
ID Base Discretionary Action:	
BA	966,924
OT	1,117,675
Global War on Terrorism:	
BA	92,289
OT	48,010
Total Discretionary Action:	
BA	1,059,213
OT	1,165,685
Current Law Mandatory:	
BA	749,400
OT	738,140

RESOLUTION BY AUTHORIZING COMMITTEE

(On-budget amounts in millions of dollars)

	2014	2014–2023
Agriculture:		
Current Law:		
BA	92,956	906,903
OT	89,341	900,800
Resolution Change:		
BA	−2,631	−209,044
4OT	−2,501	−208,556
Total:		
BA	86,840	692,244
Armed Services:		
Current Law:		
BA	150,138	1,764,863
OT	149,922	1,768,772
Resolution Change:		
BA	0	0
OT	0	0
Total:		
4BA	150,138	1,764,863
OT	149,922	1,768,772
Financial Services:		
Current Law:		
BA	12,981	114,942
OT	2,112	−57,397
Resolution Change:		
BA	−11,465	−94,439
OT	−10,428	−94,325
Total:		
BA	1,516	20,503
OT	−8,316	−151,722
Education & Workforce:		
Current Law:		
BA	−25,740	−661
OT	−18,800	2,383
Resolution Change:		
BA	−21,712	−217,458
BA	−7,430	−198,921
Total:		
BA	−47,452	−218,119
OT	−26,230	−196,538
Energy & Commerce:		
Current Law:		
BA	356,892	4,936,804
BA	356,892	4,936,804
OT	354,784	4,935,838
Resolution Change:		
BA	−22,996	−1,604,166
OT	−20,659	−1,596,356
Total:		
BA	333,896	3,332,638
OT	334,125	3,339,482
Foreign Affairs:		
Current Law:		
BA	29,118	241,385
OT	26,085	235,012
Resolution Change:		
BA	0	0
OT	0	0
Total:		
BA	29,118	241,385
OT	26,085	235,012

RESOLUTION BY AUTHORIZING COMMITTEE—Continued

(On-budget amounts in millions of dollars)

	2014	2014–2023
Oversight & Government Reform:		
Current Law:		
BA	102,657	1,199,434
OT	99,645	1,170,525
Resolution Change:		
BA	−11,758	−165,996
OT	−11,758	−165,996
Total:		
BA	90,899	1,033,438
OT	87,887	1,004,529
Homeland Security:		
Current Law:		
BA	1,916	22,255
OT	1,779	22,321
Resolution Change:		
BA	−305	−12,575
OT	−305	−12,575
Total:		
BA	1,611	9,680
OT	1,474	9,746
House Administration:		
Current Law:		
BA	40	371
OT	6	206
Resolution Change:		
BA	−34	−295
OT	0	−130
Total:		
BA	6	76
OT	6	76
Natural Resources:		
Current Law:		
BA	6,441	63,590
OT	7,069	66,964
Resolution Change:		
BA	−900	−17,995
OT	−632	−17,225
Total:		
BA	5,541	45,595
OT	6,437	49,739
Judiciary:		
Current Law:		
BA	19,809	102,678
OT	11,573	105,537
Resolution Change:		
BA	−11,506	−47,461
OT	−637	−45,809
Total:		
BA	8,303	55,217
OT	10,936	59,728
Transportation & Infrastructure:		
Current Law:		
BA	71,454	728,035
OT	16,822	193,098
Resolution Change:		
BA	−78	−116,444
OT	−47	−951
Total:		
BA	71,376	611,591
OT	16,775	192,147
Sdence, Space & Technology:		
Current Law:		
BA	101	1,010
OT	104	1,013
Resolution Change:		
BA	0	0
OT	0	0
Total:		
BA	101	1,010
OT	104	1,013
Small Business:		
Current Law:		
BA	0	0
OT	0	0
Resolution Change:		
BA	0	0
OT	0	0
Total:		
BA	0	0
OT	0	0
Veterans Affairs:		
Current Law:		
BA	2,939	93,544
OT	3,098	95,206
Resolution Change:		
BA	0	0
OT	0	0
Total:		
BA	2,939	93,544
OT	3,098	95,206
Ways & Means:		
Current Law:		
BA	963,421	14,458,848

RESOLUTION BY AUTHORIZING COMMITTEE—Continued

(On-budget amounts in millions of dollars)

	2014	2014–2023
OT	962,271	14,455,530
Resolution Change:		
BA	−22,567	−1,298,202
OT	−21,667	−1,291,946
Total:		
BA	940,854	13,160,646
OT	940,604	13,163,584

ACCOUNTS IDENTIFIED FOR ADVANCE APPROPRIATIONS

ACCOUNTS IDENTIFIED FOR ADVANCE APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2015

(Subject to a General Limit of $28,852,000,000)

Payment to Postal Service

Employment and Training Administration
Education for the Disadvantaged
School Improvement Programs
Special Education
Career, Technical and Adult Education

Tenant-based Rental Assistance
Project-based Rental Assistance

VETERANS ACCOUNTS IDENTIFIED FOR ADVANCE APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2015

(Subject to a Separate Limit of $55,634,227)

VA Medical Services
VA Medical Support and Compliance
VA Medical Facilities

COMMITTEE ON RULES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, June 3, 2013.

CHAIRMAN PAUL RYAN,
Committee on the Budget, Cannon House Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN RYAN: Thank you for your letter of May 31, 2013. I appreciate your desire and commitment to achieving a final resolution of the Budget for Fiscal Year 2014 with the Senate. Your leadership on the budget challenges facing the Nation is unmatched.

I agree with you that, pending a conference report on the budget, it is both timely and proper to ensure that we have the necessary budget enforcement mechanisms in place as we begin the annual appropriations process. Despite the fact that the President's Budget was submitted more than two months after the statutory deadline, we must move forward on the annual appropriations process if we have any hope of meeting the deadlines imposed by the end of the fiscal year.

To that end, I intend to recommend to the Committee on Rules that we agree to your request for the inclusion of budget enforcement language in the rule that will be considered by the Committee later today. This will allow you to continue your negotiations with the Senate and allow the House to begin its work on the appropriations bills, which I believe is a responsible approach.

Thank you again for your leadership.

Sincerely,

PETE SESSIONS.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to the rule for H.R. 2216, Military Construction/VA Appropriations act for Fy 2014.

I oppose the rule because it adheres to the draconian spending limits imposed by the Ryan Budget resolution rather than more realistic and responsible limits to be negotiated and agreed to by House and Senate budget conferees.

Indeed, the Republican House leadership has refused for months to appoint conferees empowered to reach a budget agreement that is fair, balanced and would end sequestration.

I agree with President Obama that prior to consideration of appropriations bills the House and Senate should first reach agreement on an appropriate framework for all appropriations bills and one does not harm our economy or require draconian cuts to middle-class priorities.

Without such an agreement, House Republican appropriation bills will result in: hundreds of thousands of low-income children losing access to Head Start programs; tens of thousands of children with disabilities losing federal funding for their special education teachers and aides; thousands of federal agents who will not be able to secure the border, enforce drug laws, combat violent crime or apprehend fugitives; and thousands of scientists without medical grants to conduct research to find new treatments and cures for diseases like breast cancer and Alzheimer's.

As Ranking Member of the Homeland Security Border and Maritime Security Subcommittee, I will continue working with my colleagues across the aisle and in the Senate to ensure that our firefighters and other first responders have the resources needed to keep the American people safe.

But I oppose this rule and urge all Members to join me in voting against it.

The material previously referred to by Mr. HASTINGS of Florida is as follows:

AN AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 243 OFFERED BY MR. HASTINGS OF FLORIDA

Strike Section 3, and insert the following new sections:

Sec. 3. Immediately upon adoption of this resolution the Speaker shall, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the resolution (H. Res. 174) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the Speaker should immediately request a conference and appoint conferees to complete work on a fiscal year 2014 budget resolution with the Senate. The first reading of the resolution shall be dispensed with. General debate shall be confined to the resolution and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Budget. After general debate the resolution shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. At the conclusion of consideration of the resolution for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the resolution to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the resolution and preamble to adoption without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions. If the Committee of the Whole rises and reports that it has come to no resolution on the resolution, then on the next legislative day the House shall, immediately after the third daily order of business under clause 1 of rule XIV, resolve into the Committee of the Whole for further consideration of the resolution.

Sec. 4. Clause 1(c) of rule XIX shall not apply to the consideration of the resolution specified in section 3 of this resolution.

THE VOTE ON THE PREVIOUS QUESTION: WHAT IT REALLY MEANS

This vote, the vote on whether to order the previous question on a special rule, is not merely a procedural vote. A vote against ordering the previous question is a vote against the Republican majority agenda and a vote to allow the Democratic minority to offer an alternative plan. It is a vote about what the House should be debating.

Mr. Clarence Cannon's Precedents of the House of Representatives (VI, 308–311), describes the vote on the previous question on the rule as ''a motion to direct or control the consideration of the subject before the House being made by the Member in charge.'' To defeat the previous question is to give the opposition a chance to decide the subject before the House. Cannon cites the Speaker's ruling of January 13, 1920, to the effect that ''the refusal of the House to sustain the demand for the previous question passes the control of the resolution to the opposition'' in order to offer an amendment. On March 15, 1909, a member of the majority party offered a rule resolution. The House defeated the previous question and a member of the opposition rose to a parliamentary inquiry, asking who was entitled to recognition. Speaker Joseph G. Cannon (R-Illinois) said: ''The previous question having been refused, the gentleman from New York, Mr. Fitzgerald, who had asked the gentleman to yield to him for an amendment, is entitled to the first recognition.''

The Republican majority may say ''the vote on the previous question is simply a vote on whether to proceed to an immediate vote on adopting the resolution . . . [and] has no substantive legislative or policy implications whatsoever.'' But that is not what they have always said. Listen to the Republican Leadership Manual on the Legislative Process in the United States House of Representatives, (6th edition, page 135). Here's how the Republicans describe the previous question vote in their own manual: ''Although it is generally not possible to amend the rule because the majority Member controlling the time will not yield for the purpose of offering an amendment, the same result may be achieved by voting down the previous question on the rule. . . . When the motion for the previous question is defeated, control of the time passes to the Member who led the opposition to ordering the previous question. That Member, because he then controls the time, may offer an amendment to the rule, or yield for the purpose of amendment.''

In Deschler's Procedure in the U.S. House of Representatives, the subchapter titled ''Amending Special Rules'' states: ''a refusal to order the previous question on such a rule [a special rule reported from the Committee on Rules] opens the resolution to amendment and further debate.'' (Chapter 21, section 21.2) Section 21.3 continues: ''Upon rejection of the motion for the previous question on a resolution reported from the Committee on Rules, control shifts to the Member leading the opposition to the previous question, who may offer a proper amendment or motion and who controls the time for debate thereon.''

Clearly, the vote on the previous question on a rule does have substantive policy implications. It is one of the only available tools for those who oppose the Republican majority's agenda and allows those with alternative views the opportunity to offer an alternative plan.

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

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

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, the Chair will reduce to 5 minutes the minimum time for any electronic vote on the question of adoption.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 229, nays 193, not voting 11, as follows:

[Roll No. 186]

YEAS—229

Aderholt
Alexander
Amash
Amodei
Bachmann
Bachus
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Bonner
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Calvert
Camp
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Cassidy
Chabot
Chaffetz
Coble
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Cook
Cotton
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Daines
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Frelinghuysen
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grimm
Guthrie
Hall
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (WA)
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Issa
Jenkins
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Lankford
Latham
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Marchant
Marino
Massie
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
Olson
Palazzo
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Petri
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Radel
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Royce
Runyan
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schock
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Stewart
Stivers
Stockman
Stutzman
Terry
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walorski
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (FL)
Young (IN)

NAYS—193

Andrews
Barber
Barrow (GA)
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera (CA)
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu
Cicilline
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garcia
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hahn
Hanabusa
Hastings (FL)
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Holt
Horsford
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matheson
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McIntyre
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Michaud
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Nolan
O'Rourke
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Peterson
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Schwartz
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Waxman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—11

Campbell
Deutch
Franks (AZ)
Granger
Honda
Markey
McCarthy (NY)
Rangel
Sanchez, Loretta
Slaughter
Watt

□ 1430

Ms. ESHOO, Ms. SINEMA, and Messrs. FOSTER and McGOVERN changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

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

So the previous question was ordered.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TERRY). The question is on the resolution.

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 227, nays 194, not voting 12, as follows:

[Roll No. 187]

YEAS—227

Aderholt
Alexander
Amash
Amodei
Bachmann
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Bonner
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Calvert
Camp
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Cassidy
Chabot
Chaffetz
Coble
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Cook
Cotton
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Daines
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grimm
Guthrie
Hall
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (WA)
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Issa
Jenkins
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Lankford
Latham
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Marchant
Marino
Massie
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
Olson
Palazzo
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Petri
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Radel
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Royce
Runyan
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schock
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Stewart
Stivers
Stockman
Stutzman
Terry
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walorski
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (FL)
Young (IN)

NAYS—194

Andrews
Barber
Barrow (GA)
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera (CA)
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu
Cicilline
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garcia
Gibson
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hahn
Hanabusa
Hastings (FL)
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Holt
Horsford
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matheson
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McIntyre
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Michaud
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Nolan
O'Rourke
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Peterson
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Schwartz
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Waxman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—12

Bachus
Campbell
Deutch
Granger
Honda
Markey
McCarthy (NY)
Rangel
Sanchez, Loretta
Slaughter
Watt
Woodall

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining.

□ 1437

So the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained and missed rollcall vote Nos. 186 and 187. Had I been present, I would have voted "nay" on rollcall vote Nos. 186 and 187.

PUBLICATION OF BUDGETARY MATERIAL

REVISIONS TO THE AGGREGATES AND ALLOCATIONS OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2014 BUDGET RESOLUTION

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET,
Washington, DC, June 4, 2013.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to title VI of House Concurrent Resolution 25 (113th Congress), the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2014, which was put into effect by House Resolution 243 (113th Congress), I hereby submit for printing in the Congressional Record revisions to the aggregates, allocations and other budgetary levels set forth pursuant to the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2014, as put into effect by House Resolution 243.

These revisions are provided for bills, joint resolutions, and amendments thereto or conference reports thereon, considered by the House subsequent to this filing, as applicable.

The adjustments made by this communication are pursuant to the terms of the H. Con. Res. 25. They are made in order to take into account new information included in the budget submission by the President for fiscal year 2014 for the following: veterans' programs, Overseas Contingency Operations/Global War on Terrorism, or the 302(a) allocation to the Committee on Appropriations set forth in the report on H. Con. Res. 25, as deemed in force, to conform with section 251(c) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (as adjusted by section 251A of that Act).

The chair of the Committee on the Budget is also permitted to adjust the allocations, aggregates, and other appropriate budgetary levels to reflect changes resulting from technical assumptions in the most recent baseline published by the Congressional Budget Office.

The adjustments made by this communication are pursuant to the authority granted in section 603 of H. Con. Res. 25. The adjusted levels also incorporate a technical correction to the committee allocations included in House Report 113–17 to accurately reflect the levels of the budget resolution.

Associated tables are attached. These adjustments are made for the purposes of enforcing titles III and IV of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, and other budgetary enforcement provisions.

If there are any questions on these adjustments to the aggregates, allocations, and other budgetary levels in the concurrent resolution on the budget, please contact Paul Restuccia, Chief Counsel of the Budget Committee.

Sincerely,
PAUL D. RYAN of Wisconsin,
Chairman, House Budget Committee.

ADJUSTMENTS TO THE LEVELS IN HOUSE REPORT 113–17

BUDGET AGGREGATES

(On-budget amounts, in millions of dollars)

	Fiscal year	
	2014	2014–2023
Current Aggregates:		
Budget Authority	2,755,317	[1]
Outlays	2,810,979	[1]
Revenues	2,310,972	31,089,081

[1] Not applicable because annual appropriations acts for fiscal years 2015–2023 will not be considered until future sessions of Congress.

ALLOCATION OF SPENDING AUTHORITY TO HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

(In millions of dollars)

	2014
Base Discretionary Action:	
BA	966,924
OT	1,117,675
Global War on Terrorism	
BA	92,289
OT	48,010
Total Discretionary Action	
BA	1,059,213
OT	1,165,685
Current Law Mandatory	
BA	749,400
OT	738,140

RESOLUTION BY AUTHORIZING COMMITTEE

(On-budget amounts in millions of dollars)

	2014	2014–2023
Agriculture:		
Current Law:		
BA	92,956	906,903
OT	89,341	900,800
Resolution Change:		
BA	−2,631	−209,044
OT	−2,501	−208,556
Total:		
BA	90,325	697,859
OT	86,840	692,244
Armed Services:		
Current Law:		
BA	150,138	1,764,863
OT	149,922	1,768,772
Resolution Change:		
BA	0	0
OT	0	0
Total:		
BA	150,138	1,764,863
OT	149,922	1,768,772
Financial Services:		
Current Law:		
BA	12,981	114,942
OT	2,112	−57,397
Resolution Change:		
BA	−11,465	−94,439
OT	−10,428	−94,325
Total:		
BA	1,516	20,503
OT	−8,316	−151,722
Education & Workforce:		
Current Law:		
BA	−25,740	−661
OT	−18,800	2,383
Resolution Change:		
BA	−21,712	−217,458
OT	−7,430	−198,921
Total:		
BA	−47,452	−218,119
OT	−26,230	−196,538
Energy & Commerce:		
Current Law:		
BA	356,892	4,936,804
OT	354,784	4,935,838
Resolution Change:		
BA	−22,996	−1,604,166
OT	−20,659	−1,596,356
Total:		
BA	333,896	3,332,638
OT	334,125	3,339,482
Foreign Affairs:		
Current Law:		
BA	29,118	241,385
OT	26,085	235,012
Resolution Change:		
BA	0	0
OT	0	0
Total:		
BA	29,118	241,385
OT	26,085	235,012
Oversight & Government Reform:		
Current Law:		
BA	102,657	1,199,434
OT	99,645	1,170,525
Resolution Change:		
BA	−11,758	−165,996
OT	−11,758	−165,996
Total:		
BA	90,899	1,033,438
OT	87,887	1,004,529
Homeland Security:		
Current Law:		
BA	1,916	22,255
OT	1,779	22,321
Resolution Change:		
BA	−305	−12,575
OT	−305	−12,575
Total:		
BA	1,611	9,680
OT	1,474	9,746
House Administration:		
Current Law:		
BA	40	371
OT	6	206
Resolution Change:		
BA	−34	−295
OT	0	−130
Total:		
BA	6	76
OT	6	76
Natural Resources:		
Current Law:		
BA	6,441	63,590

RESOLUTION BY AUTHORIZING COMMITTEE—Continued

(On-budget amounts in millions of dollars)

	2014	2014–2023
OT	7,069	66,964
Resolution Change:		
BA	−900	−17,995
OT	−632	−17,225
Total:		
BA	5,541	45,595
OT	6,437	49,739
Judiciary:		
Current Law:		
BA	19,809	102,678
OT	11,573	105,537
Resolution Change:		
BA	−11 ,506	−47,461
OT	−637	−45,809
Total:		
BA	8,303	55,217
OT	10,936	59,728
Transportation & Infrastructure:		
Current Law:		
BA	71,454	728,035
OT	16,822	193,098
Resolution Change:		
BA	−78	−116,444
OT	−47	−951
Total:		
BA	71,376	611,591
OT	16,775	192,147
Science, Space & Technology:		
Current Law:		
BA	101	1,010
OT	104	1,013
Resolution Change:		
BA	0	0
OT	0	0
Total:		
BA	101	1,010
OT	104	1,013
Small Business:		
Current Law:		
BA	0	0
OT	0	0
Resolution Change:		
BA	0	0
OT	0	0
Total:		
BA	0	0
OT	0	0
Veterans Affairs:		
Current Law:		
BA	2,939	93,544
OT	3,098	95,206
Resolution Change:		
BA	0	0
OT	0	0
Total:		
BA	2,939	93,544
OT	3,098	95,206
Ways & Means:		
Current Law:		
BA	963,421	14,458,848
OT	962,271	14,455,530
Resolution Change:		
BA	−22,567	−1,298,202
OT	−21,667	−1,291,946
Total:		
BA	940,854	13,160,646
OT	940,604	13,163,584

ACCOUNTS IDENTIFIED FOR ADVANCE APPROPRIATIONS

ACCOUNTS IDENTIFIED FOR ADVANCE APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2015

(Subject to a General Limit of $28,852,000,000)

Financial Services and General Government

Payment to Postal Service

Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education

Employment and Training Administration
Education for the Disadvantaged
School Improvement Programs
Special Education
Career, Technical and Adult Education

Transportation, Housing and Urban Development

Tenant-based Rental Assistance
Project-based Rental Assistance

VETERANS ACCOUNTS IDENTIFIED FOR ADVANCE APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2015

(Subject to a Separate Limit of $55,634,227)

Military Construction, Veterans Affairs

VA Medical Services
VA Medical Support and Compliance
VA Medical Facilities

PUBLICATION OF BUDGETARY MATERIAL

REVISIONS TO THE AGGREGATES AND ALLOCATIONS OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2014 BUDGET RESOLUTION RELATED TO LEGISLATION REPORTED BY THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET,
Washington, DC, June 4, 2013.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to section 314(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, I hereby submit for printing in the Congressional Record revisions to the aggregate budget levels and committee allocations set forth pursuant to H. Con. Res. 25, the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2014, as put into effect by H. Res. 243. The revision is for new budget authority and outlays for provisions designated as disaster relief, pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(D) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, contained in a bill making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security reported by the Committee on Appropriations. A corresponding table is attached.

This revision represents an adjustment for purposes of enforcing sections 302 and 311 of the Budget Act. For the purposes of the Budget Act, these revised allocations are to be considered as allocations included in the levels of the budget resolution, pursuant to section 101 of H. Con. Res. 25 and H. Rept. 113–17, as adjusted.

Sincerely,

PAUL D. RYAN of Wisconsin,
Chairman, House Budget Committee.

BUDGET AGGREGATES

(On-budget amounts, in millions of dollars)

	Fiscal year	
	2014	2014–2023
Current Aggregates:		
Budget Authority	2,755,317	[1]
Outlays	2,810,979	[1]
Revenues	2,310,972	31,089,081
Adjustment for Disaster Designated Spending:		
Budget Authority	5,626	[1]
Outlays	281	[1]
Revenues	0	0
Revised Aggregates:		
Budget Authority	2,760,943	[1]
Outlays	2,811,260	[1]
Revenues	2,310,972	31,089,081

[1] Not applicable because annual appropriations acts for fiscal years 2015–2023 will not be considered until future sessions of Congress.

ALLOCATION OF SPENDING AUTHORITY TO HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

(In millions of dollars)

	2014
Base Discretionary Action:	
BA	966,924
OT	1,117,675
Adjustment for Disaster Designated Spending:	
BA	5,626
OT	281
Global War on Terrorism:	
BA	92,289
OT	48,010
Total Discretionary Action:	
BA	1,064,839
OT	1,165,966
Current Law Mandatory:	
BA	749,400
OT	738,140

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate agreed to the following resolution:

S. RES. 160

Whereas the Senate has heard with profound sorrow and deep regret the announcement of the death of the Honorable Frank R. Lautenberg, late a Senator from the State of New Jersey: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the memorial observances of the Honorable Frank R. Lautenberg, late a Senator from the State of New Jersey be held in the Senate Chamber on Thursday, June 6, 2013, beginning at 2 p.m., and that the Senate attend the same.

Resolved, That paragraph 1 of Rule IV of the Rules for the Regulation of the Senate Wing of the United States Capitol (prohibiting the taking of pictures in the Senate Chamber) be temporarily suspended for the sole and specific purpose of permitting the Senate Photographic Studio to photograph this memorial observance.

Resolved, That the Sergeant at Arms be directed to make necessary and appropriate arrangements in connection with the memorial observances in the Senate Chamber.

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate communicate these resolutions to the House of Representatives, transmit an enrolled copy thereof to the family of the deceased, and invite the House of Representatives and the family of the deceased to attend the memorial observances in the Senate Chamber.

Resolved, That invitations be extended to the President of the United States, the Vice President of the United States, and the members of the Cabinet, the Chief Justice and Associate Justices of the Supreme Court of the United States, the Diplomatic Corps (through the Secretary of State), the Chief of Staff of the Army, the Chief of Naval Operations of the Navy, the Major General Commandant of the Marine Corps, the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, and the Commandant of the Coast Guard to attend the memorial observances in the Senate Chamber.

The message also announced that the Senate has agreed to a concurrent resolution of the following title in which the concurrence of the House's requested:

S. Con. Res. 18. Concurrent Resolution providing for the use of the catafalque situated in the Exhibition Hall of the Capitol Visitor Center in connection with memorial services to be conducted in the United States Senate Chamber for the Honorable Frank R. Lautenberg, late a Senator from the State of New Jersey.

□ 1440

PROVIDING FOR THE USE OF THE CATAFALQUE IN THE EXHIBITION HALL OF THE CAPITOL VISITOR CENTER IN CONNECTION WITH MEMORIAL SERVICES TO BE CONDUCTED IN THE UNITED STATES SENATE CHAMBER FOR THE HONORABLE FRANK R. LAUTENBERG, LATE A SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table Senate Concurrent Resolution 18, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

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

There was no objection.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

S. CON. RES. 18

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That the Architect of the Capitol is authorized and directed to transfer the catafalque which is situated in the Exhibition Hall of the Capitol Visitor Center to the Senate Chamber so that such catafalque may be used in connection with services to be conducted there for the Honorable Frank R. Lautenberg, late a Senator from the State of New Jersey.

The concurrent resolution was concurred in.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2014

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on the bill under consideration and include extraneous material on the consideration of H.R. 2216, and that I may include tabular material on the same.

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

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 243 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 2216.

The Chair appoints the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) to preside over the Committee of the Whole.

□ 1442

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 2216) making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes, with Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

The gentleman from Texas (Mr. CULBERSON) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BISHOP) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. CULBERSON. Madam Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

It is my privilege, along with my good friend from Georgia (Mr. BISHOP), to present to the House for its consideration the 2014 appropriations bill for Military Construction and Veterans Affairs.

One of the most important obligations this Congress has is to ensure that our men and women in uniform have everything they need to do their job without worry. We think of ourselves on this subcommittee as the peace-of-mind committee for our military so that they can focus on their missions, standing on the walls of Rome, protecting our freedom, at the far corners of the world.

I think of all the appropriations bills we consider, we're honored to bring this one to the House first because of its importance to our men and women in uniform, to their families, and to our veterans who have served our Nation. We want to be sure, as I say, that they have no worries and that they don't ever have to look over their shoulder and be concerned that the United States Congress and the American people don't support them 110 percent, as we have done in this legislation, which my colleague from Georgia and I have drafted arm-in-arm.

This is a bipartisan bill that we present to the House today to ensure that the military construction needs of the armed services are fully met. We have also done our best to ensure that when our men and women in uniform retire and move into the Veterans Affairs system, they will have the best medical care possible and that this backlog of disability claims that's been plaguing us for a number of years will be cleared as rapidly as possible.

We've done this in a way that's also fiscally responsible. We have found every dollar we could that was left unspent from previous years and returned that to the taxpayers. At the same time, we make sure that our veterans and our men and women in uniform have everything that they need to do their job.

Our committee has also been very committed to ensuring that their families are taken care of and that the Defense Department schools on bases are the best that they can be and in the best condition that they can be in. I know all of us as parents are concerned about the quality of our kids' education. The last thing that a man or woman who's deployed at a United States base overseas—we don't want them to worry about the caliber of the school that their children are attending. So we've also placed emphasis on the ability of our military base commanders to contract with the State in which they're located to set up charter schools at their military bases if the base happens to be located in an area where the local schools can't provide the quality that they need.

We have in this appropriations bill, as I say, fully funded the Department of Veterans Affairs. Some of this money is advance appropriated. So while we've got a total funding level in this bill for 2014 of $73.3 billion, that's

$1.4 billion more than last year. We provide an additional $2.1 billion more than last year for the Department of Veterans Affairs. But of that increase, $1.9 billion was provided as an advance appropriation from previous years.

The Congress began several years ago to appropriate funding in advance for our Veterans Affairs Department to ensure that because of the uncertainty and the unpredictability of the appropriations cycle, again, we want our men and women in uniform and our veterans to have absolute peace of mind and no worries as they serve our country or as they move into retirement in the veterans hospital system, so we advance appropriate some of this money.

Any reductions that we made in this bill, again, were done to make sure that we're doing our part to control spending at a time of record debt and deficit, which is at the top of our minds. As fiscal conservatives, we want to ensure that we have done everything in our power to reduce the debt and to reduce the burden that is passed on to our children and grandchildren.

So we have not provided funding in the bill for 10 military construction projects that the committee believed it lacked sufficient justification for. And we funded only what the Department of Defense expects to spend in fiscal year 2014 for six military construction projects. We've also reduced the funding available for the Contingency Construction account, which has not even been used since fiscal year 2008. Our marvelous staff did a good job in identifying $659 million in unobligated balances from previous years for construction projects that have been left unspent, and we're able to return that to taxpayers.

We have also reduced the Department of Veterans Affairs request for funding in a program where they substantially overestimated their projections. The scope of this committee's jurisdiction also includes military memorials and cemeteries. We've made sure those are fully funded and that our memorials and cemeteries here in the United States and around the world are going to be well tended and that veterans, no matter where they may be in the United States, will be able to get the health care and benefits that they have earned by their service to this country.

□ 1450

We did everything we could in this bill to ensure that our men and women in uniform are taken care of and that our veterans are taken care of, but we are very concerned about the backlog in the disability claims that the VA has accumulated. The VA has promised us that they would have the backlog cleared up by the year 2015, so the bill contains very strong language that holds the VA to account ensuring that they will give the committee and the Congress detailed accounts and reports to ensure that they stay on target. Mr. KINGSTON of Georgia is going to offer an amendment later, which I intend to accept, to help ensure that the VA holds themselves to the standard that they have set for themselves to reduce the backlog.

And then, finally, Madam Chairman, I want to mention something that we are particularly exercised about. Our committee chairman, HAL ROGERS from Kentucky, has told us a story that I have never forgotten of a young man who I believe was wounded in Afghanistan—Iraq, who lost one eye, lost eyesight in one eye. When he left the service to go into the VA system, in order to save his remaining eye, he had to have medical records that could be read by the VA doctors. And because of bureaucratic inefficiency and pure idiocy, we've got a completely separate set of medical records in the DOD and the Veterans Administration. And for years, taxpayers have spent upwards of a billion dollars or more over the last 10 years to get the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs operating in a single, using a single unified medical record so that when a young man like this moves out of active service and into the VA, when it's a time-critical surgery such as this young man needed to have to save his eyesight, that the doctors in the VA could read those medical records and get him the help that he needs. But, sadly, because of bureaucratic inefficiency and refusal to cooperate—and, of course, we're all human and we're all flawed, but there's this instinctive human, I think, reaction to make sure you protect your own turf. Whatever it is, the VA and the DOD have not adopted a unified medical record. As a result, this young man lost his eyesight. He could not get the surgery he needed in the VA, and he is now permanently blinded as a result of the failure of these two departments to do their job.

Now, the week before last when we were considering this bill in committee, the Secretary of Defense, Mr. Hagel, said that the DOD was just going to go ahead and adopt their own medical record system separate from the VA. This is just unacceptable. I ask all my colleagues in Congress to work with Mr. BISHOP and me and to work with Chairman ROGERS, Ranking Member LOWEY, with the members of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, the members of the Armed Services Authorizing Committee and the members of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee so that we develop identical, parallel language that compels the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs to come up with a single, integrated, unified medical record so that no one will ever suffer the fate that this young man did who is now permanently blinded because of bureaucratic inefficiency.

It's unacceptable. The Congress won't stand for it any longer, and we've got strong language in this bill and will continue to work to strengthen it to ensure that these men and women, as they move from their days of uniformed service to the country into the VA, that it is seamless, that it is easy, that they can get their disability claims handled in a timely and efficient manner and that they can get their medical records read quickly and efficiently by the doctors in the VA system who do such a good job.

We deeply appreciate our extraordinary staff working together with my good friend from Georgia (Mr. BISHOP) in a truly bipartisan way. I'm proud to present to the House, Madam Chairman, the 2014 Military Construction and VA appropriations bill for approval by the House, a bill that is fiscally conservative and responsible yet fully funds and takes care of our men and women in uniform and our veterans in a way that they deserve, because our men and women who have fought so valiantly for this country deserve nothing less than the very best of the United States Congress, and we've done that for them in this bill today.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Military Construction - Veterans Affairs - and Related Agencies Appropriations Act - FY 2014 (H.R. 2216)
(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2013 Enacted	FY 2014 Request	Bill	Bill vs. Enacted	Bill vs. Request
TITLE I - DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE					
Military construction, Army	1,682,639	1,119,875	1,099,875	-582,764	-20,000
Military construction, Navy and Marine Corps	1,547,615	1,700,269	1,616,281	+68,666	-83,988
Military construction, Air Force	322,220	1,156,573	1,127,273	+805,053	-29,300
Military construction, Defense-Wide	3,578,841	3,985,300	3,707,923	+129,082	-277,377
Total, Active components	7,131,315	7,962,017	7,551,352	+420,037	-410,665
Military construction, Army National Guard	613,185	320,815	315,815	-297,370	-5,000
Supplemental (P.L. 113-2) (Emergency)	24,235	---	---	-24,235	---
Subtotal	637,420	320,815	315,815	-321,605	-5,000
Military construction, Air National Guard	42,344	119,800	107,800	+65,456	-12,000
Military construction, Army Reserve	305,540	174,060	174,060	-131,480	---
Military construction, Navy Reserve	49,482	32,976	32,976	-16,506	---
Military construction, Air Force Reserve	10,968	45,659	45,659	+34,691	---
Total, Reserve components	1,045,754	693,310	676,310	-369,444	-17,000
Total, Military construction	8,177,069	8,655,327	8,227,662	+50,593	-427,665
North Atlantic Treaty Organization Security Investment Program	253,909	239,700	199,700	-54,209	-40,000
Family housing construction, Army	4,636	44,008	44,008	+39,372	---
Family housing operation and maintenance, Army	529,521	512,871	512,871	-16,650	---
Family housing construction, Navy and Marine Corps	102,080	73,407	73,407	-28,673	---
Family housing operation and maintenance, Navy and Marine Corps	377,852	389,844	389,844	+11,992	---
Family housing construction, Air Force	83,740	76,360	76,360	-7,380	---
Family housing operation and maintenance, Air Force	497,331	388,598	388,598	-108,733	---
Family housing operation and maintenance, Defense-Wide	52,186	55,845	55,845	+3,659	---
Department of Defense Family Housing Improvement Fund	1,784	1,780	1,780	-4	---
Total, Family housing	1,649,130	1,542,713	1,542,713	-106,417	---
Chemical demilitarization construction, Defense-Wide	150,849	122,536	122,536	-28,313	---
Base realignment and closure:					
Base realignment and closure account, 1990	408,987	---	---	-408,987	---
Base realignment and closure account, 2005	126,570	---	---	-126,570	---
Base realignment and closure account	---	451,357	451,357	+451,357	---
Total, Base realignment and closure	535,557	451,357	451,357	-84,200	---
Military Construction, Army (Sec. 126)	---	---	-89,000	-89,000	-89,000
Military Construction, Navy and Marine Corps (Sec.127)	---	---	-49,920	-49,920	-49,920
Military Construction, Defense-Wide (Sec. 128)	-20,000	---	-358,400	-338,400	-358,400
Rescission (P.L. 113-6):					
Base Realignment and Closure, 2005	-132,513	---	---	+132,513	---
Military construction, Army, Planning and design FY12 (Sec. 129)	---	---	-50,000	-50,000	-50,000
Military construction, Defense-Wide, Unspecified minor construction FY09 and FY10 (Sec. 130)	---	---	-16,470	-16,470	-16,470
Military construction, Air National Guard, Unspecified minor construction FY09 and FY10 (Sec. 131)	---	---	-45,623	-45,623	-45,623
42 USC 3374 (Sec. 132)	---	---	-50,000	-50,000	-50,000
Reduction of funds (Sec. 133)	---	---	-4,668	-4,668	-4,668
Navy Land Transfer (P.L. 113-6)	10,989	---	---	-10,989	---

Military Construction - Veterans Affairs - and Related Agencies Appropriations Act - FY 2014 (H.R. 2216)
(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2013 Enacted	FY 2014 Request	Bill	Bill vs. Enacted	Bill vs. Request
Military Construction, Navy and Marine Corps (Sec. 135)	---	---	75,000	+75,000	+75,000
Total, title I, Department of Defense	10,624,990	11,011,633	9,954,887	-670,103	-1,056,746
Appropriations	(10,753,268)	(11,011,633)	(10,614,300)	(-138,968)	(-397,333)
Rescissions	(-152,513)	---	(-659,413)	(-506,900)	(-659,413)
Emergency appropriations	(24,235)	---	---	(-24,235)	---
TITLE II - DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS					
Veterans Benefits Administration					
Compensation and pensions	60,599,855	71,248,171	71,248,171	+10,648,316	---
Readjustment benefits	12,023,458	13,135,898	13,135,898	+1,112,440	---
Veterans insurance and indemnities	104,600	77,567	77,567	-27,033	---
Veterans housing benefit program fund:					
(indefinite)	184,859	---	---	-184,859	---
(Limitation on direct loans)	(500)	(500)	(500)	---	---
Administrative expenses	157,656	158,430	158,430	+774	---
Vocational rehabilitation loans program account	19	5	5	-14	---
(Limitation on direct loans)	(2,729)	(2,500)	(2,500)	(-229)	---
Administrative expenses	346	354	354	+8	---
Native American veteran housing loan program account	1,088	1,109	1,109	+21	---
Total, Veterans Benefits Administration	73,071,881	84,621,534	84,621,534	+11,549,653	---
Veterans Health Administration					
Medical services:					
Advance from prior year	(41,354,000)	(43,557,000)	(43,557,000)	(+2,203,000)	---
Current year request	154,845	157,500	---	-154,845	-157,500
Advance appropriation, FY 2015	43,557,000	45,015,527	45,015,527	+1,458,527	---
Supplemental (P.L. 113-2) (Emergency)	21,000	---	---	-21,000	---
Subtotal	43,732,845	45,173,027	45,015,527	+1,282,682	-157,500
Medical support and compliance:					
Advance from prior year	(5,746,000)	(6,033,000)	(6,033,000)	(+287,000)	---
Advance appropriation, FY 2015	6,033,000	5,879,700	5,879,700	-153,300	---
Subtotal	6,033,000	5,879,700	5,879,700	-153,300	---
Medical facilities:					
Advance from prior year	(5,441,000)	(4,872,000)	(4,872,000)	(-569,000)	---
Advance appropriation, FY 2015	4,872,000	4,739,000	4,739,000	-133,000	---
Supplemental (P.L. 113-2) (Emergency)	6,000	---	---	-6,000	---
Subtotal	4,878,000	4,739,000	4,739,000	-139,000	---
Medical and prosthetic research	582,091	585,664	585,664	+3,573	---
Medical care cost recovery collections:					
Offsetting collections	-2,527,000	-2,485,000	-2,485,000	+42,000	---
Appropriations (indefinite)	2,527,000	2,485,000	2,485,000	-42,000	---
Subtotal	---	---	---	---	---
DoD-VA Joint Medical Funds (transfers out)	(-279,720)	(-254,257)	(-271,000)	(+8,720)	(-16,743)
DoD-VA Joint Medical Funds (by transfer)	(279,720)	(254,257)	(271,000)	(-8,720)	(+16,743)
DoD-VA Health Care Sharing Incentive Fund (Transfer out)	(-15,000)	(-15,000)	(-15,000)	---	---

Military Construction - Veterans Affairs - and Related Agencies Appropriations Act - FY 2014 (H.R. 2216)
(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2013 Enacted	FY 2014 Request	Bill	Bill vs. Enacted	Bill vs. Request
DoD-VA Health Care Sharing Incentive Fund (by transfer)	(15,000)	(15,000)	(15,000)	---	---
Total, Veterans Health Administration	55,225,936	56,377,391	56,219,891	+993,955	-157,500
Appropriations	(736,936)	(743,164)	(585,664)	(-151,272)	(-157,500)
Emergency appropriations	(27,000)	---	---	(-27,000)	---
Advance appropriations, FY 2015	(54,462,000)	(55,634,227)	(55,634,227)	(+1,172,227)	---
Advances from prior year appropriations	(52,541,000)	(54,462,000)	(54,462,000)	(+1,921,000)	---
National Cemetery Administration					
National Cemetery Administration	258,026	250,000	250,000	-8,026	---
Supplemental (P.L. 113-2) (Emergency)	2,100	---	---	-2,100	---
Subtotal	260,126	250,000	250,000	-10,126	---
Departmental Administration					
General administration	424,312	403,023	403,023	-21,289	---
General operating expenses, VBA	2,161,910	2,455,490	2,455,490	+293,580	---
Information technology systems	3,324,117	3,683,344	3,683,344	+359,227	---
Supplemental (P.L. 113-2) (Emergency)	531	---	---	-531	---
Subtotal	3,324,648	3,683,344	3,683,344	+358,696	---
Office of Inspector General	114,885	116,411	116,411	+1,526	---
Construction, major projects	531,938	342,130	342,130	-189,808	---
Supplemental (P.L. 113-2) (Emergency)	207,000	---	---	-207,000	---
Subtotal	738,938	342,130	342,130	-396,808	---
Construction, minor projects	606,922	714,870	714,870	+107,948	---
Grants for construction of State extended care facilities	84,915	82,650	82,650	-2,265	---
Grants for the construction of veterans cemeteries	45,954	44,650	44,650	-1,304	---
Total, Departmental Administration	7,502,484	7,842,568	7,842,568	+340,084	---
Emergency appropriations	(207,531)	---	---	(-207,531)	---
Administrative Provisions					
FY 2014 Advance Rescission (Sec. 230)	---	---	-156,000	-156,000	-156,000
FY 2014 Current Reduction (Sec. 230)	---	---	-24,000	-24,000	-24,000
Section 225					
Medical services	1,498,500	1,400,000	1,400,000	-98,500	---
(Rescission)	-1,500,000	-1,400,000	-1,400,000	+100,000	---
Medical support and compliance	199,800	100,000	100,000	-99,800	---
(Rescission)	-200,000	-100,000	-100,000	+100,000	---
Medical facilities	249,750	250,000	250,000	+250	---
(Rescission)	-250,000	-250,000	-250,000	---	---
Total. Administrative Provisions	-1,950	---	-180,000	-178,050	-180,000
Total, title II	136,058,477	149,091,493	148,753,993	+12,695,516	-337,500
Appropriations	(83,309,846)	(95,207,266)	(95,025,766)	(+11,715,920)	(-181,500)
Emergency appropriations	(236,631)	---	---	(-236,631)	---
Rescissions	(-1,950,000)	(-1,750,000)	(-1,750,000)	(+200,000)	---
Advance appropriations, FY 2015	(54,462,000)	(55,634,227)	(55,634,227)	(+1,172,227)	---
Advances from prior year appropriations	(52,541,000)	(54,462,000)	(54,462,000)	(+1,921,000)	---
(Limitation on direct loans)	(3,229)	(3,000)	(3,000)	(-229)	---

Military Construction - Veterans Affairs - and Related Agencies Appropriations Act - FY 2014 (H.R. 2216)
(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2013 Enacted	FY 2014 Request	Bill	Bill vs. Enacted	Bill vs. Request
Discretionary	(63,145,705)	(64,629,857)	(64,292,357)	(+1,146,652)	(-337,500)
Advances from prior year less FY 2015 advances	-1,921,000	-1,172,227	-1,172,227	+748,773	---
Less emergency appropriations	-236,631	---	---	+236,631	---
Net discretionary	(60,988,074)	(63,457,630)	(63,120,130)	(+2,132,056)	(-337,500)
Mandatory	(72,912,772)	(84,461,636)	(84,461,636)	(+11,548,864)	---
Total mandatory and net discretionary	133,900,846	147,919,266	147,581,766	+13,680,920	-337,500
TITLE III - RELATED AGENCIES					
American Battle Monuments Commission					
Salaries and expenses	61,348	58,200	57,980	-3,368	-220
Foreign currency fluctuations account	14,818	14,100	14,100	-718	---
Total, American Battle Monuments Commission	76,166	72,300	72,080	-4,086	-220
U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims					
Salaries and expenses	31,665	35,408	35,272	+3,607	-136
Department of Defense - Civil					
Cemeterial Expenses, Army					
Salaries and expenses	64,146	45,800	70,685	+6,539	+24,885
Construction program	100,412	---	---	-100,412	---
Total, Cemeterial Expenses, Army	164,558	45,800	70,685	-93,873	+24,885
Armed Forces Retirement Home - Trust Fund					
Operation and maintenance	63,941	66,800	66,400	+2,459	-400
Capital program	1,950	1,000	1,000	-950	---
Armed Forces Retirement Home - General Fund					
Capital program	---	---	---	---	---
Total, Armed Forces Retirement Home	65,891	67,800	67,400	+1,509	-400
Total, title III	338,280	221,308	245,437	-92,843	+24,129
TITLE IV - OVERSEAS CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS					
Military Construction, Navy and Marine Corps	150,768	---	---	-150,768	---
Rescission (P.L. 112-10)	-150,768	---	---	+150,768	---
Total, title IV	---	---	---	---	---
Grand total	147,021,747	160,324,434	158,954,317	+11,932,570	-1,370,117
Appropriations	(94,401,394)	(106,440,207)	(105,885,503)	(+11,484,109)	(-554,704)
Rescissions	(-2,102,513)	(-1,750,000)	(-2,409,413)	(-306,900)	(-659,413)
Emergency appropriations	(260,866)	---	---	(-260,866)	---
Advance appropriations, FY 2015	(54,462,000)	(55,634,227)	(55,634,227)	(+1,172,227)	---
Overseas contingency operations	---	---	---	---	---
Advances from prior year appropriations	(52,541,000)	(54,462,000)	(54,462,000)	(+1,921,000)	---

Military Construction - Veterans Affairs - and Related Agencies Appropriations Act - FY 2014 (H.R. 2216)
(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2013 Enacted	FY 2014 Request	Bill	Bill vs. Enacted	Bill vs. Request
(By transfer)	(294,720)	(269,257)	(286,000)	(-8,720)	(+16,743)
(Transfer out)	(-294,720)	(-269,257)	(-286,000)	(+8,720)	(-16,743)
(Limitation on direct loans)	(3,229)	(3,000)	(3,000)	(-229)	---

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Madam Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Chairman, as you know, the allocation provides $73.3 billion for the FY14 Military Construction-VA bill, which is $1.4 billion above the FY13 and $1 billion below the request. In my opinion, the allocation is what we could have expected had the Republican leadership addressed sequestration.

Madam Chairman, I know some folks will say that title 2 of this bill is exempt from sequestration and that is why the bill received a decent allocation, but I just want to point out that the funding in the bill largely mirrors the administration's request which does not reflect sequestration, even for the portions of the bill that were not exempted. I think that we all agree that we need to address the sequester, and I hope that we do it in the near future, because if we don't, the long-term effects will be devastating to our economy.

With that being said, I'm pleased to join Chairman CULBERSON as the House takes up the FY14 appropriations bill for Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and related agencies. The MilCon-VA bill is critically important to the strength and the well-being of our military, our veterans, and the families who sacrifice so much to defend our country. In fact, Mr. Chairman, I find it quite fitting that we are debating this bill immediately after observing Memorial Day last week.

Working with Chairman CULBERSON and the members of our subcommittee, we have crafted a bill that will address the funding needs for military construction and family housing for our troops and their families, as well as other quality-of-life construction projects. In addition, it will provide funding for many important VA programs, as well as agencies like the Veterans Court of Appeals and the American Battle Monuments Commission.

The bill before us today touches every soldier, sailor, marine, and airman. In addition, the bill also will impact military spouses, their children, and every veteran that participates in VA programs.

I want to commend the chairman for his work. Together, we sat through numerous hearings, gaining valuable insight to the workings of all the agencies under the subcommittee's jurisdiction. Also, we would like to thank our subcommittee members and recognize them for their hard work on this bill. I believe that the minority was treated fairly during this process, and I want to thank the chairman for ensuring this bipartisan result.

Chairman CULBERSON has already provided the funding highlights in the bill, and I will not repeat them all, but I would like to point out a few items that I believe are extremely important.

The bill before us today includes $797 million for the renovation and replacement of 17 Department of Defense schools. I believe that providing the funds for the DOD schools will help our servicemembers' children get a quality education in safe facilities and will give our servicemembers peace of mind.

I'm pleased that the bill includes $151 million for the third increment of the Landstuhl Medical Center replacement in Germany. As you know, a large portion of the serious casualties from Afghanistan are treated there, and I'm pleased to see that we are making this important investment.

The Department of Veterans Affairs is funded at $63.1 billion, and overall, the subcommittee recommendation meets the discretionary budget request in all areas of administrative expenses, research, information technology, and facilities.

In addition, the bill contains $55.6 billion in advance appropriations for medical services, medical support and compliance, and medical facilities at the VA, which is $1.1 billion above the amount included in FY13. Madam Chairman, I strongly believe that advance funding provides timely and predictable resources for the veterans' health care system, and I'm so glad that we have been able to do it now for this 5th year in a row.

Now, I know that a lot of Members of this body are deeply concerned about the claims backlog and the electronic health records challenge. Trust me, the members of our committee, especially Chairman CULBERSON and I, have spoken directly with Secretary Shinseki about these issues numerous times, and I believe that our bill provides the resources and the accountability needed to address these two problems:

First, the bill funds the general operating expenses for the VBA, which will support 20,851 claims processors, which is 94 more than FY2013, and all 94 new claims processors will work disability claims;

Second, the bill fully funds the Veterans Benefits Management System at $155 million and the Veterans Claim Intake Program at $136.4 million.

□ 1500

These two efforts should speed up the VA's efforts to take old claims that are filed on paper and convert them into digital files that are easily searchable by claims processors, thus speeding up the claims process.

Second, we include a monthly reporting requirement every 30 days for the VA to provide Congress with several statistics, such as the average wait time at each regional office, rating inventory that has been pending for 125 days, rating claims advocacy, and month-to-month updates in changes in those statistics.

Third, we require a report on the VA's expedited claims initiative that was announced just a few weeks ago. This report should give the committee and the Congress insight into whether or not the Secretary's new initiatives are having positive results.

Finally, the bill directs the VA and the Department of Defense toward one integrated electronic health record system in bill language, and it restricts the availability of funds for the development of a system that meets the requirements of being single, joint, common, and integrated with open architecture and is the sole system used by both the Veterans Administration and the Department of Defense. This initiative would ensure that veterans get their records to the VA electronically, thus reducing the number of claims filed on paper and speeding up the claims process.

Now, the committee's action—and I want to make this point clear—the committee's action and this bill do not mandate the adoption of a particular system, only that it be a single system that is used by both Departments. I don't think that we should get into the business of picking the software, but I do believe that by mandating a single system between the Department of Defense and the VA, that veteran claims in the future will not continue to fall victim to the slow inefficiencies that we're dealing with today.

Madam Chair, I believe that we have a strong, bipartisan bill that supports our military, their families, and our veterans. I would hate to see the hard work of our committee up-ended by contentious partisan riders intended to serve in scoring political points instead of those that serve our Nation. I also believe that the most important parts of this bill are the resources and accountability provided to assist the VA in tackling this outrageous claims backlog.

So I say to my colleagues that our committee strongly shares the deep commitment of this body to fixing the claims backlog issue. We looked at numerous approaches and further believe that our bill has found the optimal approach in dealing with this pressing concern of our veterans.

Before I close, Madam Chair, I would like to recognize the staff for all of the hard work and time that they've put into this bill. From the minority committee staff, I would like to thank Matt Washington, as well as Michael Reed and Adam McCombs from my personal staff. From the majority committee staff, I would like to thank Donna Shabazz, Sue Quantius, Sarah Young, and Tracey Russell.

I would also like to thank Mrs. LOWEY and Mr. ROGERS, the chairman and the ranking member, who served so valiantly and who are so diligently trying to seek the well-being of our servicemen and -women, their families, and our veterans.

At this time, Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CULBERSON. Madam Chairman, the House budget that we adopted set a total spending limit of $967 billion in the 3 years that the Republicans have had the majority in the House and the leadership of Chairman HAL ROGERS of Kentucky. For the first time since

World War II, we have reduced annual spending from year to year, each year, under Chairman ROGERS' leadership.

It's also, I think, important for the country to know that one of the first and most important responsibilities of the chairman of the full committee is to take that total spending number that's given to us by Chairman RYAN's Budget Committee, that $967 billion—Chairman ROGERS, one of his first responsibilities is to take that $967 billion and use his best judgment to allocate or divide that money among the subcommittees of the Appropriations Committee. And it's a real tribute to this good man's commitment, a demonstration of his commitment to our men and women in uniform, a vivid illustration of the bipartisan nature of this bill, that with the help of Ranking Member LOWEY, that Chairman ROGERS gave this subcommittee for military construction and VA allocation that enabled us to fully fund the request to the military and the Veterans Affairs.

It is my privilege now, Madam Chairman, to recognize the distinguished chairman of the full committee, HAL ROGERS of Kentucky, who has done so much to save our taxpayers' hard-earned dollars, and do everything that can be done to help support our men and women in uniform, and yield him as much time as he may consume.

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Madam Chairman, I thank the chairman for the generous introduction.

I rise in support of this, the first of 12 appropriations bills that I hope to bring to the floor under regular order. Although we received the President's budget nearly 2 months beyond the deadline, I have every intention of drafting and considering all 12 appropriations measures in a timely fashion and in the traditional open process that allows all Members to have their say in how taxpayer dollars should be spent.

As we kick off the appropriations season on the floor today, we face some of the most challenging circumstances in recent memory—a tardy Presidential budget, a divided Congress, the ham-handed cuts of sequestration, and historically low funding levels.

Given our tight budget, my committee has and will continue to prioritize funding in areas of the highest national need—our security and enforcement of law. However, virtually all areas of the government will face cuts this year, including critical national security programs.

Clearly, this is an austere budget year, to put it mildly. Our top line number is severely low and billions apart from the Senate's number. It is my sincere hope that there will soon be a budget compromise that will undo the harmful sequestration law and give us a single common top line allocation that we can work with the Senate to pass all of the funding of the government.

In spite of all this, I want to reiterate my commitment to regular order. This is not a pie-in-the-sky endeavor. It's what our Founding Fathers wanted and directed in the Constitution. Under regular order, each of my esteemed colleagues in this body will have their chance to put their stamp on this bill, to have their voices heard and represented on these must-pass bills.

We have a lot of work to do in a very limited amount of time, so I suggest we get down to it. Today, we are considering the Military Construction and VA bill, a truly bipartisan effort that this entire body can and should support.

This bill funds critical Department of Defense infrastructure that gives our men and women in uniform the quality of life they deserve, including hospitals, schools, and family housing. This bill also includes $63.1 billion to provide our veterans with the benefits and care they've earned for their service.

Notably, we support medical treatment for 6.5 million veterans, including funding for traumatic brain injury treatment, suicide prevention, and important mental health care programs.

This bill also addresses two of the VA's biggest problems, Madam Chairman—the disgraceful disability claims backlog and the lack of a seamless coordinated Department of Defense-Veterans electronic health record system.

□ 1510

The bill includes funding that will jump-start efforts to clean up the backlog and force DOD and VA to get moving on a system that should have been in place years ago.

But this is not the easiest of budget times. While most of the funding in this bill is not subject to sequestration, we could not in good conscience let a single dollar in this bill go to waste. Every nickel and dime appropriated was carefully assessed to ensure these funds are used properly, efficiently and responsibly.

We took the difficult but responsible step to reduce military construction funding to offset the increases in VA spending, but we made these reductions without affecting military readiness or effectiveness. To make sure that our careful work in this bill does not go to waste, we've implemented strict oversight protocols, and we have included certain benchmarks to help guarantee that disability claims are not piling up again and that we aren't throwing away precious taxpayer dollars as we try to get this DOD–VA electronic health records system up and running.

Before concluding, Madam Chairman, I would like to spend a half-minute here thanking the chairman of the MilCon Subcommittee on our committee, JOHN CULBERSON, for his time and attention to this bill and for his dedication and perseverance, as well as to thank the work of the ranking member, Mr. BISHOP. These two gentlemen of the House, dedicated appropriators, have spent untold hours working with each other to try to come to agreement on the items in this bill. It has worked, and it is a good example, perhaps the best I can think of, in which we see that bipartisanship in support of our military and our veterans takes place. So I want to congratulate Mr. CULBERSON and Mr. BISHOP for a job well done, and we thank you for your bipartisanship.

Madam Chairman, I think this bill is one that Members on both sides of the aisle can wholeheartedly support to keep our military in fighting form and to give our veterans the benefits that they have so sincerely earned, many of them in the loss of limb, some in the loss of life. So I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. At this time, I yield 3 minutes to the ranking member of the Appropriations Committee, who, along with the entire leadership and Members on this side of the aisle, is committed to this bipartisan work product in support of our military construction needs and our veterans, the distinguished gentlelady from New York (Mrs. LOWEY).

Mrs. LOWEY. I would like to thank distinguished Ranking Member BISHOP. I would like to thank Chairman CULBERSON. I would like to thank Chairman ROGERS. I would like to thank all of the outstanding staffs for putting together a really good bipartisan bill. It's an important bill, and I know how hard you worked together to produce a really good product, and we thank you.

This bill does represent a reasonable approach and continues a long commitment to our veterans and our military facilities. It continues the bipartisan tradition of providing funding levels that Members on both sides of the aisle could agree are appropriate while avoiding contentious legislative riders that complicate passage.

However, the Republican majority's refusal to go to conference to forge a bipartisan agreement on the budget resolution is really unacceptable. This imperils this year's appropriations process, making it nearly impossible to move all 12 bills. Instead, it is likely that we will consider in the full House only a few bills with reasonable allocations, including MilCon-VA, while others are left in limbo indefinitely until we pass a continuing resolution.

I am optimistic that this bill has a good chance of enactment as long as we don't attach any controversial riders, but other important priorities will assuredly suffer. While veterans programs are exempt from sequestration, $73.3 billion provided in the bill largely mirrors the administration's request and does not reflect sequestration even for the portions of the bill that were not exempted. In fact, the differences between this bill and the administration's request are relatively small: an adjustment of $1.05 billion, due to bid savings and other project adjustments, and the misguided decision not to provide $185 million for the requested 2014 civilian pay raise.

If the MilCon-VA bill assumes the sequester cuts have been replaced, why

can't we join with the administration and the Senate and assume it will be addressed for the other bills?

On a positive note, this bill would better support our female veterans who are struggling with the trauma of sexual assault and would support those in need of prosthetics. It also continues to focus on the mental health needs of our Nation's veterans.

The CHAIR. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. I yield the gentlelady an additional 1 minute.

Mrs. LOWEY. The bill, which takes several steps related to the shameful veterans claims backlog, would hire 94 additional claims processors; provide $155 million for the Veterans Benefit Management System and $136 million for the Veterans Claims Intake Program in order to significantly speed up claims by converting old paper files into digital files; restrict funds to force DOD and the VA to use a seamless electronic health records system; and require the VA to provide monthly reports.

We cannot accept any further excuses. The VA must make progress. This is a good bill. I hope we can avoid adding contentious and unnecessary legislative riders today, and I hope that the chairman from Kentucky's optimism about sequestration reflected in the allocation for the first bill is proven true.

I commend the chairman and ranking member once again on their good work, and I urge your support.

Mr. CULBERSON. Madam Chairman, at this time, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. FORTENBERRY).

Mr. FORTENBERRY. First, let me thank Chairman CULBERSON for his stalwart leadership on this important bipartisan measure. Let me also thank Ranking Member BISHOP as well for his leadership and support.

Madam Chair, many people in America want Congress to find constructive solutions, seek good answers, overcome problems, and say ''yes'' to our essential needs. While Congress is stuck on certain areas, this bill takes a bipartisan step forward in defense of our country and in service to our veterans. This bill says ''yes'' in a bipartisan manner to meet our Department of Defense infrastructure needs and to properly care for those who have served us so well, our veterans.

The bill spends a little bit less than the President asked for and a little bit more than last year. Projects that are not justifiable are removed, but others receive increases. The bill also pushes forward, as we've heard, a seamless transition of care when our warfighters leave active service by integrating their medical records and expeditiously dealing with a very serious claims backlog. I am pleased as well that my colleagues have continued funding for the headquarters construction of the United States Strategic Command. STRATCOM is an important force in protecting our Nation from nuclear threats.

Madam Chair, we need to continue to work hard and smart to reduce budgets while also delivering essential policy services that are necessary and fundamental at the Federal level. I think that this bill accomplishes that goal. I think we also accomplish the goal of doing what is just and what is right.

□ 1520

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. At this time, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. PRICE), the ranking member of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security and a distinguished member of the MilCon-VA Subcommittee.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. I thank my colleague for yielding.

Madam Chairman, I rise today in qualified support of the fiscal year 2014 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

I want to thank Chairman CULBERSON and Ranking Member BISHOP for their leadership and commend my colleagues on the Appropriations Committee for a cordial, timely, and deliberative process.

I have to caution, however, that this bill's relatively generous allocation must be viewed in the context of the overall fiscal year 2014 appropriations process. To get workable allocations for the two appropriations bills we will consider this week, the majority has drastically underfunded other critical appropriations bills, from educational research, to health care, to repairing and maintaining our Nation's crumbling infrastructure.

Earlier today, I joined with many colleagues to vote against the rule providing for consideration of the bill before us, because the resolution requires this body to carry out the fiscal year 2014 appropriations process within the framework of the so-called ''Ryan budget,'' which doubles down on sequestration and will have devastating consequences as our Nation continues its economic recovery.

So the overall appropriations process is in deep trouble. But the bill before us gives the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs adequate resources to address several critical challenges faced by our military and veterans community. I'm particularly pleased the bill would fully fund the President's request for military construction projects at Fort Bragg, which is adjacent to my district.

The bill also provides critical funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs to assure that those who have served our country receive the benefits and services that they need and deserve. Our subcommittee paid particular heed to the ongoing disabilities claims backlog issue at the VA. The bill provides nearly $300 million for the continued implementation of electronic management systems and improved processing of both new and existing claims.

I'm also pleased the bill provides robust funding for medical and prosthetic research, suicide prevention and mental health treatment, addressing unacceptable levels of unemployment among veterans, and pressing to end veteran homelessness.

The CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. These are priorities, and this is a bill I hope all of our colleagues will be able to support.

Mr. CULBERSON. Madam Chairman, at this time I yield 2 minutes to a distinguished and valued member of our subcommittee, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DIAZ-BALART).

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Madam Chairman, I rise today in strong support of the fiscal year 2014 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

Let me first of all thank Chairman CULBERSON and your staff. You've done a spectacular job. This has been among the most inclusive processes that I've ever been involved with. So thank you.

Madam Chairwoman, this bill includes almost $10 billion for critical military construction projects, as well as imperative funding for the NATO Security Investment Fund.

Our bill fully funds the fiscal year 2014 National Guard and Reserve construction programs as requested, by the way, as well as fully funding the family housing construction program.

The bill also includes $55.6 billion in fiscal year 2015 advanced appropriations for VA medical care, the level approved in the House budget resolution and the same, by the way, as was actually requested.

This bill provides targeted funding for various information technology programs to ensure that the VA can tackle the enormous backlog of compensation claims, something that this chair and Chairman ROGERS have already talked about.

These funds will provide the resources that the VA indicates it requires to meet its goals of ending the disability compensation claims backlog by 2015.

Additionally, it includes stringent reporting requirements for the VA so the Members of Congress and the American people can have direct oversight on the progress of the claims backlog.

The committee also included report language to address the issue of prescription painkiller abuse.

This important bill also funds critical programs like the American Battle Monuments Commission, the United States Court of Appeals for Veteran Claims, as well as cemeterial expenses, including Arlington National Cemetery.

So I thank the chairman and urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this very important piece of legislation that has been done in a very bipartisan way.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. At this time, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CUELLAR), a distinguished member of the Appropriations Committee.

Mr. CUELLAR. Madam Chair, I've been concerned also, as my ranking member and as the chairman also of the committee, the gentleman from Texas, about the claims backlog that exists at the VA.

Veterans of all generations deserve a benefits system that is easy to navigate and responsive to their needs. Currently, the VA is still experiencing a huge backlog in processing claims. As of May 2013, the VA claims totaled 843,000, with more than two-thirds that have been pending over 125 days.

Currently, in my congressional district, we're working with over 205 veterans: 60 them are from Laredo, 30 of them from the valley, and 115 in San Antonio with outstanding claims with the VA that have been unresolved for 18 to 24 months, which is unacceptable and shameful.

I am pleased that the chairman and the ranking member have worked in a bipartisan manner to make sure the Veterans Benefits Administration is able to support 20,851 claims processors.

Additionally, the bill includes the necessary funding so that old claims filed on paper can be converted to digital files, making them more accessible and researchable.

I also support the inclusion of the monthly reporting requirement of the claims backlog, so that way we can put performance measures also to make sure that we get rid of this backlog.

Finally, I know also my good friend will be having another amendment that I support with him, which is that if the VA doesn't do its work, I think some of those bureaucrats should have their pay cut; because if the veterans are not getting their benefits, then I think that should affect the bureaucrats also.

I want to the thank the chairman and the ranking member for all their good work on this bipartisan bill, and I appreciate their efforts to ensure that veterans receive their benefits.

Mr. CULBERSON. Madam Chairman, I yield myself just a moment to particularly point out and thank my friend from Laredo.

Mr. CUELLAR and I have worked together since 1986 in the Texas Legislature. The people of the United States often read in the national press that Democrats and Republicans don't get along. That's just simply not true. HENRY CUELLAR and I have been the best of friends since 1986. Mr. BISHOP and I worked together beautifully on this subcommittee. This bill is a great example of bipartisan cooperation, and it's a privilege to work on this committee where we really don't pay attention to party labels as we try to do what is best for the country.

At this time, Madam Chairman, it's my privilege to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) for the purpose of a colloquy.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. First of all, I want to thank the chairman, my colleague from Texas, for putting together this critical bill. I know that Mr. CULBERSON has been a longtime advocate for the best care possible for our Nation's veterans, and I thank the chairman of the subcommittee for his continued leadership and, of course, that of the ranking member, my Georgia colleague, Mr. BISHOP.

Madam Chair, I rise today to bring attention to the recent tragic events at the Atlanta VA Medical Center. According to an April report by the inspector general and continued news stories, mismanagement and lack of oversight at the Atlanta facility contributed to at least four deaths. Additionally, the Atlanta VA Medical Center has admitted that the combination of a large volume of patients and a lack of appropriate tracking has led to patients ''slipping through the cracks.''

The mental health unit at the Atlanta VA Medical Center has been of particular concern and is at the center of these recent tragedies. Mental health is a critical component of care for our veterans, and as our soldiers continue to return home from war, we must ensure that they're receiving the attention and care that they deserve.

I would ask that as this bill moves forward, Madam Chair, to the Senate and to conference, that the chairman and the ranking member join me and the chairman of the authorizing committee to get answers from the Department of Veterans Affairs as to why we have yet to see those responsible held accountable and what changes the Atlanta VA Medical Center is going to make.

And I ask that question of the subcommittee chair.

□ 1530

Mr. CULBERSON. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. CULBERSON. Madam Chairman, I would say to the gentleman from Georgia that both Mr. BISHOP and I and the subcommittee are keenly aware of these terrible tragedies in Atlanta and the very critical and important inspector general's report, and we intend to aggressively pursue the recommendations in the inspector general's report and work with you and the delegation from Georgia to ensure that this does not happen again.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Madam Chair, I thank the chairman.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. May I inquire how much time remains on our side?

The CHAIR. The gentleman from Georgia has 12½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Texas has 6 minutes remaining.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. At this time I'm delighted to yield 2 minutes to the gentlelady from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I thank the distinguished ranking member and distinguished chairman, and I know that they have worked collaboratively together on behalf of our veterans, so I rise in recognition of the important work that they have done and to compliment them for the work that involves fully funding the military construction and certainly something that rises every moment that I'm amongst veterans. Just recently, as I was in a town hall meeting and had the Veterans Affairs Department represented, the question came up about benefits. I was glad that the initiative that has been offered, all of us embraced it. All of us have been fighting to stop this backlog and to move this backlog forward. And now we see the funding of this initiative, and it is most important.

I am also glad that there's a focus on jobs for veterans. I will say that we need to do more, because when you talk to our veterans of various wars, particularly the Vietnam War, there's always the sense of lack of employment, along with those who come in from Iraq and Afghanistan.

But I do want to raise the point of what we have deemed ourselves into. We've deemed ourselves into a Ryan budget that causes a great deal of suffering: a cap of $967 billion versus the mark of $1.58 billion that would be more helpful that was produced by the consensus during the Budget Control Act. Basically, we are ignoring the suffering of the middle class, and we're allowing the sequestration to run rampant over those who are in need.

I can particularly say to you that teachers and schools in Texas are losing $67.8 million in education for children with disabilities; $51 million for 620 teachers. Head Start is going kaput with 4,800 children losing their seat. Military readiness is being challenged in Texas with 52,000 civilian Department of Defense employees furloughed. In law enforcement and public safety funds, Texas will lose $1.103 million.

And then when we look at the United States, we go far and beyond that. We're looking at the fires in the West, the devastation of what happened in West, Texas, and the tornadoes. And we see, for the Coast Guard, there's a 25 percent reduction. This is a crisis.

The CHAIR. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. I yield the gentlewoman an additional 30 seconds.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. This is a crisis not only in the making, Madam Chair, but it is a crisis that is going forward. Whether we're talking about the National Institutes of Health or the Centers for Disease Control, my main concern is that the middle class is suffering from the sequestration.

The Ryan budget cannot be deemed the appropriations cap as we go through this process of appropriations. There is a desperate need of responding to the middle class, allowing for the continuation of job creation, making

sure that we do not lose 125,000 in section 8 vouchers, rural rental assistance, or the Community Development Financial Institutions Fund.

NEGATIVE IMPACT OF SEQUESTRATION

The middle class are suffering and they need help. We need to stop the sequestration—now.

In Texas—

The state of Texas will greatly be affected by sequestration in the following ways:

Teachers and Schools: Texas will lose approximately $67.8 million for primary and secondary education, putting around 930 teacher and aide jobs at risk. In addition about 172,000 fewer students would be served and approximately 280 fewer schools would receive funding.

Education for Children With Disabilities: Texas will lose approximately $51 million for about 620 teachers, aides, and staff who help children with disabilities.

Head Start: Head Start and Early Head Start services would be eliminated for approximately 4,800 children in Texas, reducing access to critical early education.

Military Readiness: In Texas, approximately 52,000 civilian Department of Defense employees would be furloughed, reducing gross pay by around $274.8 million in total.

Law Enforcement and Public Safety Funds: Texas will lose about $1,103,000 in Justice Assistance Grants that support law enforcement, prosecution and courts, crime prevention and education, corrections and community corrections, drug treatment and enforcement, and crime victim and witness initiatives.

Job Search Assistance: Around 83,750 fewer Texans will get the help and skills they need to find employment as Texas will lose about $2,263,000 for job search assistance, referral, and placement, meaning.

Child Care: Up to 2300 disadvantaged and vulnerable children could lose access to child care, which is also essential for working parents to hold down a job.

Vaccines for Children: In Texas around 9,730 fewer children will receive vaccines for diseases such as measles, mumps, rubella, tetanus, whooping cough, influenza, and Hepatitis B due to reduced funding for vaccinations.

Violence Against Women Grants: Texas could lose up to $543,000 to provide services to victims of domestic violence, resulting in up to 2,100 fewer victims being served.

Public Health: Texas will lose approximately $2,402,000 to help upgrade its ability to respond to public health threats including infectious diseases, natural disasters, and biological, chemical, nuclear, and radiological events. In addition, Texas will lose about $6,750,000 in grants to help prevent and treat substance abuse, resulting in around 2,800 fewer admissions to substance abuse programs. And the Texas State Department of Public Health will lose about $1,146,000 resulting in around 28,600 fewer HIV tests.

In the U.S.A.—

Across-the-board cuts from sequestration began in March, and the detrimental effects are gradually coming into focus. These cuts are diminishing the effectiveness of federal initiatives, with a direct impact on the lives of virtually every American. Highlights of specific cuts to vital services and investments that have been documented to date are outlined below.

Public Safety

1. Wildland Fire: U.S. Forest Service understaffed and under-equipped for fire season with 500 fewer firefighters, 50–70 fewer fire engines, and 2 fewer aircraft.

2. U.S. Coast Guard: 25 percent reduction in training, maintenance and drug interdiction patrols.

3. Extreme Weather: A 3–6 month delay in NOAA's weather satellite launch will increase costs and risk of inaccurate forecasts.

4. U.S. Park Police: Up to 10,640 combined furlough days for officers leave national landmarks understaffed and increase response time for emergencies.

5. Food Safety: Fewer FDA inspections, increasing risk of food-borne illness, even as Congress demands stricter food safety standards.

Health

1. National Institutes of Health:

$1.5 billion cut from life-saving research projects,

Estimated loss of more than 20,000 jobs and $3 billion in economic activity.

2. Centers for Disease Control: $285 million cut from research to detect and combat disease outbreaks, facilitate immunizations, plan for public health emergencies, conduct HIV/AIDS tests, and more.

3. Environmental Health: More than 3,200 furloughs and layoffs delay cleanup from nuclear weapons development in Washington, New Mexico, Kentucky and Tennessee.

Housing

1. Section 8 Vouchers:

a. 125,000 fewer vouchers.

b. 750 Public Housing Authorities terminating tenants within 3 months.

2. Rural rental assistance: 15,000 aid recipients affected, usually elderly, disabled, or single mothers.

3. Community Development Financial Institutions Fund: Up to thousands fewer units of affordable housing built.

Education and Science

1. Head Start and Early Head Start:

70,000 children will lose access,

Thousands of layoffs of teachers and aides.

2. Impact Aid: $68 million cut from schools that educate 950,000 children of military members, or who are otherwise federally connected, resulting in layoffs and larger class sizes.

3. Research: 1,000 fewer National Science Foundation grants and thousands fewer jobs.

National Security

1. Defense: $37 billion in FY13, largest drag on broader economic growth, includes:

a. Cancelled deployment of aircraft carrier USS Harry S. Truman,

b. Cancelled Army training rotations,

c. Grounded Air Force squadrons,

d. 800,000 civilian employees facing furloughs of 11 days, and

e. Reduced equipment and facilities maintenance.

2. Defense Health Program (DHP): $2.6 billion reduction will result in TRICARE funding being exhausted by August and delayed payments of TRICARE contracts.

The Judiciary and Legal Representation for Low-Income Americans

1. Public defenders: Up to 15 furlough days per public defender will delay trials and force courts to hire private attorneys for defendants at $125 per hour.

2. Judiciary: 20 percent reduction in electronic monitoring & drug testing of offenders.

3. Violence Against Women Grants: $20 million cut from grants for prevention and prosecution of violence against women.

Senior Citizens

1. Senior nutrition: 4 million fewer meals for low-income seniors.

2. Social Security Administration:

3,300 additional staff lost, increasing backlog of disability claims by nearly 100,000 and increasing processing time of claims to more than one year.

82,000 fewer continuing disability reviews, which save $9 for every $1 spent.

3. Medicare: Thousands of cancer patients turned away by cancer clinics due to cuts in provider payments.

Commerce and Economic Security

Small Business: lending guarantees drastically reduced.

Oil and gas drilling permits: 300–400 fewer oil & gas drilling permits processed, 150 fewer leases issued, resulting in $150 million loss to taxpayers.

Customs Border Protection: Wait times at land border ports of entry up to 6x longer.

National Parks and public lands: Reductions in 900 permanent and 1,000 seasonal positions will reduce public access and result in hundreds fewer trained firefighters.

Unemployment compensation: 10.7 percent cut in weekly benefits.

Fiscal Malpractice Results in Job Loss and Stunted Economic Growth—The Federal Reserve announced, ''Fiscal policy is restraining economic growth.'' The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) and independent economists forecast sequestration costing 750,000 jobs and a 0.6 percent reduction in growth in 2013. While many agree we can find additional spending cuts in the long-term, such large cuts now—instead of phasing them in responsibly when the economy is stronger—amounts to fiscal malpractice.

Squeaky Wheel ''Fixes'' Exacerbate Long-Term Problems—Congress acted to prevent furloughs of food inspectors and air traffic controllers, and departments and agencies are using limited transfer and reprogramming authority to mitigate other immediate problems caused by cuts. These gimmicks merely kick the can down the road, sparing short-term pain through one-time savings that delay long-term needs like construction, maintenance, and training.

These expenses will have to be repaid in future years even as the sequester cuts deeper into the overall budgets for these agencies. While industries' bottom lines were protected from flight delays and fewer meat inspections, infrastructure at airports will suffer this year, increasing needs in the future, and this year's fixes do nothing to address the cuts required of these same programs in the coming years.

Responsible Fix is Needed—In just two short months of sequester cuts, the impacts are hurting our economy, increasing financial burdens on families, and forcing the federal government to make false choices between essential services. We simply cannot afford 10 years of job loss and stunted economic growth. Congress must replace these mindless cuts with a sensible and balanced plan to promote growth and reduce the long-term deficit and debt.

Mr. CULBERSON. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. FARR), the ranking member of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture and a valuable member of the Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs.

Mr. FARR. Madam Chair, I thank Ranking Member BISHOP for that kind introduction. And, Mr. Chairman, I thank you for your leadership on this committee. I have been on this committee since I've been on the Committee on Appropriations, and I'm really excited about the ability for us to respond to the quality of life for people in uniform and their families.

This is the committee that helps the families with housing, with health care, with child care, with the benefit packages that the military allows. It's very, very important because we also have the responsibility for the Department of Veterans Affairs. It's the only one-stop in an entire Congress, because the Senate has no comparable committee where both the responsibility of the Active Duty and the veterans are in one place. You know, in this country you can't be a veteran unless you've first been a member of the Department of Defense, so it's a continuum of care.

If you add up the budgets of both the Defense Department and veterans and our military construction, it's the largest of all the budgets that the appropriations does, so it is important that we pay a lot of attention to detail. We have a lot of issues dealing with not only Active Duty military and their living conditions, but also conditions, serious conditions with veterans and the backlog that veterans have.

I think we're on the road to solving that problem. California has the worst backlog in the office in Oakland, but the Secretary has been paying a lot of attention and putting a lot of technology into it. I want to commend the chair and the ranking member of this committee for the leadership they've provided in trying to solve it.

I also want to commend, I think the Department of Defense has the best capital outlay program. It's called the FYDP. It stands for fiscal year improvement plan or something like that. What it does, all of the services, whenever they need anything constructed, they have to go in and compete against each other, and so it's on merit. Then the project with the most merit moves to the top of the list. We have been able to take care of that in a very responsible way.

Mr. CULBERSON. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Madam Chair, I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for the purpose of a colloquy.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Chair, I thank Mr. BISHOP for his courtesy. I also would really like to thank you, Chairman CULBERSON, for your excellent work on this bill. This is a massive undertaking.

One aspect here that I want to focus on is the policies. The Pentagon has set its sight on good policies. Not only do our troops benefit, but so does the American public. Nothing demonstrates this more than the recent Defense Department's Unified Facilities Criteria, UFC 2–100–01. Behind this strange-sounding title is the Pentagon's installation master planning document for over 500 installations around the world, four times the amount of space of Walmarts. This document, updated for the very first time since 1986, has the potential to positively impact every military servicemember and their families by making our military bases more welcoming, more connected, and more livable.

However, the UFC is only guidance for each branch of the military. In order for it to have a positive and transformative impact, we will need to see strong implementation guidance from each service branch. I believe this is a priority for the Department of Defense. Delay and deviation would only serve to harm or set back our military families who deserve nothing but the best.

As such, I deeply appreciate the opportunity to work with the chairman and ranking member to include language urging the Department of Defense to provide an assessment of the progress and barriers to the implementation of UFC 2–100–01.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. BLUMENAUER. I am happy to yield to the gentleman.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. The gentleman from Oregon raises a really important issue that the subcommittee will look into and will work to address in some way as we move through this process.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Terrific. Thank you very much.

□ 1540

If I have time remaining, I was curious if the chairman of the subcommittee feels comfortable with working with us to make some progress on this implementation.

Mr. CULBERSON. Of course we will do all we can to work together.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Thank you. I really appreciate the opportunity to work with you on this and look forward to making this progress for our military families. Thank you very much.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Madam Chair, we have no further speakers on this side.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CULBERSON. Madam Chairman, it's a pleasure to bring this bill to the House and to recommend it to every Member of the House to support this bipartisan bill to make sure that our men and women in uniform—as my good friend, SAM FARR, said, this is such a privilege to be on this committee, the only one in Congress that can ensure the quality of life and peace of mind of our men and women in uniform and our men and women who, once they've served our country, move into the VA system. And I would urge the adoption of the bill by the Members of the House.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. FRANKEL of Florida. Madam Chair, Jeff Calaicovo is a military veteran living with his loving wife in Ft. Lauderdale. He is an American hero who received two Purple Hearts for his courage and service during the Vietnam War. Jeff fought for, and suffered for this country, spending five months in a burn ward as a result of his exposure to Agent Orange.

Today, Jeff suffers from PTSD, loss of hearing and other medical complications that should be covered by his veterans' benefits. But our claims system failed him.

Jeff first initiated his claim in May 2011. Until his case was brought to my office's attention, he had made little progress towards receiving the benefits he deserves.

My staff worked with Jeff over many months so that he finally will begin receiving his benefits after waiting nearly two years.

Sadly, Jeff's story is not unique. The average wait time for claims processing is 292 days with some regional offices averaging 450 days.

Having just returned from visiting our service men and women in Afghanistan, and as the mother of a Marine veteran, I know firsthand the sacrifices our troops make for our freedoms. Our veterans have fought for this country and it is time we fight for them.

That is why I have joined my colleagues in enacting a number of measures that will help eliminate the veterans' claims backlog once and for all, in H.R. 2216, the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act of 2014.

These measures include finally requiring the DOD and the VA to move towards one integrated electronic system, requiring more frequent reporting to Congress on the status of claims processing, and boosting VA funding to allow for 94 new claims processors to tackle head on the disability claims backlog.

I am confident these new measure will put us on the road towards eliminating an unacceptable problem that has neglected our America heroes.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Chair, I rise today to express my strong support for funding veterans' programs. However, I am very concerned that this bill is part of a Republican budget that would shortchange other critical priorities—like education, nutrition and housing assistance, healthcare and medical research.

I voted in favor of H.R. 2216, the Military Construction—VA Appropriations bill for FY 2014 because I believe it is critical that we keep our promises to our veterans. Today's legislation provides $157.8 billion for veterans' programs and military construction in FY 2014, including the over $73 billion in advance appropriations for veterans' health care approved in last year's appropriations measure. It also contains $55.6 billion in advance FY 2015 funding for VA medical programs.

Among other critical priorities, it provides over $290 million to help the VA eliminate the disability claims backlog by 2015, including funding for the VA's paperless process claims system. It provides $344 million for the Pentagon and the VA to implement a joint integrated electronic health records system. These funds are critical: the VA has nearly

900,100 Pending disability claims and, of those, 72 percent have been pending for over 125 days. That is unacceptable; the backlog is causing serious hardships for veterans and families throughout our country, and it is imperative that we work with the VA to ensure that the backlog is eliminated and all claims are processed in a fair and timely manner.

While I am proud to support critical funding for those who served our nation, I have serious concerns about the implications this bill carries for the rest of the appropriations process. The Republican Budget sets the lowest cap on discretionary spending in a decade. Non-defense discretionary spending would be reduced even below the levels required under the sequester. Because of those limits, the adequate funding of this bill will result in inadequate funding of other spending bills down the line. Those other bills fund national priorities including education, nutrition and housing assistance, and programs to spur job growth. We cannot afford to abandon those important initiatives.

The White House warned, in its veto threat for this legislation, that enacting this bill "while adhering to the overall spending limits in the House Budget's top line discretionary level for fiscal year (FY) 2014, would hurt our economy and require draconian cuts to middle-class priorities." I couldn't agree more. We need to set a realistic spending ceiling so that all of our national priorities receive adequate funding.

The CHAIR. All time for general debate has expired.

Pursuant to the rule, the bill shall be considered for amendment under the 5-minute rule.

During consideration of the bill for amendment, the Chair may accord priority in recognition to a Member offering an amendment who has caused it to be printed in the designated place in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. Those amendments will be considered read.

The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 2216

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the following sums are appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes, namely:

TITLE I

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, ARMY

For acquisition, construction, installation, and equipment of temporary or permanent public works, military installations, facilities, and real property for the Army as currently authorized by law, including personnel in the Army Corps of Engineers and other personal services necessary for the purposes of this appropriation, and for construction and operation of facilities in support of the functions of the Commander in Chief, $1,099,875,000, to remain available until September 30, 2018: *Provided*, That of this amount, not to exceed $64,575,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, architect and engineer services, and host nation support, as authorized by law, unless the Secretary of Army determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, NAVY AND MARINE CORPS

For acquisition, construction, installation, and equipment of temporary or permanent public works, naval installations, facilities, and real property for the Navy and Marine Corps as currently authorized by law, including personnel in the Naval Facilities Engineering Command and other personal services necessary for the purposes of this appropriation, $1,616,281,000, to remain available until September 30, 2018: *Provided*, That of this amount, not to exceed $89,830,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Secretary of Navy determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, AIR FORCE

For acquisition, construction, installation, and equipment of temporary or permanent public works, military installations, facilities, and real property for the Air Force as currently authorized by law, $1,127,273,000, to remain available until September 30, 2018: *Provided*, That of this amount, not to exceed $11,314,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Secretary of Air Force determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, DEFENSE-WIDE

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For acquisition, construction, installation, and equipment of temporary or permanent public works, installations, facilities, and real property for activities and agencies of the Department of Defense (other than the military departments), as currently authorized by law, $3,707,923,000, to remain available until September 30, 2018: *Provided*, That such amounts of this appropriation as may be determined by the Secretary of Defense may be transferred to such appropriations of the Department of Defense available for military construction or family housing as the Secretary may designate, to be merged with and to be available for the same purposes, and for the same time period, as the appropriation or fund to which transferred: *Provided further*, That of the amount appropriated, not to exceed $237,838,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Secretary of Defense determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor: *Provided further*, That of the amount appropriated, notwithstanding any other provision of law, $38,513,000 shall be available for payments to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization for the planning, design, and construction of a new North Atlantic Treaty Organization headquarters.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. BROUN OF GEORGIA

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Page 4, line 14, after the dollar amount, insert "(reduced by $38,513,000)"

Page 5, line 6, after the dollar amount, insert "(reduced by $38,513,000)".

Page 63, line 6, after the dollar amount, insert "(increased by $38,513,000)".

The CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Madam Chairman, my amendment would zero out our contribution to the brand-new NATO headquarters in Brussels and transfer that amount, more than $38 million, to the spending reduction account to help us deal with our debt.

This line item within the bill is the very definition of ridiculous. The U.S. is furloughing civilian military personnel and sacrificing our own military readiness here at home, policies with which I disagree. And yet, here we are, sending millions of dollars overseas to build a lavish new headquarters for the international bureaucrats in NATO.

Madam Chairman, the planned NATO headquarters is an unfortunate example of excess and waste. While every NATO member-nation is cutting back on overall spending, the new headquarters remains on track as a monument to bureaucracy. In total, the building will cost well over $1 billion to build, and it's taken 13 years just to finalize the plans.

If we are serious about confronting our spending problem, we must fundamentally re-evaluate our priorities. We don't need to help NATO build a new headquarters. We need to ask what are we doing in NATO in the first place. The Cold War is over. It's time to stop policing Europe and start worrying about our deficit.

I encourage all Members to support this commonsense amendment to help us reduce our spending and to pay off our unsustainable debt.

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

Mr. CULBERSON. I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The CHAIR. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CULBERSON. I share my colleague from Georgia's passion and commitment to reduce the deficit to avoid passing on this debt to our children. This bill has bipartisan support. It has been put together very carefully to ensure that we're supporting our men and women in uniform, and I'm looking forward to finding ways to save money in other parts of the appropriations bill and in the parts of the budget that are actually, truly crushing our kids with debt and deficit.

It's the social safety net that has grown so tremendously that is causing the greatest burden on our kids, the Social Security and Medicare and Medicaid. The growth of these programs has been so astronomical it's swallowing up almost all of our national income on an annual basis. And that's where we need to focus our attention is saving those programs from bankruptcy. In fact, that's where we will really save the big money for our children in the future.

Medicare is in such dire straits that if you're 54 years of age or younger, the Medicare hospital fund can only pay about 50 cents on the dollar of the benefits that have been promised. So the

Medicare program, for all intents and purposes, for people that are 54 years of age or younger, is bankrupt.

And the Social Security program, if you're 47 years of age or younger, that program is bankrupt because it can only pay about 60 cents on the dollar.

So we've got to, as a Congress, in order to save our Nation from bankruptcy, to save our kids from crushing levels of taxation, to prevent this mountain of debt from being passed on to our children, save Medicare and Social Security from bankruptcy. And that's what Congressman RYAN, chairman of the Budget Committee is working on. Congressman SAM JOHNSON from the Ways and Means Committee is working on legislation to save Social Security, and that's where we're going to save the big money.

On things like NATO, we have over 600,000 troops in Europe. We have 127 military installations. I am no fan of the United Nations, but NATO has served a vital role since the end of World War II in preserving the peace in Europe. We've expanded NATO membership now to the former countries of Eastern Europe that were behind the Iron Curtain.

It was NATO and the leadership of President Ronald Reagan and the resolute courage of our men and women in uniform that led to the fall of the Soviet Union and the collapse of the Iron Curtain. But for NATO, but for that strategic alliance, we may still be facing Communist Russia. Today the Soviet Union is gone, the Iron Curtain is gone, and many of those nations that were once in the Soviet Bloc are members of NATO.

So with great respect for my colleague from Georgia and his conservative commitment to balance the budget, let us focus on saving Social Security and Medicare from bankruptcy, first and foremost, as the most effective, long-term way to save the Nation from bankruptcy and to get us back on track to a balanced budget.

Look for other opportunities to save money in our multiple appropriations bills that are coming up, but not at the expense of a great strategic alliance that has served this Nation well since the end of World War II.

I'd urge my colleagues to vote against this amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. I move to strike the last word.

The CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. I'd like to join my distinguished chair in opposition to this amendment.

I certainly appreciate and understand the gentleman from Georgia's commitment to reducing the deficit. The deficit is something that is undermining the economic foundation of this Nation. It is like a cancer that is eating away at us, and we have to do all that we can to reduce that deficit and get us on track to a balanced budget.

However, I suspect that this amendment, while well intentioned, may be penny-wise and pound-foolish because NATO, this account from which these funds will be taken, supports a strategic alliance that has helped to protect the American people.

Just over the last decade, NATO has been our strategic partner in the war against terrorism in Iraq and in Afghanistan and in our efforts to protect the American people and to protect us abroad.

□ 1550

We simply cannot afford to turn our backs on our allies who have stuck with us and who have supported us in our efforts to protect this world from the bad actors in the war against terrorism. And as a result of that, I reluctantly oppose the gentleman's amendment, while understanding and commending him for his commitment toward deficit reduction.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BROUN).

The question was taken; and the Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Madam Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Georgia will be postponed.

The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows:

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

For construction, acquisition, expansion, rehabilitation, and conversion of facilities for the training and administration of the Army National Guard, and contributions therefor, as authorized by law, $315,815,000, to remain available until September 30, 2018: *Provided*, That of the amount appropriated, not to exceed $24,005,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Director of the Army National Guard determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, AIR NATIONAL GUARD

For construction, acquisition, expansion, rehabilitation, and conversion of facilities for the training and administration of the Air National Guard, and contributions therefor, as authorized by law, $107,800,000, to remain available until September 30, 2018: *Provided*, That of the amount appropriated, not to exceed $13,400,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Director of the Air National Guard determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, ARMY RESERVE

For construction, acquisition, expansion, rehabilitation, and conversion of facilities for the training and administration of the Army Reserve as authorized by law, $174,060,000, to remain available until September 30, 2018: *Provided*, That of the amount appropriated, not to exceed $14,212,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Chief of the Army Reserve determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, NAVY RESERVE

For construction, acquisition, expansion, rehabilitation, and conversion of facilities for the training and administration of the reserve components of the Navy and Marine Corps as authorized by law, $32,976,000, to remain available until September 30, 2018: *Provided*, That of the amount appropriated, not to exceed $2,540,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Secretary of Navy determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, AIR FORCE RESERVE

For construction, acquisition, expansion, rehabilitation, and conversion of facilities for the training and administration of the Air Force Reserve as authorized by law, $45,659,000, to remain available until September 30, 2018: *Provided*, That of the amount appropriated, not to exceed $2,229,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Chief of the Air Force Reserve determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor.

NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION SECURITY INVESTMENT PROGRAM

For the United States share of the cost of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Security Investment Program for the acquisition and construction of military facilities and installations (including international military headquarters) and for related expenses for the collective defense of the North Atlantic Treaty Area as authorized by section 2806 of title 10, United States Code, and Military Construction Authorization Acts, $199,700,000, to remain available until expended.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. BROUN OF GEORGIA

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Madam Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Page 8, line 12, after the dollar amount, insert ''(reduced to $0)''.

Page 63, line 6, after the dollar amount, insert ''(increased by $199,700,000)''.

The CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. My amendment would totally zero out the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Security Investment Program and transfer its nearly $200 million into the spending reduction account.

The world has changed dramatically since the creation of NATO. Its mission, as stated by the first Secretary General, Lord Ismay, is ''to keep the Russians out, the Americans in, and the Germans down.'' I have a hard time seeing how this is relevant to our post-Soviet world and a post-Cold War world.

In this modern age and in this time of domestic fiscal emergency, it makes no sense for the United States to manage the defense of Europe through NATO. And it certainly makes no sense for us to pay such a large share of it. It's time for us to wind down our involvement with NATO instead of making up new justifications for this defense warfare.

Madam Chair, our Nation is broke. We have an unsustainable debt. We're spending money that's going to crush our children's future and make their future much dimmer than it is today. We have to reallocate our resources and put them towards what's going to deal with this unsustainable debt. We've got to stop this out-of-control spending. Both parties are guilty of doing so.

Though some would say nearly $200 million is just a paltry amount, when our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines are not getting the finances that they need and when Americans are struggling just to make ends meet and we have an economy that is really hurting and jobs are not being created and students are not having jobs when they graduate from college, we have to deal with this debt that's unsustainable. This $200 million would be transferred into the spending reduction account and help us to start—just a small start—to stop this out-of-control spending. It's absolutely critical that we do so.

I urge my colleagues to support this amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CULBERSON. Madam Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment and move to strike the last word.

The CHAIR. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CULBERSON. Madam Chairman, I oppose this amendment because I share the gentleman's concern about the debt and the deficit. As I mentioned a moment ago, the way we're going to save the country from bankruptcy and protect our kids from this crushing debt burden that they're about to inherit to is rescue Social Security and Medicare from their certain bankruptcy, which is just around the corner. The Republican constitutional conservative majority of this House is working hard to develop legislation to save those two programs from bankruptcy. But this amendment would zero out the funding that the Congress has invested in the acquisition and construction of military facilities and installations for NATO.

NATO has been a vital part of our Nation's security since the end of World War II. We have over 600,000 men and women in uniform in Europe who depend on the resources that this Congress provides to them, in part, through the work of NATO. We have 127 military installations in Europe that depend, in part, on the work that is done through our contribution to NATO.

If the gentleman offers an amendment later on, for example, on the foreign operations part of the bill to cut funding for the United Nations, I look forward to supporting that because I have no particular love for the United Nations. They vote against us at every chance they get. We contribute the majority of money that the United Nations receives and they happily vote against us at every opportunity.

But when it comes to NATO, that's of strategic importance to the security of the United States. And while I share the gentleman's passion to cut the deficit and the debt, let's save it for cutting the United Nations and foreign aid, other than for Israel. I'm wearing proudly my pin of the two lone star States, the State of Texas and the State of Israel. Except for our funding for the great State of Israel, which we need to preserve and protect, I look forward to helping the gentleman cut foreign aid and cut funding for the United Nations, but not for NATO.

I urge the House to reject this amendment.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. CULBERSON. I will happily yield to my friend from Georgia.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. I appreciate the comments from my dear friend from Texas. He and I have been involved in trying to cut spending in many ways for a long period of time. In fact, I have a freestanding bill to zero out spending for the United Nations. I want to get the U.N. out of the U.S. and the U.S. out of the U.N. And so that's to come, I promise you. That will be coming. I'll give you that opportunity.

And you're exactly right, Social Security and Medicare need to be fixed so that our senior citizens and poor people have the proper help that they need. And I'm all for that, too. But we've got to cut where we can. I'm a marine. I was deployed to Afghanistan last year as a Navy reservist. And I believe in a strong military. I believe in peace through strength. And we've got to have the strongest military in the world. I don't believe our military should ever be in a fair fight. We need to be in a fight that's overwhelming.

But NATO is a relic of the Cold War. It's a relic that we need to look at. And when we have such a huge debt—almost $17 trillion—we need to cut wherever we can, whenever we can. I think it's extremely important for us to reorder our priorities, particularly across the world, and getting rid of this money for NATO is a way of doing that.

Mr. CULBERSON. Madam Chairman, reclaiming my time, the gentleman is correct that $200 million is a lot of money, but we have to preserve our investment in NATO. I would point out that the former Soviet Union is sending submarines into the Gulf of Mexico. The former Soviet Union, now Russia, is aggressively sending their strategic nuclear bombers pushing up against the outer limits of our airspace around Guam and around Alaska.

□ 1600

So the Russians are no longer overtly and openly Communist, but they are not necessarily our friends. They and the Communist Chinese are aggressively attacking the United States in the cyberworld. If a state of war could be declared in the cyberworld, a state of war already exists. The Communist Chinese have already attacked us and are at war with the United States over the Internet and over in Russia, as well. They are not our friends. And we, of course, are going to look for every opportunity to work together with them, but NATO is a vital part of America's strategic security.

I urge defeat of the gentleman's amendment and yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. I move to strike the last word.

The CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Again, I certainly understand and commend the gentleman for his commitment and his passionate support for reduction of the debt and the deficit, and I think that we on this side of the aisle join him in that quest. However, again, I submit that this amendment is probably one that is penny-wise and pound-foolish. We have an alliance with the countries in NATO. Those countries have been our staunch supporters in Operation Iraqi Freedom, our efforts in Afghanistan; and, of course, each of those NATO countries has a developing presence of al Qaeda just as we in the United States. So it's very, very important that we maintain that strategic alliance.

This amendment would cut our share of the responsibility for NATO which we share with the other member countries. And I think that since we are deriving a mutual benefit that we should have a mutual responsibility to support, this joint support, and I think that it would not be wise for us to withdraw our aspect of that support. We should assume our responsibility with our allies for the mutual support and the mutual benefits.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BROUN).

The amendment was rejected.

The CHAIR. The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows:

FAMILY HOUSING CONSTRUCTION, ARMY

For expenses of family housing for the Army for construction, including acquisition, replacement, addition, expansion, extension, and alteration, as authorized by law, $44,008,000, to remain available until September 30, 2018.

FAMILY HOUSING OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, ARMY

For expenses of family housing for the Army for operation and maintenance, including debt payment, leasing, minor construction, principal and interest charges, and insurance premiums, as authorized by law, $512,871,000.

FAMILY HOUSING CONSTRUCTION, NAVY AND MARINE CORPS

For expenses of family housing for the Navy and Marine Corps for construction, including acquisition, replacement, addition, expansion, extension, and alteration, as authorized by law, $73,407,000, to remain available until September 30, 2018.

FAMILY HOUSING OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, NAVY AND MARINE CORPS

For expenses of family housing for the Navy and Marine Corps for operation and maintenance, including debt payment, leasing, minor construction, principal and interest charges, and insurance premiums, as authorized by law, $389,844,000.

FAMILY HOUSING CONSTRUCTION, AIR FORCE

For expenses of family housing for the Air Force for construction, including acquisition, replacement, addition, expansion, extension, and alteration, as authorized by law, $76,360,000, to remain available until September 30, 2018.

FAMILY HOUSING OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, AIR FORCE

For expenses of family housing for the Air Force for operation and maintenance, including debt payment, leasing, minor construction, principal and interest charges, and insurance premiums, as authorized by law, $388,598,000.

FAMILY HOUSING OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, DEFENSE-WIDE

For expenses of family housing for the activities and agencies of the Department of Defense (other than the military departments) for operation and maintenance, leasing, and minor construction, as authorized by law, $55,845,000.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE FAMILY HOUSING IMPROVEMENT FUND

For the Department of Defense Family Housing Improvement Fund, $1,780,000, to remain available until expended, for family housing initiatives undertaken pursuant to section 2883 of title 10, United States Code, providing alternative means of acquiring and improving military family housing and supporting facilities.

CHEMICAL DEMILITARIZATION CONSTRUCTION, DEFENSE-WIDE

For expenses of construction, not otherwise provided for, necessary for the destruction of the United States stockpile of lethal chemical agents and munitions in accordance with section 1412 of the Department of Defense Authorization Act, 1986 (50 U.S.C. 1521), and for the destruction of other chemical warfare materials that are not in the chemical weapon stockpile, as currently authorized by law, $122,536,000, to remain available until September 30, 2018, which shall be only for the Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives program.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE BASE CLOSURE ACCOUNT

For deposit into the Department of Defense Base Closure Account, established by section 2906(a) of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 (10 U.S.C. 2687 note), as amended by section 2711 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013 (Public Law 112-239), $451,357,000, to remain available until expended.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

SEC. 101. None of the funds made available in this title shall be expended for payments under a cost-plus-a-fixed-fee contract for construction, where cost estimates exceed $25,000, to be performed within the United States, except Alaska, without the specific approval in writing of the Secretary of Defense setting forth the reasons therefor.

SEC. 102. Funds made available in this title for construction shall be available for hire of passenger motor vehicles.

SEC. 103. Funds made available in this title for construction may be used for advances to the Federal Highway Administration, Department of Transportation, for the construction of access roads as authorized by section 210 of title 23, United States Code, when projects authorized therein are certified as important to the national defense by the Secretary of Defense.

SEC. 104. None of the funds made available in this title may be used to begin construction of new bases in the United States for which specific appropriations have not been made.

SEC. 105. None of the funds made available in this title shall be used for purchase of land or land easements in excess of 100 percent of the value as determined by the Army Corps of Engineers or the Naval Facilities Engineering Command, except: (1) where there is a determination of value by a Federal court; (2) purchases negotiated by the Attorney General or the designee of the Attorney General; (3) where the estimated value is less than $25,000; or (4) as otherwise determined by the Secretary of Defense to be in the public interest.

SEC. 106. None of the funds made available in this title shall be used to: (1) acquire land; (2) provide for site preparation; or (3) install utilities for any family housing, except housing for which funds have been made available in annual Acts making appropriations for military construction.

SEC. 107. None of the funds made available in this title for minor construction may be used to transfer or relocate any activity from one base or installation to another, without prior notification to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress.

SEC. 108. None of the funds made available in this title may be used for the procurement of steel for any construction project or activity for which American steel producers, fabricators, and manufacturers have been denied the opportunity to compete for such steel procurement.

SEC. 109. None of the funds available to the Department of Defense for military construction or family housing during the current fiscal year may be used to pay real property taxes in any foreign nation.

SEC. 110. None of the funds made available in this title may be used to initiate a new installation overseas without prior notification to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress.

SEC. 111. None of the funds made available in this title may be obligated for architect and engineer contracts estimated by the Government to exceed $500,000 for projects to be accomplished in Japan, in any North Atlantic Treaty Organization member country, or in countries bordering the Arabian Sea, unless such contracts are awarded to United States firms or United States firms in joint venture with host nation firms.

SEC. 112. None of the funds made available in this title for military construction in the United States territories and possessions in the Pacific and on Kwajalein Atoll, or in countries within the United States Central Command Area of Responsibility, may be used to award any contract estimated by the Government to exceed $1,000,000 to a foreign contractor: *Provided*, That this section shall not be applicable to contract awards for which the lowest responsive and responsible bid of a United States contractor exceeds the lowest responsive and responsible bid of a foreign contractor by greater than 20 percent: *Provided further*, That this section shall not apply to contract awards for military construction on Kwajalein Atoll for which the lowest responsive and responsible bid is submitted by a Marshallese contractor.

SEC. 113. The Secretary of Defense shall inform the appropriate committees of both Houses of Congress, including the Committees on Appropriations, of plans and scope of any proposed military exercise involving United States personnel 30 days prior to its occurring, if amounts expended for construction, either temporary or permanent, are anticipated to exceed $100,000.

SEC. 114. Funds appropriated to the Department of Defense for construction in prior years shall be available for construction authorized for each such military department by the authorizations enacted into law during the current session of Congress.

SEC. 115. For military construction or family housing projects that are being completed with funds otherwise expired or lapsed for obligation, expired or lapsed funds may be used to pay the cost of associated supervision, inspection, overhead, engineering and design on those projects and on subsequent claims, if any.

SEC. 116. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, any funds made available to a military department or defense agency for the construction of military projects may be obligated for a military construction project or contract, or for any portion of such a project or contract, at any time before the end of the fourth fiscal year after the fiscal year for which funds for such project were made available, if the funds obligated for such project: (1) are obligated from funds available for military construction projects; and (2) do not exceed the amount appropriated for such project, plus any amount by which the cost of such project is increased pursuant to law.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 117. In addition to any other transfer authority available to the Department of Defense, proceeds deposited to the Department of Defense Base Closure Account established by section 207(a)(1) of the Defense Authorization Amendments and Base Closure and Realignment Act (10 U.S.C. 2687 note) pursuant to section 207(a)(2)(C) of such Act, may be transferred to the account established by section 2906(a)(1) of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 (10 U.S.C. 2687 note), to be merged with, and to be available for the same purposes and the same time period as that account.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 118. Subject to 30 days prior notification, or 14 days for a notification provided in an electronic medium pursuant to sections 480 and 2883 of title 10, United States Code, to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress, such additional amounts as may be determined by the Secretary of Defense may be transferred to: (1) the Department of Defense Family Housing Improvement Fund from amounts appropriated for construction in ''Family Housing'' accounts, to be merged with and to be available for the same purposes and for the same period of time as amounts appropriated directly to the Fund; or (2) the Department of Defense Military Unaccompanied Housing Improvement Fund from amounts appropriated for construction of military unaccompanied housing in ''Military Construction'' accounts, to be merged with and to be available for the same purposes and for the same period of time as amounts appropriated directly to the Fund: *Provided*, That appropriations made available to the Funds shall be available to cover the costs, as defined in section 502(5) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, of direct loans or loan guarantees issued by the Department of Defense pursuant to the provisions of subchapter IV of chapter 169 of title 10, United States Code,

pertaining to alternative means of acquiring and improving military family housing, military unaccompanied housing, and supporting facilities.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 119. In addition to any other transfer authority available to the Department of Defense, amounts may be transferred from the accounts established by sections 2906(a)(1) and 2906A(a)(1) of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 (10 U.S.C. 2687 note), to the fund established by section 1013(d) of the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 3374) to pay for expenses associated with the Homeowners Assistance Program incurred under 42 U.S.C. 3374(a)(1)(A). Any amounts transferred shall be merged with and be available for the same purposes and for the same time period as the fund to which transferred.

SEC. 120. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, funds made available in this title for operation and maintenance of family housing shall be the exclusive source of funds for repair and maintenance of all family housing units, including general or flag officer quarters: *Provided*, That not more than $35,000 per unit may be spent annually for the maintenance and repair of any general or flag officer quarters without 30 days prior notification, or 14 days for a notification provided in an electronic medium pursuant to sections 480 and 2883 of title 10, United States Code, to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress, except that an after-the-fact notification shall be submitted if the limitation is exceeded solely due to costs associated with environmental remediation that could not be reasonably anticipated at the time of the budget submission: *Provided further*, That the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) is to report annually to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress all operation and maintenance expenditures for each individual general or flag officer quarters for the prior fiscal year.

AMENDMENT NO. 1 OFFERED BY MR. GRIFFITH OF VIRGINIA

Mr. GRIFFITH of Virginia. I have an amendment at the desk.

The CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 18, line 8, strike ''$35,000 per unit'' and insert ''$15,000 per unit''.

The CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GRIFFITH of Virginia. Madam Chair, this is a simple little amendment. Currently, any expenditures for flag officers' general housing on base has to be reported if there is an expenditure in excess of $35,000. This lowers this number down to $15,000. It doesn't mean they can't do the work. It just means that if they're going to spend more than $15,000, they have to file a report with Congress before they do so.

In this day and age where we're trying to make sure that we're spending the taxpayers' money wisely, this seems to be appropriate. My wife and I put a roof on our house a couple of years ago for about $15,000. If they need more than that, that's fine, but make a report to Congress. If there's something terribly wrong with the flooring and it costs more than $15,000, they can report it. But most repairs to a home can be done under $15,000.

This is just simply saying, hey, tell us what you're doing so that we can have a more transparent expenditure and a more transparent government.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CULBERSON. I rise in support of the gentleman's amendment.

The CHAIR. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CULBERSON. We'd be happy to accept it. I think it's more than reasonable to report that you're going to expend more than $15,000. Certainly, we want to help make sure that our officers have everything that they need, but it would be nice to have them report it. And I would be willing to accept the gentleman's amendment if my colleague from Georgia is in agreement.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GRIFFITH).

The amendment was agreed to.

Mr. FATTAH. Madam Chair, I move to strike the last word.

The CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FATTAH. I just wanted to come to the floor. I have had the opportunity to serve on this subcommittee under the leadership of my great friend from Texas and our ranking member, Congressman BISHOP from Georgia.

□ 1610

The focus of the work is in a bipartisan process to come up with the best possible set of proposals to move our country forward to respond to our needs in terms of military construction.

I rise today, in particular, to thank the two leaders of the subcommittee, and in particular, the chairman for his great leadership on veterans benefits. I had breakfast with General Shinseki, and the staff of the VA I think has been clearly moved by the ranking member and the chairman's insistence that we deal with the challenges around the backlog.

I want to particularly note the great work in this bill on neuroscience and brain disorders. The chairman and I began some work together in the CJS appropriations process a year and a half ago, which has moved our country, I think, forward in terms of dealing with some 600 different brain diseases and disorders in a much more aggressive fashion, and we compliment the President on the brain initiative. Right here in this VA bill there are actual concrete steps being taken to deal with posttraumatic stress, to deal with traumatic brain injury. And I had a Nobel Prize laureate, who has done work on TV, really come just to say that the focus we put on this has been so important because some 40 percent of our injured veterans have some type of traumatic brain injury or posttraumatic stress challenges that they face. I visited the Intrepid Center.

So I didn't want this moment to pass without thanking the two leaders of the subcommittee for their work. I could go on and on about the Epilepsy Centers of Excellence, but I know I only have a few minutes, so I'll cease here. I want to thank them, because it won't necessarily be recorded. But in the lives of tens of thousands of our veterans and servicemen, differences in their life circumstances will be made for the positive because of what's in this bill. So thank you, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIR. The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows:

SEC. 121. Amounts contained in the Ford Island Improvement Account established by subsection (h) of section 2814 of title 10, United States Code, are appropriated and shall be available until expended for the purposes specified in subsection (i)(1) of such section or until transferred pursuant to subsection (i)(3) of such section.

SEC. 122. None of the funds made available in this title, or in any Act making appropriations for military construction which remain available for obligation, may be obligated or expended to carry out a military construction, land acquisition, or family housing project at or for a military installation approved for closure, or at a military installation for the purposes of supporting a function that has been approved for realignment to another installation, in 2005 under the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 (part A of title XXIX of Public Law 101–510; 10 U.S.C. 2687 note), unless such a project at a military installation approved for realignment will support a continuing mission or function at that installation or a new mission or function that is planned for that installation, or unless the Secretary of Defense certifies that the cost to the United States of carrying out such project would be less than the cost to the United States of cancelling such project, or if the project is at an active component base that shall be established as an enclave or in the case of projects having multi-agency use, that another Government agency has indicated it will assume ownership of the completed project. The Secretary of Defense may not transfer funds made available as a result of this limitation from any military construction project, land acquisition, or family housing project to another account or use such funds for another purpose or project without the prior approval of the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress. This section shall not apply to military construction projects, land acquisition, or family housing projects for which the project is vital to the national security or the protection of health, safety, or environmental quality: *Provided*, That the Secretary of Defense shall notify the congressional defense committees within seven days of a decision to carry out such a military construction project.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 123. During the 5-year period after appropriations available in this Act to the Department of Defense for military construction and family housing operation and maintenance and construction have expired for obligation, upon a determination that such appropriations will not be necessary for the liquidation of obligations or for making authorized adjustments to such appropriations for obligations incurred during the period of availability of such appropriations, unobligated balances of such appropriations may be transferred into the appropriation ''Foreign Currency Fluctuations, Construction, Defense'', to be merged with and to be available for the same time period and for the same purposes as the appropriation to which transferred.

SEC. 124. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used for any action that relates to or promotes the expansion of the boundaries or size of the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site, Colorado.

SEC. 125. (a) Except as provided in subsection (b), none of the funds made available in this Act may be used by the Secretary of the Army to relocate a unit in the Army that—

(1) performs a testing mission or function that is not performed by any other unit in the Army and is specifically stipulated in title 10, United States Code; and

(2) is located at a military installation at which the total number of civilian employees of the Department of the Army and Army contractor personnel employed exceeds 10 percent of the total number of members of the regular and reserve components of the Army assigned to the installation.

(b) EXCEPTION.—Subsection (a) shall not apply if the Secretary of the Army certifies to the congressional defense committees that in proposing the relocation of the unit of the Army, the Secretary complied with Army Regulation 5–10 relating to the policy, procedures, and responsibilities for Army stationing actions.

(INCLUDING RESCISSION OF FUNDS)

SEC. 126. Of the unobligated balances available for ''Military Construction, Army'', from prior appropriations Acts (other than appropriations designated by law as being for contingency operations directly related to the global war on terrorism or as an emergency requirement), $89,000,000 are hereby rescinded.

(INCLUDING RESCISSION OF FUNDS)

SEC. 127. Of the unobligated balances available for ''Military Construction, Navy and Marine Corps'', from prior appropriations Acts (other than appropriations designated by law as being for contingency operations directly related to the global war on terrorism or as an emergency requirement), $49,920,000 are hereby rescinded.

(INCLUDING RESCISSION OF FUNDS)

SEC. 128. Of the unobligated balances available for ''Military Construction, Defense-Wide'', from prior appropriations Acts (other than appropriations designated by law as being for contingency operations directly related to the global war on terrorism or as an emergency requirement), $358,400,000 are hereby rescinded.

(INCLUDING RESCISSION OF FUNDS)

SEC. 129. Of the unobligated balances available for ''Military Construction, Army'', from prior appropriations Acts (other than appropriations designated by law as being for contingency operations directly related to the global war on terrorism or as an emergency requirement), $50,000,000 are hereby rescinded.

(INCLUDING RESCISSION OF FUNDS)

SEC. 130. Of the unobligated balances available for ''Military Construction, Defense-Wide'', from prior appropriations Acts (other than appropriations designated by law as being for contingency operations directly related to the global war on terrorism or as an emergency requirement), $16,470,000 are hereby rescinded.

(INCLUDING RESCISSION OF FUNDS)

SEC. 131. Of the unobligated balances available for ''Military Construction, Air National Guard'', from prior appropriations Acts (other than appropriations designated by law as being for contingency operations directly related to the global war on terrorism or as an emergency requirement), $45,623,000 are hereby rescinded.

(INCLUDING RESCISSION OF FUNDS)

SEC. 132. Of the unobligated balances made available in prior appropriation Acts for the fund established in section 1013(d) of the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 3374) (other than appropriations designated by law as being for contingency operations directly related to the global war on terrorism or as an emergency requirement), $50,000,000 are hereby rescinded.

SEC. 133. Discretionary appropriations in this title are hereby reduced by $4,668,000.

SEC. 134. Notwithstanding section 116, the Secretary of Army may obligate from any available military construction funds such additional funds that the Secretary determines are necessary to complete the Explosive Research and Development Loading Facility, Picatinny Arsenal, New Jersey.

SEC. 135. For an additional amount for ''Military Construction, Navy and Marine Corps'', $75,000,000, to remain available until September 30, 2018: *Provided*, That notwithstanding any other provision of law, such funds may be obligated and expended to carry out planning and design and construction of projects that (1) are of critical importance to the Armed Forces, (2) will be conducted within the 50 States, and (3) were contained in the fiscal year 2014 portion of the future-years defense program submitted to Congress under section 221 of title 10, United States Code, for fiscal years 2013 through 2017 and are also contained in the fiscal year 2015 portion of the future-years defense program submitted under such section for fiscal years 2014 through 2018: *Provided further*, That not later than 30 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress an expenditure plan for funds provided under this heading.

TITLE II

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION

COMPENSATION AND PENSIONS

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For the payment of compensation benefits to or on behalf of veterans and a pilot program for disability examinations as authorized by section 107 and chapters 11, 13, 18, 51, 53, 55, and 61 of title 38, United States Code; pension benefits to or on behalf of veterans as authorized by chapters 15, 51, 53, 55, and 61 of title 38, United States Code; and burial benefits, the Reinstated Entitlement Program for Survivors, emergency and other officers' retirement pay, adjusted-service credits and certificates, payment of premiums due on commercial life insurance policies guaranteed under the provisions of title IV of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (50 U.S.C. App. 541 et seq.) and for other benefits as authorized by sections 107, 1312, 1977, and 2106, and chapters 23, 51, 53, 55, and 61 of title 38, United States Code, $71,248,171,000, to remain available until expended: *Provided*, That not to exceed $9,232,000 of the amount appropriated under this heading shall be reimbursed to ''General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration'' and ''Information Technology Systems'' for necessary expenses in implementing the provisions of chapters 51, 53, and 55 of title 38, United States Code, the funding source for which is specifically provided as the ''Compensation and Pensions'' appropriation: *Provided further*, That such sums as may be earned on an actual qualifying patient basis, shall be reimbursed to ''Medical Care Collections Fund'' to augment the funding of individual medical facilities for nursing home care provided to pensioners as authorized.

READJUSTMENT BENEFITS

For the payment of readjustment and rehabilitation benefits to or on behalf of veterans as authorized by chapters 21, 30, 31, 33, 34, 35, 36, 39, 41, 51, 53, 55, and 61 of title 38, United States Code, and for the payment of benefits under the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program, $13,135,898,000, to remain available until expended: *Provided*, That expenses for rehabilitation program services and assistance which the Secretary is authorized to provide under subsection (a) of section 3104 of title 38, United States Code, other than under paragraphs (1), (2), (5), and (11) of that subsection, shall be charged to this account.

VETERANS INSURANCE AND INDEMNITIES

For military and naval insurance, national service life insurance, servicemen's indemnities, service-disabled veterans insurance, and veterans mortgage life insurance as authorized by chapters 19 and 21, title 38, United States Code, $77,567,000, to remain available until expended.

VETERANS HOUSING BENEFIT PROGRAM FUND

For the cost of direct and guaranteed loans, such sums as may be necessary to carry out the program, as authorized by subchapters I through III of chapter 37 of title 38, United States Code: *Provided*, That such costs, including the cost of modifying such loans, shall be as defined in section 502 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974: *Provided further*, That during fiscal year 2014, within the resources available, not to exceed $500,000 in gross obligations for direct loans are authorized for specially adapted housing loans.

In addition, for administrative expenses to carry out the direct and guaranteed loan programs, $158,430,000.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION LOANS PROGRAM ACCOUNT

For the cost of direct loans, $5,000, as authorized by chapter 31 of title 38, United States Code: *Provided*, That such costs, including the cost of modifying such loans, shall be as defined in section 502 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974: *Provided further*, That funds made available under this heading are available to subsidize gross obligations for the principal amount of direct loans not to exceed $2,500,000.

In addition, for administrative expenses necessary to carry out the direct loan program, $354,000, which may be paid to the appropriation for ''General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration''.

NATIVE AMERICAN VETERAN HOUSING LOAN PROGRAM ACCOUNT

For administrative expenses to carry out the direct loan program authorized by subchapter V of chapter 37 of title 38, United States Code, $1,109,000.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Chair, I move to strike the last word.

The CHAIR. The gentleman from Oregon is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Thank you, Madam Chair.

As our veterans return home from Iraq and Afghanistan after 10 years of conflict, it's critical that they're able to get the care they need and deserve. Part of that care must be greater access to complementary and alternative medicine. Unfortunately, based on conversations I've had with veterans back in my district and with practitioners of alternative medicine, and letters I've received, it's too often difficult for the veterans to utilize complementary and alternative medicine through the VA system, even though research is showing that a holistic approach to treatment, including complementary and alternative medicine, can make a significant impact. A recent survey conducted by the Samueli Institute, which

shared its findings at a Senate Veterans' Affairs hearing 2 weeks ago, demonstrated how the effectiveness of drugless self-care and integrative practices for treatment of these conditions had immediate and long-lasting impacts.

Many VA practitioners have taken note and are doing their best to integrate these practices. Many veterans are seeking out these services. Both, sadly, are encountering institutional barriers and limited availability.

Given the steadfast commitment of this committee to do all it can to increase the quality of care for our veterans, I would sincerely request the chairman and ranking member to address this issue as the bill proceeds through the process.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. BLUMENAUER. I would be happy to yield.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. The gentleman from Oregon, again, raises a very important issue that the subcommittee will look into, and we will do our best to address in some way as we move forward through this process.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Thank you.

Mr. CULBERSON. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. BLUMENAUER. I would be happy to yield to the gentleman.

Mr. CULBERSON. I agree with my colleague from Georgia, and we look forward to working closely with you to be sure that we continue to address these vital issues.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. I appreciate the hard work of the committee and the willingness to work with us, to be able to make sure our veterans have access to these services, and look forward to working with you to make it happen.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIR. The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows:

VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

MEDICAL SERVICES

For necessary expenses for furnishing, as authorized by law, inpatient and outpatient care and treatment to beneficiaries of the Department of Veterans Affairs and veterans described in section 1705(a) of title 38, United States Code, including care and treatment in facilities not under the jurisdiction of the Department, and including medical supplies and equipment, bioengineering services, food services, and salaries and expenses of health care employees hired under title 38, United States Code, aid to State homes as authorized by section 1741 of title 38, United States Code, assistance and support services for caregivers as authorized by section 1720G of title 38, United States Code, loan repayments authorized by section 604 of the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010 (Public Law 111–163; 124 Stat. 1174; 38 U.S.C. 7681 note), and hospital care and medical services authorized by section 1787 of title 38, United States Code, $45,015,527,000, plus reimbursements, shall become available on October 1, 2014, and shall remain available until September 30, 2015: *Provided*, That notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish a priority for the provision of medical treatment for veterans who have service-connected disabilities, lower income, or have special needs: *Provided further*, That notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall give priority funding for the provision of basic medical benefits to veterans in enrollment priority groups 1 through 6: *Provided further*, That notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may authorize the dispensing of prescription drugs from Veterans Health Administration facilities to enrolled veterans with privately written prescriptions based on requirements established by the Secretary: *Provided further*, That the implementation of the program described in the previous proviso shall incur no additional cost to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

MEDICAL SUPPORT AND COMPLIANCE

For necessary expenses in the administration of the medical, hospital, nursing home, domiciliary, construction, supply, and research activities, as authorized by law; administrative expenses in support of capital policy activities; and administrative and legal expenses of the Department for collecting and recovering amounts owed the Department as authorized under chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code, and the Federal Medical Care Recovery Act (42 U.S.C. 2651 et seq.), $5,879,700,000, plus reimbursements, shall become available on October 1, 2014, and shall remain available until September 30, 2015.

MEDICAL FACILITIES

For necessary expenses for the maintenance and operation of hospitals, nursing homes, domiciliary facilities, and other necessary facilities of the Veterans Health Administration; for administrative expenses in support of planning, design, project management, real property acquisition and disposition, construction, and renovation of any facility under the jurisdiction or for the use of the Department; for oversight, engineering, and architectural activities not charged to project costs; for repairing, altering, improving, or providing facilities in the several hospitals and homes under the jurisdiction of the Department, not otherwise provided for, either by contract or by the hire of temporary employees and purchase of materials; for leases of facilities; and for laundry services, $4,739,000,000, plus reimbursements, shall become available on October 1, 2014, and shall remain available until September 30, 2015.

MEDICAL AND PROSTHETIC RESEARCH

For necessary expenses in carrying out programs of medical and prosthetic research and development as authorized by chapter 73 of title 38, United States Code, $585,664,000, plus reimbursements, shall remain available until September 30, 2015.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. BLUMENAUER

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Page 31, line 18, after the dollar amount insert the following: ''(reduced by $35,000,000) (increased by $35,000,000)''.

The CHAIR. The gentleman from Oregon is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Thank you, Madam Chair. And I do appreciate the courtesy that the chair and ranking member have evidenced. I appreciate the fact that the gentleman from Texas—we've worked not only on these issues, but he's played a critical role on another issue near and dear to my heart dealing with international water, and it's a pleasure to work again.

Those efforts have saved countless lives abroad, and today, with this amendment, it's my hope that we can partner to improve and hopefully save lives right here at home.

I helped organize, found and chair the Congressional Neuroscience Caucus. It's clear from our work that we find America standing on the precipice of discovery in neuroscience research that will lead to a higher quality of life for the 50 million Americans affected by neurological illnesses every year.

□ 1620

Conditions in neuroscience have already dwarfed other areas of health care expenditures, and that's before the waves of baby boomers turning 65 at a rate of 10,000 per day for another 14 years are going to drive it even further. There are more people with brain disorders than all cancers and heart problems combined; and as society ages, this number will increase exponentially as will the cost to the health care system and the economy.

But the importance of neuroscience isn't just about the numbers. It's about improving the quality of life for those affected by neurological trauma, and no one is more deserving of these breakthroughs than the returning servicemembers affected by traumatic brain injuries or posttraumatic stress disorder.

As stated by General Peter Chiarelli, now the CEO of One Mind for Research and the 32nd chief of staff of the Army, TBI and PTSD have accounted for 36 percent of the disabling injuries suffered by soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan. He is convinced, as I think most of us in Congress are, that we must do all we can to help our veterans because these invisible wounds have devastating and long-lasting impacts.

The amendment before the committee is identical to the one that I and Congresswoman MCMORRIS RODGERS, who is my cochair of the Neuroscience Caucus, offered and had adopted in last year's MilCon-VA appropriations bill.

The amendment aims to ensure that the Veterans Administration continues to have the resources it needs to find innovative new medicines and enhanced diagnostics for what can truly be termed an ''epidemic.'' The amendment does not increase or decrease any accounts in the appropriations bill. It simply requires that no less than $35 million of the Medical and Prosthetic Research account goes towards posttraumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury so that we can expedite the cure for Active Duty personnel and veterans suffering from the effects of brain and psychological trauma incurred during their service.

The amendment, I hope, symbolizes a commitment from this Congress that, even in the midst of sequestration and tight budgets, we will not yield on this critical issue and area of funding.

In meeting with neuroscientists, I am always amazed to hear how this one

area of research often leads to positive, but unexpected, breakthroughs. For example, in researching depression, scientists found out that Prozac can help stroke victims recover motor skills more quickly.

The account, the Military and Prosthetic Research, funds many critical areas of research with direct and indirect links to PTSD, and this complementary amendment ensures that these links are made and that research is shared to everyone's benefit. It's a commitment to using resources in a way that allows one scientific inquiry to seek out other areas of impact that will lead to breakthroughs in TBI and PTSD. These items demand our special attention because their effects can so easily harm a soldier's family and loved ones if not properly diagnosed. Early detection and prevention prevents chaos, hardship and, indeed, in some cases, a further loss of life.

We must remember our duty to the wounded warriors who face a long journey to recovery. These harms may not be as visible as a missing limb, but can be even more damaging to a veteran's future. I urge my colleagues to support this amendment—a commitment from Congress to our servicemembers. We will continue to do all we can in developing new medicines and technology to improve the lives for those in need. I appreciate the extraordinary courtesy of the subcommittee, and respectfully urge adoption of the amendment.

Mr. CULBERSON. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. BLUMENAUER. I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CULBERSON).

Mr. CULBERSON. Madam Chairman, I have no objection to the amendment.

I want to acknowledge and thank the gentleman from Oregon for his long labors and support of this important work to identify and cure these invisible injuries that many of our soldiers have suffered as a result of concussion, as a result of the circumstances of battle in which they find themselves.

We appreciate your good work, sir, and I will continue to work with you. I thank you for the amendment. I have no objection.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. I move to strike the last word.

The CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. The gentleman's amendment would require that no less than $35 million goes towards traumatic brain injury and posttraumatic stress disorder research from the Medical and Prosthetic Research account. I want to bring to the attention of this House that $32 million was already included for this purpose.

I do have some concerns regarding the amendment. I understand what the gentleman is trying to do, and I agree that PTSD and traumatic brain injury are the two major problems that the VA needs to focus on. Tens of thousands of veterans have suffered traumatic brain injury. Most are mild concussions that get better within a few months, but serious ones and multiple concussions can raise the risk of dementia and other problems. The gentleman points that out rightly.

With the tight budgets that we are facing, I am concerned, however, where the reduction would come from. For example, this account also provides for the research for prosthetics, for women's health, and for gulf war veterans illness. So I just want to make sure that the gentleman is aware that his amendment could cause shortfalls in other areas of research that are vital to the health care needs of our veterans.

I do assure the gentleman that the subcommittee and the committee will work hard to try to make sure that traumatic brain injury and PTSD are adequately addressed with our resources available for funding research there.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER).

The amendment was agreed to.

The CHAIR. The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows:

NATIONAL CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION

For necessary expenses of the National Cemetery Administration for operations and maintenance, not otherwise provided for, including uniforms or allowances therefor; cemeterial expenses as authorized by law; purchase of one passenger motor vehicle for use in cemeterial operations; hire of passenger motor vehicles; and repair, alteration or improvement of facilities under the jurisdiction of the National Cemetery Administration, $250,000,000, of which not to exceed $25,000,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2015.

DEPARTMENTAL ADMINISTRATION

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For necessary operating expenses of the Department of Veterans Affairs, not otherwise provided for, including administrative expenses in support of Department-Wide capital planning, management and policy activities, uniforms, or allowances therefor; not to exceed $25,000 for official reception and representation expenses; hire of passenger motor vehicles; and reimbursement of the General Services Administration for security guard services, $403,023,000, of which not to exceed $20,151,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2015: *Provided*, That funds provided under this heading may be transferred to ''General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration''.

GENERAL OPERATING EXPENSES, VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION

For necessary operating expenses of the Veterans Benefits Administration, not otherwise provided for, including hire of passenger motor vehicles, reimbursement of the General Services Administration for security guard services, and reimbursement of the Department of Defense for the cost of overseas employee mail, $2,455,490,000: *Provided*, That expenses for services and assistance authorized under paragraphs (1), (2), (5), and (11) of section 3104(a) of title 38, United States Code, that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs determines are necessary to enable entitled veterans: (1) to the maximum extent feasible, to become employable and to obtain and maintain suitable employment; or (2) to achieve maximum independence in daily living, shall be charged to this account: *Provided further*, That of the funds made available under this heading, not to exceed $123,000,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2015.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. GALLEGO

Mr. GALLEGO. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Page 33, line 5, after the dollar amount, insert ''(reduced by $5,000,000) (increased by $5,000,000)''.

The CHAIR. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GALLEGO. Madam Chair, I would like to thank my long-time friend, even from the Texas Legislature, Representative CULBERSON, the chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, as well as Representative BISHOP, the ranking Democrat on the subcommittee, for their work on these important issues.

I rise today to offer an amendment to H.R. 2216, the appropriations bill for the Department of Veterans Affairs. The amendment is for the brave men and women who have served our country—our veterans.

It's simple. It's common sense. It highlights job training for veterans, helping them to find employment. Within the general operating expenses for the Veterans Benefits Administration account, this would support funding for veterans to become employable and maintain their jobs to meet the workforce needs of the 21st century.

Over the next 4 years, 1 million veterans are expected to transition into the workforce from the armed services. This makes this specific account vital to the lifeblood of decreasing our unemployment rate for veterans once they return home. 1.6 million veterans call Texas home, and 64,000 of these men and women reside in the 23rd Congressional District. These men and women have obtained tremendous skill sets while serving our country, and yet many have difficulty finding employment after they've completed their service. Nearly 700,000 veterans are unemployed. The jobless rate among our veterans is at 6.2 percent. Among veterans who served after 9/11, that rate increases to 7.5 percent.

These men and women have served this country, and they have put their lives on the line. It is our turn to serve them. Let's make certain that Congress focuses on training our veterans to meet the workforce needs of the 21st century. We should make the transition from military service to the workforce as seamless as possible. Lastly, this amendment doesn't present any budgetary issues, and the Congressional Budget Office confirms that the amendment doesn't score. Additionally, it doesn't have a net change in funding levels.

I encourage my colleagues to stand up for veterans' employment and to support my commonsense amendment. I look forward to working with all of you to get veterans back to work.

□ 1630

Mr. CULBERSON. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. GALLEGO. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Chairman, I have no objection to the amendment. The gentleman is absolutely right. We're all committed to making sure that when our veterans return home, they are fully employed and well taken care of.

I thank my friend from the Texas Legislature, Mr. GALLEGO, for offering his amendment, and we have no objection.

Mr. GALLEGO. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. POE of Texas). The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. I rise in support of the gentleman's amendment.

Mr. Chairman, after returning home from the war, veterans are now fighting for jobs back home. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, last year's unemployment rate for veterans was 12.1 percent, a significantly higher figure than the 8.7 percent unemployment rate for nonveterans. Even more staggering is that 19.1 percent of young veterans between the ages of 20 and 24 are unemployed.

All veterans, because of their service, have basic skills, and the only thing that they're missing is formal job training to match their abilities with the specific needs of an employer. This is another issue on Secretary Shinseki's plate. I believe that anything that we can do to help veterans gain employment we should do.

I thank the gentleman for raising this issue, and I support the amendment and yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GALLEGO).

The amendment was agreed to.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Mr. Chairman, the sacrifices of the few, our military veterans, provide the freedom for the many.

We know that it is our military veterans, who only make up just 1 percent of our population, that provide 100 percent of our freedom. But far too many of our veterans seeking the disability assistance that they rightly earned are running into a severe backlog at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Nationwide, there are close to 800,000 pending disability claims at the VA, and almost 550,000 of these claims have been pending for over 125 days. At the Oakland VA in Oakland, California, which serves the 15th Congressional District, which I represent, the constituents in my district have been waiting, on average, a staggering 552 days. Over 81 percent of the constituents have been waiting over 125 days. This is the longest average wait time across the United States. These numbers are a national disgrace, and I'm ashamed that the veterans who have served our country and have fought so hard have to wait so long.

Our military spends $1.8 billion a year recruiting young Americans to join our military. We spend it on NASCAR, Super Bowl ads, and we send our recruiters out to our schools to have our young men and women join in the honorable profession of defending our country, but we are neglecting the needs of the veterans. We're failing to keep the promises we make after they serve.

This weekend I had the opportunity to go to a Salute to New Recruits who are going into the military. I looked at those young, bright faces of young men and women who are going to go off to serve their country, and I told them, You are doing something that is very brave and very noble, but I hope that your families and you stand up for the benefits that you are rightfully earning.

Right now what we're seeing at the VA is shameful, Mr. Chairman. It's shameful that we would treat our veterans like this and not give them the benefits that they've earned. We're failing to live up to that solemn pledge that we've made to our Nation's wounded warriors. That's why this bill is so important. It reaffirms our commitment to caring for the men and women who made sacrifices to serve in uniform.

It contains commonsense solutions to eliminate the disability claims backlog by mandating that the VA modernize the disability claims process, and it also ensures greater efficiency and accountability on the part of the VA.

It would fully fund the President's requested budget to allow for an increase of the staff levels at the Veterans Benefits Administration. These funds would support an additional 94 claims processors, all of whom will work solely on disability claims, helping to address the heart of the backlog.

Increasing staff levels, as we know, however, is not a silver bullet. Creating a more efficient and responsive VA is also necessary if the disability claims process is going to be fixed. Today, the VA spends, on average, 175 days waiting for the Department of Defense to send them a veteran's record, mostly because these records are still kept in the form of paper files. It's time we bring this process into the 21st century.

In addition to moving away from paper files, it's clear that it would be far better for servicemembers and veterans, as well as taxpayers, for the DOD and the VA to maintain one integrated system for electronic health records. This bill seeks to move the DOD away from paper and towards an integrated system that can be used both for DOD and the VA. It also fully funds the Veterans Claims Intake Program, which is working to convert all those paper records the VA receives into digital files.

Mr. Chairman, the constituents of the 15th Congressional District who served so honorably should not have to wait 552 days for their disability compensation cases to be processed.

Those parts of the bill that I outlined will help to improve veterans' access to the benefits that they have earned and enable us to better live up to President Lincoln's promise in his second inaugural address:

> To care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan.

President Lincoln's words happen to be at the core of the VA's mission statement. Words, however, are not enough. Congress must act swiftly to fix the VA backlog with practical solutions and fulfill our pledge to veterans. We must leave no veteran behind when they come back. We must make sure that when we say ''thank you for your service'' to a veteran, that we mean it and we follow up with a meaningful and responsive claims process. The funding in this bill helps move us in that direction.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY AMODEI

Mr. AMODEI. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

> Page 33, line 5, after the dollar amount insert the following: ''(reduced by $44,000,000)(increased by $44,000,000)''.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Nevada is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. AMODEI. Mr. Chairman, first of all, I would like to thank Chairman CULBERSON and Ranking Member BISHOP for their effort on bringing forth a good bill that addresses the needs of our veterans and maintains our commitment to providing them with the benefits that they earned and deserve.

I rise with this amendment for the first time since I've been in this body because of the existing claims backlog, which is over 600,000 claims nationwide.

As a member of the primary committee of jurisdiction and the primary subcommittee of jurisdiction on the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, I can tell you that, in dealing with this number of claims, we are not making mission in the Department of Veterans Affairs. I can also tell you that the proposal to spend $44 million, according to the Veterans Affairs testimony in front of our committees, to clear 50,000 of

those claims in the backlog is, quite simply, more of the same. That's about $900 a claim and will leave you with 550,000 claims when it's done this year.

I appreciate the opportunity of coming technology, but I can tell you this: if you represent a district that's in California, New York, Arizona, Indiana, Virginia, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Texas, Ohio, Maryland, another Texas hit, Boston or Mississippi, which is the majority of Members in this House, then guess what; you've got a majority of those claims in your district offices.

I say it's time for this House to take action and say this: don't cut a single regional office's budget. This amendment does not attempt to do that. This amendment says take that $44 million and allocate it for personnel in those 15 offices that all have over a year of processing time.

By the way, while we're mentioning that, I want to give you a quote that is from Under Secretary Hickey that basically says:

> Quite frankly, we have a resource allocation model that doesn't make any sense.

That's before the Veterans' Affairs Committee.

Let's try something new. Let's put the staffing where those offices are that are in need of it most. Two of them are in California and two of them are in the Lone Star State. Chicago also needs help. You name it. Let's try that instead of just doing what we have been doing. It adds no money to the bill, and it also does not take any money away from existing offices.

□ 1640

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I would like to say this. Even though staffing at the VA's 58 regional offices has increased by almost 300 people since September 2010, because of turnover and loss of more than 2,000 workers temporarily paid through stimulus funds, the VA regional offices are severely understaffed. Overtime will not be the answer. At a majority of the regional offices, including those in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Waco, and Oakland, the VA presently employs fewer people than it did 2 years ago, according to their own internal documents.

Let's take the leadership on this issue and do something that's a little different than, quite frankly, a resource allocation model which the determined Under Secretary says makes no sense.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Chairman, I have no opposition to the gentleman's amendment and share his frustration and concern, as Mr. BISHOP and I and the subcommittee have done in this bill repeatedly throughout the series of our hearings to literally pound on the VA to get them to move more rapidly on this backlog.

We have included, Mr. BISHOP and I, in this bill, very powerful and strong reporting language that we're going to get detailed information on a level that we've never seen before from the VA. In fact, later today we're going to have an amendment from Mr. KINGston of Georgia that I will support that will hold the VA to the same standard as the private sector in that either they meet their performance levels that they have set for themselves or they will not be paid, as they are in the private sector. You miss your goal, you don't get your full compensation.

We are addressing this in a number of different ways. I think the gentleman's amendment is helpful and constructive in driving home the point to the VA that it's absolutely vital that we get this backlog disposed of and that we expect the VA to live up to the time line that they've promised us, and that's to eliminate the backlog within the next 24 months by the year of 2015.

And so we have no opposition to the gentleman's amendment, and we appreciate his concern for ensuring that our men and women in uniform receive the disability benefits that they have so rightly earned.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I think this is a subject on which we need to tread very, very, very carefully. As we all know, the VA announced that it's mandating the use of overtime for claims processors at the 56 regional offices as part of a ''surge'' aimed at eliminating the disabilities claims backlog.

This effort is the latest in a series of measures that the VA has adopted in recent months in response to sharp criticism and to the cajoling by Members of this Congress and the public over the number of claims pending from veterans seeking disability compensation. That number, which was over 900,000 earlier this year, had fallen to 843,000 as May 13, with more than two-thirds of those having been pending for over 125 days. I believe that Secretary Shinseki should and I believe that Secretary Shinseki is using every option available to him to make progress in eliminating this backlog.

Furthermore, the overtime measure is on top of the VA's recent announcement that it's giving priority to claims that have been pending for longer than a year. I believe that the increased overtime initiative coupled with the expedited claims initiative will provide more veterans with more expedited decisions on their claims and will help us to achieve our goal of eliminating the claims backlog. I believe that this overtime initiative correctly shows that the Secretary's commitment is there to end the problem of the backlog. And so I think we should tread very carefully in this regard.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. AMODEI).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. AMODEI. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Nevada will be postponed.

Ms. BROWNLEY of California. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. BROWNLEY of California. Mr. Chairman, this bill is one of the most important that the House will consider all year. It provides critical funds for military training facilities, improves living conditions for our troops and their families, and addresses the needs of our Nation's veterans.

As ranking member of the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Health, however, I wanted to bring your attention to a serious issue.

As you know, the advance appropriations process ensures that the VA health care funding is not delayed by Congress' failure to pass the appropriations bills on time. For the past 3 years, the GAO has been required to review the accuracy of the administration's projections for advance funding for veterans' health care programs. The report helps Congress evaluate VA projections for advance appropriations and ensures the VA receives the funding needed for veterans' health care.

Unfortunately, this GAO reporting requirement is scheduled to sunset on September 30. I believe this requirement should be extended, and a number of veterans service organizations have expressed concerns about this issue as well.

As the bill moves forward, I ask the committee to review this issue and continue the reporting requirement.

On another note, one of our most important obligations is to ensure adequate training and support of our troops. That is why one of my first stops as a Member of Congress was to Naval Base Ventura County. For fiscal year 2014, the Navy has requested funding for several important projects at Point Mugu and Port Hueneme, including military housing, training, and maintenance facilities. This bill provides funding for base infrastructure improvements, but it is a decrease from last year and also below the DOD request.

On behalf of my constituents serving at Naval Base Ventura County, I would like to express my hope that these reductions do not come at the expense of the much-needed infrastructure improvements at Point Mugu and Port Hueneme.

As a VA committee member, I am also pleased that H.R. 2216 funds veterans' benefits and programs. It provides $43.6 billion for VA medical services to serve about 6.5 million veterans.

It supports mental health care services, suicide prevention activities, traumatic brain injury treatment, homeless veterans' programs, and rural health initiatives. It continues work on an integrated DOD-VA electronic health record system, the paperless claims process system, digital scanning of health records, and transparent reporting on our progress with the claims backlog for VA benefits.

Finally, it funds construction and renovation of hundreds of VA health clinics, medical residences, and nursing homes. Support of our servicemembers, veterans, and their families is of the highest importance. However, we must be mindful of the entire budget picture.

Like many of my colleagues, I am concerned that we are operating under inadequate discretionary budget caps that will not allow us to provide sufficient funding later in the appropriations process for programs that are important to middle class families and seniors, such as education and health care programs.

While this bill is not perfect, it does provide critical funding for our Nation's military construction projects and for our Nation's veterans, and I intend to support the final passage of this bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows:

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For necessary expenses for information technology systems and telecommunications support, including developmental information systems and operational information systems; for pay and associated costs; and for the capital asset acquisition of information technology systems, including management and related contractual costs of said acquisitions, including contractual costs associated with operations authorized by section 3109 of title 5, United States Code, $3,683,344,000, plus reimbursements: *Provided*, That $1,026,400,000 shall be for pay and associated costs, of which not to exceed $30,792,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2015: *Provided further*, That $2,161,653,000 shall be for operations and maintenance, of which not to exceed $151,316,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2015: *Provided further*, That $495,291,000 shall be for information technology systems development, modernization, and enhancement, and shall remain available until September 30, 2015: *Provided further*, That amounts made available for information technology systems development, modernization, and enhancement may not be obligated or expended until the Secretary of Veterans Affairs or the Chief Information Officer of the Department of Veterans Affairs submits to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress a certification of the amounts, in parts or in full, to be obligated and expended for each development project: *Provided further*, That amounts made available for salaries and expenses, operations and maintenance, and information technology systems development, modernization, and enhancement may be transferred among the three sub-accounts after the Secretary of Veterans Affairs requests from the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress the authority to make the transfer and an approval is issued: *Provided further*, That amounts made available for the ''Information Technology Systems'' account for development, modernization, and enhancement may be transferred among projects or to newly defined projects: *Provided further*, That no project may be increased or decreased by more than $1,000,000 of cost prior to submitting a request to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress to make the transfer and an approval is issued, or absent a response, a period of 30 days has elapsed: *Provided further*, That none of the funds made available under this Act may be obligated or expended for the development or procurement of an electronic health record unless the health record will be a single, joint, common, integrated health record with an open architecture that will be used by both the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense: *Provided further*, That funds made available for such an integrated electronic health record may not be obligated or expended until the Secretaries of the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs jointly certify in writing to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress that the proposed integrated electronic health record will be the sole electronic health record system used by each Department and that it meets the requirements established in the previous proviso: *Provided further*, That not more than 25 percent of the funds made available for the integrated electronic health record may be obligated or expended until: (1) the Government Accountability Office confirms to the Committees, after reviewing the Secretaries' certification, that the proposed integrated electronic health record system does in fact meet the requirements established in this paragraph; and (2) the Secretaries of the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs submit to the Committees, and such Committees approve, a plan for expenditure that: (A) defines the budget and cost baseline for development and procurement of the integrated electronic health record; (B) identifies the deployment timeline for the system for both Departments and the performance benchmarks for deployment; and (C) identifies annual and total spending on such efforts for each Department: *Provided further*, That the funds made available under this heading for information technology systems development, modernization, and enhancement, shall be for the projects, and in the amounts, specified under this heading in the report accompanying this Act.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. CULBERSON

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent that the amendment be considered as read.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 35, line 11, strike ''Act''and insert ''heading''.

Page 35, line 13, strike ''unless'' and all that follows through ''Department:'' on page 36, line 16, and insert the following: ''except for a health record as set forth in the Joint Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2013-2015 of the Department of Veteran Affairs and Department of Defense, Joint Executive Council:''.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

□ 1650

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Chairman, I rise today with an amendment to clarify the House Appropriations Subcommittee's intent with regard to the integrated electronic health records system that we want the Department of Defense and Veterans Affairs to adopt.

This issue necessarily involves two appropriation subcommittees and two authorizing committees, Armed Services and Veterans' Affairs. We have talked with our friends on the authorizing committees and agree that the best way forward is for language to be included in each one of these bills that conveys a unified position.

I am confident that all parties in Congress and in the Department of Defense and Veterans Affairs share the same goal of having an integrated, unified health record.

My amendment removes some of the specificity of the original House language, but retains the reference point of an integrated record. This allows all sides to continue to spend more time to develop mutually acceptable language that we can carry in the National Defense Authorization Act and other legislation as we move forward with this bill as well, which clearly defines the intent of Congress that we will have an integrated record with its capability of helping our men and women in uniform when they move out of active service into the VA.

We are unshakeable in our commitment, as a Congress, to make certain that we solve this problem as quickly as humanly possible. I can tell you that the subcommittee, the committees of jurisdiction, the entire Congress is tired of the delays. We're tired of postponement. We're tired of disputes. This has to be solved immediately.

And I'm going to continue to work aggressively with our colleagues on the authorizing committee and with our good friends on the Defense Appropriation Subcommittee, all of us together, arm-in-arm, regardless of party, from all parts of the country, to make sure that we get one single, unified, integrated electronic medical record as fast as humanly possible.

So that's the reason I offer this amendment today, and I urge its support.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I believe that this amendment reflects the apparent obstruction of the Department of Defense on the electronic health record issue; and let me explain to you how we got here.

The 2008 National Defense Authorization Act directed the two Departments to develop a single electronic health

record system that will follow a servicemember from the time he or she enlisted in the military to the time they exited the VA care, by 2009.

However, after a number of management, oversight, and planning snags and snafus, and the cost estimates that grew from $4 billion to now nearly $12 billion, former Defense Secretary Leon Panetta and VA Secretary Eric Shinseki decided to alter their plans to focus on making that current electronic health record system more interoperable.

Just recently, Secretary Hagel, the Department of Defense, made the decision to modernize the Defense Department's electronic health record through purchase of commercial software. A recent memo released by the Department of Defense makes no reference to the integrated electronic health records; and it seems more of the same go-it-alone, stovepipe approach that has been favored by the Pentagon in the past.

In addition to the Department of Defense's memo, it also made no mention of the congressionally mandated role of the Interagency Program Office set up to run the integrated electronic health records project and staffed by more than 300 personnel from both Departments.

Finally, by going the commercial route, I believe the Department of Defense has opened up its latest electronic health records scheme to protest and subsequent delays.

With all these issues I laid out, some still want to think that the Department of Defense should be free to do whatever it pleases.

Mr. Chairman, paper is a problem, and we cannot keep letting servicemembers leave the Department of Defense with paper records. Please know that this situation will be addressed further as we move through the process.

And we support the gentleman's amendment. I think it is timely. I think it is necessary.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CULBERSON).

The amendment was agreed to.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Virginia is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk that would strike section 413 of this bill.

First of all, I have great respect, even affection, for the chairman of the subcommittee and the ranking member, and their exemplary staff, Mr. Washington. But section 413 of this bill, Mr. Chairman, would prohibit funds to construct, renovate, or expand any facility in the U.S. for the purposes of housing Guantanamo detainees.

According to a recent GAO report, there are prisons in the U.S. that could hold the Guantanamo detainees as safely and securely as the security conditions at the Guantanamo facility. The Department of Defense and the Department of Justice both operate detention facilities comparable to Guantanamo Bay and currently hold convicted terrorists and other felons connected to terrorism.

The GAO report, however, noted that existing facilities would need to be slightly modified, and current inmates would need to be relocated perhaps. But this would prohibit that.

I can't imagine that there are Members of this Chamber that believe that indefinitely detaining individuals at Guantanamo Bay for the rest of their lives, without access to a fair trial, comports with American standards of justice.

Now, first of all, a few words about Gitmo itself. Eighty-six percent of the Guantanamo detainees were captured in exchange for a bounty. A majority of these young men never actually committed an act of violence against the United States or its allies. Five percent were perhaps members of al Qaeda. So let's assume that 5 percent were, because there seems to be some indication that they were; but 95 percent were not.

From a national security standpoint, Gitmo has been too easily used as a rallying cry and a recruitment tool for our enemies. For that reason, its continued existence really is a direct threat to our national security.

Language such as is in this bill has constrained the President's options for closing this detention facility. President Obama still retains the authority to significantly decrease the prison's population, though, should he choose to do so. He could waive the certification requirements if receiving countries take actions to substantially mitigate the risk that a detainee were to re-engage in terrorism. That would clear the release of at least 86 detainees, about half of the entire prison's population.

Since Guantanamo was opened, the statistics indicate that about 13 percent may have become recidivists. But less than 5 percent of President Obama's transfers have.

Military strategy often dictates that by releasing lower-threat detainees, you mitigate the risk of radicalizing more. We released many foot soldiers in Afghanistan who are far worse than the Guantanamo detainees.

But what is most relevant to this bill's language is that 46 detainees have been designated for indefinite detention, either because they are too dangerous to release, or they can't be charged in a court due to evidentiary standards.

The President did establish a Periodic Review Board, but the panel has never been formed. Frankly, the President should do that.

But those detainees that cannot be transferred, I think, should be tried in courts here in the United States. The problem is, given the limitation that Congress has wrongly placed on such transfers, that can't be done today, notwithstanding the fact that our Federal courts have tried more than 1,000 terrorists.

The United States already holds 373 individuals convicted of terrorism in 98 facilities across the country. There are six Department of Defense facilities where Guantanamo detainees could be held in the United States that are currently at a combined 48 percent capacity. In other words, less than half the capacity is being used.

Believing that they will never leave Cuba, more than 100 are protesting their indefinite detention the only way that they can, with a hunger strike. Thirty-seven detainees are currently being tube-fed. It's a procedure that requires a lubricated plastic tube to be inserted down a detainee's nose and into their stomach while they're being restrained. They are then held in a chair for about 2 hours to force them to digest the liquid.

The fact is that the President can't do what he needs to do as long as section 413 remains in this bill, and that's why my amendment would remove this restriction.

I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1700

Mr. VARGAS. I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. VARGAS. Today, I rise in support of the efforts to address the increasing backlog of veterans disability claims in the FY 2014 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs appropriations bill. We must do everything in our power to ensure that the men and women who have served honorably in the armed services receive the full benefits they have earned protecting our Nation and our freedoms abroad. It is a shame that our veterans have to wait an average of 321 days to receive a response from the Department of Veterans Affairs after filing a claim.

In my district, I have the privilege of representing the southern portion of San Diego County and all of Imperial County in California. San Diego is the home to the third-largest veteran resident population in the Nation. Current processing times have tripled in the area since 2009, with over 28,500 pending disability claims being processed and an average wait time of 334 days.

As we continue to wind down our operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, more and more men and women will be seeking the benefits they are owed. We must continue to find workable solutions for these heroes and their families. This bill presented today provides more than $290 million to help the VA meet its goal of ending its disability claim backlog by 2015. In order to meet this deadline, funds will be provided for the digital scanning of health and benefit files and for the development of a

paperless process claim system. Additionally, $344 million will be appropriated to the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs to implement a single, integrated health record system used by both Departments. Both of these measures are needed to speed up the processing and to modernize our record-keeping system.

We must also hold the VA accountable for its results, and I am glad to see that the monthly reporting requirements on the process of the expedited claims initiative for veterans is included in this bill.

During the final throes of the Civil War, President Lincoln affirmed the government's obligation to care for those injured during the war and to provide for the families of those who perished on the battlefield. With the commitment ''to care for him, who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphan,'' President Lincoln laid the foundation for our moral responsibility to our Nation's veterans. Let's continue to work in this tradition by reducing the backlog and the wait times of disability claims for the veterans and their families across our Nation.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent that the remainder of the bill through page 59, line 18, be considered as read, printed in the RECORD, and open to amendment at any point.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

The text of that portion of the bill is as follows:

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

For necessary expenses of the Office of Inspector General, to include information technology, in carrying out the provisions of the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.), $116,411,000, of which $6,000,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2015.

CONSTRUCTION, MAJOR PROJECTS

For constructing, altering, extending, and improving any of the facilities, including parking projects, under the jurisdiction or for the use of the Department of Veterans Affairs, or for any of the purposes set forth in sections 316, 2404, 2406, and chapter 81 of title 38, United States Code, not otherwise provided for, including planning, architectural and engineering services, construction management services, maintenance or guarantee period services costs associated with equipment guarantees provided under the project, services of claims analysts, offsite utility and storm drainage system construction costs, and site acquisition, where the estimated cost of a project is more than the amount set forth in section 8104(a)(3)(A) of title 38, United States Code, or where funds for a project were made available in a previous major project appropriation, $342,130,000, of which $322,130,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2018, and of which $20,000,000 shall remain available until expended: *Provided further*, That except for advance planning activities, including needs assessments which may or may not lead to capital investments, and other capital asset management related activities, including portfolio development and management activities, and investment strategy studies funded through the advance planning fund and the planning and design activities funded through the design fund, including needs assessments which may or may not lead to capital investments, and salaries and associated costs of the resident engineers who oversee those capital investments funded through this account, and funds provided for the purchase of land for the National Cemetery Administration through the land acquisition line item, none of the funds made available under this heading shall be used for any project which has not been approved by the Congress in the budgetary process: *Provided further*, That funds made available under this heading for fiscal year 2014, for each approved project shall be obligated: (1) by the awarding of a construction documents contract by September 30, 2014; and (2) by the awarding of a construction contract by September 30, 2015: *Provided further*, That the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall promptly submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress a written report on any approved major construction project for which obligations are not incurred within the time limitations established above.

CONSTRUCTION, MINOR PROJECTS

For constructing, altering, extending, and improving any of the facilities, including parking projects, under the jurisdiction or for the use of the Department of Veterans Affairs, including planning and assessments of needs which may lead to capital investments, architectural and engineering services, maintenance or guarantee period services costs associated with equipment guarantees provided under the project, services of claims analysts, offsite utility and storm drainage system construction costs, and site acquisition, or for any of the purposes set forth in sections 316, 2404, 2406, and chapter 81 of title 38, United States Code, not otherwise provided for, where the estimated cost of a project is equal to or less than the amount set forth in section 8104(a)(3)(A) of title 38, United States Code, $714,870,000, to remain available until September 30, 2018, along with unobligated balances of previous ''Construction, Minor Projects'' appropriations which are hereby made available for any project where the estimated cost is equal to or less than the amount set forth in such section: *Provided*, That funds made available under this heading shall be for: (1) repairs to any of the nonmedical facilities under the jurisdiction or for the use of the Department which are necessary because of loss or damage caused by any natural disaster or catastrophe; and (2) temporary measures necessary to prevent or to minimize further loss by such causes.

GRANTS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF STATE EXTENDED CARE FACILITIES

For grants to assist States to acquire or construct State nursing home and domiciliary facilities and to remodel, modify, or alter existing hospital, nursing home, and domiciliary facilities in State homes, for furnishing care to veterans as authorized by sections 8131 through 8137 of title 38, United States Code, $82,650,000, to remain available until expended.

GRANTS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF VETERANS CEMETERIES

For grants to assist States and tribal organizations in establishing, expanding, or improving veterans cemeteries as authorized by section 2408 of title 38, United States Code, $44,650,000, to remain available until expended.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 201. Any appropriation for fiscal year 2014 for ''Compensation and Pensions'', ''Readjustment Benefits'', and ''Veterans Insurance and Indemnities'' may be transferred as necessary to any other of the mentioned appropriations: *Provided*, That before a transfer may take place, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall request from the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress the authority to make the transfer and such Committees issue an approval, or absent a response, a period of 30 days has elapsed.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 202. Amounts made available for the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2014, in this Act or any other Act, under the ''Medical Services'', ''Medical Support and Compliance'', and ''Medical Facilities'' accounts may be transferred among the accounts: *Provided*, That any transfers between the ''Medical Services'' and ''Medical Support and Compliance'' accounts of 1 percent or less of the total amount appropriated to the account in this or any other Act may take place subject to notification from the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the amount and purpose of the transfer: *Provided further*, That any transfers between the ''Medical Services'' and ''Medical Support and Compliance'' accounts in excess of 1 percent, or exceeding the cumulative 1 percent for the fiscal year, may take place only after the Secretary requests from the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress the authority to make the transfer and an approval is issued: *Provided further*, That any transfers to or from the ''Medical Facilities'' account may take place only after the Secretary requests from the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress the authority to make the transfer and an approval is issued.

SEC. 203. Appropriations available in this title for salaries and expenses shall be available for services authorized by section 3109 of title 5, United States Code; hire of passenger motor vehicles; lease of a facility or land or both; and uniforms or allowances therefore, as authorized by sections 5901 through 5902 of title 5, United States Code.

SEC. 204. No appropriations in this title (except the appropriations for ''Construction, Major Projects'' and ''Construction, Minor Projects'') shall be available for the purchase of any site for or toward the construction of any new hospital or home.

SEC. 205. No appropriations in this title shall be available for hospitalization or examination of any persons (except beneficiaries entitled to such hospitalization or examination under the laws providing such benefits to veterans, and persons receiving such treatment under sections 7901 through 7904 of title 5, United States Code, or the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.)), unless reimbursement of the cost of such hospitalization or examination is made to the ''Medical Services'' account at such rates as may be fixed by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

SEC. 206. Appropriations available in this title for ''Compensation and Pensions'', ''Readjustment Benefits'', and ''Veterans Insurance and Indemnities'' shall be available for payment of prior year accrued obligations required to be recorded by law against the corresponding prior year accounts within the last quarter of fiscal year 2013.

SEC. 207. Appropriations available in this title shall be available to pay prior year obligations of corresponding prior year appropriations accounts resulting from sections 3328(a), 3334, and 3712(a) of title 31, United States Code, except that if such obligations are from trust fund accounts they shall be payable only from ''Compensation and Pensions''.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 208. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, during fiscal year 2014, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall, from the National Service Life Insurance Fund under section 1920 of title 38, United States Code, the Veterans' Special Life Insurance Fund under section 1923 of title 38, United States Code, and the United States Government Life Insurance Fund under section 1955 of title 38, United States Code, reimburse the ''General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration'' and ''Information Technology Systems'' accounts for the cost of administration of the insurance programs financed through those accounts: *Provided*, That reimbursement shall be made only from the surplus earnings accumulated in such an insurance program during fiscal year 2014 that are available for dividends in that program after claims have been paid and actuarially determined reserves have been set aside: *Provided further*, That if the cost of administration of such an insurance program exceeds the amount of surplus earnings accumulated in that program, reimbursement shall be made only to the extent of such surplus earnings: *Provided further*, That the Secretary shall determine the cost of administration for fiscal year 2014 which is properly allocable to the provision of each such insurance program and to the provision of any total disability income insurance included in that insurance program.

SEC. 209. Amounts deducted from enhanced-use lease proceeds to reimburse an account for expenses incurred by that account during a prior fiscal year for providing enhanced-use lease services, may be obligated during the fiscal year in which the proceeds are received.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 210. Funds available in this title or funds for salaries and other administrative expenses shall also be available to reimburse the Office of Resolution Management of the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Office of Employment Discrimination Complaint Adjudication under section 319 of title 38, United States Code, for all services provided at rates which will recover actual costs but not exceed $42,904,000 for the Office of Resolution Management and $3,360,000 for the Office of Employment and Discrimination Complaint Adjudication: *Provided*, That payments may be made in advance for services to be furnished based on estimated costs: *Provided further*, That amounts received shall be credited to the ''General Administration'' and ''Information Technology Systems'' accounts for use by the office that provided the service.

SEC. 211. No appropriations in this title shall be available to enter into any new lease of real property if the estimated annual rental cost is more than $1,000,000, unless the Secretary submits a report which the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress approve within 30 days following the date on which the report is received.

SEC. 212. No funds of the Department of Veterans Affairs shall be available for hospital care, nursing home care, or medical services provided to any person under chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code, for a non-service-connected disability described in section 1729(a)(2) of such title, unless that person has disclosed to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in such form as the Secretary may require, current, accurate third-party reimbursement information for purposes of section 1729 of such title: *Provided*, That the Secretary may recover, in the same manner as any other debt due the United States, the reasonable charges for such care or services from any person who does not make such disclosure as required: *Provided further*, That any amounts so recovered for care or services provided in a prior fiscal year may be obligated by the Secretary during the fiscal year in which amounts are received.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 213. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, proceeds or revenues derived from enhanced-use leasing activities (including disposal) may be deposited into the ''Construction, Major Projects'' and ''Construction, Minor Projects'' accounts and be used for construction (including site acquisition and disposition), alterations, and improvements of any medical facility under the jurisdiction or for the use of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Such sums as realized are in addition to the amount provided for in ''Construction, Major Projects'' and ''Construction, Minor Projects''.

SEC. 214. Amounts made available under ''Medical Services'' are available—

(1) for furnishing recreational facilities, supplies, and equipment; and

(2) for funeral expenses, burial expenses, and other expenses incidental to funerals and burials for beneficiaries receiving care in the Department.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 215. Such sums as may be deposited to the Medical Care Collections Fund pursuant to section 1729A of title 38, United States Code, may be transferred to ''Medical Services'', to remain available until expended for the purposes of that account.

SEC. 216. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may enter into agreements with Indian tribes and tribal organizations which are party to the Alaska Native Health Compact with the Indian Health Service, and Indian tribes and tribal organizations serving rural Alaska which have entered into contracts with the Indian Health Service under the Indian Self Determination and Educational Assistance Act, to provide healthcare, including behavioral health and dental care. The Secretary shall require participating veterans and facilities to comply with all appropriate rules and regulations, as established by the Secretary. The term ''rural Alaska'' shall mean those lands sited within the external boundaries of the Alaska Native regions specified in sections 7(a)(1)–(4) and (7)–(12) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, as amended (43 U.S.C. 1606), and those lands within the Alaska Native regions specified in sections 7(a)(5) and 7(a)(6) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, as amended (43 U.S.C. 1606), which are not within the boundaries of the Municipality of Anchorage, the Fairbanks North Star Borough, the Kenai Peninsula Borough or the Matanuska Susitna Borough.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 217. Such sums as may be deposited to the Department of Veterans Affairs Capital Asset Fund pursuant to section 8118 of title 38, United States Code, may be transferred to the ''Construction, Major Projects'' and ''Construction, Minor Projects'' accounts, to remain available until expended for the purposes of these accounts.

SEC. 218. None of the funds made available in this title may be used to implement any policy prohibiting the Directors of the Veterans Integrated Services Networks from conducting outreach or marketing to enroll new veterans within their respective Networks.

SEC. 219. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress a quarterly report on the financial status of the Veterans Health Administration.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 220. Amounts made available under the ''Medical Services'', ''Medical Support and Compliance'', ''Medical Facilities'', ''General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration'', ''General Administration'', and ''National Cemetery Administration'' accounts for fiscal year 2014 may be transferred to or from the ''Information Technology Systems'' account: *Provided*, That before a transfer may take place, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall request from the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress the authority to make the transfer and an approval is issued.

SEC. 221. Of the amounts made available to the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2014, in this Act or any other Act, under the ''Medical Facilities'' account for nonrecurring maintenance, not more than 20 percent of the funds made available shall be obligated during the last 2 months of that fiscal year: *Provided*, That the Secretary may waive this requirement after providing written notice to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 222. Of the amounts appropriated to the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2014 for ''Medical Services'', ''Medical Support and Compliance'', ''Medical Facilities'', ''Construction, Minor Projects'', and ''Information Technology Systems'', up to $254,257,000, plus reimbursements, may be transferred to the Joint Department of Defense-Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Facility Demonstration Fund, established by section 1704 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 (Public Law 111–84; 123 Stat. 3571) and may be used for operation of the facilities designated as combined Federal medical facilities as described by section 706 of the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009 (Public Law 110–417; 122 Stat. 4500): *Provided*, That additional funds may be transferred from accounts designated in this section to the Joint Department of Defense-Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Facility Demonstration Fund upon written notification by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 223. Such sums as may be deposited to the Medical Care Collections Fund pursuant to section 1729A of title 38, United States Code, for health care provided at facilities designated as combined Federal medical facilities as described by section 706 of the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009 (Public Law 110–417; 122 Stat. 4500) shall also be available: (1) for transfer to the Joint Department of Defense-Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Facility Demonstration Fund, established by section 1704 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 (Public Law 111–84; 123 Stat. 3571); and (2) for operations of the facilities designated as combined Federal medical facilities as described by section 706 of the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009 (Public Law 110–417; 122 Stat. 4500).

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 224. Of the amounts available in this title for ''Medical Services'', ''Medical Support and Compliance'', and ''Medical Facilities'', a minimum of $15,000,000, shall be transferred to the DOD–VA Health Care Sharing Incentive Fund, as authorized by section 8111(d) of title 38, United States Code, to remain available until expended, for any purpose authorized by section 8111 of title 38, United States Code.

(INCLUDING RESCISSIONS OF FUNDS)

SEC. 225. (a) Of the discretionary funds made available to the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2014, the following amounts which became available on

October 1, 2013, are hereby rescinded from the following accounts in the amounts specified:

(1) ''Department of Veterans Affairs, Medical Services'', $1,400,000,000.

(2) ''Department of Veterans Affairs, Medical Support and Compliance'', $100,000,000.

(3) ''Department of Veterans Affairs, Medical Facilities'', $250,000,000.

(b) In addition to amounts provided elsewhere in this Act, an additional amount is appropriated to the following accounts in the amounts specified to remain available until September 30, 2015:

(1) ''Department of Veterans Affairs, Medical Services'', $1,400,000,000.

(2) ''Department of Veterans Affairs, Medical Support and Compliance'', $100,000,000.

(3) ''Department of Veterans Affairs, Medical Facilities'', $250,000,000.

SEC. 226. The Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs shall notify the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of all bid savings in major construction projects that total at least $5,000,000, or 5 percent of the programmed amount of the project, whichever is less: *Provided*, That such notification shall occur within 14 days of a contract identifying the programmed amount: *Provided further*, That the Secretary shall notify the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress 14 days prior to the obligation of such bid savings and shall describe the anticipated use of such savings.

SEC. 227. The scope of work for a project included in ''Construction, Major Projects'' may not be increased above the scope specified for that project in the original justification data provided to the Congress as part of the request for appropriations.

SEC. 228. The Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs shall provide on a quarterly basis to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress notification of any single national outreach and awareness marketing campaign in which obligations exceed $2,000,000.

SEC. 229. The Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress a reprogramming request if at any point during fiscal year 2014, the funding allocated for a medical care initiative identified in the fiscal year 2014 expenditure plan is adjusted by more than $25,000,000 from the allocation shown in the corresponding congressional budget justification. Such a reprogramming request may go forward only if the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress approve the request or if a period of 14 days has elapsed.

(INCLUDING RESCISSION OF FUNDS)

SEC. 230. Discretionary fiscal year 2014 appropriations in this title are hereby reduced by $24,000,000: *Provided*, That the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall allocate this reduction within the accounts to which the reduction is applied: *Provided further*, That $156,000,000 are hereby rescinded from the fiscal year 2014 funds appropriated in title II of division E of Public Law 113-6 for ''Department of Veterans Affairs, Medical Services'', ''Department of Veterans Affairs, Medical Support and Compliance'', and ''Department of Veterans Affairs, Medical Facilities'': *Provided further*, That the Secretary shall allocate this rescission among the three accounts.

TITLE III

RELATED AGENCIES

AMERICAN BATTLE MONUMENTS COMMISSION

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For necessary expenses, not otherwise provided for, of the American Battle Monuments Commission, including the acquisition of land or interest in land in foreign countries; purchases and repair of uniforms for caretakers of national cemeteries and monuments outside of the United States and its territories and possessions; rent of office and garage space in foreign countries; purchase (one-for-one replacement basis only) and hire of passenger motor vehicles; not to exceed $7,500 for official reception and representation expenses; and insurance of official motor vehicles in foreign countries, when required by law of such countries, $57,980,000, to remain available until expended.

FOREIGN CURRENCY FLUCTUATIONS ACCOUNT

For necessary expenses, not otherwise provided for, of the American Battle Monuments Commission, such sums as may be necessary, to remain available until expended, for purposes authorized by section 2109 of title 36, United States Code.

UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR VETERANS CLAIMS

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For necessary expenses for the operation of the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims as authorized by sections 7251 through 7298 of title 38, United States Code, $35,272,000: *Provided*, That $2,500,000 shall be available for the purpose of providing financial assistance as described, and in accordance with the process and reporting procedures set forth, under this heading in Public Law 102–229.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE—CIVIL

CEMETERIAL EXPENSES, ARMY

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For necessary expenses, as authorized by law, for maintenance, operation, and improvement of Arlington National Cemetery and Soldiers' and Airmen's Home National Cemetery, including the purchase or lease of passenger motor vehicles for replacement on a one-for-one basis only, and not to exceed $1,000 for official reception and representation expenses, $70,685,000. In addition, such sums as may be necessary for parking maintenance, repairs and replacement, to be derived from the ''Lease of Department of Defense Real Property for Defense Agencies'' account.

ARMED FORCES RETIREMENT HOME

TRUST FUND

For expenses necessary for the Armed Forces Retirement Home to operate and maintain the Armed Forces Retirement Home—Washington, District of Columbia, and the Armed Forces Retirement Home—Gulfport, Mississippi, to be paid from funds available in the Armed Forces Retirement Home Trust Fund, $67,400,000, of which $1,000,000 shall remain available until expended for construction and renovation of the physical plants at the Armed Forces Retirement Home—Washington, District of Columbia, and the Armed Forces Retirement Home—Gulfport, Mississippi.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISION

SEC. 301. Funds appropriated in this Act under the heading ''Department of Defense—Civil, Cemeterial Expenses, Army'', may be provided to Arlington County, Virginia, for the relocation of the federally owned water main at Arlington National Cemetery, making additional land available for ground burials.

TITLE IV

GENERAL PROVISIONS

SEC. 401. No part of any appropriation contained in this Act shall remain available for obligation beyond the current fiscal year unless expressly so provided herein.

SEC. 402. None of the funds made available in this Act may be used for any program, project, or activity, when it is made known to the Federal entity or official to which the funds are made available that the program, project, or activity is not in compliance with any Federal law relating to risk assessment, the protection of private property rights, or unfunded mandates.

SEC. 403. No part of any funds appropriated in this Act shall be used by an agency of the executive branch, other than for normal and recognized executive-legislative relationships, for publicity or propaganda purposes, and for the preparation, distribution, or use of any kit, pamphlet, booklet, publication, radio, television, or film presentation designed to support or defeat legislation pending before Congress, except in presentation to Congress itself.

SEC. 404. All departments and agencies funded under this Act are encouraged, within the limits of the existing statutory authorities and funding, to expand their use of ''E-Commerce'' technologies and procedures in the conduct of their business practices and public service activities.

SEC. 405. Unless stated otherwise, all reports and notifications required by this Act shall be submitted to the Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies of the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies of the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate.

SEC. 406. None of the funds made available in this Act may be transferred to any department, agency, or instrumentality of the United States Government except pursuant to a transfer made by, or transfer authority provided in, this or any other appropriations Act.

SEC. 407. None of the funds made available in this Act may be used for a project or program named for an individual serving as a Member, Delegate, or Resident Commissioner of the United States House of Representatives.

SEC. 408. (a) Any agency receiving funds made available in this Act, shall, subject to subsections (b) and (c), post on the public website of that agency any report required to be submitted by the Congress in this or any other Act, upon the determination by the head of the agency that it shall serve the national interest.

(b) Subsection (a) shall not apply to a report if—

(1) the public posting of the report compromises national security; or

(2) the report contains confidential or proprietary information.

(c) The head of the agency posting such report shall do so only after such report has been made available to the requesting Committee or Committees of Congress for no less than 45 days.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows:

SEC. 409. (a) None of the funds made available in this Act may be used to maintain or establish a computer network unless such network blocks the viewing, downloading, and exchanging of pornography.

(b) Nothing in subsection (a) shall limit the use of funds necessary for any Federal, State, tribal, or local law enforcement agency or any other entity carrying out criminal investigations, prosecution, or adjudication activities.

SEC. 410. None of the funds made available in this Act may be distributed to the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) or its subsidiaries or successors.

SEC. 411. None of the funds made available in this Act may be used by an agency of the

executive branch to exercise the power of eminent domain (to take the private property for public use) without the payment of just compensation.

SEC. 412. None of the funds made available in this Act may be used by an agency of the executive branch to pay for first-class travel by an employee of the agency in contravention of sections 301–10.122 through 301–10.124 of title 41, Code of Federal Regulations.

SEC. 413. (a) IN GENERAL.—None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available to the Department of Defense in this Act may be used to construct, renovate, or expand any facility in the United States, its territories, or possessions to house any individual detained at United States Naval Station, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, for the purposes of detention or imprisonment in the custody or under the control of the Department of Defense.

(b) The prohibition in subsection (a) shall not apply to any modification of facilities at United States Naval Station, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

(c) An individual described in this subsection is any individual who, as of June 24, 2009, is located at United States Naval Station, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and who—

(1) is not a citizen of the United States or a member of the Armed Forces of the United States; and

(2) is—

(A) in the custody or under the effective control of the Department of Defense; or

(B) otherwise under detention at United States Naval Station, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. MORAN

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Strike section 413.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Virginia is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Chairman, section 413 prohibits any funds, no matter how small they might be, to renovate or expand any facility in the U.S. for the purposes of housing Guantanamo detainees. The fact is that the Department of Defense does have six facilities where Guantanamo Bay detainees could be held in the United States. Those facilities are currently operating at only 48 percent capacity.

Mr. Chairman, if we were to look deeply into this issue of detention at Guantanamo Bay, we would conclude: number one, that this detention facility doesn't meet the standards of justice that our American jurisprudence system demands; number two, the vast majority of people at Guantanamo Bay should have been released. Even the Bush Administration recognized by their actions, that the vast majority of the 779 people that were put there should never have been detained, because they released most of them; number three, the best place for them to be detained and then tried is in the United States; and number four, the continuance of the Guantanamo Bay facility represents an immediate security threat to the United States because it is a rallying cry and a recruitment tool for our enemies.

Right now, there are more than a hundred detainees that are protesting what appears to be an indefinite detention the only way they can—through hunger strikes. Thirty-seven of them are being tube-fed through their noses into their stomach. They're held for about 2 hours to make sure that this liquid stuff is digested.

Guantanamo has become an immediate humanitarian crisis. It needs to be addressed urgently because the rest of the world can't understand why we don't do the right thing by those detainees who still are at Guantanamo Bay, whom we have cleared. In fact, the Bush administration cleared them for release because they had no evidence on them. President Obama has asked the Congress to lift restrictions on detainee transfers. He's asked DOD to identify a site in the United States for military commissions.

□ 1710

They will appoint a senior envoy charged with transferring detainees to third countries and he's got to lift the restriction on transfers to Yemen. He's going to staff the periodic review board for those that cannot be transferred. I think he should use the certification and waiver provisions in the National Defense Authorization Act to transfer detainees from Guantanamo beginning with the reported 86 detainees already cleared for transfer.

But he can't do what he needs to do for our national security as long as the language of section 413 is in this bill. That's why my amendment would remove this restriction. What we're doing does not comport with America's system of justice or with fairness. And as I say, I believe it's a direct threat to our national security.

So, Mr. Chairman, I would urge that we remove this language by voting for my amendment. We have Department of Defense facilities, they're being underused in the United States, and that's the way that we could clear up a situation that we never should have created in the first place.

At this point—well, can I reserve time in order to respond to Mr. CULBERSON?

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman may not reserve time. Does the gentleman yield back?

Mr. MORAN. I suspected not. So at this point I will yield back, and I'm anxious to hear from the chairman of the subcommittee.

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong opposition to the gentleman's amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Chairman, this language is in the bill because it has strong, bipartisan support. The American people do not want these terrorists, these criminals, captured either on battlefields overseas or who have sworn to kill innocent American men, women and children housed in American prisons.

In the Second World War, Nazi soldiers—saboteurs—landed on Long Island and on the beaches of Florida carrying explosives with the intent of killing innocent Americans. Franklin Roosevelt, as President, when they were captured, they were held and tried in the military, and within 90 days they were executed. The prisoners at Guantanamo Bay, quite frankly, are being treated much more leniently than I think they should be, than most Americans think they should be.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in strenuous opposition to the gentleman's amendment. I'd like to, if I could, yield the remainder of my initial time in opposition to my good friend, the chairman of the Commerce, Justice, Science Subcommittee, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF).

Mr. WOLF. I rise in opposition to my good friend's—and we are good friends—amendment. Let me tell you why. One, at the outset, in the President's first term, an executive order declared the intention to close Guantanamo Bay and bring the detainees to the United States. That proposal was rejected by the Congress overwhelmingly on a bipartisan basis.

Similar language is carried in a Commerce, State, Justice bill on the subcommittee on which I serve. These provisions reflect a consensus of this and previous Congresses.

But let me tell you some of the real reasons why this is a bad and even, I would say, a dangerous amendment.

Several of these men who have been released from Guantanamo have gone back into the battlefield and have killed Americans. Secondly, Director Mueller, and I don't have the letter here, but I will give it to my friend, said this could have an impact on local jails, the locality of the jails. Do you remember the Blind Sheikh Rahman when Officer Pepe was stabbed in the eye with regard to an escape? To bring people like this into the United States could have an impact not only on the jail but also on the community.

To bring Khalid Sheikh Mohammed to the United States would cost roughly, if you recall, $250 million a year. Moussaoui, who was tried in the gentleman's district in Alexandria, it literally upset Alexandria, and if you take the same timeframe that Moussaoui was tried in, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed's trial would go on for 4 years, would cost $1 billion—$250 million a year.

Do you remember when this idea first came out, Mayor Bloomberg said nothing, and CHUCK SCHUMER said nothing, and then all of a sudden everything broke loose and Mayor Bloomberg came out against it and Senator SCHUMER came out against it.

Lastly, the Bureau of Prisons, we had to give Holder the ability to reprogram money because they were going to furlough prison guards. They were going to furlough prison guards. So to bring people like this in to put this stress on the Bureau of Prisons would be absolutely crazy.

Let me just debunk another thing. For people who say, and I heard the

President say it, that Guantanamo causes terrorism, Guantanamo Bay Prison was not there when 9/11 took place. The Blind Sheikh who was involved in trying to blow up the World Trade Center in 1993, there was no Guantanamo. It's a hoax to say that. What you say is not true. It's false. To say that Bin Laden and people like that, we're going to say, oh, well, the Congress and the administration they're going to close down Guantanamo, we're going to close down al Qaeda, we're going to close down all the terrorism, it just doesn't make any sense.

This is a bad amendment. The gentleman is a good friend, but it's a bad amendment, and it's a very dangerous amendment and it would cost a lot of money and, quite frankly, I think would endanger the locality.

If you vote for this amendment, you'd better be prepared. What locality wants to bring Khalid Sheikh Mohammed to their local neighborhood. What locality wants to bring Khalid Sheikh Mohammed to their county, to their State? I say none. I urge a ''no'' vote on the amendment.

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Chairman, I would just also say that bringing these terrorists in to the United States we would be giving them American constitutional rights, a very precious, very special privilege that is reserved for the people of the United States. These people should be tried in military court and treated as prisoners of war and the criminals and the cowards that they are. And I urge a ''no'' vote against the amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. I stand today also concerned about the policy on Guantanamo Bay detention facility. And as I listened to my colleague and as I consider the speech from the President last week, it is very, very clear that there needs to be additional debate on this subject. Also I understand that the House Armed Services Committee will be holding discussions on this very important issue in the coming days as they begin marking up the National Defense Authorization Act.

And so I say to my colleagues that this issue deserves a more vigorous debate but that this is not the proper venue to hold that debate. As I stated in my opening remarks today, this bill was crafted and brought to the floor as a result of bipartisan work and compromise due to the committee's commitment to our servicemembers, their families and to all of our veterans.

This is a deeply, deeply controversial issue that I believe requires much more in-depth discussion than we can have here today. And I respectfully submit that this appropriations bill is not the appropriate venue for discussion and action on this very, very controversial policy. Today is not the time, and this bill, I submit, is not the place.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MORAN).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Virginia will be postponed.

The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows:

SEC. 414. None of the funds made available in this Act may be used to execute a contract for goods or services, including construction services, where the contractor has not complied with Executive Order No. 12989.

SEC. 415. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to enter into a contract, memorandum of understanding, or cooperative agreement with, make a grant to, or provide a loan or loan guarantee to, any corporation that was convicted of a felony criminal violation under any Federal law within the preceding 24 months, where the awarding agency is aware of the conviction, unless the agency has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation and has made a determination that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government.

SEC. 416. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to enter into a contract, memorandum of understanding, or cooperative agreement with, make a grant to, or provide a loan or loan guarantee to, any corporation that has any unpaid Federal tax liability that has been assessed, for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability, where the awarding agency is aware of the unpaid tax liability, unless the agency has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation and has made a determination that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government.

SEC. 417. None of the funds made available in this Act may be used to wind down or otherwise alter the implementation of a program, project, or activity in anticipation of any change (including any elimination or reduction of funding) proposed in a budget request, until such proposed change is subsequently enacted in an appropriation Act.

SPENDING REDUCTION ACCOUNT

SEC. 418. The amount by which the applicable allocation of new budget authority made by the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives under section 302(b) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 exceeds the amount of proposed new budget authority is $0.

AMENDMENT NO. 2 OFFERED BY MR. FARR

Mr. FARR. I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. ____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to implement Veterans Health Administration directive 2011-004 regarding ''Access to clinical programs for veterans participating in State-approved marijuana programs''.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

□ 1720

Mr. FARR. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I have a very simple amendment. As most Members know, 19 States and the District of Colombia have enacted laws that provide for the legal access to medical marijuana. Two of those States provide access to marijuana for more than medicinal purposes.

In checking out the rules within the VA on the matter of medical marijuana, it turns out that there is a policy in force, which is called Directive 2011–004, that specifically ''prohibits VA providers from completing forms seeking recommendations or opinions regarding a veteran's participation in a State marijuana program.''

My amendment denies the VA any funds to implement that prohibition, thus freeing up the VA doctors to assist VA patients in accessing medical marijuana outside of the VA system. All this amendment does is make it possible for the VA doctors to provide medical advice to the VA patients on the relative pros and cons of medical marijuana if they want to have that discussion. For those doctors who wish to offer recommendations to VA patients on accessing medical marijuana, they are no longer prohibited from doing so.

Essentially, the VA order is a censorship in those 19 States and the District of Columbia saying that doctors can't even have this discussion, yet the civilians going to a civilian doctor can have that discussion. So what we're doing is removing the ability for the VA to enforce that provision thinking that that's fair.

This is a very controversial, I know, issue of medical marijuana, but in those States that have made it the law of that State, then veterans ought to be treated equally with civilian patients in being able to have access to the total array of applicable medical devices, including the use of medical marijuana.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Oregon is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I appreciate my colleague, Mr. FARR, bringing this forward. I agree with what he said, except for one item. And that is that somehow medical marijuana is intensely controversial. What we're finding is that with the American public it's no longer really that controversial. As he said, 20 jurisdictions, 19 States and the District of Columbia, have approved medical marijuana to be available to their citizens. Over 1 million Americans are people who are legally entitled to have the qualities of medical marijuana.

It has long been recognized that it has therapeutic values. They use it to deal with chronic paralyzing pain, the nausea associated with chemotherapy, symptoms of multiple sclerosis. There are many applications that are going to make a difference to our veterans dealing with traumatic brain injury or PTSD.

Now, it is ironic that when we are trying to have a veterans health system that deals with the total patient—and the committee just supported an amendment that I had earlier to help give them alternative therapies—that we would prohibit a VA doctor from even discussing a therapy that is perfectly legal in 20 jurisdictions.

What is the rationale here to prohibit the doctor from being able to have that conversation, forcing our veterans to go outside the system and incur additional costs? I think it is a misguided policy in the extreme.

We are in the process now where the majority of Americans think that marijuana should be legalized; and if you ask the question, ''Should we respect the decisions of States?'' that majority gets even bigger. Over 60 percent say the Federal Government ought not to interfere.

But here, the Veterans Administration is prohibited from giving candid advice to people in our system, people who could benefit, like the over 1 million legal medical marijuana patients. I think that's inappropriate. I think it's unfortunate. I think we should do everything we can to try and relieve the pain and suffering that our veterans are incurring; and if it means having a conversation with a VA doctor about something perfectly legal in their community, I think that's the least we could do.

I commend the gentleman for bringing the amendment forward, and I hope that the day will come when we provide this service to veterans who would like information about it.

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

The Acting CHAIR. Is there further debate on the amendment?

Mr. FARR. Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to withdraw the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. Without objection, the amendment is withdrawn.

There was no objection.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. KINGSTON

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title) insert the following:

SEC. ____. (a) None of the funds made available in this Act may be used to pay more than 75 percent of the salary of any senior Department of Veterans Affairs official during the period beginning on July 1, 2014, and ending on September 30, 2014, unless as of July 1, 2014, the percentage of disability compensation claims that are more than 125 days old is less than or equal to 40 percent.

(b) In this section, the term ''senior Department of Veterans Affairs official'' means the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and any Under Secretary or Assistant Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Georgia is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KINGSTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This bill provides $43.6 billion for medical treatment for the 6.5 million veterans today who use the VA. It increases funding for processes, such as the electronic health record system and the disability claims process, the paperless environment, and yet that's what we did last year and the year before.

Nonetheless, today, as we sit here, the VA has 865,265 claims in their backlog; 66½ percent of these claims have been pending for more than 125 days. The current claim to be processed, the current amount of time is 292 days, and some offices report some claims that have been pending for 450 days.

This is not acceptable. But every year we provide more money for the VA to process claims, and every year the backlog gets more.

So what this amendment does is it takes a different approach. It takes an approach that's used in the private sector on a regular basis for compensation. It says to the senior members of the VA that if they don't have the claims backlog reduced by 40 percent by next July, the senior leadership will have a pay cut of 25 percent. Mr. Chairman, this follows their own goal. All it says is that if you don't make your own goal, there will be a 25 percent pay reduction for the senior management of the VA.

I think everyone in Congress has a VA office with problems in their own district. In Decatur, Georgia, a VA hospital that serves 86,000 patients in the State of Georgia has a backlog of over 4,000—or 4,000 patients have fallen through the cracks. Three deaths occurred over the past 2 years when the VA lost track of mental health patients and referred it to a contractor while not keeping a close eye on them while they were supposed to be monitored.

□ 1730

One may have committed suicide because he could not see a doctor and had an overdose of his treatment. There are other atrocities that have happened in that one VA clinic. Again, Mr. Chairman, this is not adequate. This is not acceptable. For our veterans, we need to treat them better.

I am a member of the Armed Services Committee and often say that the American soldier needs to have the best equipment and the best training that's out there because we want them to fight and win wars; but we also want them to come home and live normal lives, so we need to make sure that our treatment of the American military does not end in a theater of war but continues throughout the rest of their lives. As the claims or as the injuries that they incurred while rendering service to the Nation haunt them for the rest of their lives, we need to be there for them for their medical treatment.

This amendment sends a very strong signal to the VA that we are serious that this backlog will be cleaned up and that, if not, there will be a price to pay.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of the gentleman's amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CULBERSON. I believe Mr. KINGSTON has correctly identified the problem in the private sector. If you don't meet a performance goal, you're going to suffer a cut in pay. You can be discharged from your job. Mr. KINGSTON correctly points out that the VA set their own standard. They have set this goal of eliminating the backlog by the year 2015. Mr. KINGSTON's amendment simply says that, if they don't meet their own standard—their own yardstick, a measurement of success in reducing the backlog—that there will be a pay cut of 25 percent to the senior leadership that is responsible for setting this goal, that's responsible for leading the VA and executing this goal.

Congress is, frankly, tired of the delays, tired of the excuses, and we want our veterans to receive what they have earned. We want to be sure that they are given compensation for the injuries they suffered in the course of service to the United States of America, so I urge the adoption of Mr. KINGSTON's amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. I could not agree more with the gentleman from Georgia that the claims backlog is absolutely unacceptable.

I think the chairman of the full Appropriations Committee, the ranking member of the full Appropriations Committee, the chairman of our subcommittee, and yours truly as the ranking member of the subcommittee have met with and have criticized and have done everything that we could possibly do to try to bring to the attention of the Veterans Administration and the Secretary of the need to have this backlog addressed, and I do think we address that in this bill; but I must rise in opposition to this amendment.

When I talk to veterans, the number one issue that they always have is the claims and claims backlog. The number one issue being worked on by my staff in southwest Georgia is VA claims and the claims backlog. I believe that what we have done in this bill will finally do something about the backlog.

Now let me just put a pin right there for a moment. The backlog, while inexcusable, does have some basis.

Just a couple of years ago, this Congress, in an effort to support our Vietnam era veterans, made it possible for the Agent Orange claims to be covered by the VA even though that had been an ongoing issue for the two decades that I've been a Member of Congress. As a result of that, there was a great surge of VA claims by Vietnam veterans, which added to the backlog. Add to that the returning veterans from Iraq and now from Afghanistan, which has added even more to that backlog, resulting in the now almost 850,000 claims when, 2 years ago, before the Agent Orange claims, we had just about eliminated that backlog.

I think that, even though there is some justification, the backlog is inexcusable, but in this bill that we are debating right now, we've done something about the backlog:

First, the bill fully funds the general operating expenses by the VBA, which will support 20,851 claims processors, which is 94 more than in last year's bill, and all 94 of these new claims processors will work disability claims. The bill fully funds the Veterans Benefits Management System at $155 million and the Veterans Claims Intake Program at $136.4 million. These two efforts should speed up the VA's efforts to take old claims that are filed on paper and convert them into digital files that are easily searchable by the claims processors, thus speeding up the claims process;

Second, we include a monthly reporting requirement for the VA to provide Congress with several statistics, such as the average wait time at each regional office, the rating inventory that has been pending for 125 days, rating claims accuracy, and month-to-month updates of any changes in those statistics;

Third, we require a report on the VA's expedited claims initiative that was announced just a few weeks ago. This report should give the committee insight into whether or not the Secretary's new initiative is having a positive result.

I believe that we should let the measures in this bill take effect before we turn to these more drastic measures. I understand the frustration that the gentleman feels and that is felt by most of the Members of this Congress, and I understand the frustration that is felt by our veterans and even by the Secretary, who is quite frustrated. I am open to all reasonable methods to solve the problem, but I believe that we should avoid measures like this as it is unnecessarily punitive, and I believe that the measures that we have put forth in this bill will adequately get results, accountability, and ultimately meet our objective of eliminating the claims backlog by 2015.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CULBERSON. I ask unanimous consent to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CULBERSON. I yield to my good friend, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. KINGSTON).

Mr. KINGSTON. I thank the gentleman from Texas for the time.

To my friend from Georgia, who I know is just as fervent as we are in terms of cleaning up the backlog, I would say the only part with which we are in disagreement is this approach, again emphasizing that this committee has provided the adequate funding to reduce the backlog. We did it last year, and we did it the year before, and we did it the year before that.

What we are doing with this amendment is what the private sector does every single day—it bases compensation on performance. We are saying, if you don't perform to your own guidelines, there will be a compensation penalty for it.

Congress has reduced its expenses, depending on the committee, anywhere from 8 to 14 percent. We have not had a COLA in several years now. In fact, the only way the United States Senate passed a budget this year was because of an amendment that was offered, called ''no budget, no pay,'' and the House passed a budget, too, under that threat. One way you do get people's attention is to say, You have got to perform in your job or there will be a salary cut. That's all we're doing.

For the men and women who put their lives on the line for our country that we could have this debate today and that we can go about our lives tomorrow and the next day and raise families in a free and independent country, we owe it to them. A backlog of 800,000 claims is not acceptable, and we are tired of talking about it. This amendment takes the final step. We are going to make a change. We are going to get that backlog cleaned up.

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Chairman, it's common sense that your performance should be tied to your pay, so I urge the adoption of the gentleman from Georgia's amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. KINGSTON).

The amendment was agreed to.

□ 1740

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MS. KUSTER

Ms. KUSTER. I have an amendment at the desk and offer that amendment at this time.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. ____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used for any conference (as described in the Office of Management and Budget memorandum M-12-12, ''Promoting Efficient Spending to Support Agency Operations'', dated May 11, 2012) for which the cost to the agency exceeds $500,000.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from New Hampshire is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KUSTER. Mr. Chairman, my amendment is straightforward. It would prohibit the Federal Government from spending more than $500,000 of the funds appropriated by this bill on any single conference. This amendment would simply enforce the Obama administration's May 11, 2012, Office of Management and Budget memorandum promoting efficient spending.

I understand the need for the VA and other agencies to invest in workforce development, and I recognize the role that conferences can play in improving services for our constituents. But from the GSA to the IRS, time and again we have seen Federal agencies misuse public funds at conferences and make expenditures of questionable value. In recent years, this problem has extended to the VA.

In 2011, the VA spent over $6 million on just two conferences. This prompted an investigation by the Department's Inspector General, who documented numerous examples of excessive cost and unnecessary and unsupported expenditures, including over $49,000 for a parody video, over $97,000 for unnecessary promotional items, and over $43,000 in awards paid to the staff managing these conferences.

We can all agree that the VA should focus its limited resources on its core mission: serving those brave men and women who have worn the uniform and served our country.

There are so many worthwhile uses for VA funding, from eliminating the egregious claims backlog, to improving support for survivors of military sexual trauma, to expanding access to health care services in rural communities such as in my district in the northern town of Colebrook, New Hampshire, on the Canadian border.

I commend my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for their support for America's veterans.

Out of respect for our constituents during these times of enhanced fiscal responsibility and in service to our veterans, I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense amendment.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from New Hampshire (Ms. KUSTER).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 3 OFFERED BY MR. ROTHFUS

Mr. ROTHFUS. I have an amendment at the desk printed as No. 3 in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. ____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to pay a performance award under section 5384 of title 5, United States Code.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Pennsylvania is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Chairman, I rise today to stand with our Nation's veterans and their families.

We owe our veterans a debt of gratitude that can never be repaid. As public servants, we have a solemn obligation to make sure that our veterans receive the respect, support, and care that they have earned and rightly expect.

That responsibility extends to employees and executives of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Unfortunately, the VA has failed veterans in western Pennsylvania and around the Nation.

This failure has resulted in the outrageous disability claims backlog and the unconscionable death of five veterans at the VA Pittsburgh Health Care System. In light of these unresolved problems, no one in the senior leadership of the VA should be paid a performance bonus.

Today, over 865,000 veterans around the Nation are waiting to receive disability benefits from the VA. Of those veterans, almost 576,000 are considered part of the VA backlog, meaning their claims have been pending for more than 125 days.

On average, our Nation's veterans must wait between 316 and 327 days for their first-time disability claims to be processed. Wait times in major population centers and in my district are often longer. For example, veterans must wait 642 days in New York, 619 days in Los Angeles, 542 days in Chicago, 517 days in Philadelphia, and 625 days in Pittsburgh.

The number of veterans who have been forced to wait more than a year to receive their benefits has grown by more than 2,000 percent over the last 4 years, despite significant increases in the VA's budget during the same time period.

In addition, a study conducted by the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review found that veterans who disagree with the VA's initial decision must wait even longer. That study found that it takes an average of 1,040 days for the agency to make decisions in appeals cases. That's almost 3 years.

In fact, some veterans wait so long that they die before their claims are processed. The Trib-Review study found almost 3,000 cases between 2009 and 2013 in which veterans or their surviving spouses died before getting decisions on their disputed claims.

Western Pennsylvania veterans have recently seen even more egregious failures of the VA firsthand in the death of five veterans due to an outbreak of Legionnaires' disease. The VA Inspector General found that the systemic failure of the Pittsburgh VA to follow its own safety protocols and a breakdown in communication resulted in these unconscionable deaths.

Four days after the Inspector General's report was released, the regional director of the Pittsburgh VA was awarded an almost $63,000 bonus and presented with the Presidential Distinguished Rank award.

In total, the VA gave its senior executives bonuses totaling $2.8 million in 2011 and $2.3 million in 2012. Paying bonuses to executives of an organization with this kind of abysmal performance record is ridiculous. In the private sector, this level of performance achievement is rewarded with a pink slip, not a bonus check.

Rather, this hard-earned taxpayer money should be properly directed towards fixing the problems at the VA and ensuring that our veterans receive the first-rate service and care they rightfully deserve. VA executives need to take responsibility, fix these problems, and do their jobs.

I urge my colleagues to stand with our veterans and their families and support the Rothfus-Roby-Tipton-Kelly-Huelskamp amendment.

Mrs. ROBY. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. ROTHFUS. I yield to the gentlewoman from Alabama.

Mrs. ROBY. Mr. Chairman, I would like to rise in support of the gentleman's amendment and I just want to add—and you've heard the statistics—that the number of backlogged cases—each case represents a veteran who may have earned a benefit but is currently being denied because of bureaucratic delay.

In the last 4 years, the number of VA claims pending for longer than a year has grown by 2,000 percent.

An award of a bonus should be a special recognition of success and accomplishment, not a right or a routine payment.

Mr. Chairman, I don't consider a backlog of over 1.2 million cases to be cause for celebration or reward. I consider it a catastrophe that must be fixed. Restricting the ability to award bonuses until that backlog is cleared is a commonsense good-government policy. I'm pleased to support my colleague's amendment. It is a strong step in that direction.

Mr. ROTHFUS. Reclaiming my time, I urge my colleagues to stand with our veterans and their families by supporting this amendment and yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. I move to strike the last word.

The Acting Chair. The gentleman from Illinois is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Chairman, I rise to lend my support for the underlying bill we are debating today that addresses critical health care, housing, education, and unemployment needs for our soldiers who are deploying and our veterans who are returning from the battlefield.

The Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations measure is one of the most important pieces of legislation Congress considers annually. It provides the necessary funding to house, train, and equip our brave men and women in uniform, support our military families, and maintain our military base infrastructure. Put simply, no one should stand ahead of our men and women in uniform or our Nation's veterans when it comes to making Federal funding decisions.

Critical to this discussion is the priority placed on investments in medical care for our Active Duty servicemembers and veterans.

I appreciate that the committee continues the precedence set in past years of providing advanced appropriations for the VA.

□ 1750

Allowing for advanced appropriations provides a platform for long-term planning and investment in critical programs that meet the emerging needs of our servicemembers and military families.

I want to personally thank the committee for providing these resources that will allow our VA hospitals, including those in my district, to prepare adequately for the number of veterans returning home from deployment. This approach will provide flexibility to capitalize on emerging technology and treatments that will ensure our warriors here at home are receiving the very best health care possible.

As well, I would like to thank the committee for its important work to ensure that we are maintaining investment in our military installations. I applaud the inclusion of $35.8 million for the construction of housing units at Naval Station Great Lakes, located in my district. This funding will allow more servicemembers to receive the training they need, while not overburdening them with complicated, temporary housing conditions.

This forward-looking investment is one that illustrates how we can further utilize existing military infrastructure to achieve efficiencies in training and services. I want to again thank the committee for its work on this important bipartisan bill.

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

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, we are all outraged in regards to the claims backlog and the incidences of poor quality health services and safety. The current claims backlog is, as we have said over and over today, unacceptable. There is no question that the VA has failed to successfully deliver one of its key missions—to provide timely ratings of disability.

Given this failure, it is hard to imagine how VA leaders responsible for disability claims rating and the claims processing transformation could warrant high performance ratings and substantial bonuses. It is also clear that some VA health facilities have had serious issues that put the health, safety, and well-being of veterans at risk. This, too, is unacceptable. Where these failures have occurred, it is hard to

imagine how the VA leaders of these facilities could have received high performance ratings and substantial bonuses.

However, this amendment will not provide any solution in the short term, and in the long term it may have adverse consequences and compound the very problem that it attempts to address.

Many VA workers are compassionate and hard workers. The previous amendment that was adopted, which was adopted by this body by voice vote, referenced models from the private sector by cutting pay, reducing the pay by 25 percent until the backlog is reduced. However, if you follow that same model from the private sector, bonuses are the converse of that so that when those backlogs are reduced, and if there is exceptional work that goes in to reducing that backlog by those responsible at the VA, then appropriate bonuses could be granted.

This amendment, I submit, would make the VA a less attractive option than other agencies when it comes to recruiting and retaining quality executive leaders, and it will not have the very talent it needs to solve the problems that it faces today, like the claims backlog and the health care deficiencies.

Furthermore, the SES pay and bonuses are governed by title 5 of the United States Code and administered by the Office of Personnel Management. Any change to title 5 to address VA would then also apply to all other Federal agencies. Attempting an across-the-board, one-size-fits-all fix will penalize those dedicated VA executives who are working hard, and well, to find solutions to the VA's problems.

So I urge our colleagues to vote ''no'' on this amendment, that's the Rothfus amendment, not because we don't have the challenges and the obligation to eliminate this backlog and to do it forthwith, but because I think we are going a little bit too far in attempting to create a disincentive for people, not solving this backlog.

I think that recruitment and retention of people in the VA, talented people, talented executives who can effectively solve the challenges that we face, like eliminating the backlog, will be undermined if this amendment should become law.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HUELSKAMP. I move to strike the last word, Mr. Chairman.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Kansas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HUELSKAMP. Mr. Chairman, I won't take quite that long, but I appreciate the opportunity to visit about this amendment. I have always thought bonuses and performance awards to employees should only be given out to those who go above and beyond the expectations laid out in their job description. An end-of-the-year bonus should never be an assumed addition to an employee's paycheck, but the Department of Veterans Affairs apparently takes a very different approach to performance awards for many of their employees, particularly top-level administrators and supervisors.

As a member of the VA Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee, we've held multiple hearings on the mismanagement and negligence of Federal employees at the VA. What's worse, many of these individuals have been rewarded for their behavior.

We're all aware of the situation at the VA Pittsburgh health care system and the outbreak of Legionnaires' disease, but how many of us know that the individual in charge received a bonus for the very year that we potentially had five deaths from that outbreak that could have been prevented?

At another hearing conducted by our Oversight Investigations Committee, I recently asked a VA bureaucrat who had missed deadlines and overspent on VA construction projects of over a billion dollars to explain why he deserved $55,000 in bonuses. In our exchange, he had no idea—claimed to have no idea why he received this bonus; and, actually, neither did I, Mr. Chairman.

Earlier this afternoon, much more troubling, we had another VA Oversight hearing where it was revealed that potentially up to 20 million veterans' records have been hacked and perhaps accessed by foreign state actors, and the individual in charge of the security during these last 4 years when this apparently occurred has received over $87,000 in bonuses. This has become a trend within the VA departments, and I believe taxpayer dollars would be better directed towards protecting the sensitive records of our veterans and their dependents and improving veterans' health care options.

I support this amendment. I am glad my colleague from Pennsylvania has offered it.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Chairman, I want to express my support for this amendment. I share the gentleman's intense frustration with the VA for their failure to meet their own guidelines and their own deadlines for eliminating the backlog, and I urge adoption of the amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ROTHFUS).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. GRAYSON

Mr. GRAYSON. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), add the following new section:

SEC._____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to enter into a contract with any offeror or any of its principals if the offeror certifies, as required by Federal Acquisition Regulation, that the offeror or any of its principals:

(A) within a three-year period preceding this offer has been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against it for: commission of fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a public (Federal, State, or local) contract or subcontract; violation of Federal or State antitrust statutes relating to the submission of offers; or commission of embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, tax evasion, violating Federal criminal tax laws, or receiving stolen property; or

(B) are presently indicated for, or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity with, commission of any of the offenses enumerated above in subsection (A); or

(C) within a three-year period preceding this officer, has been notified of any delinquent Federal taxes in an amount that exceeds $3,000 for which the liability remains unsatisfied.

Mr. GRAYSON (during the reading). Mr. Chair, I ask unanimous consent to waive the reading.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GRAYSON. Mr. Chairman, this amendment strengthens existing provisions in the bill by preventing the award of contracts of money allocated under this bill to offerers or principals of offerers who, within the 3-year period preceding the offer, have been convicted or had a civil judgment rendered against them for such action as fraud, theft, bribery, making false statements, tax evasion, and so on.

□ 1800

It would be unconscionable, Mr. Chairman, if we allowed taxpayer money to be given to contractors who have been convicted of such things as bribery; and, therefore, I offer this amendment to prevent that.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GRAYSON).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. RUNYAN

Mr. RUNYAN. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), add the following new section:

SEC. 419. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to propose, plan for, or execute a new or additional Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) round

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from New Jersey is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. RUNYAN. Mr. Chairman, my amendment states that none of the funds made available by this act may

be used to propose, plan, or execute a new or an additional round of base realignment and closure, otherwise known as BRAC.

We all recognize the budget pressures we face. A round of BRAC closures now will entail a large up-front cost. We should direct these limited dollars to addressing the current mission and readiness needs supporting our warfighters.

For that reason, I urge my colleagues to support this amendment, which helps ensure these funds address current needs. I know that many Members of this Chamber want Congress to continue to have oversight of our base and force structure, and my amendment ensures that we do so.

I thank the chairman and members of the subcommittee for working with me on this important amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Chairman, I just want to express my support for the gentleman's amendment and urge its adoption by the House.

I yield back the balance of my time

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. RUNYAN).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. MURPHY OF FLORIDA

Mr. MURPHY of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. ____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to award any contract in an amount greater than $1,000,000 for which the Department of Defense did not receive at least two offers.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MURPHY of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I rise today to offer an amendment to the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs appropriations bill that would boost competitive bidding across defense construction projects.

The Department of Defense manages hundreds of billions of dollars in contracts each year, 43 percent of which are noncompetitively awarded. The Government Accountability Office has reported that the Department of Defense does not keep accurate records of which contracts received multiple bids or why sole-sourced contracts are awarded. This is not good government.

Competition works because it drives down cost while giving consumers greater choice. It is the cornerstone of our free-market economy and needs to be integrated throughout the government.

I recently introduced the SAVE Act with my colleague, Representative DAVID JOYCE from Ohio, to root out wasteful and duplicative government spending. The bipartisan legislation would implement several commonsense solutions outlined by the GAO to reduce up to $200 billion in spending over the next 10 years.

One of the 11 measures in my bill encourages the robust use of competitive bidding to reduce contract costs across all agencies.

Today's amendment is an extension of the SAVE Act. It would prevent the Department of Defense from spending the taxpayers' money on contracts over $1 million that have not received at least two competitive bids.

With the national deficit currently at almost $17 trillion, and the current deficit over $600 billion annually, it is clear that we must rein in government spending, but we must do it in a strategic way, cutting programs that are wasteful, duplicative, or ineffective; and this amendment would do just that.

Mr. Chairman, I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this commonsense and cost-saving amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MURPHY).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. TERRY

Mr. TERRY. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), add the following new section:

SEC. 419. None of the funds made available by this Act, including the funds made available for ''Construction, Major Projects'', may be used to increase the funding for any major medical facility project (as defined in subsection (a)(3)(A) of section 8104 of title 38, United States Code), which is under construction as of the date of the enactment of this Act, above the amount specified in the prospectus described in subsection (b) of such section 8104 and the detailed estimate of cost described in paragraph (1) of such subsection.

Mr. TERRY (during the reading). Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to waive the reading.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Nebraska?

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Nebraska is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. TERRY. Mr. Chairman, the Terry amendment requests that none of the funds made available by this act, including the funds made available for the Construction and Major Projects account, be used to increase funding for any major medical facility project that is under construction as of the date of enactment of this act.

A major medical facility project, as defined by section 8104 of Title 38 in the U.S. Code, is a project that involves a total expenditure of more than $10 million. This includes the cost overruns of new VA hospitals.

Take the new VA Hospital in New Orleans that was originally supposed to cost $625 million, but a new GAO report shows that the cost overruns at this particular facility is $370 million, pushing that to a near-billion-dollar hospital.

The Navy Times recently reported about a GAO report that clearly illustrates this problem and should greatly disturb everyone. The Government Accountability Office found that the VA Hospital construction projects in Denver, Las Vegas, New Orleans, and Orlando are, on average, experiencing delays of 35 months and cost overruns of around $366 million. This comes out to about, with the expected costs and the overruns, almost a billion dollars per hospital.

My amendment is designed to stop these cost overruns. In the Omaha metropolitan area, eastern Nebraska and western Iowa, there's about 112,000 underserved veterans in Omaha that are all too familiar with the cost overruns and delays associated with the building of VA hospitals.

We have an almost 70-year-old facility in Omaha that is in dire need of replacement. The infrastructure's decrepit; it's rusting away. The HVAC system is so poor that we can't use many of the rooms. And then on top of that, our seven operating rooms have been shut down recently.

Unfortunately, there's no telling when the VA is going to get to it. The veterans in Omaha are being told that there's no money left.

This isn't just Omaha; this is occurring in California, Texas, and all over the world. This is unfair to the seniors to have this level of cost overruns and mismanagement.

So that's the purpose and reason behind this amendment, to start making them focus on the bidding process, do it right, and not simply just have a bid and then make all the additions and changes afterwards that drive up the costs. And so I urge support for this amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Chairman, I would rise in support of the gentleman's amendment. I share his concerns; and that's why, in section 227 of our bill, we included language that's very similar. And I look forward to supporting the gentleman's amendment and working with him in conference to make sure there's no duplication.

The committee is also concerned about increases in costs beyond that originally specified on the project, and that's why we included the section and why I welcome the gentleman's amendment and urge its adoption.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. TERRY).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. ENGEL

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. ____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used by the Department of Defense or the Department of Veterans Affairs to lease or purchase new light duty vehicles for any executive fleet, or for an agency's fleet inventory, except in accordance with Presidential Memorandum—Federal Fleet Performance, dated May 24, 2011.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from New York is recognized for 5 minutes.

□ 1810

Mr. ENGEL. On May 24, 2011, President Obama issued a Memorandum on Federal Fleet Performance that requires all new light-duty vehicles in the Federal fleet to be alternate fuel vehicles, such as hybrid, electric, natural gas, or biofuel, by December 31, 2015. My amendment echoes the Presidential Memorandum by prohibiting funds in the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act from being used to lease or purchase new light-duty vehicles, except in accord with the President's Memorandum.

Our transportation sector is by far the biggest reason we send $600 billion per year to hostile nations to pay for oil at ever-increasing costs. But America does not need to be dependent on foreign sources of oil for transportation fuel. Alternative technologies exist today that, when implemented broadly, will allow any alternative fuel to be used in America's automotive fleet. The Federal Government operates the largest fleet of light-duty vehicles in America. According to GSA, there are over 660,000 vehicles in the Federal fleet, with over 14,000 being used by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

By supporting a diverse array of vehicle technologies in our Federal fleet, we will encourage development of domestic energy resources, including biomass, natural gas, agricultural waste, hydrogen, renewable electricity, methanol, and ethanol. Expanding the role these energy sources play in our transportation economy will help break the leverage over Americans held by foreign government-controlled oil companies and will increase our Nation's domestic security and protect consumers from price spikes and shortages in the world oil markets.

Let me say that the gentlewoman from Florida, Congresswoman ROS-LEHTINEN, and I have a bill that would mandate that by a certain date all vehicles made in America would be flex-fuel vehicles. It would cost $100 or even less to make each vehicle flex-fuel. Other countries have it. America should not be behind other countries. We will be introducing this legislation shortly.

So I ask that my colleagues support the Engel amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. TIPTON

Mr. TIPTON. I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. ____. The amounts otherwise provided by this Act are revised by reducing the amount made available for ''Department of Veterans Affairs—Departmental Administration—General Administration'', and increasing the amount made available for ''Department of Veterans Affairs—Departmental Administration—Information Technology Systems'', by $10,000,000.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Colorado is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. TIPTON. Mr. Chairman, I rise today with an amendment to reduce wasteful spending by the Department of Veterans Affairs on conferences and use the money to be able to assist the VA backlog of processing disability claims for veterans. Two-thirds of all veterans who file disability claims with the VA must wait longer than 125 days to be able to receive their benefits. I have seen this firsthand from constituents in my district. People have contacted my office in sheer exasperation by the lack of response and endless delays by the VA in processing their claims.

This isn't a statistic we're talking about. This is literally peoples' lives. Many of the veterans on the backlog are in desperate need of care, care that has been delayed by needless lag of bureaucratic backlogs in the Department of Veterans Affairs. This is deplorable, Mr. Chairman. The VA backlog has grown by over 2,000 percent over the last 4 years, despite an increase in the budget of more than the 20 percent. As of March 28 of this year, the VA reported that there are over 606,007 backlogged claims and 865,989 total claims. Nearly 900,000 veterans who have sacrificed for our country are not getting their benefits. They're not getting the care that they need. Our veterans deserve better.

Despite the inability of the VA to be able to process claims in a timely manner, the agency continues to waste money on unnecessary conferences. In September of 2012, the VA Office of the Inspector General released a report highlighting abuses by the VA at conferences. That report included numerous troubling findings. According to the report, the VA spent more than $6.1 million on two human resource conferences in Orlando, and nearly $100,000 on unnecessary promotional items like bags, pins, and water bottles. In addition to these, the report included information on many more instances of waste, fraud, and abuse at the VA.

Following the release of the OIG report, Congressman JEFF MILLER, chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, stated ''it can be reasonably concluded that 10 to 15 percent of VA's conference spending is wasteful, amounting to $10 to $15 million a year, at the least.'' I wholeheartedly agree with Chairman MILLER. That is why today I'm proposing this amendment to target $10 million in wasteful spending on conferences from the Secretary's $403 million budget and reprioritize these funds to be able to assist with addressing the VA backlog.

It's time that the VA focus their efforts on serving our veterans and processing their claims in a reasonable amount of time—not in 125 days or more. The VA must reduce the backlog, and it won't get it done by wasting time and taxpayer dollars at conferences. It's time that the benefits work for our veterans rather than our veterans having to be able to work for their benefits.

I urge my colleagues to be able to support this commonsense amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TIPTON).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. MURPHY OF FLORIDA

Mr. MURPHY of Florida. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), add the following new section:

SEC. 419. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to maintain or improve Department of Defense real property with a zero percent utilization rate according to the Department's real property inventory database, except in the case of maintenance of an historic property as required by the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.) or maintenance to prevent a negative environmental impact as required by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.).

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MURPHY of Florida. I rise today to offer an amendment to the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs appropriations bill that would eliminate wasteful spending on unused facilities, which could save tens of millions of dollars in fiscal year 2014 alone.

The Department of Defense has hundreds, possibly thousands of buildings and structures that it has rated at zero percent utilization. This is an incredible number of useless facilities the Department of Defense is paying to maintain. Federal agencies, as a whole, must do a better job at managing their facilities. Taxpayers cannot continue paying for unused and underused buildings while the Nation is at record debt levels. That is not good government and that is not smart spending.

That is why I joined with Representative DAVID JOYCE of Ohio to introduce the SAVE Act to root out the up to $200 billion in wasteful and duplicative government spending over the next

years. This amendment is an extension of one of the 11 commonsense solutions included in the bipartisan SAVE Act, preventing the Department of Defense from spending money on facilities that the Department itself has rated at zero percent utilization.

Mr. Chairman, we all agree that we must rein in government spending. The best place to start is by rooting out waste. My amendment is a commonsense solution to do just that, and I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MURPHY).

The amendment was agreed to.

□ 1820

Mr. GARCIA. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word and enter into a colloquy with the gentleman from Georgia, the ranking member of the committee.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Florida is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GARCIA. The President's budget request included $3.6 million for the Special Operations Boat Docks in Key West, Florida. These improvements will help ensure that the Special Forces Underwater Operations School, which trains more than 300 servicemembers and conducts support training for troops preparing for deployments, can continue to meet its critical role in our Nation's defense.

The Appropriations Committee recommended no funds for the project. As I understand it, the subcommittee made that recommendation with no prejudice against the boat dock project. Having determined that the Army had sufficient military construction funds available to complete the project without additional appropriations, the committee recommended no additional funds to undertake the project.

I yield to my friend from Georgia to ask if it is a fair characterization of the committee's recommendation.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. I would agree with the gentleman from Florida. The Army does have sufficient funds in bid savings and in unobligated balances from prior military construction appropriations to undertake a $3.6 million project. I would be happy to work with the gentleman to see if the Army would use those existing funds on this project.

Mr. GARCIA. I thank the gentleman, and I look forward to working with him.

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

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. KING OF IOWA

Mr. KING of Iowa. I have an amendment at the desk, Mr. Chairman.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. 419. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to implement, administer, or enforce the prevailing wage requirements in subchapter IV of chapter 31 of title 40, United States Code (commonly referred to as the Davis-Bacon Act).

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Iowa is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate being recognized. I bring this amendment to the floor out of a sense of fiscal responsibility and a sense of duty to the people that go out and work hard every day and return a value for every dollar, for every hour they invest, a value returned on production.

I have spent my life in the construction industry. We have paid Davis-Bacon wage scales, I believe, in each year that I have been in business, and we were a merit shop operation. So I have both sides of experience to this. I have worked underneath Davis-Bacon wage scales, and I have worked in competition with them.

Davis-Bacon is rooted back in the early 1930s. There was a decision made by a couple of people from New York, both Republicans I might add. They let me down then before I was born. They wanted to provide protectionism for their people in New York and lock out minorities that would be coming from the South to build Federal buildings during that era of the Great Depression in New York. It remains the last vestige of Jim Crow laws that's designed to protect and lock out minorities from the construction industry as far as labor is concerned.

My records on this is it costs a lot of money to have Davis-Bacon wage scales imposed. And our King Construction records show over the years that there is somewhere between 8 and 38 percent increase in the costs that we have to bid a project when we make the adjustment for Davis-Bacon. According to Beacon Hill, there's a 9 to 37 percent increase. I just simply use a 20 percent increase as a rule of thumb to discuss the amount of cost that is extra.

So it's this: if we're going to have federally mandated union scale that turns out to be the increase in price for every Federal construction project that has $2,000 or more in it, the result of that is then that if we're going to build only 4 miles of road instead of 5; only four bridges instead of five; only four military facilities instead of five; only four sets of barracks instead of five; only four training facilities instead of five, we can get 20 percent more production out of the dollars that we have and maintain the quality and maintain that sense of responsibility and have a trained workforce, and we can bring more trainees into the process and we'll employ, according to the study I have in front of me here, an average of about 25,000 more minorities each year within the construction business that's there.

What we have instead is we have some people that are in the industry that sit down once a year and they take a look at the records and they decide, well, let's see, let's pay a little bit more to the people here in labor because we don't want to compete outside of our particular industry. We'll raise these wages and we'll transfer that to the taxpayers. It is not a prevailing wage; it is a mandated union scale. That is the effect of it, Mr. Chairman.

I have lived under this for at least 28 years that I operated King Construction. We're now in about our 38th or 39th year of business. We have deep experience with it; and the quality of the work does not suffer, neither does the finishing, neither does the completion, neither does the bonding. All of this construction industry works better when you have real competition instead of some kind of mandated wage scale. Plus, eliminating the enforcement of Davis-Bacon wage scale brings efficiency in and it brings competition in. It's an impossible and onerous Federal regulation to seek to try to regulate. No one can sit in government and determine what a prevailing wage is.

It upsets the relationship between management and workers. And I've been on both sides of that, on all four sides of it, as a matter of fact. It reduces the efficiency of the crews that are there because it reduces your ability to be flexible with the assignment of workforce and their flexibility to self-assign.

For every possible financial reason, you cannot be fiscally responsible or a fiscal conservative and oppose this amendment, Mr. Chairman. It must be supported by a country that's going deeply in debt. We're borrowing over 40 cents out of every dollar that we spend. Meanwhile, we can save 20 cents out of every dollar in this MilCon appropriation bill simply by eliminating the enforcement of the Davis-Bacon wage scale on it.

So I urge in the strongest terms possible the adoption of this amendment which would eliminate the effect of the last vestige of Jim Crow law with regard to where military construction is concerned, save 20 percent, someplace between 9 and 37 according to Beacon Hill. And we can build five facilities instead of four. This is the right way to go to support my amendment.

I urge its adoption, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Georgia is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. I rise in opposition to the amendment.

I respect my good friend, but I am totally baffled by the comparison of Davis-Bacon to Jim Crow laws. I think it's totally inapplicable. Davis-Bacon is a pretty simple concept, and it's a fair one. What the Davis-Bacon Act does is protect the government as well as the workers in carrying out the policy of paying decent wages on government contracts.

The act requires that workers on federally funded construction projects be paid no less than the wages paid in the community for some of the work. It requires that every contract for construction to which the Federal Government is a party in excess of $2,000 contain a provision defining the minimum wages paid to various classes of laborers and mechanics.

Mr. Chairman, the House has taken numerous votes on this issue, and on every vote this body has voted to maintain Davis-Bacon requirements. Last year, we avoided including divisive language like this, and it's my hope that we stop attacking the working class and defeat the amendment before us today and move on to more important matters.

Davis-Bacon wages actually save construction costs. A study of more than 4,000 new schools, some built with prevailing wage and others not, found that there were no significant differences in construction costs associated with prevailing wage requirements. A repeal in Davis-Bacon wages has consistently been shown to increase costs because of the poor construction resulting in repairs, revisions, and project delays and consequently substantial cost overruns all as a result of the increase in employing unskilled, unqualified workers on projects.

For example, when President Bush suspended Davis-Bacon wages during the Hurricane Katrina building efforts, construction costs went up due to the dramatic increase in the employment of unqualified workers.

Opponents of the prevailing wage claim that the government can save billions by eliminating them. But they ignore how the Davis-Bacon Act has proven to increase workforce productivity and result in cost-effective projects. For example, a study of 10 States when nearly half of all highway and bridgework in America is done showed that when high-wage workers were paid double the wage of low-wage workers, they built 74.4 more miles of roadbed and 32.8 more miles of bridges for $557 million less.

Repealing Davis-Bacon wages dramatically decreases the economic benefits to the local community. For example, studies have shown that Davis-Bacon wages generate more than two times the amount spent on the construction project itself in the local community since the workers spend part of their income in local businesses and pay local taxes, all of which recirculates throughout the economy.

Driving wages down will not help to balance the Federal budget. A Florida analysis such as the Bluegrass Institute study fails to take into account the spin-off economic benefits of maintaining prevailing wages. Davis-Bacon improves the skill level and the training of all of the workers. Opponents of prevailing wage regulations assume that repealing the law and lowering wages will not erode training nor lead to an exodus of skilled workers.

□ 1830

They are wrong, because it has that exact effect. Davis-Bacon increases training opportunities for all workers, both union and nonunion.

Finally, a Davis-Bacon wage is usually not a union wage. The Davis-Bacon prevailing wage is based on surveys of wages and benefits paid to various job classifications of construction workers in the community without regard to union membership. According to the Department of Labor, a whopping 72 percent of the prevailing wage rates issued in 2000 were based upon nonunion wage rates. A union wage prevails only if the Department of Labor survey determines that the local union wage is paid to more than 50 percent of the workers in the job classifications.

Let me just say that we have in the past avoided including divisive language in our bill, and it is my hope that we can stop attacking the working class and we can defeat this amendment.

I urge all of the Members in this House to vote ''no.'' Davis-Bacon is good law, it produces good results, and it is cost effective for the taxpayers of the United States.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from New York is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Chairman, the MilCon-VA bill should be one of the least controversial measures this committee considers. I am deeply disappointed that instead of seeking to pass the most bipartisan bill possible, some would prefer to weigh down the bill that funds veterans and military construction with divisive riders.

Not only is this procedurally problematic, but it's completely wrong on substance. Repealing Davis-Bacon has consistently, as my colleague has shown, been shown to increase costs. Poor construction results in repairs, revisions, project delays, and cost overruns. Let's not add an unnecessary policy rider that will not be included in the final version.

Again, this is probably one of the most bipartisan bills that we have considered. I have applauded the chair and the ranking member for working so closely together to produce a really important bill that helps our veterans. Why weigh this down with this divisive rider? Let's vote against this amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I rise in support of my colleague, Mr. KING's amendment, to H.R. 2216, the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act. This amendment would ensure that no funds made available by H.R. 2216 could be used to implement, administer, or enforce the Davis-Bacon Act requirements for government contracts.

Mr. Chairman, the Davis-Bacon Act is an anachronistic law that was enacted during the Great Depression to prevent wayfaring contractors from lowballing local construction bids. In defense of my colleague, Mr. KING's characterization, the sponsors of the Davis-Bacon Act originally intended for it to actually discriminate against nonunionized Black workers in favor of White workers belonging to White-only unions. Mr. KING is correct—and that's in all deference to everyone in this debate—but this is indeed a vestigial remnant of the Jim Crow era and has no place in our military construction contracts and should be abandoned.

Furthermore, the Davis-Bacon Act results in billions of wasted taxpayer dollars every year. This act requires Federal construction contractors to pay their workers ''prevailing wages,'' which could be as much as 1½ times greater than their basic pay rate. This results in artificially high costs of construction, which are ultimately shouldered by American taxpayers.

Contractors wishing to offer a lower bid would still be required by law to pay their employees the prevailing wage and file a weekly report of the wages paid to each worker. This has a particularly negative effect on small businesses, as they are often unable to compete due to Davis-Bacon wage and benefit requirements, which reduces competition and further inflates contract rates.

Moreover, Mr. Chairman, Davis-Bacon was enacted before the Fair Labor Standards Act and the National Labor Relations Act. According to the GAO, these acts have rendered Davis-Bacon obsolete and unnecessary. There are a number of laws passed by this body that protect construction workers without the discriminatory intent and effect of Davis-Bacon.

During this time of fiscal austerity and responsibility, Congress must do all it can to lower Federal contract costs and decrease the burden on American taxpayers. This amendment is intended to stop the hemorrhage of wasteful spending and rein in our debt.

I would urge my colleagues to support this amendment by Mr. KING that would, again, ensure no funds made available by H.R. 2216 could be used to implement, administer, or enforce the wasteful Davis-Bacon Act, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Massachusetts is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LYNCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First of all, I would like to associate myself with the remarks of the gentleman from Georgia and the gentlelady from New York who spoke previously on this, and I rise in strong opposition to the gentleman from Iowa's

amendment that would prevent Davis-Bacon from being enforced on projects under this act.

It is a shame, I believe, that this funding bill—which provides needed facilities for our servicemembers and benefits to our veterans—is being exploited to undermine hardworking Americans, but here we have it.

Ironically, however, in contravention with some of the things that have been said here on the floor under this amendment, Davis-Bacon requires that workers of every color and every gender be paid based on their work, not on the color of their skin, not on their gender. That flies in the face of some of the accusations that have been put out for the original purpose of this.

I do agree with the gentleman from Iowa that there were two Republicans who did originally sponsor this back in 1931, but I disagree that the danger, that the evil that it was trying to fight against back then, has gone away. As a matter of fact, it is just a race to the bottom that would ensue if we got rid of Davis-Bacon.

Like the gentleman from Iowa, I have worked on Davis-Bacon jobs. I was an ironworker for 18 years—very proud to work with the men and women of the building trades—and I've worked on jobs where some of the workers were union and some of the workers were nonunion; but the important thing was that we were not exploited by trying to pit us against each other in a race to the bottom based on the wages that we earned.

Since 1931, the Davis-Bacon Act has required Federal contractors to provide workers the local ''prevailing local wage.'' What happens is that's not the union wage, and in many cases, as the gentleman from Georgia has pointed out, it's the nonunion wage, but it is determined by a survey of the Department of Labor of the wages in that area.

The danger that it's meant to deal with is that, in some areas of the country where there's no work and folks are dealing with the recession or depression-like conditions in the construction industry, unscrupulous contractors can go down there where workers don't have any shot of going to work and they can take them at very low wages and transport them to another area of the country that has work and then depress the wage base in that area. That's what Davis-Bacon is meant to deal with, and that's still the situation that we have today and the danger that we guard against.

On these federally funded construction projects, Davis-Bacon protects these workers by preventing wage exploitation while still ensuring that the value for the taxpayer dollar and work quality are not compromised. This amount would bar funding to administer these wage requirements. Without Davis-Bacon protection, unscrupulous contractors will be free to exploit those tradesmen and -women who, despite a slight recovery in their jobs numbers, still today face high levels of unemployment.

□ 1840

Mr. Chairman, I want to speak for a moment about my time as an ironworker and about my involvement with the men and women of the building trades. These people are incredibly hardworking, they are immensely skilled, and they work in a dangerous industry. They truly care about the craftsmanship, and they are dedicated to getting the job done and doing it right, and working side by side with them was a true honor for me.

Generations of trades workers, by the sweat of their brows and the toil of their hands, built our great Nation. They deserve our respect, as does the work that they do. Protecting Davis-Bacon does just that.

The amendment offered by the gentleman from Iowa will not create jobs, it will not house our military, and it certainly will not result in better care and services for our veterans. All it will do is take away critical wage protections and open our workers to exploitation in a race to the bottom.

I urge my colleagues to stand behind our American workers and to stand behind our veterans and oppose this amendment. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CULBERSON. I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIR (Ms. FOXX). The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CULBERSON. Madam Chairman, I rise in strong support of the gentleman's amendment.

It is just common sense that the free market and competitive open bidding process is going to result in a savings to taxpayers. Davis-Bacon artificially drives up the cost to taxpayers at a time when we simply cannot afford it. With record debt, record deficit and at a time when all of us as stewards of the Treasury need to do everything we can to protect our constituents' hard-earned tax dollars, I strongly support the gentleman from Iowa's amendment, which is to make sure that we have a competitive bidding process in which the lowest price and, obviously, free market wages in this environment in the 21st century are going to be fair wages with good compensation and good benefits. We truly don't need to pay higher wages in an era of record debt and deficit.

I would, Madam Chairman, like to yield to the gentleman from Iowa.

Mr. KING of Iowa. I appreciate the gentleman from Texas for yielding.

First, in response to some of the remarks that were made that Davis-Bacon wages are based on surveys, well, technically they are based on surveys, but merit shop employers often do not answer those surveys because union organizers show up to organize their employees very shortly after that. It's not always a wise decision to turn your wage records in to the Department of Labor, because in many environments that just about guarantees union organizers coming in to try to drive the wages up more.

The statement about the cost of Davis-Bacon wages actually saving money in Katrina reconstruction, that's a new one for me. My recollection is that George Bush initially after Katrina suspended Davis-Bacon wages so that the money could be best applied to get the cleanup and then the reconstruction done down in New Orleans, in that area, under Katrina. He shortly thereafter lifted that order, so I don't know how a study could show how much money was actually saved. If my memory is correct, it never really was implemented for any length of time that would be appreciable. I don't know of a study that shows that imposed union scale Davis-Bacon wages actually saves the taxpayers money unless that study might be funded by the unions themselves.

There is no argument that this is the last remaining Jim Crow law, the law that was designed to lock Black Americans out of the union trades in New York, particularly in New York City. The vestiges of that remain today, and I think it's worthy to go back and look at a study and see what representation of the ethnic population is represented within these construction trades in places like New York City. It would be very constructive, I think, to look at that.

Also, labor is a commodity. The value of it needs to be determined by supply and demand in the marketplace, Madam Chair. And just like gold or oil or corn or beans, where I come from, you're not going to get the real wages out of that unless you let competition determine that.

And I, as an employer for all of these years, want to pay the best wages I can, I want to provide the best benefits that I can, I want to hire the best people that I can, and in doing so, your people are your company, and when you hire good people and you pay them a good wage, you get to keep them. What I set up a business model on was hiring people in a seasonal business to work 12 months out of the year, not seasonally, not going into the union hall and pulling somebody out and putting him to work for a few days and putting him back again, but saying to him, You can have a career here, and I'll give you 12-months' work for 12-months' pay, and I'll give you a benefits package.

I want to compete with that, but when the Federal Government comes in and tells you that somebody on a shovel has to be paid this and that somebody on a backhoe has to be paid this and that somebody on a motor grader has to be paid this, you will see them machine hopping during the day because they'll always be maneuvering to get on the machine that pays the highest wages, not the one that does the best for efficiency to get the job done.

I've had to go in and police that, and I've had to go in and build a spreadsheet that calculates the movement of everybody on our jobs going on in order to determine that I can comply with the Federal Government's requirement that I pay the wages that they demand and insist, instead of the simplicity of saying, Here is what I'll offer you for pay and benefits.

They've sometimes come to me and have said, What's my job?

I'll define your job for you. Help me make money, and I'll pay you for that, and I want to reward you by trying to give you enough money in benefits to keep you.

That's how free markets work. We cannot be out here setting up a union scale imposed by some people who are sitting in a backroom, which is what happens, by the way. We can't be supporting the last vestige of Jim Crow laws. We can't be letting the Federal Government decide what job categories are going to be paid what wages when we just want to put people to work and let them develop a skill and develop their trades.

So the machine hopping is something that gives me a lot of heartburn. Even if we have an actual representation of prevailing wage, it's still not representative of supply and demand because many States have passed their many Davis-Bacon laws, and the market has been so distorted that we don't today have a concept of what that cost is, Madam Chair. So I urge the adoption of my amendment.

Mr. CULBERSON. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. KILDEE. I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Michigan is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KILDEE. I come from Flint, Michigan, a working class community. I represent Flint-Saginaw-Bay City, and it's a community that's proud of the fact that in this area—and it's true across the country—the notion has been that, if you work hard, if you train yourself, if you focus on a trade or go to school, you'll be paid a wage or a salary commensurate with the contribution that you make to the work that you're doing.

We live in a time when we're seeing decreasing compensation for the value that the worker brings to the working place. Between 1945 and 1975, we saw worker productivity rise in this country by 97 percent, and we saw household income rise in that same 30-year period by 95 percent. There was some parity in the contribution that workers made and the compensation that they received. You fast-forward to the last 30-year period, and we've seen a period of economic growth and expansion, increased productivity—80 percent over the last 30 years—but in real wages, a 10 percent increase in productivity.

One of the reasons that we've seen such a drop is that we are not compensating the average workers for the quality and the work that they do and that they contribute to the highly productive society that we live in. This is yet another attempt to continue the race to the bottom, where we continue to see real wages go down and productivity continue to rise.

I have done a tremendous amount of work in local development. As a public and private citizen, I have been involved in lots and lots of construction projects involving hundreds of millions of dollars, and I will tell you one thing: there is absolutely nothing sacrificed by making sure that the people who do this important work are paid wages that are fair and that fit the marketplace. It is not only good for those families that benefit from a decent and fair wage, but it supports those local employers and those small businesses that we all talk about every day that we're trying to support.

Where does the money come from into communities that support those folks?

It comes from the fact that the workers have a decent living wage that allows them to pay their bills, set a little money aside for their families and contribute to a local economy. Davis-Bacon wages contribute to the ability for workers to be trained as well.

This is the wrong direction for this country. This is certainly the wrong direction in this particular budget connected to the work that our Nation does when what we fought for in this country was a society that rewards people for the quality and the quantity of their hard work and their training that they put to work in doing these tough construction jobs particularly. When we're already seeing private sector wages go down, we ought not as a Nation participate in this race to the bottom.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Madam Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Iowa will be postponed.

□ 1850

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE ACTING CHAIR

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, proceedings will now resume on those amendments on which further proceedings were postponed, in the following order:

An amendment by Mr. BROUN of Georgia.

An amendment by Mr. AMODEI of Nevada.

An amendment by Mr. MORAN of Virginia.

An amendment by Mr. KING of Iowa.

The Chair will reduce to 2 minutes the time for any electronic vote after the first vote in the series.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. BROUN OF GEORGIA

The Acting CHAIR. The unfinished business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BROUN) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the noes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The Acting CHAIR. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 151, noes 269, not voting 13, as follows:

[Roll No. 188]

AYES—151

Amash
Bachmann
Bachus
Barr
Barrow (GA)
Barton
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Bonner
Brady (TX)
Brooks (AL)
Broun (GA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Camp
Cassidy
Chabot
Chaffetz
Coble
Coffman
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Cotton
Daines
Davis, Rodney
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Farenthold
Fincher
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Franks (AZ)
Gardner
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gowdy
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Green, Gene
Griffith (VA)
Guthrie
Hall
Harris
Hensarling
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Jenkins
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Kilmer
King (IA)
Kingston
LaMalfa
Lance
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Maffei
Marchant
Massie
Matheson
McCaul
McClintock
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Michaud
Miller (MI)
Miller, George
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Nolan
Olson
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Petri
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Polis
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Radel
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Ross
Royce
Ruiz
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Shuster
Smith (NE)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Stockman
Stutzman
Tiberi
Tipton
Upton
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho

NOES—269

Aderholt
Alexander
Amodei
Andrews
Barber
Barletta
Bass
Beatty
Bera (CA)
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Boustany
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Bridenstine
Brooks (IN)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Calvert
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Carter
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu
Cicilline
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Cole
Conaway
Connolly
Conyers
Cook
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Crawford

Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Denham
Dent
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Fitzpatrick
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garcia
Gerlach
Gosar
Grayson
Green, Al
Griffin (AR)
Grijalva
Grimm
Gutierrez
Hahn
Hanabusa
Hanna
Harper
Hartzler
Hastings (WA)
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Herrera Beutler
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Holt
Honda
Horsford
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Issa
Johnson, E. B.
Joyce
Kaptur
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kind
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kline
Kuster
Labrador
Lamborn
Langevin
Lankford
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Marino
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
Meadows
Meeks
Meng
Miller (FL)
Miller, Gary
Moore
Moran
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
O'Rourke
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peterson
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Rangel
Reed
Reichert
Richmond
Rigell
Roby
Rogers (KY)
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Rothfus
Roybal-Allard
Runyan
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schock
Schrader
Schwartz
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (NJ)
Smith (WA)
Speier
Stewart
Stivers
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Turner
Valadao
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walorski
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Waxman
Welch
Wenstrup
Wilson (FL)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Yarmuth
Young (AK)
Young (FL)
Young (IN)

NOT VOTING—13

Becerra
Campbell
Cramer
Granger
Hastings (FL)
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Keating
Markey
McCarthy (NY)
Palazzo
Watt

□ 1917

Messrs. RIGELL, KELLY of Pennsylvania, ALEXANDER, GOSAR, GARY G. MILLER of California, BOUSTANY, HINOJOSA, RUSH and Ms. GABBARD changed their vote from ''aye'' to ''no.''

Messrs. POE of Texas, GUTHRIE, JOHNSON of Ohio, HUNTER, McCAUL, OLSON and MEEHAN changed their vote from ''no'' to ''aye.''

So the amendment was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. AMODEI

The Acting CHAIR. The unfinished business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. AMODEI) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the noes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The Acting CHAIR. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The Acting CHAIR. This will be a 2-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 248, noes 172, not voting 13, as follows:

[Roll No. 189]

AYES—248

Aderholt
Alexander
Amodei
Bachus
Barber
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bass
Bera (CA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Bonner
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Bustos
Calvert
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Coble
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Connolly
Conyers
Cook
Cotton
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Daines
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
Denham
Dent
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Engel
Enyart
Farr
Fincher
Fleischmann
Fleming
Forbes
Foster
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallego
Garamendi
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Green, Gene
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Hahn
Hall
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hastings (WA)
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hinojosa
Honda
Horsford
Huelskamp
Huffman
Hultgren
Hurt
Israel
Jenkins
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Keating
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kline
Labrador
LaMalfa
Latham
Latta
Lee (CA)
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Lofgren
Long
Lowenthal
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Lynch
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Matheson
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McGovern
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Meehan
Meng
Messer
Mica
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Neugebauer
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
Olson
Pastor (AZ)
Pearce
Perry
Petri
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Price (GA)
Radel
Rahall
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rigell
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruiz
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schneider
Schock
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Speier
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (PA)
Tiberi
Tierney
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Turner
Valadao
Vela
Velázquez
Walden
Walorski
Waters
Waxman
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Young (AK)
Young (FL)
Young (IN)

NOES—172

Amash
Andrews
Bachmann
Barrow (GA)
Beatty
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Broun (GA)
Brown (FL)
Butterfield
Camp
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Carter
Cartwright
Chu
Cicilline
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Conaway
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
DeSantis
Deutch
Dingell
Edwards
Ellison
Ellmers
Eshoo
Esty
Farenthold
Fattah
Fitzpatrick
Flores
Fortenberry
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Garcia
Grayson
Green, Al
Grijalva
Grimm
Guthrie
Hanabusa
Hartzler
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Holding
Holt
Hoyer
Hudson
Huizenga (MI)
Hunter
Issa
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Kelly (IL)
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kuster
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Lankford
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Levin
Lewis
Loebsack
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Massie
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McNerney
Meeks
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moore
Moran
Murphy (FL)
Negrete McLeod
Noem
Nolan
O'Rourke
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Paulsen
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Peterson
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Polis
Posey
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rangel
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (MI)
Runyan
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Schwartz
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Southerland
Stockman
Terry
Thompson (MS)
Thornberry
Upton
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth
Yoho

NOT VOTING—13

Becerra
Campbell
Cassidy
Granger
Gutierrez
Hastings (FL)
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Markey
McCarthy (NY)
Palazzo
Watt

□ 1923

Mr. NOLAN changed his vote from ''aye'' to ''no.''

Ms. WATERS and Messrs. LYNCH, McINTYRE, GARRETT, and BONNER changed their vote from ''no'' to ''aye.''

So the amendment was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. MORAN

The Acting CHAIR. The unfinished business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment offered by the

gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MORAN) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the noes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The Acting CHAIR. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The Acting CHAIR. This will be a 2-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 170, noes 254, not voting 9, as follows:

[Roll No. 190]

AYES—170

Amash
Andrews
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera (CA)
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown (FL)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu
Cicilline
Clarke
Clay
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Crowley
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Garamendi
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hahn
Hanabusa
Heck (WA)
Himes
Hinojosa
Holt
Honda
Horsford
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
Meeks
Meng
Michaud
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Nolan
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters (CA)
Peterson
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rangel
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Schwartz
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Waxman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOES—254

Aderholt
Alexander
Amodei
Bachmann
Bachus
Barber
Barletta
Barr
Barrow (GA)
Barton
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Bonner
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Calvert
Camp
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Cassidy
Chabot
Chaffetz
Cleaver
Coble
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Cook
Cotton
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Cuellar
Culberson
Daines
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallego
Garcia
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grimm
Guthrie
Hall
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (WA)
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Issa
Jenkins
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kline
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Lankford
Latham
Latta
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Long
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Massie
Matheson
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
Olson
Owens
Palazzo
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Peters (MI)
Petri
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Radel
Rahall
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Royce
Ruiz
Runyan
Ruppersberger
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanford
Scalise
Schock
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shea-Porter
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Stewart
Stivers
Stockman
Stutzman
Terry
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Vela
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walorski
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (FL)
Young (IN)

NOT VOTING—9

Campbell
Granger
Hastings (FL)
Higgins
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Markey
McCarthy (NY)
Watt

□ 1928

Ms. GABBARD changed her vote from ''no'' to ''aye.''

So the amendment was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. KING OF IOWA

The Acting CHAIR. The unfinished business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the ayes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The Acting CHAIR. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The Acting CHAIR. This will be a 2-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 192, noes 231, not voting 10, as follows:

[Roll No. 191]

AYES—192

Aderholt
Alexander
Amash
Amodei
Bachmann
Bachus
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Bonner
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Calvert
Camp
Cantor
Carter
Cassidy
Chabot
Chaffetz
Coble
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Cotton
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Daines
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Farenthold
Fincher
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gardner
Garrett
Gibbs
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Guthrie
Hall
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (WA)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hunter
Hurt
Issa
Jenkins
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
Kingston
Kline
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lankford
Latham
Latta
Long
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Marchant
Marino
Massie
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKeon
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Mullin
Mulvaney
Neugebauer
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
Olson
Palazzo
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Radel
Reed
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ross
Rothfus
Royce
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Simpson
Smith (NE)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Stewart
Stockman
Stutzman
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tipton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walorski
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (FL)
Young (IN)

NOES—231

Andrews
Barber
Barletta
Barrow (GA)
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera (CA)
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu
Cicilline
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cook
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar

Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Duffy
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Fitzpatrick
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garcia
Gerlach
Gibson
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Grimm
Gutierrez
Hahn
Hanabusa
Hanna
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Holt
Honda
Horsford
Hoyer
Huffman
Hultgren
Israel
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Joyce
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matheson
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McIntyre
McKinley
McNerney
Meehan
Meeks
Meng
Michaud
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Nolan
O'Rourke
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Peterson
Petri
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Rangel
Reichert
Richmond
Roskam
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Runyan
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schock
Schrader
Schwartz
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (NJ)
Smith (WA)
Speier
Stivers
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tiberi
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walden
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Waxman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth
Young (AK)

NOT VOTING—10

Campbell
Diaz-Balart
Granger
Hastings (FL)
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Markey
McCarthy (NY)
Ros-Lehtinen
Watt

□ 1933

So the amendment was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows:

This Act may be cited as the ''Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2014''.

Mr. CULBERSON. Madam Chairman, I move that the Committee do now rise and report the bill back to the House with sundry amendments and with the recommendation that the amendments be agreed to, and that the bill, as amended, do pass.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HULTGREN) having assumed the chair, Ms. FOXX, Acting Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2216) making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes, and, pursuant to House Resolution 243, she reported the bill back to the House with sundry amendments adopted in the Committee of the Whole, with a recommendation that the amendments be adopted and that the bill, as amended, do pass.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the rule, the previous question is ordered.

Is a separate vote demanded on any amendment reported from the Committee of the Whole? If not, the Chair will put them en gros.

The amendments were agreed to.

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

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

MOTION TO RECOMMIT

Mr. ENYART. Mr. Speaker, I have a motion to recommit at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is the gentleman opposed to the bill?

Mr. ENYART. I am opposed in its present form.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion to recommit.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. ENYART moves to recommit the bill H.R. 2216 to the Committee on Appropriations with instructions to report the same back to the House forthwith with the following amendment:

Page 22, line 10, after the dollar amount, insert ''(increased by $9,200,000)''.

Page 33, line 5, after the dollar amount, insert ''(increased by $9,200,000)''.

Mr. ENYART. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of this amendment to H.R. 2216 to increase funding for veterans claims processors so that we can reduce the disgraceful backlog of claims waiting to be processed.

This is the final amendment to the bill, which will not kill the bill nor send it back to committee. If adopted, the bill will immediately proceed to final passage, as amended.

We have been fighting two wars for over 10 years, which has resulted in a large number of veterans returning home with both physical and mental injuries.

□ 1940

In addition, veterans who served in Vietnam and the gulf war are getting older, and many are discovering health issues that are related to their service. The result is that currently there are over 900,000 veterans' disability claims waiting to be processed. The average wait for that backlog is now 9 months.

We are talking about American heroes like Michael Boren of Energy, Illinois. Michael is a veteran in my district who was in danger of losing his home because the VA took 19 months to track down his paperwork and process his claim. Veterans like Michael are in your district, and you've heard their stories, just as I have. Too many veterans are threatened with home foreclosure, having their cars repossessed, having their credit cards cut off, all because of the VA backlog. It's shameful.

We must act to speed up the process so that disabled, honorably discharged American veterans are not waiting without income for months and years. This motion to recommit adds $9.2 million to hire 94 additional VA claims processors. This doubles the number of claims processors in the base bill. The amendment is fully offset from unobligated and unused funds and funds from military construction.

This vote serves as a lifeline to countless veterans who can no longer wait for this problem to be solved.

When I look out at this House, I look down the center aisle. I look at the right side and see my colleagues, my friends in the party of Dwight David Eisenhower; I see the party of Teddy Roosevelt; I see the party of Abraham Lincoln.

When I look at the left side, I see my friends who represent the party of Harry S. Truman; the party of Franklin Delano Roosevelt; the party of Woodrow Wilson—great wartime leaders, all.

Those great Presidents knew the meaning of commitment to the troops that we sent to defend and protect our Nation. Today, we stand in their shadows. We in Congress committed to send these brave men and women in harm's way for our country. Folks in the Active Duty service, in the Guard, and in the Reserve, they have served us honorably; they have served their commitment proudly. Now we must complete our commitment to veterans in our time.

To paraphrase President Lincoln, many of the votes we cast here in Congress will be little noted, nor long remembered. But the veterans, veterans up there in that gallery, veterans back in your district, veterans all across this Nation will remember this vote; their families will remember this vote. Today, we vote to fulfill the promise of a great Nation to those who have served that great Nation. This is a vote to serve them.

Vote ''yes'' on this final amendment to help veterans get the benefits they have earned and they deserve. Vote ''yes'' on this motion to recommit.

When I step down from this podium, I will walk up that center aisle, not to the right, nor to the left, but up that center aisle, and cast my vote ''yes'' for this amendment, because it is for the veterans and for our great Nation.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair reminds Members to refrain from referring to occupants in the gallery.

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Speaker, I am opposed to the motion to recommit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CULBERSON. Our third-highest priority in the Constitution is to provide for the common defense. This bill, more than any other, has been done in a bipartisan way; this bill more than any other is vitally important to the peace of mind, to the quality of life of our men and women in uniform when they're on Active Duty standing on the walls of Rome defending our freedom and protecting us and putting themselves in harm's way, and the peace of mind and comfort of their families back in the United States and around the world where they're deployed, and when they become veterans and move into the veterans system.

We in this subcommittee, more than any other in the House, have been bipartisan, arm-in-arm, doing everything in our power to help ensure that no man or woman wearing the uniform of the United States should ever worry for one moment about the quality of their life, about the quality of their health care. We think of ourselves as the peace-of-mind committee for the men and women in uniform defending the United States. There's been no more bipartisan bill than this one, there's been no more open bill than this one, there's been no more open process for amendment than the appropriations process.

It is possible, in fact, for you to walk down here on the floor and with a yellow notepad and a pen write an amendment and walk down and hand it to the Clerk at any point during the debate on this bill and have it considered by the House. Yet we got this amendment 3 minutes and 45 seconds before the debate began. It reflects so poorly on the House of Representatives for the minority to present an amendment that we would have happily worked with you on to have accomplished in a bill in an amendment form had you just brought it down to the floor.

In fact, we have given the Veterans Affairs Secretary everything that he's asked for. The Veterans Administration has been given massive increases in funding to handle the claims backlog. In fact, Congressman KINGSTON of Georgia just offered an amendment, which the House has approved, which will cut the salary of the senior leadership of the VA by 25 percent if they don't meet their own deadlines on reducing the backlog.

The United States Congress has literally done everything. We've given them every dollar, everything they have possibly asked for. We've offered you every opportunity to just walk down here and amend the bill, yet you give it to us 3 minutes and 45 seconds before the debate begins. This ought to be exhibit A of why we need a rule in the House that all amendments ought to be published at least 24 hours in advance on the Internet, especially a motion to recommit as embarrassing, frankly, as this one.

I am happy to yield my time to the chairman of the Veterans Committee, Mr. MILLER.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. I thank the chairman very much for yielding his time. And I do think it's important that the Members know that the committee under both Democrat and Republican chairmen have given every dollar, every person, every piece of equipment, every software that the Department of Veterans Affairs has asked for. And to do this at the 12th hour is not the way to make a difference in what we are trying to do.

Our committee, the authorizing committee, has made it their number one focus; and Members here know this. MIKE MICHAUD and I together have worked with our committee members and other Members across the floor trying to make sure that the backlog is taken care of. This is purely a political stunt and not one that we should vote for.

Mr. CULBERSON. I urge Members to defeat this motion to recommit and vote ''no.''

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to recommit.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to recommit.

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

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. ENYART. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, this 5-minute vote on the motion to recommit will be followed by a 5-minute vote on the passage of the bill.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 198, noes 227, not voting 8, as follows:

[Roll No. 192]

AYES—198

Andrews
Barber
Barrow (GA)
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera (CA)
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu
Cicilline
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garcia
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hahn
Hanabusa
Hastings (FL)
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Holt
Honda
Horsford
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matheson
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McIntyre
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Michaud
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Nolan
O'Rourke
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Peterson
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Polis
Posey
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Rangel
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Schwartz
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Waxman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOES—227

Aderholt
Alexander
Amash
Amodei
Bachmann
Bachus
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Bonner
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Calvert
Camp
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Cassidy
Chabot
Chaffetz
Coble
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Cook
Cotton
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Daines
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grimm
Guthrie
Hall
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (WA)
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Issa
Jenkins
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jordan
Joyce
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Lankford
Latham
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Marchant
Marino
Massie
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
Olson
Palazzo
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Petri
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Price (GA)
Radel
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Royce

Runyan
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schock
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Stewart
Stivers
Stockman
Stutzman
Terry
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walorski
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (FL)
Young (IN)

NOT VOTING—8

Campbell
Granger
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Markey
McCarthy (NY)
Watt
Wolf

□ 1955

So the motion to recommit was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

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

Under clause 10 of rule XX, the yeas and nays are ordered.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 421, nays 4, not voting 8, as follows:

[Roll No. 193]

YEAS—421

Aderholt
Alexander
Amash
Amodei
Andrews
Bachmann
Bachus
Barber
Barletta
Barr
Barrow (GA)
Barton
Beatty
Becerra
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bera (CA)
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Bonner
Boustany
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Bustos
Butterfield
Calvert
Camp
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Carter
Cartwright
Cassidy
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Chu
Cicilline
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Connolly
Cook
Cooper
Costa
Cotton
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Daines
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Edwards
Ellison
Ellmers
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farenthold
Farr
Fattah
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garcia
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grijalva
Grimm
Guthrie
Gutierrez
Hahn
Hall
Hanabusa
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Holding
Holt
Honda
Horsford
Hoyer
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huffman
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Israel
Issa
Jenkins
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kline
Kuster
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Lankford
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
Latta
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Long
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lummis
Lynch
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Massie
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
Meadows
Meehan
Meeks
Meng
Messer
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Moore
Moran
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Neugebauer
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
O'Rourke
Olson
Owens
Palazzo
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Paulsen
Payne
Pearce
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Peterson
Petri
Pingree (ME)
Pittenger
Pitts
Pocan
Poe (TX)
Polis
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Quigley
Radel
Rahall
Rangel
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruiz
Runyan
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanford
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schock
Schrader
Schwartz
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Southerland
Speier
Stewart
Stivers
Stockman
Stutzman
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tierney
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walorski
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Waxman
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Welch
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (FL)
Young (IN)

NAYS—4

Bass
Conyers
Miller, George
Nolan

NOT VOTING—8

Campbell
Granger
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Markey
McCarthy (NY)
Watt
Wolf

□ 2004

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION,

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday afternoon, June 4, 2013, I was required to return to my congressional district in Houston, Texas, in order to attend a memorial service for four members of the Houston Fire Department who lost their lives in the line of duty on Friday, May 31, 2013. This tragedy was the deadliest incident in terms of the numbers of firefighters lost in the history of the Houston Fire Department. As the senior Member of the Houston congressional delegation and a senior Member of the Committee on Homeland Security, attending the memorial service was directly related to my representational, legislative, and committee responsibilities.

Because of this excused absence I was not present for rollcall votes 188 through 193.

Had I been present I would have voted as follows:

1. On rollcall No. 188, I would have voted "no."

Broun Amendment, which eliminates funding for an on-going NATO headquarters project (a cut of $38,513,000) and applies the savings to the spending reduction account.

2. On rollcall No. 189, I would have voted "no."

Amodei Amendment, which takes overtime funding from 41 VA regional offices and concentrates it in the 15 offices with the worst backlog.

3. On rollcall No. 190, I would have voted "aye."

Moran Amendment, which language prohibiting the use of funds to construct, renovate or expand any facility in the United States to house any individual detained at United States Naval Station, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, for the purposes of detention or imprisonment.

4. On rollcall No. 191, I would have voted "no."

King (IA) Amendment, which prohibits the use of funds to implement, administer, or enforce the Davis-Bacon Act, which requires federal contractors to pay locally prevailing wages

5. On rollcall No. 192, I would have voted "aye."

Democratic Motion to Recommit H.R. 2216.

6. On rollcall No. 193, I would have voted "aye."

Final Passage of H.R. 2216, Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2014.

EXTREME WEATHER

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

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, as hurricane season begins this week, there is no better time for Congress to refocus its efforts on better protecting our coastline communities and the more than 123 million people that live in them from extreme weather events.

In the wake of hurricanes like Katrina, Rita, Sandy, and Irene, which took lives and destroyed property in my district, extreme weather preparedness should be an issue that both

Democrats and Republicans support now more than ever.

Since 2011, extreme weather episodes have cost $188 billion in property destruction, business closures, and crop damages. Even worse, these storms have taken the lives of 1,107 Americans.

There is ample evidence to believe that this trend of increased extreme weather, which has grown exponentially since 2000, will only continue to get worse. Just today we heard about the widest tornado recorded in United States history at 2.6 miles wide and winds of 296 miles per hour.

We need to ask ourselves: Do we address the climate change problem now or do we continue to ignore future threats, making preventable disasters more and more costly with each passing year of inaction?

As the cochair of the Sustainable Energy and Environment Coalition in the House of Representatives, I suggest we act now.

JOBS IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WENSTRUP). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, tonight we want to talk about jobs in America, we want to talk about how we can rebuild the great American manufacturing sector, and we also want to spend some time talking about a very special part of the American economy, and that is the infrastructure upon which that economy can grow and prosper. So there are many pieces to this puzzle about rebuilding the economic strength of this Nation.

□ 2010

Much of it comes down to what we call the Make It in America agenda. It's an agenda to rebuild the great manufacturing sector of this Nation. That's where the middle class found its strength. That's where the middle class grew following World War II. Unfortunately, in the last 15 years or so, we've seen a decline from some 20 million Americans in manufacturing down to perhaps 11 million.

In recent months, we've seen a resurgence in part due to some changes in law that we've put in place that end tax breaks that American corporations received when they sent jobs overseas—really foolish tax breaks. We ended many of those, and we have a few more to go. What we want to do is give manufacturers, American corporations and others, who want to on shore bring jobs back to America, we want to give them a tax break.

So the Make It in America agenda is about rebuilding that great American manufacturing base. There are many different parts to it. Part of it is the infrastructure system.

I was talking to one of my friends from the Connecticut area just a few moment ago, and he said, Listen, I can't be with you tonight, but what I want you to say is we had a terrible Amtrak train wreck in Connecticut just a week ago, and we think it may have been due to bad track.

That's the infrastructure, folks. We really need to build that train system here in America, the infrastructure for it.

I'm going to put up one more sign here before I call upon my friend from New York. Here it is. Now, that's a beautiful locomotive. That's an American-made locomotive. So this is manufacturing. This is an American-made locomotive by a German company, Siemens, one of the great industrial companies in this world. They bid on almost a half-a-billion-dollar project that was in the stimulus bill for 70 locomotives for Amtrak that had to be American made. This German company said half a billion dollars, American made, we can do that. They set up a factory in Sacramento, California, and that's the first American-made locomotive in many, many decades, or generations, and it's a beauty. It's electric. I think it's about 7,500 horsepower, and it's going to be used here on the East Coast and on that Boston to Washington, D.C., track. Hopefully, it'll be rebuilt.

Joining me tonight in this discussion about infrastructure and jobs and Make It in America is my friend from New York, PAUL TONKO. We're redoing the East-West show.

Mr. TONKO. Representative GARAMENDI, thank you for leading us in this hour discussion focusing on jobs—from a manufacturing sector, jobs from an investment. They come about in an investment in research, R&D, and they come about through innovation.

We have talked about this many times on this floor, that we come from districts that have that keen sense of vision about how to do it smarter, which can be that difference in the competitive edge that our businesses require in an international marketplace.

What I like about the investment through this package, Make It in America, is an across-the-board holistic approach, incentives that provide everything from encouragement to the local industries to retrofit and rebuild their manufacturing processes; to investment in the workforce, making certain that those cutting-edge skills and trades are being developed within our workers, making certain that we have that human infrastructure up and ready to go so as to be robustly competitive; and also talking about the investment in this ideas economy, which speaks to the sophistication of our American society. The intellectual capacity that is harnessed to produce jobs is an awesome measure that allows us to maintain a great bit of hope that we can robustly respond to the needs of today's economy, an international economy, and be a winning agent out there. And it happens with this investment. That's how we grow jobs.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. TONKO, you have come to a very important point here, and that is: Before you came to Congress, you headed up a consortium in New York that did precisely that, didn't you?

Mr. TONKO. Absolutely. I was at the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, and we saw what public-private matches were about. We were able to deal with the ideas economy. We came up with new ways to harness energy, to create energy efficiency in the outcome, and by so doing, innovation and research equals jobs, good-paying jobs that allow us, again, to have that cutting edge of cleverness, of having a thoughtful way to do things. The smart factor can win those contracts on an international scale. So I'm thrilled about what we can do through research.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Well, the Make It in America agenda has many, many parts to it. It has a research piece. It has an innovation piece. It has some tax issues to it. All of these have been packaged and pulled together by our leader, STENY HOYER, who I see has joined us on the floor.

Maryland is on the East Coast. California is on the West Coast, so now we've augmented our East Coast-West Coast show. Mr. HOYER, thank you so very much for your leadership on Make It in America.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for taking the floor, and I thank the gentleman from New York for joining in. I think that we are on the cusp of a real expansion and reinvigoration of our manufacturing sector in this country for a lot of reasons that I point out around the country, and I know the two of you do as well.

First of all, salaries are going up overseas. That's good news for them and, frankly, for us.

Furthermore, as we all know, it's costing a lot more to ship goods back to the biggest market in the world than it used to.

Thirdly, I think both of you have talked about energy. We are about to become an energy-independent Nation with energy that has a cost less than most of our competitors around the world, so we have become, in a relatively short period of time, I think, in many respects, the venue of choice for someone who wants to either expand or establish manufacturing here in this country or, frankly, continue to grow things in this country.

As you know, our Make It in America agenda really has four component parts. One is having a plan. Nobody talks about this more than JOHN GARAMENDI of California, and God bless you for that. Thank you so much for your leadership on this issue. And PAUL TONKO from New York also has been very focused on this issue, and I thank him for that.

The second part of the agenda is to not only have a plan, but be focused on exports, be focused on building markets for small, medium, and large businesses. Large businesses have the resources to look for markets themselves. In many respects, small- and medium-sized businesses do not, but they are producing products that they can sell not only here but around the world.

President Obama was in Baltimore not too long ago at a relatively small company, Ellicott Dredges, in Baltimore. They have sold dredges to over 100 countries in the world, and they are making those dredges in America.

The third part is to encourage bringing jobs home, not sending them overseas. It makes no sense to have a tax policy that gives benefits to people who are sending job overseas while we have millions of Americans who can't find jobs. So what we want to do is incentivize bringing jobs home by giving a tax break for not only bringing jobs home, but creating jobs here in America.

Lastly—you both referenced this—we need to make sure that we have a 21st century workforce. As a result, we need to invest, as the gentleman from New York just said—I am just repeating his words, but I use them all the time as well—we need to invest in education, innovation, and infrastructure. That's what helps you grow American manufacturing jobs. And Americans, when they're polled, over 85 percent of them say, if America is going to be the kind of country we want it to be, it will be because we make things here in the United States of America. And the ''Made in America'' label is seen all over the world. In fact, the ''Made in America'' label is a very popular label all over the world.

So I want to thank the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) and the gentleman from New York for their leadership and their focus on what is critical: if the next generation of Americans is going to make it, that we provide the kinds of jobs and opportunity, as well as education and investment in innovation, that they need to continue to live in the most successful economic country on the face of the Earth. I thank the gentleman for his leadership.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. HOYER, thank you so very much. As I've heard you say over and over again, America will make it when we Make It in America.

Mr. HOYER. Amen.

□ 2020

Mr. GARAMENDI. Thank you very much for joining us.

Mr. TONKO, education, innovation, infrastructure—those are keys. There are a couple of other keys, as Mr. HOYER was saying. Part of it is our tax policy, the policies that come out of this building. And we can really do the kinds of things, laws, that really make a difference.

I put up that picture of that new Amtrak locomotive. It was a law, the Stimulus Act, that allowed the men and women in Sacramento, some 200 of them, plus another 70 companies that are the supply chain that supply the various parts to this locomotive to have a job.

And what happened in the stimulus bill was, okay, we're going to spend half a billion dollars for 70 locomotives for Amtrak. But, another sentence, they must be American-made, using American taxpayer money to buy American-made equipment.

So we now have this manufacturing plant in Sacramento. We now have men and women employed, not only in Sacramento, but around the Nation, making the various parts for this most advanced locomotive.

So it's public policy. I have a bill in that does that. It requires that if we're going to build the infrastructure and locomotives, buses, trains, roads, bridges, and use American taxpayer money, then we must be buying American-made products. Pretty simple stuff. It's the Buy America, and it creates jobs in America.

I know you have several pieces of legislation that you're sponsoring and supporting. You may want to bring those up. We'll talk about them for a few moments.

Mr. TONKO. Sure. The wordsmithing that you talk about is so critical. The addition of language that clarifies or specifically states ''made in America'' as an outcome, very critical to the legislation. And two things were happening. The wordsmithing didn't happen as tenderly as it should have for American workers, but there was also a disinvestment in manufacturing as a sector of our economy. And agriculture was ignored. Manufacturing was ignored.

Service sector was paid attention to; and then more narrowly, financial services got great attention. But we know that story: turn your back as government, say go function as you choose, and create derivatives to avoid government overview and avoid the watchdog. And we saw trillions lost to American households because of that failure.

Here there's a conscious attempt to say, no, we're not going to pay to have you ship jobs offshore. Yes, we're going to pay to have you bring them back. Yes, we're going to invest in workers. Yes, we're going to invest in research to develop new processes.

I have a bill that deals with energy efficiency that allows for us to enhance the efficiency of turbines that are being produced in Schenectady, that are being made in Schenectady at GE, and then exported to the markets around the world.

Routinely, I am showcasing manufacturing in my district so that the media, as a partner, can showcase what's happening right in our very neighborhoods, and that the story fully, complete and told to everyone, is that we're also exporting from Tech Valley, New York. That is so important for people to know, and we need to enhance that.

We need to provide for the reinforcement, the underpinning of support through language in bills, resources that are attached to various appropriations bills, and pointing a focus on American manufacturing.

I saw what happened through an incubator program at RPI, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, in my district, where a local manufacturer was able to revisit his process, his manufacturing process. They upgraded it, went to a community college in the district, Hudson Valley Community College, which trained the workers from this facility how to use this new automated piece; and now they've added workers who are specifically trained on this automated concept. They're winning contracts, and Kintz Plastics in Schoharie, New York, in the upstate New York region, a rural county setting, by the way, is strengthened by all that investment.

That's what it takes. It's a focus, laser-sharp focus on how to meet the various elements of the equation that will take us to a winning effort. And it's straightforward, it's thought out, it's not mindless.

Instead of issues of ignoring manufacturing, providing for sequestration that automatically cuts programs where there ought to be investment, let's move forward with a sound budget. Let's move forward with an agenda that produces jobs.

The President has introduced a package that calls for a budget that's real, that displaces sequestration. He knows of the damage that that would do to the economy and to the investment in manufacturing that is needed now in a very targeted way.

So this is a thoughtful, mindful, analytical, academically driven agenda that really speaks to the needs of all sorts of efficiency operations, turbines that will be built to better scale, that will allow for better outcomes and save us, in the process, save jobs in the process, grow jobs, and then provide for more productivity on the local scene.

So, I think it's incredibly successful when we just apply simple logic to the situation.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. TONKO, I certainly agree about logic and the sometimes lack of logic, the sequestration, which is no sense, otherwise known as nonsense, but extraordinarily damaging.

But you're talking about Rensselaer and what came out of that. I'll give you an example in my own district, Davis, California, University of California-Davis. And here's where your discussion really meets the road.

The engineering school did computerized programming for machine tools and did some very advanced research on how to do that. One of the Japanese companies that manufactured machine tools, one of the most advanced machine tool manufacturers in the world, Mori Seiki, came over to University of

California-Davis, talked to the engineers and the students and the professors that were putting together this computerized system for machine tools and said, we want to be part of that.

And so they began to use it and realized that what they needed to do was to be right next to the research so that they could constantly upgrade their machines. And they, therefore, came to Davis, California, built a factory, hired, I think, about 120 people now; and they're making the most advanced machine tools, computerized-driven machine tools anywhere in the world right in Davis, California.

So we can see the connection between research, the adaptation of that research into the manufacturing process, and then the jobs. These are all middle class jobs and above that are now available in Davis, California. And there are others that spin off from that, providing certain parts of it. So these are the keys.

Now, here's where the nonsense comes in. If those are the keys to industrial growth and manufacturing and job growth, why is it that we have a budget that's going to be back on the floor tomorrow that actually cuts research, cuts the educational components, cuts the job training, the retraining that's necessary, and doesn't do anything to create jobs except reduce the Federal support that has been critical in this Nation's history?

Why would we do that?

I don't understand, but it's going to be back here. This is the Republican Ryan budget. They're going to play some games tomorrow, try to pretend that somehow it passed the Senate when, in fact, we really need a budget conference committee so that we can sort out our differences, so we can lay the platform for future economic growth.

But that's not what that budget does. It's exactly the opposite. It's an austerity budget, and it cuts those things that really do create economic growth.

Unfortunate, but we have a different agenda; and we want that agenda of growth.

We, perhaps, ought to shift our gears here a little bit and talk about the infrastructure component which is integral to this. You mentioned it earlier.

I know that in your area a year ago you had tremendous flooding; and so the infrastructure, the protection from that, you may want to pick that up, and I'll follow along.

Mr. TONKO. Sure. Even the data compilation there, the research that's done with the weather patterns, putting together data that's compiled that are very compelling bits of information allow us to grow back smarter. If we're just going to rebuild after the damages of these consequences of Mother Nature——

Mr. GARAMENDI. It's global warming.

Mr. TONKO. Yes. And we have to be real about this. We have to take into mind and heart the situations out there. And to just simply rebuild and ignore the facts, if there's increased precipitation over the last 20 years, markedly so, discernibly speaking to us, we need to move forward accordingly. And so there should be retrofits that are responding to the data.

□ 2030

You don't rebuild a bridge to the same span and same height if the water volume is growing exponentially. We have combined heat and power situations that were impacted or survived the consequences of the disaster of Superstorm Sandy. Should we revisit how we rebuild some of the electric infrastructure?

So there are calls here that challenge us, that require us to do it more wisely, to do it more effectively, and to do it with intelligent approaches that allow us to use the innovative approaches that are available.

I watch what is being designed here by so many of the startup industries that are taking into account climate change, taking into account the various elements that are impacting us, causing coastal areas on your coast, on my coast of this country, where people need to rebuild in a clever way and in a way that's sensitive to the demands of the system. And the threshold years out there by which we need to respond to climate change are quickly approaching us. Some suggest as early as 2017. Others will stretch it to 2020. Regardless, that is around the corner. And the call to order here is to be sophisticated in the approach. Go forward, do it with science, do it with intellect, do it academically, so that we can grow jobs that are going to respond to the pressures out there that are bearing down upon us and are undeniable. Let's get the stuff done.

Recently, I went to several college graduations in my district. And to see the technical strength walking across that stage. From doctorates to master's degrees to bachelor's degrees, there is great talent being released out there. Let's put it to work so this Nation can build upon that pioneer spirit that has always driven us. There's just such great opportunity here. And if you believe that all the products ever required by humankind have been conceived, prototyped, developed, manufactured, and sold, the story is over. But we know better than that. Products are being developed as we speak. And the challenge to a sophisticated society such as ours, it's okay. Maybe some of those manufactured goods that you did a century ago are now replaced by some new, precision-oriented, heavy-duty ideas reformulation that really allows us to be clever in the attempt.

Mr. GARAMENDI. The infrastructure system of this Nation is the foundation for the economy. And any economic growth that we have has to be built on a solid infrastructure. The American Society of Civil Engineers rates the American infrastructure at a D. That's not good. That's doggone bad, actually. You take a look at the other countries of the world, China and others, that are building first class infrastructure, and you come to the United States and see that we're really not. We're way behind.

You talked about the safety issue. I have probably well over 1,100 miles of levees in my district that are flood protection. And they're decades old. They need to be upgraded. So just in terms of the communities being safe—for example, Natomas, in Sacramento, is an area that I share with Congresswoman MATSUI and is one of the riskiest places in America for flooding, right behind New Orleans. We need to upgrade those levees so that that community can, A, be safe and, B, grow. We know that other areas in my district have the same problem.

Yet at the same time, the sequestration, to go back to that nonsense, removes $250 million of levee improvements from the Army Corps of Engineers' budget. So projects are going to be delayed. We're going to have another winter and, God willing, we won't have a flood. But it could happen. The money that is necessary to rebuild those levees is gone.

The President has been very, very upfront about this. The President was standing right behind us here at the State of the Union and said, We need to build our infrastructure. And he proposed three things. First of all, he wants to put in an additional $50 billion to be spent in the near term—this year and the year after—to really give a major push for America's infrastructure. He also said we need an infrastructure bank. Europe has had one for nearly three decades, and it really helps to finance projects that have a cash flow: sanitation systems, water systems, toll roads, toll bridges, and the like.

The other thing that I think we ought to do is, when we spend that money, we ought to spend it on American-made equipment. And that's what my bill does. The other part of this is that we really need to address the infrastructure issue with a very robust program.

I'm going to take this for just a second. For every $1 that we invest in infrastructure, there is a boost to the economy of $1.57. So by investing in the infrastructure, we actually grow the economy more than a one-to-one basis. It's $1.57 for every $1 that we invest. And so you set this kind of economic growth going on and you've built the foundation for the future. That's what we ought to be doing.

So I ask my Republican colleagues here: pay attention. Forget about whether it's President Obama or President whomever. Infrastructure is really, really important. Take up what the President has suggested. Call it a Republican suggestion. Boost the infrastructure spending in this Nation. Put the men and women who build America's foundation back to work so that

we have a foundation for economic growth and for safety.

Let's realize that we had a train wreck in Connecticut. Was it caused by a bad track situation? Possibly. We had a bridge collapse in Washington State. We know that that was an infrastructure maintenance problem. We have potholes. We know that the economy of this Nation has slowed down because of traffic jams and insufficient capacities on our highways. And we know that we have insufficient transit systems. In New York, you need to rebuild, as you just discussed, from Superstorm Sandy.

Mr. TONKO. Absolutely. When you talk about roads and bridges, my home county of Montgomery, New York, in my district, was host to a terrible bridge collapse. We commemorated in 2012 the 25th anniversary of the collapse of a thruway bridge that took several lives. That was a stark reminder 25, 26 years ago. We have only accumulated more concern for deficiencies.

So it's roads and bridges. It's rail, as you made mention. But it's also telecommunications and utilities. You look at a system that was engineered to be a monopoly, serving regions of energy needs for people, and then with deregulation came the wheeling of electrons from region to region, State to State, nation to nation. You had Canada wheeling in electrons to New York State. We need to upgrade the system. The interconnection devices need to be upgraded. There's new technology. You get more efficiency, less line loss. These are the things that are smart. And we're asking with this package that we've talked about here tonight, let's be smart. Let's respect the hard-earned tax dollars that are under our stewardship.

In August of 2003, I was serving in State government in New York when we had a major collapse of the system that was driven by transmission. An outage in Ohio triggered a collapse into New York. So Ohio put out the lights on Broadway in New York City. And this was long-term in its consequences. Great economic loss, great challenge to us. In the midst of homeland security, anti-terrorist sentiment, you had a glaring, gaping vulnerability for terrorist minds to see that weakness.

We need to invest in the infrastructure. So an infrastructure bank bill, you're absolutely right, is a tremendously strong, powerful way to leverage public-private sector matches to extend the opportunities, to grow the opportunities to make investments in all sorts of infrastructure.

I live in one of the oldest sections of the country. Our water-sewer systems are antiquated. Our utility sectors are very, very old.

□ 2040

The upgrades that are required, the technology that can be invested, the cutting-edge improvements that are part and parcel to that solution, these are incredible opportunities for us to strengthen the outcome for businesses. We have business coming in to upstate New York that, in one case, Global Foundries, represents some of the greatest job growth in the world for chip manufacturing. Are they energy intensive? You better believe they are. Do we need state-of-the-art hookups? Do we need reliability and predictability in that capacity that's delivered? Absolutely. So we know what the needs of business happen to be. We know how best to respond to that. We do it through clever, public, progressive policy that enables us to see the worthiness of investment.

Belt tightening, we've talked about this before—waste, inefficiency, fraud, outmoded programs undone. We belt tighten. But that is cut where you can so that you invest where you must. And that mantra should guide us: cut where you can so you invest where you must.

And the infrastructure requires our response. You need to move freight. You need to move workers. You need to have safety addressed, public safety addressed. I saw the consequences. I saw the deaths that came from the tragic collapse of a thruway bridge in upstate New York 26 years ago. That should not be repeated. That sort of tragedy should be avoided with any clever cost being assumed. And here we're asking simply to put people to work.

This is not just spending money. It's investing in workers that will make for a stronger outcome, and it provides for state-of-art opportunities. And that's where the business partnership is with this country. If you're going to sit there and say we're just going to cut our way to prosperity, cut our way to deficit reduction, and cut our way to job growth, it's not going to happen that way.

Mr. GARAMENDI. No, it certainly won't. You've been talking about bridge collapses, the bridge that collapsed in the Twin Cities, Minnesota and Wisconsin, lives lost. We're continuing to see the infrastructure, bridges and others, unable to really carry the modern loads that are there, rusting and falling down. We need to really address that.

You did raise an essential point about the electric grid, that power infrastructure, the electric power infrastructure of this Nation, critically important. We need to make the investments there. And we're also making—Mr. HOYER talked about the energy independence that we're moving towards in the United States. One part of that is the natural gas that is now being more readily available and at a reasonable price, and we're seeing the repowering of many of the coal-fired power plants using natural gas, which also reduces the greenhouse gas emissions from coal. All of that is good.

I want to pick up another area of infrastructure that's really important. I've now become the ranking member of the Coast Guard and Maritime. While I've always been interested in the ports, at least in the California ports, I'm now in a position here to spend even more time focusing on the ports and the maritime industry. International commerce, critically important to economic growth, Mr. HOYER talked about the export potential that this country has and will even grow more in the future, but that is also the ports and the airports.

Both of these, airports and the ports, are unable to meet the demands of modern and advanced transportation. Many of the ports in America need to be deepened so that the new container ships that are now coming into play and many of the new oil tankers and the rest can access the American ports. In doing so, we will be able to maintain the vitality of international trade, the export market, which we really must, once again, dominate, and the jobs that go with the ports.

And so it's ports and it's railroads that lead out of the ports and the trucking industry that goes out of it so that we need a comprehensive transportation plan. We're going to rewrite the Surface Transportation Act in this session of Congress, start on it this year, get it done in, well, hopefully this year or maybe next year—not maybe. We have to do it next year because we see the expiration of the current transportation plan.

So there's enormous responsibilities that we have to create the infrastructure upon which America grows. It's the roads. It's the ports. It's the airports. It's the electrical system and the communication systems. All of these are critical, and all of them, in one way or another, are dependent upon the actions taken by the 435 of us in the House of Representatives and the 100 Members of the Senate and, of course, the President.

Bear in mind that the President has presented to the Congress a very robust infrastructure plan that takes into account all of the elements that we've discussed here tonight. Very, very little of that has actually been taken up in any committee hearing, and what we have seen pass the House thus far is not the kind of robust investment that is needed for infrastructure but quite the opposite: a disinvestment through such things as the sequestration and the Ryan budget which will be back on the floor again in the next day or so. These are not the way you grow the economy. These are austerity programs that actually reduce the investments that we need for the foundation of America's economic growth: education, research, infrastructure investment, modern manufacturing. These are the keys, and we have to do it.

Mr. TONKO, we've gone through most of our time. If you'd like to take a wrap, and then I'll take a wrap and we'll call it a night.

Mr. TONKO. Well, you talk about the challenges that we have out there, and you've listed what I think is a very aggressive agenda but a doable agenda; and I think to reinforce the doability

of it, the acceptability of it, perhaps we just need to recall some of our most golden moments in American history when we were challenged, when there was a need to respond with boldness, with vision, and with courage. We did it.

My district is the donor area in a large way to the Erie Canal system. You talk about ports. It grew a port out of a little town called New York. It was that port of entry that then allowed for the shipping of goods up the Hudson into the Mohawk, into the Erie Canal system, a system that was brought about under tough times. The proponents of the canal said, Look, we're going to do this; it's a tough time, but let's invest.

Did that prove successful? You'd better believe it. It sparked the westward movement and an industrial revolution, gave birth to a necklace of communities called mill towns. Mill towns became the powerful epicenters of invention and innovation.

When President Roosevelt, Franklin Roosevelt, led this Nation out of its worst economic crunch, it was about investing in America, putting people to work and developing projects that were essential to our hopeful tomorrow. It put a lot of people to work. It pulled us out of the doldrums of the Depression and allowed us to rise from the situation and provide, again, hope for this Nation.

President Eisenhower, understanding that in some tough times we needed to develop an interstate system for our highway network because, again, it was transporting and shipping of goods and we needed to modernize and advance what was best for America, that golden moment of our history should speak to us.

Certainly, President Kennedy picked up on that Sputnik moment when we dusted off our backside and said, Never again. He called us together as a nation, a rather youthful President, saying, We're going to win this global race on space. We're going to do it, because with passionate resolve, we're going to say ''yes'' to the investments required so as to stake that American flag as the first flag onto the surface of the Moon, winning that race, that global race on space. And we did it because we invested, we believed, and we resolved with passion and worked together as a nation.

So, let's take inspiration from those golden moments, an Erie Canal, an FDR comeback with the workers corps and the building of an infrastructure, highway infrastructure, and the winning of a global race on space. Let's let that speak to us as a nation. Let us move forward with the passion and the resolve and say, Invest in the clean energy, science and tech, innovation economy. We know we can win this. But if we sit there complacently and don't allow for the investment in our workforce, deny the potential of this Nation, that is not leadership. That is not leadership. We will then be passed by by other nations.

We have the intellect that can be harnessed here to grow the sophisticated products, to deal with a position orientation of manufacturing today, to provide for advanced manufacturing, to come up with clever batteries as a linchpin to the energy revolution, and the list goes on and on and on. Leadership from this Chamber can make a difference, and a sound budget, an honest budget, one that invests in America is what we require right now.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. TONKO, thank you so very much. Your passion on this has been displayed on this floor numerous times as we talked about making it in America, about jobs and infrastructure. As you were going through that recitation of American history, I want to go back even further than the canal period. Let's go back to our very first President, George Washington.

□ 2050

He refused to go through the Inaugural in a suit made by England. So he wanted an American-made suit. He found the cloth from Boston and a tailor, and wore an American-made suit.

He also, immediately on taking office, our very first President in the very first days in his office, turned to his Treasury secretary, Alexander Hamilton, and said: We need to develop the manufacturing in this country. I want you to develop a plan on manufacturers.

Hamilton went out—I don't know if he had a committee or not—but he came back with a report. It was probably 30 to 50 pages. Now it would be 30–50,000 pages. But nonetheless, he came back with a report—I think he had about 15 different thoughts in it—and they were precisely on this subject of ''making it in America.''

You will love this. One of the very first things in that document was: We need to build the infrastructure; canals, roads, and ports. The very first President said: The role of the Federal Government is to help build the infrastructure. And here we are centuries later still debating how we're going to do it. Well, just pay attention to the Founding Fathers. They told us how to do it.

They also said we ought to spend the American taxpayers' money on American-made goods. It's in that document dating back to the very first policies of this Nation. And so when I introduced this bill that says use the taxpayer money to buy American-made products, it's not new, folks. I'm simply copying what Alexander Hamilton suggested to George Washington and the first Congress of the United States.

There are other elements in it that play into this in a similar way. And certainly we know that Thomas Jefferson was really big on education. And so the University of Virginia came up. These are the elements of economic growth.

Here we are—435 of us in the House of Representatives—and the question for us is are we going to put in place policies that provide the foundation for economic growth, or are we going to go the opposite direction and continue on the austerity route which actually disinvests on those key elements that create economic growth?

For me, I'm an investor, I want to invest in America's future with infrastructure, education, innovation, research, and manufacturing in America. Those are the policies that I believe we need to put in place, Mr. TONKO. You and I have been here many nights and we've talked about these issues many, many times. And we're not going to stop, are we?

Mr. TONKO. You know, we're not. And I think it's, again, that belief, that sense that we can accomplish; as you were talking about, those early, early days from our humble beginnings.

I was reminded of the event this weekend in my district in Saratoga where we were revisiting the area that hosted General Burgoyne's surrender to the American troops after the Battle of Saratoga. And this was the David and Goliath routine. We weren't supposed to win that battle. It's been dubbed the battle of the millennium. And that it was more than a national battle. It made a statement around the world that this mighty force came up against insurmountable odds and won. That's in our DNA.

We are replete in our history of all sorts of response that came in powerful measure, that said, ''this is America at her best.'' That's the moment to seize right here. Not to walk away and sequester us, weaken us, disinvest in us, defund us.

I told a group of young students this weekend with the Hugh O'Brien Youth Leadership Conference, hundreds of students: Do not let us as a political generation undo your political generation. You are worthy of education dollars, you are in need of access affordability to a college path, you deserve your climate change to be addressed, your planet requires our stewardship. What is this walking away from the next generation? Is that our legacy? Is that what we want our legacy to be? Or is it us remembered as a generation that faced immense challenge after a difficult recession and we came to terms and said the academics applied here show us how to work our way through this critical test and how to invest in America so that her best days lie ahead?

That's responding with fairness, with respect, and justice to that next generation of workers who are only asking us to do what generations before us did: Believe in us, care for us, invest in us, so only our best will be available for us, our best opportunities.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. TONKO, I don't think I could say it better. And so what I think I will say is, Mr. Speaker, we yield back our time.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 8 o'clock and 55 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, June 5, 2013, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

1691. A letter from the Secretary, Commodity Futures Trading Commission, transmitting the Commission's ''Major'' final rule — Core Principles and Other Requirements for Swap Execution Facilities (RIN Number: 3038-AD18) receivd June 3, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

1692. A letter from the Administrator, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Pears Grown in Oregon and Washington; Committee Membership Reapportionment for Processed Pears [Doc. No.: AMS-FV-12-0032; FV12-927-3 FR] received May 8, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

1693. A letter from the Administrator, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Milk in the Northeast and Other Marketing Areas; Order Amending the Orders [Doc. No.: AMS-DA-07-0026; AO-14-A77, et al.; DA-07-02] received May 28, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

1694. A letter from the Administrator, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Lamb Promotion, Research, and Information Order; Amendment to the Order To Raise the Assessment Rate [No.: AMS-LS-11-0038] received May 28, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

1695. A letter from the Administrator, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Irish Potatoes Grown in Colorado; Reestablishment of Membership on the Colorado Potato Administrative Committee, Area No. 2 [Doc. No.: AMS-FV-12-0044; FV12-948-2 FR] received May 8, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

1696. A letter from the Principal Deputy Under Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting a report entitled, ''Combating Terrorism Activities FY 2014 Budget Estimates''; to the Committee on Armed Services.

1697. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's FY 2012 annual performance report to Congress required by the Prescription Drug User Fee Act of 1992 (PDUFA), as amended, pursuant to 21 U.S.C. 379g note; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1698. A letter from the Secretary, Department of the Treasury, transmitting as required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c), and section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), and pursuant to Executive Order 13313 of July 31, 2003, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to to the Western Balkans that was declared in Executive Order 13219 of June 26, 2001; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

1699. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting Transmittal of D.C. ACT 20-76, ''Certified Business Enterprise Compliance Temporary Act of 2013''; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

1700. A letter from the Acting General Counsel, Office of Management and Budget, transmitting seven reports pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows;

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky: Committee on Appropriations. Report on the Suballocation of Budget Allocations for Fiscal Year 2014 (Rept. 113–96). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. HASTINGS of Washington (for himself, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. FLORES, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. LAMALFA, and Mr. WITTMAN):

H.R. 2231. A bill to amend the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act to increase energy exploration and production on the Outer Continental Shelf, provide for equitable revenue sharing for all coastal States, implement the reorganization of the functions of the former Minerals Management Service into distinct and separate agencies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. GRAVES of Missouri (for himself, Mr. HANNA, Mr. PETERS of California, Mr. HUNTER, and Mr. COLLINS of New York):

H.R. 2232. A bill to amend the Small Business Act to permit prime contractors covered by a subcontracting plan pertaining to a single contract with a Federal agency to receive credit against such a plan for using small business subcontractors at any level of subcontracting, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business.

By Mr. BILIRAKIS:

H.R. 2233. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a credit against tax for hurricane and tornado mitigation expenditures; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BISHOP of New York:

H.R. 2234. A bill to reduce and prevent the sale and use of fraudulent degrees in order to protect the integrity of valid higher education degrees that are used for Federal employment purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and in addition to the Committees on Oversight and Government Reform, Energy and Commerce, and the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. CAPUANO (for himself, Mr. KEATING, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. NEAL, Mr. TIERNEY, and Ms. TSONGAS):

H.R. 2235. A bill to amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to provide death benefits for campus police officers; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CHABOT (for himself, Ms. LOFGREN, Ms. ESHOO, Ms. CHU, Mr. FARENTHOLD, Mr. CHAFFETZ, and Mr. COBLE):

H.R. 2236. A bill to amend title 35, United States Code, to modify the definition of micro entity; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. CHU (for herself, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mr. HONDA, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. LEWIS, Mr. POLIS, and Mr. LOEBSACK):

H.R. 2237. A bill to strengthen student achievement and graduation rates and prepare young people for college, careers, and citizenship through innovative partnerships that meet the comprehensive needs of children and youth; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. COSTA (for himself and Mr. POE of Texas):

H.R. 2238. A bill to amend the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 to exempt the Crime Victims Fund from sequestration; to the Committee on the Budget.

By Mr. COTTON:

H.R. 2239. A bill to reduce the number of Federal judgeships for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BLUMENAUER (for himself, Mr. ROHRABACHER, Mr. POLIS, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. FARR, Mr. COHEN, Mr. PERLMUTTER, and Ms. LEE of California):

H.R. 2240. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow deductions and credits relating to expenditures in connection with marijuana sales conducted in compliance with State law; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. DIAZ-BALART (for himself and Mr. HARRIS):

H.R. 2241. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a credit for owning certain disaster resilient property; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. ENGEL:

H.R. 2242. A bill to enable State and local promotion of natural gas, flexible fuel, and high-efficiency motor vehicle fleets; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. ENYART:

H.R. 2243. A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Air Force to make competitive grants to support research and development, education, and training to produce a bio-based aviation fuel for use by the Air Force; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas (for himself, Mr. CRAWFORD, Mr. COTTON, and Mr. WOMACK):

H.R. 2244. A bill to designate the attack that occurred at a recruiting station in Little Rock, Arkansas, on June 1, 2009, in which Private William Long of the United States Army was killed and Private Quinton Ezeagwula of the United States Army was wounded, as an international terrorist attack for which the two soldiers are to be awarded the Purple Heart; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. LANKFORD:

H.R. 2245. A bill to prohibit the Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation from making grants, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico (for himself and Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico):

H.R. 2246. A bill to amend the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in order to

limit the penalties to a State that does not meet its maintenance of effort level of funding to a one-time penalty; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mrs. LUMMIS:

H.R. 2247. A bill to amend the Arms Export Control Act to provide that certain firearms listed as curios or relics may be imported into the United States by a licensed importer without obtaining authorization from the Department of State or the Department of Defense, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mrs. CAPPS, Ms. DEGETTE, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. ELLISON, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. FARR, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. LOFGREN, Mrs. LOWEY, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. MORAN, Mr. NADLER, Ms. PINGREE of Maine, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Ms. SPEIER, and Ms. TSONGAS):

H.R. 2248. A bill to ban the use of bisphenol A in food containers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. MORAN (for himself, Mr. FOSTER, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, and Mr. POLIS):

H.R. 2249. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to provide for the payment of monthly annuities under the Survivor Benefit Plan to a supplemental or special needs trust established for the sole benefit of a disabled dependent child of a participant in the Survivor Benefit Plan; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. OWENS (for himself, Mr. RENACCI, and Mrs. BUSTOS):

H.R. 2250. A bill to require the head of each executive agency to submit a report on the implementation of Government Accountability Office reports on reducing duplication, achieving savings, and enhancing revenue within the Federal Government; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and in addition to the Committee on Rules, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. PETERSON (for himself, Mr. WALZ, Mr. KLINE, Mr. PAULSEN, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. ELLISON, Mrs. BACHMANN, and Mr. NOLAN):

H.R. 2251. A bill to designate the United States courthouse located at 118 South Mill Street, in Fergus Falls, Minnesota, as the ''Edward J. Devitt United States Courthouse''; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. POLIS (for himself, Mr. PETRI, Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. PAULSEN, Mr. GUTHRIE, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. DELANEY, and Mr. SCHOCK):

H.R. 2252. A bill to amend the charter school program under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. SCHOCK:

H.R. 2253. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to consolidate the current education tax incentives into one credit against income tax for higher education expenses, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. SEWELL of Alabama:

H.R. 2254. A bill to establish the Alabama Black Belt National Heritage Area, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. VAN HOLLEN (for himself, Mr. WOLF, and Mr. DELANEY):

H.R. 2255. A bill to amend the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Development Act to extend to the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park Commission; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. WALZ (for himself, Mr. NOLAN, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. ELLISON, and Mr. PETERSON):

H.R. 2256. A bill to amend the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 to improve the coordination of refinery outages, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Ms. WILSON of Florida:

H.R. 2257. A bill to amend the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to create a pilot program to award grants to units of general local government and community-based organizations to create jobs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. BENTIVOLIO:

H. Res. 245. A resolution recognizing the 24th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre, calling for the release of Dr. Wang Bingzhang, and for other reasons; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Ms. JACKSON LEE (for herself, Mr. BRADY of Texas, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. MCCAUL, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. POE of Texas, Mr. CULBERSON, Mr. OLSON, Mr. STOCKMAN, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, and Mr. KING of New York):

H. Res. 246. A resolution expressing condolences to the families and loved ones of firefighters Matthew Renaud, Robert Bebee, Robert Garner, and Anne Sullivan and standing in solidarity with their families, members of the Houston Fire Department, and entire Houston community, as they mourn the loss of these 4 remarkable and selfless heroes who represented the best of the Houston community and exemplify the qualities of firefighters serving communities throughout the Nation; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. GRIMM (for himself, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. HOLT, Mr. LANCE, and Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois):

H. Res. 247. A resolution expressing support for internal rebuilding, resettlement, and reconciliation within Sri Lanka that are necessary to ensure a lasting peace; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Ms. LEE of California (for herself, Ms. BORDALLO, Ms. BROWN of Florida, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, Mr. COHEN, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. LEWIS, Ms. MOORE, Ms. WATERS, Mr. RANGEL, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mr. CLAY, Ms. FRANKEL of Florida, Mr. SABLAN, Ms. CLARKE, and Mr. ENGEL):

H. Res. 248. A resolution recognizing the significance of National Caribbean American Heritage Month; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

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

By Mr. HASTINGS of Washington:

H.R. 2231.

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

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to Article IV, Section 3 of the Constitution.

By Mr. GRAVES of Missouri:

H.R. 2232.

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

Art. I, §8, cls. 1, 3, and 18 and Art. IV, 3, cl. 2 of the Constitution of the United States.

By Mr. BILIRAKIS:

H.R. 2233.

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

The constitutional authority to lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises as enumerated in Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. BISHOP of New York:

H.R. 2234. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Sec. 8, Clause 1

Article 1, Sec. 8, Clause 3

Article 1, Sec. 8, Clause 18

By Mr. CAPUANO:

H.R. 2235.

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

The Congress enacts this bill pursuant to Article I, Section 8, Clause 1; and Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. CHABOT:

H.R. 2236.

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

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following: Article I, Section 8,: ''To promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts, by securing for limited Times to Authors and Inventors the exclusive Rights to their respective Writings and Discoveries.''

By Ms. CHU:

H.R. 2237.

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

Pursuant to Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3 and Article 1, Section 9, Clause 7 of the Constitution of the United States of America, the authority to enact this legislation rests with the Congress.

By Mr. COSTA:

H.R. 2238.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause I

By Mr. COTTON:

H.R. 2239.

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

Clause 9 of section 8 of article I of the Constitution.

By Mr. BLUMENAUER:

H.R. 2240.

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

The Constitution of the United States provides clear authority for Congress to pass tax legislation. Article I of the Constitution, in detailing Congressional authority, provides that ''Congress shall have Power to lay and collect Taxes. . .'' (Section 8, Clause 1). This legislation is introduced pursuant to that grant of authority.

By Mr. DIAZ-BALART:

H.R. 2241.

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

Article 1, Section 8, of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. ENGEL:

H.R. 2242.

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

Article 1, Section 1 of the Constitution.

By Mr. ENYART:

H.R. 2243.

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

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas:

H.R. 2244.

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

Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution (Clauses 12, 13, 14, 16, and 18), which grants Congress the power to raise and support an Army; to provide and maintain a Navy; to make rules for the government and regulation of the land and naval forces; to provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining the militia; and to make all laws necessary and proper for carrying out the foregoing powers.

By Mr. LANKFORD:

H.R. 2245.

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

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1 and 3 and implied powers to not act in these areas.

By Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico:

H.R. 2246.

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

Article 1, Section 8

By Mrs. LUMMIS:

H.R. 2247.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3: ''To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.''

By Mr. MARKEY:

H.R. 2248.

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

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3

By Mr. MORAN:

H.R. 2249.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 14

This Bill is enacted pursuant to Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution, which provides Congress with the power to make rules for the government and regulation of the land and naval forces.

By Mr. OWENS:

H.R. 2250.

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

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I, Section 8, of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. PETERSON:

H.R. 2251.

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

Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2 and Article 1, Section 8, Clause 17 of the Constitution.

The Congress shall have Power to dispose of and make all needful Rules and Regulations respecting the Territory or other Property belonging to the United States; and nothing in this Constitution shall be so construed as to Prejudice any Claims of the United States, or of any particular State.

By Mr. POLIS:

H.R. 2252.

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

Article I, Section 1, All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

By Mr. SCHOCK:

H.R. 2253.

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

The constitutional authority on which this bill rests is the power of Congress as stated in Article I, Section 7 and Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Ms. SEWELL of Alabama:

H.R. 2254.

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

Article I, Section 8:

''The Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States;

''To borrow Money on the credit of the United States;

''To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes;

''To establish an uniform Rule of Naturalization, and uniform Laws on the subject of Bankruptcies throughout the United States;

''To coin Money, regulate the Value thereof and of foreign Coin, and fix the Standard of Weights and Measures;

''To provide for the Punishment of counterfeiting the Securities and current Coin of the United States;

''To establish Post Offices and post Roads;

''To promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts, by securing for limited Times to Authors and Inventors the exclusive Right to their respective Writings and Discoveries;

''To constitute Tribunals inferior to the Supreme Court;

''To define and punish Piracies and Felonies committed on the high Seas, and Offences against the Law of Nations;

''To declare War, grant Letters of Marque and Reprisal, and make Rules concerning Captures on Land and Water;

''To raise and support Armies, but no Appropriation of Money to that Use shall be for a longer Term than two Years;

''To provide and maintain a Navy;

''To make Rules for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval Forces;

''To provide for calling forth the Militia to execute the Laws of the Union, suppress Insurrections and repel Invasions;

''To provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining, the Militia, and for governing such Part of them as may be employed in the Service of the United States, reserving to the States respectively, the Appointment of the Officers, and the Authority of training the Militia according to the discipline prescribed by Congress;

''To exercise exclusive Legislation in all Cases whatsoever, over such District (not exceeding ten Miles square) as may, by Cession of particular States, and the Acceptance of Congress, become the Seat of the Government of the United States, and to exercise like Authority over all Places purchased by the Consent of the Legislature of the State in which the Same shall be, for the Erection of Forts, Magazines, Arsenals, dock-Yards, and other needful Buildings;—And

''To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.''

By Mr. VAN HOLLEN:

H.R. 2255.

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

This bill is enacted pursuant to Clause 1 of Section 8 of Article I of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. WALZ:

H.R. 2256.

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

Section 8 of Article I of the United States Constitution.

By Ms. WILSON of Florida:

H.R. 2257.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3

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

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

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

H.R. 7: Mr. PRICE of Georgia, Mr. HENSARLING, and Mr. LATHAM.

H.R. 56: Mr. HENSARLING.

H.R. 59: Mr. HENSARLING.

H.R. 141: Mr. GRIJALVA.

H.R. 142: Mr. GRIJALVA.

H.R. 208: Mr. CONYERS.

H.R. 311: Mr. HENSARLING.

H.R. 318: Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. DELANEY, and Mr. BARLETTA.

H.R. 366: Mr. SOUTHERLAND, Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico, and Ms. GABBARD.

H.R. 367: Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia.

H.R. 411: Ms. SINEMA.

H.R. 495: Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. SCHRADER, Mr. KILMER, Mr. GRIFFITH of Virginia, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. CONAWAY, Mr. BROUN of Georgia, Mr. GOODLATTE, Mr. VALADAO, Mr. MCHENRY, Mr. POLIS, and Mr. SENSENBRENNER.

H.R. 508: Mr. PASCRELL and Mr. TIBERI.

H.R. 523: Mr. BERA of California and Mr. LIPINSKI.

H.R. 556: Mr. WALBERG.

H.R. 580: Mr. GOSAR.

H.R. 582: Mr. HENSARLING.

H.R. 605: Ms. SINEMA.

H.R. 630: Mr. GARCIA, Ms. GABBARD, Mr. CONYERS, and Mrs. CHRISTENSEN.

H.R. 647: Mr. COTTON, Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. RIBBLE, and Mrs. LOWEY.

H.R. 675: Mr. HOLT.

H.R. 683: Ms. SINEMA.

H.R. 685: Mr. BROUN of Georgia.

H.R. 689: Mr. WELCH and Ms. LOFGREN.

H.R. 721: Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky and Mr. HUELSKAMP.

H.R. 755: Mr. YOUNG of Alaska and Mr. PIERLUISI.

H.R. 762: Mr. HENSARLING.

H.R. 781: Mr. KLINE.

H.R. 794: Mrs. NAPOLITANO and Mr. MCGOVERN.

H.R. 800: Mrs. BEATTY.

H.R. 805: Mr. LEWIS.

H.R. 809: Mr. PETERSON.

H.R. 846: Mr. TIERNEY, Mr. RUIZ, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. LEWIS, Mrs. LOWEY, and Ms. DEGETTE.

H.R. 853: Mr. VELA and Mr. DENHAM.

H.R. 855: Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico.

H.R. 858: Mr. LUCAS, Mr. SCHOCK, Mr. KILMER, and Mr. RIBBLE.

H.R. 924: Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, and Mr. GRIMM.

H.R. 928: Ms. SHEA-PORTER.

H.R. 940: Mrs. NOEM and Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois.

H.R. 949: Ms. MCCOLLUM.

H.R. 951: Ms. GABBARD.

H.R. 961: Mr. WAXMAN.

H.R. 963: Ms. BONAMICI.

H.R. 979: Mr. LIPINSKI.

H.R. 980: Mr. VELA.

H.R. 988: Mr. KING of New York.

H.R. 1000: Mr. LEWIS.

H.R. 1001: Ms. WILSON of Florida and Mr. ENYART.

H.R. 1024: Mr. WELCH, Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. MCHENRY, Mr. PETRI, Mr. LIPINSKI, and Mr. LEWIS.

H.R. 1026: Mr. HENSARLING.
H.R. 1037: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY.
H.R. 1038: Mrs. HARTZLER.
H.R. 1041: Mr. BERA of California.
H.R. 1079: Mr. TIERNEY.
H.R. 1097: Mr. HENSARLING.
H.R. 1102: Mr. RUIZ, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, and Ms. BROWNLEY of California.
H.R. 1129: Ms. WILSON of Florida and Mr. PETERSON.
H.R. 1141: Mr. HUFFMAN.
H.R. 1148: Mr. BISHOP of Utah and Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 1149: Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi.
H.R. 1151: Mr. COLLINS of Georgia.
H.R. 1152: Mr. LOEBSACK and Mrs. BUSTOS.
H.R. 1154: Ms. SHEA-PORTER.
H.R. 1201: Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mrs. NOEM, Mr. LIPINSKI, and Mr. COHEN.
H.R. 1221: Mr. STIVERS.
H.R. 1243: Mr. LEWIS.
H.R. 1248: Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN and Mr. COTTON.
H.R. 1249: Mr. RADEL.
H.R. 1263: Mr. LEVIN.
H.R. 1274: Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS.
H.R. 1293: Mr. BARLETTA.
H.R. 1313: Mr. VELA.
H.R. 1339: Ms. DEGETTE.
H.R. 1351: Ms. ESHOO, Mr. DEFAZIO, and Mr. KEATING.
H.R. 1373: Mr. HUFFMAN.
H.R. 1385: Ms. LEE of California.
H.R. 1390: Mr. QUIGLEY.
H.R. 1403: Mr. CARSON of Indiana.
H.R. 1404: Mr. HENSARLING.
H.R. 1414: Mr. PETERS of Michigan.
H.R. 1416: Mr. JOYCE.
H.R. 1427: Mr. YOUNG of Florida.
H.R. 1451: Mr. NADLER, Mr. BISHOP of New York, Mr. SERRANO, and Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York.
H.R. 1452: Mr. RUSH and Mr. VELA.
H.R. 1461: Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. HENSARLING, and Mr. YOHO.
H.R. 1507: Mr. LYNCH, Ms. KUSTER, Ms. SLAUGHTER, and Mr. QUIGLEY.
H.R. 1523: Mr. WELCH.
H.R. 1528: Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. COLE, and Mr. GRIJALVA.
H.R. 1540: Mr. GARAMENDI.
H.R. 1565: Mr. MURPHY of Florida.
H.R. 1593: Ms. ESTY and Mr. KENNEDY.
H.R. 1598: Mr. WHITFIELD.
H.R. 1616: Ms. ESHOO.
H.R. 1620: Mr. KINGSTON.
H.R. 1624: Mr. LOEBSACK.
H.R. 1661: Mr. PETERS on and Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California.
H.R. 1663: Mr. PETERSON.
H.R. 1666: Ms. MOORE, Ms. KAPTUR, and Mr. LOEBSACK.
H.R. 1686: Mr. COHEN and Ms. LEE of California.
H.R. 1717: Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. BRIDENSTINE, Mr. DESANTIS, Mr. LUETKEMEYER, Mr. BARR, and Mrs. ROBY.
H.R. 1726: Mr. MILLER of Florida, Mr. GRIJALVA, and Ms. MENG.
H.R. 1731: Mr. SMITH of New Jersey.
H.R. 1732: Mrs. CAPPS and Ms. FRANKEL of Florida.
H.R. 1737: Mr. TONKO.
H.R. 1739: Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California and Ms. CASTOR of Florida.
H.R. 1749: Ms. FRANKEL of Florida.
H.R. 1755: Ms. GABBARD and Mr. VISCLOSKY.
H.R. 1762: Mr. BUCHANAN.
H.R. 1767: Mr. MICHAUD and Mr. WELCH.
H.R. 1771: Mr. HIGGINS, Mr. SENSENBRENNER, Mr. SIRES, and Mr. KLINE.
H.R. 1787: Mr. ENYART, Mr. FARR, Mr. LOEBSACK, Mr. THORNBERRY, Mr. KING of Iowa, Mr. PETRI, Mr. BRALEY of Iowa, Mr. GIBSON, Mr. DUFFY, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. POCAN, and Mr. COLLINS of New York.
H.R. 1797: Mr. HENSARLING and Mr. TURNER.
H.R. 1798: Mr. PETERSON.
H.R. 1801: Mr. LOEBSACK.
H.R. 1812: Mr. CONNOLLY.
H.R. 1814: Mr. HUELSKAMP, Mr. GUTHRIE, Mr. PRICE of Georgia, Mr. PETERSON, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, and Mr. RUIZ.
H.R. 1821: Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD and Ms. SCHWARTZ.
H.R. 1823: Ms. BONAMICI.
H.R. 1825: Mr. TERRY, Mr. BURGESS, Mrs. BLACKBURN, and Mr. OWENS.
H.R. 1845: Mr. CARSON of Indiana.
H.R. 1857: Mr. LOEBSACK.
H.R. 1861: Mr. LATHAM, Mr. MARCHANT, and Mrs. BLACKBURN.
H.R. 1868: Mr. HENSARLING.
H.R. 1869: Mr. COOK, Mr. GIBSON, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. MAFFEI, Mr. HENSARLING, and Mr. WELCH.
H.R. 1884: Mr. BERA of California.
H.R. 1893: Mr. HIMES.
H.R. 1908: Mr. HENSARLING.
H.R. 1910: Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. LEE of California, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Mr. DEFAZIO, and Ms. WILSON of Florida.
H.R. 1918: Mr. MICHAUD.
H.R. 1920: Mr. GRIMM, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Ms. CLARKE, and Mr. PAYNE.
H.R. 1961: Mr. TURNER, Mr. STIVERS, Mr. JORDAN, Mr. LATTA, Mr. JOYCE, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. TIBERI, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Ms. FUDGE, Mr. GIBBS, and Mr. RENACCI.
H.R. 1962: Mr. JORDAN, Mr. NOLAN, Mr. HIMES, Mr. YARMUTH, and Mr. BUSTOS.
H.R. 1971: Mr. STIVERS and Mr. LATTA.
H.R. 1975: Ms. ESHOO, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. BERA of California, Mr. HIMES, and Mr. RUIZ.
H.R. 1976: Mr. PETERSON.
H.R. 1985: Mr. BARR.
H.R. 2009: Mr. MULLIN and Mr. CARTER.
H.R. 2014: Mr. HIMES.
H.R. 2020: Mr. HONDA, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. CUMMINGS, Ms. ESHOO, Ms. SLAUGHTER, and Mr. LOEBSACK.
H.R. 2043: Mr. VAN HOLLEN.
H.R. 2053: Mr. WESTMORELAND, Ms. JENKINS, Mr. COTTON, Mr. DUFFY, Mr. WITTMAN, Mr. HUELSKAMP, Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Mr. BURGESS, Mr. SENSENBRENNER, and Mr. LONG.
H.R. 2058: Ms. NORTON and Mr. KING of New York.
H.R. 2064: Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. COHEN, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Ms. FRANKEL of Florida, Mr. GARCIA, and Ms. WILSON of Florida.
H.R. 2066: Mr. MORAN and Mr. POCAN.
H.R. 2073: Mr. NUNES.
H.R. 2086: Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Mrs. KIRKPATRICK, and Mr. GRIJALVA.
H.R. 2088: Ms. CASTOR of Florida.
H.R. 2092: Mr. ELLMERS, Mr. NOEM, and Mr. ROKITA.
H.R. 2093: Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. PETRI, and Mr. YOUNG of Alaska.
H.R. 2115: Mr. HARRIS.
H.R. 2123: Mr. LOEBSACK.
H.R. 2125: Mr. SENSENBRENNER and Mr. MARINO.
H.R. 2132: Ms. LOFGREN.
H.R. 2137: Mr. LEWIS.
H.R. 2141: Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. JEFFRIES, Ms. BROWN of Florida, Mr. VELA, Mr. PETERS of Michigan, Mr. WATT, Mr. NOLAN, and Mrs. KIRKPATRICK.
H.R. 2143: Mr. PRICE of Georgia.
H.R. 2144: Mr. VAN HOLLEN.
H.R. 2146: Mr. FOSTER, Ms. SLAUGHTER, and Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York.
H.R. 2157: Mr. RYAN of Ohio.
H.R. 2159: Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. POLIS, and Mr. ENYART.
H.R. 2169: Mr. GRIJALVA.
H.R. 2194: Mr. CASSIDY.
H.R. 2203: Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Mr. RENACCI, Mrs. ELLMERS, Ms. KAPTUR, and Mr. COBLE.
H.R. 2218: Mr. BILIRAKIS.
H. Con. Res. 24: Mr. FORBES.
H. Con. Res. 27: Mr. COHEN and Mr. PETRI.
H. Con. Res. 34: Ms. MENG, Mrs. LOWEY, and Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico.
H. Con. Res. 36: Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MCGOVERN, and Mr. DEFAZIO.
H. Con. Res. 37: Mr. MILLER of Florida.
H. Res. 35: Mr. POE of Texas, Mr. KINGSTON, Mr. CRAWFORD, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. MCHENRY, Mr. GARRETT, Mr. MEADOWS, Mrs. NOEM, Mr. MESSER Mr. MULLIN, Mr. FLEMING, Mr. DESANTIS, Mr. STEWART, and Mr. MASSIE.
H. Res. 89: Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. HOLT, Mr. RUNYAN, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, and Mr. LOWENTHAL.
H. Res. 101: Mr. HANNA.
H. Res. 104: Mr. PEARCE, Mr. O'ROURKE, and Mr. SCHIFF.
H. Res. 112: Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, Mr. TAKANO, and Mr. DENHAM.
H. Res. 114: Mr. HENSARLING.
H. Res. 123: Ms. FRANKEL of Florida.
H. Res. 147: Mr. UPTON, Mr. KLINE, Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Mr. LANCE, and Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina.
H. Res. 203: Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. BRALEY of Iowa, Mr. O'ROURKE, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. ANDREWS, Ms. CHU, Ms. CLARKE, Mr. COOPER, Ms. NORTON, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. TIBERI, and Ms. DEGETTE.
H. Res. 213: Mr. TIERNEY, Mr. CUMMINGS, and Ms. DELAURO.

AMENDMENTS

Under clause 8 of rule XVIII, proposed amendments were submitted as follows:

H.R. 2216

OFFERED BY: MR. GRAYSON

AMENDMENT NO. 4: At the end of the bill (before the short title), add the following new section:

SEC. 419. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to purchase any flag of the United States of America for use by the Federal Government that is not wholly produced in the United States from articles, materials, or supplies 100 percent of which are grown, produced, or manufactured in the United States.

H.R. 2216

OFFERED BY: MR. GRAYSON

AMENDMENT NO. 5: At the end of the bill (before the short title), add the following new section:

SEC. _____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to enter into a contract with any offeror or any of its principals if the offeror certifies, as required by Federal Acquisition Regulation, that the offeror or any of its principals:

(A) within a three-year period preceding this offer has been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against it for: commission of fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a public (Federal, State, or local) contract or subcontract; violation of Federal or State antitrust statutes relating to the submission of offers; or commission of embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, tax evasion, violating Federal criminal tax laws, or receiving stolen property; or

(B) are presently indicted for, or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity with, commission of any of the offenses enumerated above in subsection (A); or

(C) within a three-year period preceding this offer, has been notified of any delinquent Federal taxes in an amount that exceeds $3,000 for which the liability remains unsatisfied.

H.R. 2216

OFFERED BY: MR. GRAYSON

AMENDMENT NO. 6: At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. _____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be awarded in a contract to any contractor whose past performance record indicates that its performance during the construction of a VA facility resulted in a completion date more than 18 months after the original agreed-upon completion date.

H.R. 2216

OFFERED BY: MR. BROUN OF GEORGIA

AMENDMENT NO. 7: Page 8, line 12, after the dollar amount, insert ''(reduced to $0)''.

Page 63, line 6, after the dollar amount, insert ''(increased by $199,700,000)''.

H.R. 2216

OFFERED BY: MR. BROUN OF GEORGIA

AMENDMENT NO. 8: Page 4, line 14, after the dollar amount, insert ''(reduced by $38,513,000)''

Page 5, line 6, after the dollar amount, insert ''(reduced by $38,513,000)''.

Page 63, line 6, after the dollar amount, insert ''(increased by $38,513,000)''.

H.R. 2216

OFFERED BY: MR. CULBERSON

AMENDMENT NO. 9: Page 35, line 11, strike ''Act''and insert ''heading''.

Page 35, line 13, strike ''unless'' and all that follows through ''Department:'' on page 36, line 16, and insert the following: ''except for a health record as set forth in the Joint Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2013–2015 of the Department of Veteran Affairs and Department of Defense, Joint Executive Council:''.

H.R. 2216

OFFERED BY: MR. FRANKS OF ARIZONA

AMENDMENT NO. 10: At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. 419. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to implement, administer, or enforce the prevailing wage requirements in subchapter IV of chapter 31 of title 40, United States Code (commonly referred to as the Davis-Bacon Act).

H.R. 2216

OFFERED BY: MR. RUNYAN

AMENDMENT NO. 11: At the end of the bill (before the short title), add the following new section:

SEC. 419. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to propose, plan for, or execute a new or additional Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) round

H.R. 2216

OFFERED BY: MR. TERRY

AMENDMENT NO. 12: At the end of the bill (before the short title), add the following new section:

SEC. 419. None of the funds made available by this Act, including the funds made available for ''Construction, Major Projects'', may be used to increase the funding for any major medical facility project (as defined in subsection (a)(3)(A) of section 8104 of title 38, United States Code), which is under construction as of the date of the enactment of this Act, above the amount specified in the prospectus described in subsection (b) of such section 8104 and the detailed estimate of cost described in paragraph (1) of such subsection.

H.R. 2216

OFFERED BY: MR. ENGEL

AMENDMENT NO. 13: At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. _____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used by the Department of Defense or the Department of Veterans Affairs to lease or purchase new light duty vehicles for any executive fleet, or for an agency's fleet inventory, except in accordance with Presidential Memorandum—Federal Fleet Performance, dated May 24, 2011.

H.R. 2217

OFFERED BY: MR. CASSIDY

AMENDMENT NO. 1: At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. 5 _____. None of the funds made available in this 2 Act may be used to implement, carry out, administer, or 3 enforce section 1308(h) of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4015(h)).

H.R. 2217

OFFERED BY: MR. COLLINS OF GEORGIA

AMENDMENT NO. 2: At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. _____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used in contravention of section 236(c) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1226(c)).

H.R. 2217

OFFERED BY: MR. PRICE OF GEORGIA

AMENDMENT NO. 3: At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. _____. None of the funds made available under this Act may be used in contravention of immigration laws (as defined in section 101(a)(17) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(17))).

H.R. 2217

OFFERED BY: MR. THOMPSON OF MISSISSIPPI

AMENDMENT NO. 4: At the end of the bill (before the short title), add the following:

SEC. _____. None of the funds made available in this Act may be used by the Transportation Security Administration for the Behavior Detection Officer program.

H.R. 2217

OFFERED BY: MR. MICA

AMENDMENT NO. 5: Page 17, line 15, after ''screeners:'' insert the following: ''*Provided further*, That the annual Federal personnel expenditures of the Transportation Security Administration at an airport participating in the Screening Partnership Program may not exceed the larger of—''

''(1) 1 percent of the total annual value of the Screening Partnership Program contract at that airport; or

''(2) $100,000:''.

H.R. 2217

OFFERED BY: MR. MICA

AMENDMENT NO. 6. Page 15, line 25, after the dollar amount, insert ''(reduced by $23,334,000)''.

Page 19, line 8, after the dollar amount, insert ''(increased by $23,334,000)''.

H.R. 2217

OFFERED BY: MR. MICA

AMENDMENT NO. 7. Page 15, line 20, after the dollar amount insert the following: '(reduced by $17,383,000)''.

Page 15, line 25, after the dollar amount insert the following: ''(reduced by $17,383,000)''.

Page 19, line 8, after the dollar amount insert the following: ''(increased by $17,383,000)''.

H.R. 2217

OFFERED BY: MR. MICA

AMENDMENT NO. 8. Page 15, line 25, after the dollar amount, insert ''(reduced by $31,810,000)''.

Page 16, line 6, after the dollar amount, insert ''(increased by $31,810,000)''.

H.R. 2217

OFFERED BY: MR. MICA

AMENDMENT NO. 9. Page 52, line 11, insert before the proviso the following: ''*Provided further*, That the Director of the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center shall develop a plan to further integrate and utilize modeling and similation in the training of law enforcement and security personnel:''.

H.R. 2217

OFFERED BY: MR. MICA

AMENDMENT NO. 10. Page 15, line 25, after the dollar amount insert ''(reduced by $12,500,000) (increased by $12,500,000)''.

H.R. 2217

OFFERED BY: MR. LYNCH

AMENDMENT NO. 11. Page 19, line 1, after the dollar amount insert ''(increased by $15,676,000)''.

Page 3, line 13, after the dollar amount insert ''(reduced by $15,676,000)''.

H.R. 2217

OFFERED BY: MR. PIERLUISI

AMENDMENT NO. 12. At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. _____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to implement, administer, or enforce section 1301(a) of title 31, United States Code, with respect to the use of amounts made available by this Act for the ''Salaries and Expenses'' and ''Air and Marine Operations'' accounts of U.S. Customs and Border Protection for the expenses authorized to be paid in section 9 of the Jones Act (48 U.S.C. 795) and for the collection of duties and taxes authorized to be levied, collected, and paid in Puerto Rico, as authorized in section 4 of the Foraker Act (48 U.S.C. 740), in addition to the more specific amounts available for such purposes in the Puerto Rico Trust Fund pursuant to such provisions of law.

United States of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 113th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 159 WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, JUNE 4, 2013 No. 77

Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable WILLIAM M. COWAN, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

PRAYER

The PRESIDING OFFICER offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Because of You, God most high, we have strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow. Your presence sustains us, even in the midst of storms. Because of You, O God, we face the future confident that You will guide us with the same love with which You sustained us in the past.

Bless our Senators. May Your spirit be with them and may Your love follow them and their families this day and always.

Today we also thank You for our pages and the good work they do. As their graduation date approaches, bless them with the satisfaction that comes from work well done.

We pray in Your mighty Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The PRESIDING OFFICER led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, June 4, 2013.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable WILLIAM M. COWAN, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. COWAN thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following my remarks and those of Senator MCCONNELL, we will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour. The majority will control the first half and the Republicans the final half.

Following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of the farm bill.

The Senate will recess from 12:30 p.m. until 2:15 p.m. to allow for our weekly caucus meetings.

THANKING THE PRESIDING OFFICER

Mr. REID. Mr. President, first of all, I thank the Senator from Massachusetts for giving the prayer and doing a wonderful job. Our pastor, who was supposed to give the prayer, was not here. We are all very proud of the Senator, and today we are especially proud of Gov. Deval Patrick for appointing Senator COWAN, as he has done a remarkably good job.

As we all know, there will be an election in 2 or 3 weeks to fill the seat, but Senator COWAN will be known as one of the nicest and most competent people I have served with in my many years in Congress.

Again, I thank the Senator very much.

GOODBYE TO SENATOR LAUTENBERG

Mr. REID. Mr. President, this week the Senate will say goodbye to a valued friend and colleague, Senator FRANK LAUTENBERG. The funeral for FRANK will be in New York. He is a great American success story and the Senate's last World War II veteran.

As I indicated, we will recognize his passing and celebration of his life. It has been made pretty clear that he will be buried in Arlington Friday afternoon.

Senator LAUTENBERG loved this institution, where he spent more than three decades. He would understand that its work must go on, despite our sorrow.

WORK TO BE DONE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, this week work continues on the farm bill, which will create jobs, cut taxpayer subsidies, and reduce the deficit. Chairman STABENOW and Ranking Member COCHRAN have worked very hard to come up with a finite list of amendments. They are still trying to do that. I hope they can complete that today. I will give the managers as much time as we can to reach an agreement to consider a finite number of amendments to the farm bill.

I will not file cloture unless I have spoken more than once, before the day is out, to Senator STABENOW and Senator COCHRAN. I hope I don't have to file cloture on this legislation tonight, but we need to move forward. It is important to have ample time for debate on the immigration bill reported just a few weeks ago by the Judiciary Committee.

The Senate must move forward before the end of June to protect students from the rising cost of education by keeping the loan rates low. If we don't do something about that before the end of this month, it is going to more than double the rates. If we do nothing, it will double the rates. If we

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

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do what the House wants, it will triple the rates, so we cannot do that. College is already unaffordable for too many young people, and if Congress fails to take action this month, as I have indicated—and I have certainly underlined and underscored the fact—the pricetag will go up significantly for them.

What is suggested by the House and the legislation they passed, it will add about $6,500 to the average student's loan bill. Their proposal would be worse than doing nothing at all—worse than letting rates double next month.

I hope my Senate Republican colleagues will instead support our efforts to give middle-class families security by freezing interest rates at current levels for 2 years without adding a penny to the deficit. This is exactly the kind of commonsense proposal we need to keep our economy growing, and I will do everything I can to have a vote on the student loan bill this week.

If the Republicans in the Senate want to put forward what they think should be done, I will be happy to have a vote on theirs, and then we will vote on ours.

Even if we have not completed action on the farm bill or student loan proposals, we will bring immigration to the floor next week. The immigration system is broken and it needs to be fixed.

I am grateful Senator MCCONNELL said he would not oppose moving to the bill—at least that is the way I read it in the press. He doesn't believe we will need to have cloture on the bill. I hope we do not need to do that, but if we need to do it in order to get on the bill, I will do that.

I know the Republican leader cannot control virtually every Republican, but I hope we can move forward and start the debate on this bill.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

During the recess I had the opportunity to appear at a number of events in Nevada, and the topic at each one of those events was immigration.

I appeared at an event in Las Vegas, where we had between 1,000 and 2,000 people on the street. It was a very moving event. This has always been a personal issue for me. As I have said many times, my father-in-law emigrated from Russia.

I have seen firsthand a huge increase in the number of people coming to Nevada over the last 15 to 20 years. These people have been devastated by our broken immigration system. I have personally devoted more time to immigration reform than any other issue over my career in Congress. Each time I meet with my constituents, they are desperate for commonsense reform. Each time I meet with them, my passion for fixing our broken immigration system is renewed.

This is personal for a lot of reasons. I will always remember when there was a lot of anti-immigration stuff going on in Congress, I went home—to my Washington home—and my wife said: Remember who I am; remember why I am here. My dad came from Russia.

Her words were to that effect. As a result of that brief conversation with Landra, I got the message and I became an advocate for fixing our broken immigration system.

My father-in-law contributed a lot to this country, but the one most important contribution was his only child who is now the mother of my 5 children and the grandmother of 16 grandchildren. So this issue is something that is important to me.

I admire and respect the work of the eight Senators—four Republicans and four Democrats. We need to move forward on this legislation. It is so very important.

I appeared not only at that huge event in Las Vegas, where there were thousands of people, I appeared in a Catholic Church last week in Reno. There were 1,500 people who filled the church and people were standing outside. The 1,500 didn't count toward the people who were outside.

This was organized by faith leaders, not just Catholics. All faiths that believe immigration reform is not a political issue but a moral issue were there. They don't believe it is an economic issue or political issue. I repeat, they believe it is a moral issue, and I agree. A Catholic priest from Carson City shared the story of his grandparents who emigrated from Italy.

As I have already indicated, my wife's parents emigrated from Russia—my father-in-law at least. My mother-in-law barely made it here; she almost was an immigrant, but she was a little baby born someplace in Canada.

Families who come here from other countries need to understand what the law is, and we are trying to determine that as that is our job. Today immigrant families come seeking the same as generations before them. My father-in-law Israel Goldfarb came here and changed his name. He became Earl Gould, and that was the only person I ever knew. He died as a young man. He didn't get to enjoy his grandchildren.

So there are lots of reasons why we have to fix our broken immigration system and help the many people who are undocumented here get right with the law. It is time for reform that helps them contribute fully to their communities by learning English, paying taxes, and starting down the pathway to earn their citizenship.

The bill we have from the Judiciary Committee is not a perfect bill, but we don't have that here. In my more than three decades in Congress, there has never been a perfect bill. The Founding Fathers could envision nonperfect bills. They knew that is how we would get things done, by compromise. Legislation is the art of compromise. It is up to us to ensure America remains the land of opportunity for people born within our borders as well as those who seek a better future on our shores.

Finally, on another subject, ads have been run on TV, the radio, and in the newspaper about how the Democrats need to follow regular order in the Senate, and we have done that. But now my Republican colleagues are silent. We have been waiting for months now to allow them to allow us to go to conference for regular order. They are refusing to go to conference so we can come up with a budget that we can negotiate with the House as to what we should do.

It is obvious why we are not able to go to conference. It is so obvious. The Speaker does not want us to go to conference and the Republicans in the Senate are trying to protect him and the unwieldy job he has over there. He is trying to protect his job, and the tea party people are wreaking havoc with our country.

We should be able to go to conference. Republican Senators have said: Let's go to conference. What is stopping us from going to conference? I just talked about what is stopping us from going to conference, and it is truly detrimental to our country.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

REGULAR ORDER

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I wish to associate myself with the remarks of the majority leader with regard to our late colleague FRANK LAUTENBERG. He was, indeed, a member of the greatest generation, having fought in World War II and also has had distinguished service in the Senate.

I would also like to mention to my friend the majority leader, before he leaves the floor, I indicated to him before the recess that I intended to bring up each day going forward a commitment he made to the Senate back in January of 2011 and again in January of 2013—the beginning of the last two Congresses—with regard to using the nuclear option to change the rules of the Senate.

The most important currency of the realm in the Senate is one's word, and my good friend the majority leader said in January of 2011: ''I will oppose any effort in this Congress, or the next, to change the Senate's rules other than through the regular order.'' It was not a contingent commitment, it was not a contingent based on my judgment of good behavior, it was a commitment.

Then again in January of 2013, in an exchange the majority leader and I had on the floor, I said I would confirm with the majority leader that the Senate would not consider other resolutions relating to any standing order or rules of this Congress unless they went through the regular order process. That was my question to my friend the majority leader to which he replied, ''That is correct.'' Any other resolutions related to Senate procedure would be subject to a regular order process, including consideration by the Rules Committee.

My point is the commitment has been made, an unequivocal commitment has been made. In the Senate, of course, how we deal with all issues is related to keeping our word. It will be important for the Senate to understand, before we go much further this year, what the majority leader's intentions are. Does he plan to keep his word issued in January of 2011 and January of 2013 or not? I think the Senate is entitled to an answer. All Senators would be entitled to an answer, but particularly the minority would be interested in an answer to that before we go any further into this session.

STUDENT LOANS

With regard to the loan rates for students, I think it is interesting to note, as we go into this needless controversy because we are not that far apart, one of the driving reasons for the increase in the student loan rates—two of them—is directly related to the passage of ObamaCare. In ObamaCare, the Democratic majority, without a single Republican vote, abolished the student loan program. The government took it over and raised the rates. So that is one reason rates are going up. The second reason is the Medicaid mandate, which the Supreme Court said is optional, but States are now wrestling with whether to accept this additional responsibility for vast new numbers of Americans who will receive a free health care card.

The two biggest items in every State budget are Medicaid and education. As Medicaid expenses rise, what State governments all across America have done is reduced educational funding to public colleges and universities, and in response to that the colleges and universities raise tuition. So the new generation coming along is getting it both ways: The rates are going up and the tuition is going up, so they have to pay back more at a higher rate, all related to something young people had nothing to do with, which was the passage of ObamaCare.

Washington has had to grapple with a lot of big issues over the past few years and we have had some pretty heated debates because there were real philosophical differences over how to address those challenges. That is why it is so nice to work on an issue where the two parties are in relative agreement. We are not that far apart on this student loan issue now. Neither party wants to see the rates rise in July, and both the President and Republicans generally agree on the way to make that happen. So there is no reason we should be fighting over this issue at this particular point. There is no reason the President should be holding campaign-style events to bash Republicans for supposedly opposing him on student loans when we are in agreement on the need for a permanent reform and when the plan we put forward is actually pretty similar to his own. Yet, somehow, that is what we saw last Friday at the White House.

That is certainly not going to help the students. Having a true policy debate is one thing, but provoking a partisan squabble seemingly for its own sake is, frankly, ridiculous. Our constituents sent us here to govern, not to try to pick fake fights in some crusade to restore NANCY PELOSI to her speakership.

What I am saying to the President and my Democratic friends is this: Let's put politicking aside. There is no reason for a fight here. I hope we can finally begin to work. Students are counting on us to actually get something done.

Here is a quick rundown of where we are on the issue. There is the Senate Democratic plan that everyone knows is just a political bill—a short-term fix that would only apply to less than half of the students who plan to take out new loans—new loans—and it would impose permanent tax hikes—permanent tax hikes—in return for a temporary plan for half of the students. Let me repeat that: Another temporary fix paid for with a permanent tax hike. Even the President has dismissed this approach. So in my view it is not worth much of a discussion at this point.

The fact is the proposals Republicans put forward are actually closer to what President Obama has asked for. We both agree on the need for permanent reform that takes the decisions on interest rates out of the hands of politicians. The House has already passed a bill that would achieve those two goals, and Senate Republicans have put forward a bill that is also similar to the President's proposal, as both of our plans would employ a variable market rate that, as with a mortgage, doesn't change over the life of an individual student's loan. The President said he opposed a bill that didn't lock in rates. Ours gives students the certainty that the President agrees they should have. So if the President were serious about getting this done, he would have spent that time on Friday ringing up Senators to see how we could bridge our relatively small differences, not having a press conference and bashing Congress. This is one issue where both parties can find quick agreement, but only if Washington Democrats have the will to do so. Young Americans already have enough to worry about. They don't need Washington creating even more problems for them.

The youth unemployment rate for 20- to 24-year-olds is over 13 percent. In Kentucky it is more than 14 percent. Once many students graduate from college, they face a highly uncertain future. So the President has a choice to make: Does he want to push some campaign issue for 2014 or does he want to address the problem here and prevent this rate increase?

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the majority controlling the first half.

The assistant majority leader.

STUDENT LOANS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I listened carefully to the statement made by the Republican leader. He talked about the issue of increased costs for colleges, saying the tuition is going up, and we have a student loan issue coming up with interest rates perhaps doubling. It was interesting when the Republican leader said the root cause of the problem is ObamaCare.

Well, it turns out, if we listen to the statements and speeches from the Republican side of the aisle, if a person's car won't start: ObamaCare. Too many popups on your computer: ObamaCare. Basically, it turns out that every problem in America can be traced to ObamaCare. ObamaCare, of course, is the health care reform act.

The health care reform act said, incidentally, that students in college can stay on their parents' health insurance plan until they reach the age of 26: ObamaCare. It also said those who are receiving prescription drugs under Medicare will pay less: ObamaCare. It went on to say you cannot discriminate against people when it comes to health insurance if they have a preexisting medical condition: ObamaCare. So what we hear from the Republican side of the aisle: Any problem we have in the Midwest including too much rain in the Midwest: ObamaCare. It reaches the point where it strains credibility.

Here is what the problem is. On July 1, the interest rates on subsidized loans double—double—from 3.4 percent to 6.8 percent if we do nothing. The Republicans in the House of Representatives said they have a better plan. It is a plan which the Republican leader in the Senate just spoke to. We are going to move the interest rates—we are going to peg them to the 10-year Treasury bill, and the next thing we know it turns out the interest rate coming out of the Republican bill in the House is higher than 6.8 percent. In other words, if we did nothing as opposed to the Republican plan, students would be better off.

But we have a better idea. We are going to do our best to make sure we preserve the 3.4-percent interest rate on subsidized student loans. Is it important? It is critically important.

Look what is happening to students across America today. A lot of young people listen to their parents, listen to their teachers, and all their friends who say, Go to college, get a degree. It

is good advice. Then they sit down to figure out what it is going to cost and it turns out to be pretty expensive. As I look back on my college education—I won't tell my colleagues what my student loans were; they will date me—I was scared to death when I ended up with this huge student loan at the end of law school when I accumulated it all together. At the time I said to my wife, I don't know if we will ever be able to pay this back, it is so big. It was $8,500—$8,500 for college and law school—but it was more than half of my first year's income, to put it in perspective.

Now look at what students are faced with. The average for-profit college costs $30,900 a year in tuition fees. These for-profit schools I will talk about in a minute are the most expensive schools in America. They are the ones trying to lure students into their schools. The biggest ones are the University of Phoenix, which has more students than the combined enrollment of all the big 10 universities; Kaplan University, which is owned by the Washington Post; DeVry University out of Chicago; and a variety of others. They can't wait to see these students coming out of high school and to sign them up for these for-profit schools, the most expensive schools in America. There is something else involved in those schools. They have the highest student loan default rates. They charge the students too much for tuition and they offer them too little by way of education and training. A lot of kids drop out, and even those who finish can't find a job. They default on their student loans for these for-profit schools. But take a look at the cost of education in general. Most students, unless they are lucky, with parents who have a lot of money in the bank, have to borrow money, and if they have to borrow it, the question is, What do they pay when it comes to the interest on the student loans? Private loans—not the government loans but private college loans—can have interest rates up to 18 percent. So unless a person has taken a course in consumer economics or business in high school, that person may not know what the difference is between 3.4 percent interest on a loan and 18 percent interest. Believe me, it is dramatic. Students are faced with this reality.

The question obviously is what is Congress going to do about it? If we are going to continue keeping the interest rate at an affordable level—3.4 percent for student loans—then we are going to have to take action before July 1. If we do nothing, it will double. If we do nothing, students will pay thousands of dollars more in paying off their loans.

How big is student loan debt in America? Student loan debt in America is larger than credit card debt. It is over $1 trillion. It is one of the fastest growing areas of debt in America. As students get encumbered by this debt, obligated by this debt, many don't realize what they are up against.

This is not like any other loan a person can take out. Any loan a person takes out for a car or a house or to buy a washer and a dryer is dischargeable in bankruptcy. If a person's finances go completely in the tank and that person goes to a bankruptcy court, those other loans go away, but not student loans. There are only four things that cannot be discharged in bankruptcy: taxes owed to the government, alimony, child support, and student loans. What it means is the decision made by the 19- or 20-year-old about debt to go to school is a decision for a lifetime. It is going to stick with that person for a lifetime. When the parents sign on as guarantors on these student loans, or grandparents, they are on the hook too. If the student ends up dropping out of school, with plenty of debt and no diploma, they are in a bad situation. They still have to pay off the loans.

What we are trying to do on the Democratic side is to keep the interest rate on these loans as low and affordable as possible. I think that is only reasonable. Why make it any harder for these students and their families? The Republican side, sadly, more than doubles the interest rate on student loans. That is a worthy debate. I know the side I will be on. I think most Americans know what side we should all be on: to try to keep the cost of these loans closer to being under control; to try to keep the interest rate at the 3.4-percent level.

Senator JACK REED of Rhode Island recently introduced the Student Loan Relief and Refinancing Act which would prevent the interest rate hike by moving Federal student loans back to a market-based rate as it was prior to 2007. Senator REED's bill would offer adjustable interest rates for Federal student loans and parent PLUS loans—with a cap of 6.8 percent for subsidized loans and 8.25 percent for unsubsidized and parent PLUS loans. Rates would be set every year based on the 91-day Treasury bill, plus a percentage determined by the Secretary of Education to be necessary to cover program administration and borrower benefits. The bill is revenue neutral. The bill will help current borrowers by allowing those stuck with high fixed-rate Federal student loans to refinance their loans into a new variable rate loan with a cap. Many students signed up for loans that were a bad deal and they want to change them but they are stuck with them, so this Reed bill gives them a chance to refinance.

Congress should consider a long-term interest rate fix, but we need to act quickly to stop the interest rates from doubling on July 1. We have a good short-term path that will extend the current 3.4-percent interest rate for 2 years. The bill is fully paid for by closing three tax loopholes.

Senator MCCONNELL was on the floor here complaining that we are doing Tax Code changes to keep the interest rates low. Well, here are a couple of the changes he was complaining about.

Our proposal would include a tax on the oil and gas companies from tar sands so they would put more money into the oil spill liability trust fund. That is one of the things Senator MCCONNELL said is not appropriate. The other one would close a tax loophole that allows non-U.S. companies to reduce their U.S. tax liability on income from their sales in the United States. I do not think that is unreasonable, particularly if the money we are getting from that will help subsidize a low-interest rate on student loans.

This bill is a temporary solution, I understand. But it is going to save students in States like my State of Illinois a thousand dollars—at least a thousand dollars—by keeping the interest rate low in terms of what they will pay back over a lifetime.

The complicated proposal that came out of the House of Representatives—the Republican proposal—as I said, will more than double the interest rates students are going to face. Parents are going to have to have a higher liability on the loans they sign up for for the students in their family, and that, to me, is not a good outcome either.

There has been a proposal that has been pushed by some of my Republican colleagues—Senators COBURN, BURR, and ALEXANDER—which would adjust interest rates annually for both subsidized and unsubsidized loans, and it would be, like the House Republican bill, an increase of 3 percent over the 10-year Treasury rate. There are no caps, incidentally, on where that interest rate is going to go. So the students could have a liability much greater in the future.

Here is what it boils down to: If you believe education is important—and I think everyone does—if you believe college education is a ticket for a better life and a better opportunity to contribute to this country—and most people do—we want to make sure it is affordable for students from working-income homes and middle-income homes. That is why we want to keep this interest rate low. The Republican proposals—all of the Republican proposals—dramatically raise the student loan interest rate beyond the level the Democrats are pushing for.

We have heard a lot of comment on the floor. There will be a lot of debate on the floor about a lot of other issues—the IRS and other things such as that. They are all worthy issues worth talking about. But if you talk to the average family in my home state of Illinois or around the country, they are going to tell you that something like a student loan debate is much more important to them.

We want to be on the side of working to help middle-income and those families who are working for a living, to give those families a chance to send their sons and daughters to college to have a better life in the future and not burden them with a loan that is impossible for them to pay back.

I want to close by saying a word about one category of schools I mentioned earlier, the for-profit schools. We have in our country not-for-profit schools that include private colleges and universities as well as public colleges and universities. Then there is a for-profit sector of higher education. I mentioned the leaders earlier—the University of Phoenix, Kaplan, and DeVry. Those are three of the biggest in the United States.

Currently, our Federal Government is subsidizing these for-profit schools in ways most taxpayers would not believe. Right now what these schools are bringing in is 75, 80, 85, and 90 percent of their revenue directly from the Federal Treasury. In other words, students come in and turn over their Pell grants, sign up for their government loans, and all of this government money flows into these for-profit schools.

Many of these schools offer valuable courses, but many of them are worthless. Many of them, unfortunately, burden these young people with debt and offer them nothing by way of education or training so they can have a better life. As a result, the students end up with a mountain of debt they cannot pay back and they default on the debt. Here are the numbers to keep in mind: There are three basic numbers which explain the for-profit education industry in America.

Twelve. Twelve percent of high school graduates go to for-profit schools.

Twenty-five. Twenty-five percent of all the Federal aid to education goes to for-profit schools; over $30 billion a year to for-profit schools. They would be the ninth largest Federal agency if you took for-profit schools in the private sector by themselves; over $30 billion. They would be the ninth largest, but they are private companies, for-profit companies.

The third number to remember is 47. Forty-seven percent of all the student loan defaults are by students in for-profit schools. That number tells the story. These poor students are being loaded with debt, and they are being given an education that is not worth it. At the end, they cannot pay back their debt and they default on those debts. That is the reality of where we are today. In a few weeks—July 1—if we do nothing, interest rates on loans at all schools for government loans are going to double. If we do something, we can continue to protect students. But, in addition to that, we have to do something about higher education and what is happening there. It is not just the for-profit schools, many of which are ripping off these students. It is the overall cost of higher education. It is going beyond the reach of average families across America.

I look back to my own life experience and, thank goodness, I had a chance to borrow the money and go to school, get an education, and end up, as I say, with a full-time government job. But the bottom line is, other people deserve the same opportunity. And if you are not from a wealthy family, you should be able to borrow the money to be able to get through school and make a success of your life.

Let's do our part here. Let's stand behind the working families. Let's support the Democratic approach, which will keep the interest rates at 3.4 percent. Let's reject the Republican approach that would more than double these interest rates on these students and their families. Let's give these young people a fighting chance to get a good education and an opportunity to prosper in this great Nation.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

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

REMEMBERING REVEREND ANDREW GREELEY

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, last week we lost a Chicago original. Father Andrew Greeley was a Catholic priest in Chicago and a man of great accomplishment.

He was a best-selling author, college professor, newspaper columnist, and a sociologist at the University of Chicago. Most importantly, according to Father Greeley, he was ''just a priest.''

Andrew Moran Greeley was born in Oak Park, a suburb west of Chicago. By the time he was in second grade at St. Angela Elementary School, he knew he wanted to be a Catholic priest.

After being ordained, he served as an assistant pastor at Christ the King Parish in Chicago and studied sociology at the University of Chicago. He was released from archdiocesan duties to pursue his academic interests in 1965, but he remained a priest in good standing the rest of his life.

Although he never led a parish, Father Andrew Greeley regularly filled in at Saint Mary of the Woods Church in Edgebrook. He would lead mass, preach, hear confessions, and officiate at weddings and baptisms.

But what brought Andrew Greeley international recognition was his work as a writer, an author. He built an international assemblage of fans over a career spanning five decades.

Of the 60 novels Father Greeley wrote, some were considered scandalous with their portraits of hypocritical and sinful clerics. But he also wrote more than 70 works of nonfiction, often on the sociology of religion. His clear writing style, consistent themes, and celebrity stature made him a leading spokesman for generations of Catholics.

Father Greeley enjoyed being a sociologist and a commentator on current affairs. For much of his career, he divided his time between Chicago and Tucson, AZ, where he taught at the University of Arizona.

He also achieved prominence as a journalist, writing a weekly column for the Chicago Sun-Times and contributing regularly to American and international publications.

His weekly columns touched on all sorts of issues. From critiquing the Catholic Church to the war in Iraq, Father Greeley was unapologetic in his ''tell it like it is'' Chicago style.

In July of 1986, Father Greeley wrote the first of many columns in the Chicago Sun-Times about allegations of sexual abuse by Roman Catholic priests. His thoroughly honest and powerful reporting alerted the Nation to this scandal way ahead of many others. It forced the Church to acknowledge that it had a problem and a problem it had to solve.

His opposition to the war in Iraq and a war on terror was so deep-seated that he compiled his writings and published them in a book. It was meekly titled: ''A Stupid, Unjust, and Criminal War: Iraq 2001–2007.'' He gave me an autographed copy of that book.

Needless to say, Father Greeley rarely thought twice about holding back from saying what he thought.

He was criticized by his early critics for ''never having had an unpublished thought.'' But his ability to convey his opinion was also what made him successful in connecting with readers all over the world. He had a popular approach to writing that interested people on issues they normally would not connect with.

He attended Quigley Prep in Chicago, received his Licentiate in Sacred Theology in 1954 from Saint Mary of the Lake Seminary in Mundelein, and was ordained in 1954 as well. He continued his love of learning by earning a master's degree in 1961 and a doctorate in 1962 with a study on the effect of religion on the career paths of 1961 college grads.

His scholarship led to his longtime position as a senior researcher on the staff of the university's National Opinion Research Center, which surveys American opinion on religion and other issues.

Later in life, after finding success as a novelist and published sociologist, Father Greeley created a foundation to help inner-city kids with a $1 million grant to distribute money to Catholic schools in Chicago with high minority enrollments.

Father Greeley's other lifelong love—besides the Church, his family, and his writing—was the great city of Chicago. He was a classic example of what Chicagoans call a ''lifer''—someone who never felt at home anywhere other than the Windy City. Father Greeley was fond of the different architectures and sculptures atop ordinary buildings around Chicago, places the common working people lived, but which were adorned with beautiful handmade

workmanship. He would take pictures of these buildings and sculptures and loved to show them off.

He was a great fan of the Chicago Bulls and the Bears, and he never stopped praying that the Cubs would one day win another pennant.

Father Greeley wanted people to think of him as an honest and humble priest. But he was truly one of a kind. He touched and enriched so many lives.

I remember having lunch with him several years ago. He was just one of a kind—a Catholic priest who was part of the world and part of the world's conversation but still dedicated to his vocation.

I send my condolences to his sister Mary Jule Durkin, his five nieces and two nephews.

Father Greeley blessed us with his presence for many wonderful years. His passing is a great loss to the people of Chicago and to his friends and fans all over the world.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak in morning business for up to 12 minutes.

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

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I further ask unanimous consent to bring on to the floor and display a box of home keys, which I will explain in a moment.

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

Mr. VITTER. Thank you, Mr. President.

NATIONAL FLOOD INSURANCE

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, as is obvious, the people of South Louisiana have been through a whole lot in the last several years—Hurricane Katrina, Hurricane Rita, many significant hurricanes since then, most recently Hurricane Isaac, and the BP oil disaster, to name just a few really trying tragedies.

But now, having survived all of that, having endured through all of that, many residents of South Louisiana think they face a challenge which is even greater and which is completely wholly manmade; that is, the challenge presented by new changes to the National Flood Insurance Program that many South Louisiana residents fear could make staying in their homes that they built, following all the rules every step of the way, unaffordable. That is a crying shame. We must avoid that happening at all costs.

First of all, let me underscore that I talk about the folks of South Louisiana because I represent them. They have been through so much. But this is a national concern which potentially affects tens of millions of residents all around the country, in every one of the 50 States. That too is a reason we must solve this problem.

Again, it is simple. When we reauthorized the National Flood Insurance Program last year, when we finally got past only renewing that program by fits and starts for a very short-term period, we put into the law several reforms that were supposed to make the program fiscally sound. However, as some of those reforms are beginning to be implemented, they threaten to produce sky-high flood insurance premiums that no one at the time we debated these changes—no one at FEMA, no one in private insurance, and no outside expert—forecasted.

These sky-high premiums, if they are allowed to happen, threaten two things: First of all, they threaten, as I said, many good, hard-working taxpayers, residents who have followed all of the rules every step of the way in building their homes, in renovating their homes, and buying flood insurance. They threaten their being able to stay in their homes. They threaten the affordability of living that big part of the American dream. Second, they threaten making the National Flood Insurance Program sound because if significant numbers of folks cannot stay in their homes, cannot afford flood insurance, cannot pay into the system and therefore leave the system, potentially turn over their keys to the bank, walk away, certainly leave the national flood insurance system, perhaps leave home ownership, that is a big defeat for the fiscal soundness of the National Flood Insurance Program as well.

About 2½ weeks ago I was in Bayou Gauche, which is a middle-class neighborhood in St. Charles Parish, LA, up the river from New Orleans. I stood in the driveway of a home owned by homeowners who are facing just this crisis, just this challenge. As I said a few minutes ago, they have survived a whole lot over the last several years: Hurricane Katrina, Hurricane Rita to their west, many major hurricanes since then, including most recently Hurricane Isaac and the BP oilspill, the BP disaster. They have survived more than they ever imagined was possible in a lifetime. Yet now they are fearful that their greatest challenge is yet ahead. Their greatest challenge is completely manmade—the fact that some of these new changes to the National Flood Insurance Program could cost them their house, could make their staying in that solid middle-class neighborhood and in their house unaffordable.

When I was there, when we were talking about this challenge with many local residents and leaders, those homeowners presented me with this box of keys. It is pretty heavy, but I want the Presiding Officer and everyone on the floor to see it. These are hundreds of house keys that have been put in this box by homeowners who face the same threat, who say that if the right reforms and changes are not made, they are handing over these keys. They are handing them over to FEMA, they are handing them over to the Federal Government, they are handing them over to the bank because their homes will no longer be affordable. They have to have flood insurance if they have any mortgage. Virtually everybody has to have a mortgage to afford their house over time. If flood insurance rates go sky high and rates are really unaffordable, they will be handing over these keys for good.

They all know and expect that there are going to have to be changes to the program and some significant increases for the program to be fiscally sound and pay for itself. They are not arguing with that. I am not arguing with that. What we are arguing against is completely unaffordable premium increases, things that will literally drive middle-class families out of their homes and out of their neighborhoods and make their American dream completely unaffordable. That should not be allowed to happen. That should not be allowed to happen because it is wrong to give them that uncertainty and that future when they have followed the rules every step of the way as they existed under the National Flood Insurance Program, under their mortgage, under everything else. It should not be allowed to happen because it will mean we will never achieve fiscal sustainability if tens of thousands and potentially hundreds of thousands of people around the country exit the program as they are threatening to do.

We need to take action to be able to assure these homeowners that will not happen to them. With that goal in mind, I am pursuing several things.

First of all, some of this can and must be fixed administratively at FEMA. I have led several delegations to FEMA to talk about this, to demand that they do what they can under their authority—particularly under the so-called LAMP process—to make sure they get it right, particularly in drafting and issuing new flood maps. LAMP is the new process that is under way at FEMA under which they are supposed to take into account, in making new maps, all flood protections, all features that are there on the ground to provide homeowners under that terrain flood protection, even if it is less than a 100-year level of protection. FEMA is still in the midst of their LAMP process. They are not finished by a long shot. We have to make sure FEMA gets that right, builds all protection features into their new map before any of those new maps and any of those rates take effect. That is just the biggest example

of what FEMA needs to do to get it right, what they can do under their authority.

Part of this challenge is definitely administrative. That is why I have led those groups to FEMA and why FEMA needs to get it right. That is also why I will be presenting this box of home keys to FEMA later this week at the request of these Louisiana homeowners.

The other part of our challenge is that we get it right legislatively because, in addition to everything FEMA can and must do, there probably also needs to be changes to Biggert-Waters to ensure homeowners are not thrown out of their homes because flood insurance is now unaffordable. That is why I have teamed up with the senior Senator from Mississippi, THAD COCHRAN, in introducing the Vitter-Cochran measure to fix provisions in the National Flood Insurance Program. It will do several things, at least four that are significant:

First, it would ensure that communities that are developing new maps by the end of this year will be able to maintain the old grandfathered rates that are subject to change in section 207 of Biggert-Waters.

Second, the bill would allow a 5-year phase-in of actuarially sound rates for newly purchased homes to require a reasonable phase-in to those higher rates.

Third, the bill would authorize State and local governments flexibility to directly subsidize homeowners' flood-insured properties if that can be part of a solution as well.

Fourth, it would require that a minimum of 25 percent of mitigation funding go directly to homeowners in a given year for programs and help that directly impacts homeowners, such as home elevation.

I will be advancing that bill along with THAD COCHRAN and many other interested Members. We will also be looking for amendment opportunities to advance those ideas and those provisions as well. Certainly, I am joining with my other colleagues from Louisiana, from the Sandy-hit area in the Northeast, and from all parts of the country to advance these fixes.

Senator LANDRIEU has an amendment on the farm bill which is on the Senate floor now of which I am cosponsor, and I am certainly working with her and many other Members to get this fix, to get it done, to reassure these threatened homeowners that help is on the way. We need to do this. We need to preserve the American dream and treat these people right, not make their middle-class homes and middle-class neighborhoods all of a sudden, through no fault of their own, unaffordable. We need to do it for the very goal of putting the National Flood Insurance Program on fiscally sound footing because if we have tens or hundreds of thousands of residents exiting the program, turning their keys over, turning them in to FEMA, turning them in to the bank, the National Flood Insurance Program will never get to that fiscally sound basis. We will have people exiting the system, no longer able to pay premiums. We need to get it right for them. We need to get it right for the American dream.

I look forward to working with all of our colleagues in doing so because, again, I started at the beginning talking about what South Louisiana has been through—many hurricanes and the BP disaster and more. But this is not a parochial issue. It is not a Katrina issue. It is not a Sandy issue. It is far broader than this. This movie is coming to a theater near you. I urge Members to learn about that threatened impact on their constituents, on their homeowners, and to immediately join me and many others in this effort.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCHATZ). The Senator from Texas.

REMEMBERING FRANK R. LAUTENBERG

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I join others of our colleagues in mourning the passing of our friend and former colleague Senator FRANK LAUTENBERG. Senator LAUTENBERG joined this body in 2003 for the second time. I was immensely struck by his tenacious work ethic and his deep-seated devotion to the people of his State, the State of New Jersey. These are attributes that would serve all of us well and served him well and are something to which we can all and should all aspire.

Senator LAUTENBERG's legacy will be forever woven in the fabric of America's history. His work on the new GI bill of rights has helped ensure that thousands of America's fighting men and women receive the support they need when they come home and the opportunity to become part of the next ''greatest generation.''

With his passing, the Senate has lost its final member of what we all know or have come to call, as Tom Brokaw did, the ''greatest generation,'' the World War II generation, the generation my dad served in as part of the Army Air Corps in flying B–17s in World War II, and my father-in-law, who landed on Utah Beach on the second day of the Normandy invasion. These were great Americans, and it is their sacrifice and the contribution they have made to our way of life that have made it possible for America to remain the envy of the world.

We are also reminded that our time in this Chamber is fleeting, and we should be humbled by that reminder.

There have been 43 new Senators who have come to the Senate since 2007 alone. The reason I counted is because that was the last time we took up immigration reform—a subject we are going to turn to perhaps next week. Forty-three new Senators since 2007. Perhaps we will have 44 by the time we turn to that topic next week. We are reminded it is our duty as Americans to ensure this Chamber will host future generations of great Americans as well.

As Senator LAUTENBERG goes to his rest, my prayer is that his loved ones can take solace in the fact that he played such an important part in the great American story with honor and integrity.

CULTURE OF INTIMIDATION

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, the events of the last few weeks have thrown a spotlight on a culture in Washington which threatens the very fabric of what I just spoke about and that Senator LAUTENBERG fought for and contributed to, one that would hopefully instill confidence in the American people that what is happening here is in their best interest; that people realize we are the employees of the American people, here to serve their interests. That should be our primary focus.

Unfortunately, we have learned a culture of intimidation has arisen in Washington, and, unfortunately, it has become all too pervasive and threatens to become a cancer that cannot only destroy the public confidence in their Federal Government but also destroy the nature of our democracy itself.

We have learned that IRS agents—we don't know how many yet, but we do know that some—were deliberately targeting different political groups because of their political activities. Remember, this is activity protected by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. If it weren't for the political activity of the American people, we wouldn't have this great democracy which is the envy of the world. But we have learned the Internal Revenue Service was asking different groups inappropriate questions about their donors, their positions on various issues of the day, and the political affiliations of its officers and directors. We have learned these abuses went far beyond two rogue employees in the Cincinnati field office; that the IRS headquarters in Washington was involved as well.

Of course, the initial story that this was confined to a couple of self-starters and free agents in Cincinnati was laughable. We all know enough about bureaucracies to know that no one, particularly at a lower level to mid-level, instigates any sort of initiative as bold and as toxic as this without some sort of approval from on high, whether it is implicit or explicit.

We have now learned senior officials in the IRS knew about these abuses at least 2 years ago, yet failed to notify Congress or the public. We have learned that one conservative activist from Houston, TX, one of my constituents, Catherine Engelbrecht, was targeted by multiple Federal agencies, including the IRS, the FBI, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, and OSHA.

We have also learned the Environmental Protection Agency is yet another agency that has discriminated

against political organizations they do not happen to agree with. And we have learned the Obama administration, in the form of the Justice Department, has treated a reporter as if he were a criminal simply for doing his job.

I have seen the explanation of the apologists at the Justice Department. They said just because they identified James Rosen as a potential criminal coconspirator, they never intended to prosecute him. This is part of an affidavit designed to get at certain records that Mr. Rosen and his family maintained, invading their privacy. It makes no sense they would claim in this affidavit, in order to get this search warrant, that he was a potential criminal coconspirator and at the same time they never intended to prosecute him. Those are simply incompatible and inconsistent statements.

We have also learned the Department of Justice has conducted a disturbingly intrusive and broad investigation into the phone records of journalists who worked for the Associated Press.

At the Department of Health and Human Services we have learned that Kathleen Sebelius, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, has literally been raising money from private companies she is responsible for regulating in order to fund ObamaCare. That is a conflict of interest, and that is the most charitable thing one can say about it.

We have further learned this culture of intimidation has also given way to a culture of coverups and misinformation. We have learned more about the Obama administration's dishonest portrayal of the September 2012 terrorist attack that killed four Americans in Benghazi, Libya. We have learned the Obama State Department punished U.S. diplomats, whistleblowers, for cooperating with congressional investigators.

Sadly, these abuses are part of a larger pattern that goes back several years. For example, in 2010, when we were considering the matter of ObamaCare, various health insurance companies began alerting their customers about what they believed the impact of ObamaCare would be on them, and that specifically, if passed, it would force them to raise premiums on their own customers. Secretary Sebelius, at the time, threatened to punish these companies and bar them from participating in the ObamaCare exchanges if they followed through in communicating with their own customers about what the impact of this legislation would be on them.

By the way, the same IRS official who led the division to target political speech is now in charge of administering large portions of ObamaCare, which depends upon the Internal Revenue Service to implement so much of it. At a time when the Internal Revenue Service has lost credibility with the American people, it has no business administering a law that will affect one-sixth of our national economy.

The same culture of intimidation we have seen at Health and Human Services and at the Internal Revenue Service has also been prevalent at the Justice Department. That should be the bastion of justice and equal treatment under the law, but, sadly, it is not. The case of Fox News reporter James Rosen is only the latest example.

In recent days we have learned DOJ officials tracked Rosen's movements, got a search warrant to examine his private e-mails, and even obtained his parents' phone records. They treated him like a criminal, which is quite remarkable because, as I said, he was simply doing his job.

As the Washington correspondent for the New Yorker magazine noted:

> It is unprecedented for the government, in an official court document, to accuse a reporter of breaking the law for conducting routine business of reporting on government secrets.

I believe national security leaks should be investigated. But what about going after the leaker? We recognize when reporters are targeted, it becomes especially sensitive, given the role of reporting the news and the freedom of the press guaranteed by the Constitution and the need of our society to maintain the kind of openness that only comes with a free and robust press.

In addition to an overbearing surveillance of individual journalists, the Obama Justice Department also targeted whistleblowers in the notorious Fast and Furious investigation. This is where guns were purchased in bulk in the United States and allowed to walk into the hands of the drug cartels in Mexico.

One Department of Justice official, a U.S. attorney in Arizona, tried to smear a whistleblower by leaking a private document. The Department of Justice inspector general called this behavior ''inappropriate for a department employee and wholly unbefitting a United States attorney.'' Meanwhile, a separate Justice Department official was forced to resign her position when she was caught collaborating with left-wing bloggers to slander both whistleblowers and journalists.

As you can see, my conclusion there has been created a culture of intimidation is not the result of just one incident but a number of incidents and data points that, when connected, I think clearly paint that very sad and troubling picture. This culture of intimidation has become entrenched at Federal agencies and departments all across the Obama administration.

This culture of intimidation was troubling before the IRS scandal broke, and it is even more troubling given all we have learned in the past few weeks. So I hope Congress will do its job on a bipartisan basis—as the Finance Committee, under the leadership of Senators MAX BAUCUS and ORRIN HATCH, have already done on the IRS matter—to investigate this in a bipartisan way to get to the bottom of this matter, recognizing this kind of abuse of power on the part of the Internal Revenue Service can be turned not just against conservative political speech but also against people on the political left or anybody in between. This should not and cannot be tolerated.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

THE FISCAL CRISIS

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I thank my colleague and couldn't agree with him more on a number of the things he listed; in particular, the so-called affordable care act, which is anything but affordable.

I found out, as I traveled across the State of Indiana and spoke with Hoosiers, that this law is having an enormous negative impact on the decisions of employers, on health care providers, and on average citizens relative to what is coming down the line within the next several months and into 2014.

This legislation is a colossal mistake. It is a mess. It is distorting the economy, it is keeping people out of work, and it is keeping employers from hiring new workers. People are trying to manipulate the system now because what is being imposed on them is so Draconian and unsustainable and unaffordable. That is why we need to officially call this ''unaffordable comprehensive health care reform'' rather than the Affordable Care Act. It is unaffordable.

But that is not why I came here today. I came here today to talk about our current fiscal crisis. That has sort of taken a back seat to the debates we have been having on the Senate floor, even though they are necessary—immigration, which is coming up, the farm bill that we are currently dealing with, gun issues, and others. The looming dark cloud, the big bear in the closet, is our fiscal crisis, and it is not going away.

Last Friday, the Social Security and Medicare trustees issued their annual report on the long-term financial status of the health and retirement security programs, and there was a little bit of good news; that is, the current numbers that exist out there and the rate of spending down on these programs has slowed somewhat. But it is not the kind of news we ought to celebrate.

Some are saying: Oh, well, this takes the pressure off. Now we don't need to do anything about the structural reform of our mandatory spending for our entitlement programs because, look, we just had a good report. Let's just get back to regular business and we will worry about this later.

Well, the fact remains our mandatory spending is not only unsustainable, it is having an immediate impact and will continue to have an even greater impact on other essential functions of government as the cost of funding for the mandatory systems continues to

rise—and rise dramatically in future years with 10,000 baby boomers retiring every day.

Let me repeat that: 10,000 baby boomers are reaching retirement age each day, adding to the cost of Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security.

We have known this was coming for years. We have known it was coming for decades; that an amazing number of people born post-World War II now have worked their way to the point of retirement. This has had an impact on our economy, whether they were babies needing more cribs and diapers, whether they were young children going to elementary school and we needed more schools, going to secondary colleges and universities and we needed to expand those, working their way through the economy, having children—a dramatic impact with this bulge of baby boom babies growing up and working their way through the system. Yet while we knew all this was coming, Congress and the administration repeatedly said: We will deal with this later. It is a crisis, we know, but it is just too tough to deal with now.

What I am afraid of is that this latest report which came out and provided a little bit of relief, a little bit of wiggle room, but it did nothing to solve the long-term problem. What I am concerned about is that this report may be used to basically say we don't have to do anything now.

What is the impact? The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office reported earlier this year that spending on mandatory programs and interest on the debt—because we have to borrow to cover this cost—will consume 91 percent of all Federal revenues 10 years from now. Already it is putting the squeeze on discretionary spending because what this means is that all other spending priorities are being squeezed out by spending on Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security and some of the other mandatory programs.

If we are interested in a strong national defense, in a solid education system, infrastructure and bridges and paving roads, medical research, food and drug safety, homeland security, border security—and other programs, these programs are getting squeezed every day in terms of the amount of resources available.

Why these groups don't form a coalition and come marching through the Halls of Congress and demand that we take action now on runaway mandatory spending, because it is simply wiping out their programs, is beyond me. But it is the nature of the political beast to postpone the tough stuff, to not have to get to the point where they have to tell anybody no because we want everybody to love us so they will vote for us in the next election. It is incomprehensible that we continue to put this off day after day, month after month, year after year, election after election.

I have been around a while. How many times have we heard people say we will do that after the next election? That was the mantra in the 2012 Presidential election. Well, no. You see, the President couldn't step up and do this and the ruling party couldn't step up and do this because we had a Presidential election. They said that as soon as the election takes place, then we will have a period of time where we have been reelected to office or we have new Members coming in and we will not have the pressure of an election before us and we will address this problem.

Here we are now into the sixth month of this year, when everyone knows that the first 100 days of the new administration—or a second-term in this case—is the best time to enact long-term good legislation that addresses major problems—the days are slip-sliding away. The days are counting, and we continue debate and talk about and interject issues here that, yes, have importance but don't begin to rise to the level of importance of the need to address our fiscal situation.

The other thing I don't understand is why the young people of this country aren't standing up and demanding that we take action, because we are taking money away from them. We are diminishing their future. We are leaving them with a debt burden they may not be able to pay.

The International Monetary Fund put out a report recently that to cover current obligations for young people, they—not us—will have to pay either 35 percent more in taxes to keep these mandatory funds alive and solvent or receive 35 percent fewer benefits. This is at a time when our Nation's youth already face an unemployment crisis.

It is unconscionable. It is immoral for us to defer and to delay and to simply say we can't take care of these issues now and then move on through our lives, reap the benefits that come from some of these programs, and then hand it over to our children and say: Good luck. You are either going to pay one-third more in taxes or you are going to get one-third less in benefits, lifetime savings, Social Security for your retirement, health care coverage for your later years. Good luck with that one. But we couldn't summon the will to do it. We couldn't bring ourselves to make the hard choices.

Are we going to step up to the plate and be responsible? What is our legacy going to be for those of us who are serving now? What are we going to tell our children and grandchildren? Will we say sorry, we just weren't able to do it? It was just too tough politically, we are worried about the folks back home that they might not take it the right way. It requires a little bit of sacrifice to reform these programs—actually, to save the programs—before they go broke. But, no, we just couldn't do it. The President? No; kind of AWOL on this, hasn't stepped up. We thought for sure that after reelection, not being elected again, we would get some kind of leadership.

I see it slip-sliding away, and now we are faced with that ultimate day of crisis when it hits and we have to make painful choices because we have no other choice.

So why don't we take the rational approach? Why don't we have leadership that steps up and basically says this is what we need to do? Why don't we put the future of America and the future of our children and grandchildren and succeeding generations ahead of our own political interests? It is selfish not to do so. I think it is unconscionable. I think it is immoral for us to continue doing this.

So I am going to continue to come to the floor as much as I can—I have been doing this all year—and I am going to continue to urge the President to work with us. I am not making this a partisan issue. We are working with people across the aisle who understand this and want to do something about it. But we know we can't get it done without the President taking leadership and standing up and working with us.

There is a little bit going on right now, but here we are, 6 months later, and we are not making the progress we need to make.

In the end, maybe we will pass another patch of legislation—a little patch here, a little patch there—and we will deal with the big thing later. We just can't do it now.

For the sake of the future of this country, for the sake of the future of our children and grandchildren, for living up to our sworn oath to do what is necessary to continue the great story of democracy in this Nation, we need to step up and do this. These reforms are necessary. We all know it. We know the numbers. We know they are unsustainable. We know we must address it.

I urge my colleagues to do whatever is necessary to make the tough choices. Interestingly enough, that legacy, if we stand up to do it, will be worth whatever results or consequences come from our making these decisions.

I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

AGRICULTURE REFORM, FOOD, AND JOBS ACT OF 2013

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 954, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 954) to reauthorize agriculture programs through 2018.

Pending:

Stabenow (for Leahy) amendment No. 998, to establish a pilot program for gigabit Internet projects in rural areas.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I see my distinguished ranking member on the floor. We are proceeding in our work on the farm bill this morning.

As we are moving through, we have a lot of discussions going on, working to get agreement on both sides to be able to offer a number of amendments for votes. We certainly are going to do everything we can, working with colleagues on both sides of the aisle. It is critical that we complete our work, ideally, this week.

I appreciate our Senate majority leader understanding what I say over and over, which is this is a jobs bill. Sixteen million people work in this country because of agriculture and the food industry. This is their economic development jobs policy, and it is very important that we complete our work as we have done this last year.

Let me remind colleagues again that 1 year ago—and most of us were here at that time—one year ago we worked very hard. In fact, other than the Budget resolution, I think we may have a record for the most amendments that were voted on, on a piece of legislation. I don't know for sure, but I think it ranks right up there. We voted on 73 different amendments last year. Every one of the substantive amendments that was passed by the Senate is included in the bill that is in front of us, so we start from a bill that was worked on by the entire Senate last year. We are back again working through additional ideas, additional amendments that people are interested in.

It is very important that we complete our work so that, hopefully, when the House brings the bill to the floor—and we are encouraged. We are hearing that within a couple of weeks it will come to the floor of the House—that when they complete their work, we can actually go to conference and get a final bill on the President's desk before September 30, which is what people around the country are counting on us to do.

Farmers and ranchers have to do the job in the morning, whether they feel like it or not, because the job is in front of them. They have to work hard and get it done, and we have to work hard and get our job done. This is the time to complete a 5-year policy, and we intend to do that and get it done in time so the right kinds of decisions can be made.

Let me stress again that this bill is the one bill that has come before the Senate and passed last year that has real deficit reduction in it. We have looked at every page of what is called the farm bill. We have called ours the Agriculture Reform, Food, and Jobs bill because it is just that. It is about reform—reforming policies, cutting waste, fraud and abuse and creating more accountability. It is about food policies for our country, nutrition policies for our country, and it is about jobs.

We have scoured every page and actually in our process ended up cutting over 100 different programs and authorizations by either combining them, cutting down on the duplication and paperwork or eliminating them if they didn't make sense. If it doesn't work anymore, if it doesn't work from the taxpayers' standpoint, if it doesn't work from the standpoint of agricultural policy, we eliminated it.

We took what are currently 11 different definitions of what is ''rural''—we had local mayors, local township officials telling us they appreciate and count on rural development as their economic development arm for grants and loans for small businesses, for water and sewer projects, road projects. Whatever is done in small towns and rural communities across the country, USDA rural development is there supporting those local efforts. But they said could you give us 1 definition of ''rural'' instead of 11, so we can figure out the paperwork and know how to interact with the USDA.

It sounded simple. It wasn't simple. But we have actually gotten it down to one definition, dramatically cut the paperwork and reformed and streamlined the process for local units of government.

We have $24 billion in bipartisan deficit reduction. We have, in fact, put together something that is four times more than required of the across-the-board cuts in what has been dubbed sequestration. So rather than just doing what we are required to do under the law that established sequestration, we have gone four times more and created policies supported by farmers, ranchers, those involved in conservation, and those involved across our country in every part of the farm bill.

We have 12 different titles—and each one could actually be a separate bill if we wanted to—that deal with a wide variety of topics, from our traditional commodities where there is certainly a lot of debate as we have eliminated subsidies called direct payments and moved to crop insurance where it is based on risk. Farmers share in the cost of the insurance. There is no subsidy given. They get help if they have a disaster. If something happens with the weather or there is some other kind of disaster, then, similar to any other kind of insurance, it helps cover the risk, and that is what we are moving to.

Conservation and bringing together 23 different programs; we cut it down to 13, consolidated, streamlined, did a better job with more flexibility for communities and have created a conservation title supported by more than 650 different conservation and environmental organizations across the country.

As to specialty crops, half of the cash receipts of the country roughly are something called fruits and vegetables and other specialty crops. We strengthen those efforts, which are very important—local food systems, farmers markets, areas that are very important in growing and certainly address the health of our country.

I mentioned rural development; an energy title that we have not only focused on in terms of energy efficiency for our farmers on the farm, bioenergy, biofuels, but also a new area of reducing our reliance on petroleum by using agricultural products and byproducts in manufacturing called biobased manufacturing. That is an exciting new area for jobs for us. We are seeing a lot of different possibilities in the area of soybeans. We are seeing soybean oil used to replace petroleum oil in things such as foams. If you buy a number of different vehicles today and certainly in every Ford vehicle I know that is being produced, the new Chevy Volt, and many other automobiles today, you are actually sitting on soybean foam instead of petroleum foam. It is biodegradable. There are a lot of jokes about sitting on soybeans, but the reality is this is something that is creating a market for growers. It is biodegradable, gets us off foreign oil, and is creating jobs. There are a lot of possibilities in this bill for new jobs.

We focus on foreign trade. The one area where we actually have a trade surplus in our country is in agriculture. We are, in fact, feeding the world and working with those around the globe to develop their own food systems. I am very proud of the role American farmers play in addressing hunger around the world as well as international food assistance.

We could go on. The bottom line is that this is a bill with tremendous impact—16 million people in the country directly impacted in terms of their jobs. Every American, if you had breakfast this morning, thank a farmer. If you have lunch today, thank a farmer. If you have dinner today, thank a farmer. We have the safest, most affordable food supply in the world because of a group of people who go out and take the risk against the weather, which is getting tougher and tougher as the climate is changing. They are willing to go out there and continue to be in this business. Our bill supports them with tools to help them manage their risk through insurance, to help them manage their risks on the farm in terms of keeping the soil on the ground as well as protecting our water and protecting our air. Those kinds of tools are critically important as well.

This is a bill we have worked on now twice in the last year—last year, this year—and we are looking forward to having the opportunity to bring this to completion, to work with our House colleagues in a bipartisan way to provide legislation that is good for those directly involved in agriculture and that is good for consumers, that is good for taxpayers as we look at ways to reform our government, to work more efficiently and effectively on fewer dollars.

We look forward to continuing throughout the day working with colleagues. We are hopeful we will have amendments to bring forward, but we do understand we have to move forward and get this done.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HEITKAMP). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H. CON. RES. 25

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, Senate Democrats have been waiting a very long time to go to conference on our budget. In fact, it has now been 73 days. Until recently, we have gotten pretty used to Senate Republicans simply standing and saying no.

For months Republicans have been offering a lot of excuses for why they do not want to go to conference on the budget. They have said they want a preconference ''framework,'' which, by the way, is what a budget is. They have said they would not allow us to go to conference unless we guaranteed that the wealthiest Americans and biggest corporations would be protected from paying a penny more in taxes. They said they did not want a bipartisan conference to take away the leverage they have on the debt ceiling. And then they called for a do-over, which, actually, my ranking member on Budget called for again this morning—to bring up the House budget, have 50 hours of debate, a whole new round of unlimited amendments, go through the process all over, and they did this after they praised the very open and thorough floor debate we had on the Senate budget.

The story keeps changing. But even as some Republicans were focused on finding excuses to move us closer and closer to this crisis rather than have a budget deal, we have a number of Republicans who are now joining with us to call on regular order. Senator COBURN said that blocking conference is ''not a good position to be in.'' Senator BOOZMAN said he would ''very much like to see a conference.'' Senator WICKER said weeks ago that ''by the end of next week, we . . . should be ready to go to conference.'' We have known for a while that blocking regular order—especially after calling for it so eagerly just a matter of months ago—was not sitting well with a number of our Republican colleagues, and now, according to Politico, ''more Republicans appear to favor heading to conference than blocking it.'' I welcome that.

We need to move this to conference. It is the regular order. It will allow us to solve our country's problems, and we truly need a process to allow us to deal with our Nation's problems.

Senator MCCAIN is on the floor, and I thank him because he understands the importance not just for this bill but for all legislation in the Senate that we come here, we compromise, we fight hard for what we believe in, but at the end of the day just saying ''my way or the highway,'' even if you are a small minority, does not move this country to the place where we need it to get to, which is not a crisis-by-management place. I thank him for taking a lead and calling for regular order. He has said that Republican preconditions such as demanding that the conference agree to not raise the debt ceiling or raise taxes are ''absolutely out of line and unprecedented.'' Senator COLLINS joined us on the floor a few weeks ago to say that even though there is a lot we do not see eye to eye on, we should at least go to conference and make our best effort to get a deal. I could not agree more.

The stalling that we have seen is, as some have said on their side, ''a little bizarre'' and ''ironic to say the least,'' especially after, I would remind everyone, 50 hours of debate, innumerable amendments that took us way into the early hours, and we offered everybody the chance to speak. After that session was over, many of our Republican colleagues came to me personally and thanked me for finally having an open process. If they want us to have an open process, then they have to take that process and take it to the next step.

So I am deeply concerned. We are moving toward another manufactured crisis this fall. We have our Appropriations subcommittees that need to move forward. The country is very clearly tired of this country being managed by crisis. We just had a budget hearing this morning in which our witnesses, both Republicans and Democrats alike, said that moving us to a manufactured crisis would impact this economy in a horrific way this fall. We do not need to have that happen.

I want to go to conference. Do I want to have a compromise? Not really. I love where I stand. But I have been here a long time. You do not get everything you want, but you do have to compromise in order to move the country forward. And I am willing to go to conference with my counterpart, Chairman RYAN, who is on a very different page than I am, and find our compromise and be willing to move that forward here in the Congress so we can get to a place that allows us to be able to lead this country again. So I think we are at a very critical point.

I see Senator MCCAIN is on the floor. I would be happy to yield to him for a comment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Madam President, I understand that one of my colleagues who will object is coming to the floor, so perhaps I would reserve the right to object on his behalf even though I am in stark disagreement. But instead I will just make a comment, and I am sure my colleague on this side of the aisle will voice an objection when he arrives.

Mrs. MURRAY. The Senator is here.

Mr. MCCAIN. He is here.

Mrs. MURRAY. If the Senator will yield, I can go ahead and offer the unanimous consent request at this time and we can move from there.

Mr. MCCAIN. If it is OK with the Senator, because we know what is going to happen, I would like to make remarks, and then the Senator from Florida will make the same argument that was made the last few days, and fortunately I do not have to listen again.

For 4 years Members on this side of the aisle argued strenuously that we were doing a great disservice to the country by not taking up and debating and amending a budget that would then go to conference with the other side of the Capitol, the House of Representatives, and then we would do what we expect and, unfortunately, every family in America has to do, and that is to pass a budget under which we would be guided in our authorization and appropriations process.

Now my colleague from Florida will come to the floor and say that we have amassed a debt because of the budget. But we did not have a budget for 4 years. So how can you argue that the fact that we may go to conference on a budget—that somehow that would be responsible for the debt? Obviously, it is nonsense. Obviously, it is nonsense, just as, frankly, it was nonsense when the same group of Senators said we should not even debate gun measures in light of a tragedy that took place in Connecticut and another tragedy that took place in Tucson, AZ. They did not even want to take up and debate ideas that some of us had to try to keep weapons out of the hands of criminals and the hands of the mentally ill.

So now we have a Senate where we refuse to move forward on issues and have open debate and discussion and votes. I have always believed, in the years I have been here, with Republican and Democratic majorities, that the way we are supposed to function is to say: OK, let's give it our best shot, and let's do the best we can, and let's have votes.

One of our objections against the majority leader was that he would not let us have votes on amendments. We had—I have forgotten how many—votes on the budget that lasted until I believe around 7 o'clock in the morning. So the opponents of moving forward on anything cannot argue we did not have votes on the budget, cannot argue they were blocked from whatever amendment they wanted to have voted on.

So now we are faced with a situation where we will not go to conference. And I want to tell my colleagues who continue to do this that, with my strenuous objections, the majority will become frustrated and the majority

can change the rules of the Senate. They can do that. And I must say that although I would strenuously object to a change in the rules, I can understand the frustration many of my friends on the other side of the aisle feel at a failure of a simple process of going to conference when the majority on the other side of the Capitol is of our party. That is really very difficult to understand, unless you take the word of one of my colleagues who came to the floor and said: I do not trust Democrats, and I do not trust Republicans. Let me repeat what he said: I do not trust Democrats, and I do not trust Republicans. It is not a matter of trusting Democrats or Republicans. What this is a matter of is whether we will go through the legislative process that people sent us here to do. And I have probably lost many more times than I have won, but I have been satisfied in the times that I have lost that I was able to make my argument, put it to the will of the body, and it was either accepted or rejected. That is how people, schoolchildren all over America, expect us to behave. That is the way our Constitution is written. That is what this body is supposed to be about.

So when we have a—by the way, Madam President, this is the last time I am going to come to the floor on this exercise because it is obviously a fruitless kind of effort until something changes, and obviously that is not going to happen in the short term.

My friends will be saying they are Reagan Republicans, they are Reagan Republicans. Well, I was here when Ronald Reagan was President of the United States. President Reagan, rightly or wrongly, passed amnesty for 3 million people who were in this country illegally. Ronald Reagan sat down with Tip O'Neill, and they saved Social Security from bankruptcy. Ronald Reagan sat down with the Democrats, and they agreed on ways of increasing revenues and cutting spending. Ronald Reagan's record is very clear, and by the way, it was one of an assertive role of the United States of America and leadership in the world and not come home to ''fortress America.'' So sometimes when I hear my colleagues here talk about how they are Ronald Reagan Republicans, I do not think Ronald Reagan would have disagreed that we should have a budget, we should have a budget to guide the legislative agenda of the Congress of the United States.

So, as I said, I will not be coming back to the floor again while my colleagues object. And I see my colleague from Utah who was so unfamiliar with what we do here that he claimed it was behind closed doors in back rooms. The fact is that the budget conference is on C–SPAN and open to all.

So I can just say to my colleagues that this is not a proud moment for me, as we block a process that was agreed to and enacted for many, many years; was not enacted for 4 years over the strenuous objections of myself and my colleagues that we did not enact a budget. We enacted a budget after an all-night marathon of vote after vote after vote on literally any issue, and there was not a single vote proposed by my colleagues here that said that we cannot agree to a lifting of the debt limit. Now, the floor was open for that amendment, and I do not know why my colleagues now view this as the criteria for us moving forward on the bill. So I wish them luck, and I will not be coming to the floor again to object to their objection, and we will let the American people make a judgment.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I thank the Senator from Arizona for his very heartfelt remarks. I know he and I do not agree on a lot, but we do agree that we want this country to work because the alternative is not great. The way for this country to work is for us to come together with our differences of opinion and move forward, and that is what the conference committee is all about.

So, Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 33, H. Con. Res. 25; that the amendment which is at the desk, the text of S. Con. Res. 8, the budget resolution passed by the Senate, be inserted in lieu thereof; that H. Con. Res. 25, as amended, be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that the Senate insist on its amendment, request a conference with the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses, and the Chair be authorized to appoint conferees on the part of the Senate; that following the authorization, two motions to instruct conferees be in order from each side: motion to instruct relative to the debt limit and motion to instruct relative to taxes and revenue; that there be 2 hours of debate equally divided between the two leaders or their designees prior to votes in relation to the motions; further, that no amendments be in order to either of the motions prior to the votes, all of the above occurring with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Florida.

Mr. RUBIO. Madam President, reserving the right to object, first, I want to thank the Senator from Arizona for protecting my right to object in my absence before I made it to the floor.

Just to set the record straight, I do not think that we object to moving to a budget conference; we object to moving to a budget conference and having the debt limit raised within that conference. So I would ask the Senator if she would consider adding a unanimous consent agreement and that she modify her request so that it not be in order for the Senate to consider a conference report that includes reconciliation instructions to raise the debt limit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, if the Senator heard my request, I said we would consider a motion to instruct relative to the debt limit as part of our agreement to move to conference. So the Senator would be allowed to make his voice heard at that time. I would object to making it a requirement without a vote of the Senate that says the majority agrees with that. So I would object to his amendment and again ask for unanimous consent on the original request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard. Is there objection to the original request?

Mr. RUBIO. Madam President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The majority leader.

PROVIDING FOR USE OF THE CATAFALQUE

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to S. Con. Res. 18.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the concurrent resolution by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 18) providing for the use of the catafalque situated in Exhibition Hall of the Capitol Visitor Center in connection with memorial services to be conducted in the United States Senate Chamber for the Honorable Frank R. Lautenberg, late a Senator from the State of New Jersey.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent the concurrent resolution be agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate.

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

The concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 18) was agreed to.

(The concurrent resolution is printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions''.)

MEMORIAL OBSERVANCES OF THE HONORABLE FRANK R. LAUTENBERG

Mr. REID. Madam President, I now ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 160.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 160) relative to the memorial observances of the Honorable Frank R. Lautenberg, late a Senator from the State of New Jersey.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to

reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 160) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:32 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. BALDWIN).

AGRICULTURE REFORM, FOOD, AND JOBS ACT OF 2013—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

THE PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

Mr. FLAKE. Madam President, the Senate, I am learning, is an institution bound by tradition and precedent. One of the time-honored and worthwhile traditions in this body is that new Senators, for at least the first few months of their service, are to be essentially seen and not heard until they deliver their maiden speeches on the Senate floor. This, Madam President, I am doing today.

As an aside, and in the same vein of new Senators traditionally not being heard but seen, I may have been well advised for the first few months of my service to avoid the throngs of reporters who congregate outside this Chamber, but it is too late for that. Politicians, after all, can only heed so much advice.

For the past 12 years it was my privilege to serve in the House of Representatives, a body that has its own traditions and precedents. At its core the House is governed by the concept of majority rule—one party can have a majority of only one or two and, by virtue of the rules, can still maintain control of that body. During my time in the House, I had the experience of being both in the majority and in the minority. All things equal, I have preferred the former, but I understood the power wielded by being in the majority is fleeting. That is as it should be.

The Senate, on the other hand, is a body governed by consensus. The party holding the gavel is on a short leash. Bringing even the most noncontroversial resolutions to the Senate floor requires the agreement, or at least the acquiescence, of the minority party. Over the past decades, both parties have chafed under this arrangement. Both parties have at times considered changing the rules that would in some way make the Senate more like the House. Both parties have wisely reconsidered. The House has rules appropriate for the House. The rules of the Senate, however frustrating to the party that happens to wield the gavel, are appropriate for the Senate.

I come to this point with great appreciation for those Arizona Senators who have preceded me. The 48th State in the Union, Arizona celebrated its centennial just last year. Prior to my swearing in this year, Arizona had sent just 10 Senators to this body. These Arizonans who came before me left more of an impression than simply carving their names in these desks. Few in this body have matched the longevity of Carl Hayden. Few have had the lasting impact of Barry Goldwater, who helped launch the conservative movement.

I consider it a high honor to follow in the footsteps of Senator Jon Kyl, whose steady principled leadership shaped Arizona for the better and made our Nation stronger and more secure. My constituents now call the same telephone number I once answered as an intern for Senator Dennis DeConcini. He taught me a great deal about constituent service.

Now I have the incredible honor to serve here with Senator JOHN MCCAIN who, as a prisoner of war, taught us all the meaning of sacrifice. Since that time he has served Arizona, the country, and the Senate nobly and honorably. Fortunately for all of us his service to this institution continues. It is my great privilege to serve with him.

The challenges America faces today are legion and growing. Abroad, cells of terrorists bent on our destruction continue to incubate. Some receive aid and comfort from countries with long-held grievances and irreconcilable enmity toward the United States. Other terrorists take advantage of failed states and lawless regions to hatch their plans.

But it is not just individual terrorists or terror cells we have to worry about. Countries unbound by the norms and conventions of traditional nation-states now threaten peace. Today our concern is primarily focused on Iran and North Korea, but myriad other countries are but one election or coup removed from boiling over into regional and international instability.

Here at home our fiscal situation is dire. We continue to spend considerably more than we take in. Worse yet, we have no serious plan to remedy the problem in any structural way. We seem to endlessly lurch from cliff to crisis and back again with fiscal high-wire acts that erode the confidence of markets and invite the disdain of our constituents.

It is understandable that with 2-year election cycles the House of Representatives begins to focus on the next election as soon as one election is finished. In the House difficult issues are often avoided or perpetually shelved until the next election. But in the Senate we have 6-year terms. Senators, therefore, should come with an added dose of courage to take up the thorny and vexing issues on which the other Chamber takes a pass. It is our responsibility to lead, and if there was ever a time for this body, this Chamber—the United States Senate—to lead, this is it.

I am a proud and unapologetic conservative and a Republican, and I hope my votes will consistently reflect that philosophy. So I am not suggesting we hold hands and agree on every issue or even most issues. There are profound and meaningful differences between the parties. But I want to spend more time exercising my franchise while debating the legislation itself and less time on deciding whether such legislation should be debated on the Senate floor.

There is a time and a place for using supermajority rules to block legislation and/or nominees from coming to the Senate floor; there is a time and a place for partisanship but not every time and not every place.

This country yearns for a functioning Senate, a Senate that recognizes the gravity of our fiscal situation and its responsibility to propose and adopt measures to solve it for the long term. This country yearns for a Senate that exercises its prerogative as part of the first branch of government to rein in executive branch excesses in both domestic and foreign affairs.

Domestically, the parade of missteps and abuses at the IRS and other Federal agencies stand as exhibit A of the need for more robust legislative direction and oversight. Recent Presidents, both Republican and Democratic, have exercised authority in the foreign arena far beyond that contemplated for a Commander in Chief, often obligating future Congresses to financial commitments far beyond security arrangements. A better functioning Senate, less distracted by games of shirts and skins, would not countenance such theft of its authority.

Now is not the time for this institution to retreat into irrelevance, where the sum of our influence is to sign off on another continuing resolution to fund the government for another 6 months; where success is measured by how well our tracks are covered when the debt ceiling is raised; where prioritizing spending cuts are avoided by invoking another sequester. No, we have been there, done that. It is time now for the Senate to lead.

There are encouraging signs we may be moving in this direction. Earlier this year a budget was passed by this Chamber. It wasn't a budget I preferred, but I was given ample opportunity to offer and debate amendments to that legislation, as were my Republican colleagues. We came up short, but at least the Senate got back to regular order.

In the coming weeks this body will consider an immigration bill. Immigration reform has been and remains a complex and vexing issue, with Members holding strong and discordant views on many of its facets. Still, a bill having had a thorough vetting in committee will now be allowed to come to the Senate floor to be debated, amended, and, hopefully, improved upon. This is the way it should work.

To conclude, a few days after last November's election, the 12 newly elected Senate freshmen were invited to the National Archives. We were taken to the legislative vault where we viewed the original signed copies of the first bill enacted by Congress, as well as other landmark pieces of legislation and memorabilia. Oaths of allegiance signed by Revolutionary War soldiers witnessed by General Washington, and documents and artifacts related to the Civil War, segregation, and women's suffrage were also on hand. It was an affirmation to me of the tumultuous seas through which our ship of state has sailed for more than 200 years.

We have had many brilliant and inspired individuals at the helm and trimming the sails along the way. We have also had personalities ranging from mediocre to malevolent. But our system of government has survived them all.

Serious challenges lie ahead, but any honest reckoning of our history and our prospects will note we have confronted and survived more daunting challenges than we now face. This is a durable, resilient system of government, designed to withstand the foibles of men, including yours truly.

It is the honor of a lifetime just to be here in this storied institution—more than I could have ever hoped for. My modest hope going forward is that my contributions will in some small way honor the Senate's storied past and help it realize its full potential as the world's most deliberative body.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, first let me congratulate Senator FLAKE on his maiden speech. It was very thoughtful and I think a challenge to this body to get back to the work it has been given by the American people.

I come to the floor to once again talk about the 4,670 victims of gun violence we have seen across this country since December 14.

December 14 is a date that everyone in Connecticut knows but, as time goes by, maybe fades from the memories of other Americans. That is the day in which a deranged young man walked into Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, CT, and gunned down 20 6- and 7-year-olds, in addition to 6 teachers and education professionals who were charged with taking care of those kids. That is a day none of us will ever forget.

We came to the floor of the Senate in the weeks and months that followed with the intention of passing legislation that would make sure we did everything within our power to assure that another Sandy Hook didn't happen somewhere else in this country. But we also were endeavoring to do something about the all too routine gun violence that has plagued our cities and our suburbs—frankly, almost every community in this country.

This is a stunning number. Since December 14 of last year, in just over 6 months, 4,670 people have died from gun violence, and during that time the Senate and the House of Representatives have done nothing to try to change that reality. I will at least give this body credit; we debated a bill in the Judiciary Committee and we brought it to the Senate floor. Because of the rules of this place, unfortunately, 55 votes was not enough to get a gun violence package passed that would have imposed criminal background checks on thousands of gun purchases that now operate outside that system that would have made it a Federal crime to illegally traffic in guns, that would have placed more resources in the hands of mental health professionals. At least in the Senate we tried to do it. The House, on the other hand, has taken no steps to try to cut down on the 4,670 deaths all across this country just in the last 6 months.

What I have tried to do every week since the failure of that bill is to come down to the floor of the Senate. Instead of talking over and over about the policy implications or the different ways and paths we can get to a gun violence package, instead, I think it is important to talk about the victims. Who are these 4,670 people? Because their stories should be the ones that move this place to action.

One such story as that of Matthew Tarto, age 16, who died just a few days ago, May 24. He was killed implausibly by his father. His 52-year-old father killed his 16-year-old son in an apparent murder-suicide.

Matthew was an amazing young man. He was a backup offensive lineman for his high school, John Curtis Christian School. He was a superior track and field athlete. He was an honor roll student. His friends called him a happy-go-lucky kid. They said he always had a smile. His football coach said:

> This kind of thing is unbelievable, that something like this could happen. The only way we know how to get through this is with deep prayer. I just feel so heartbroken, not only for his family but for the kids, his friends and his teammates.

We talk a lot about the fact that it is important to change gun laws. There are others who say that all of our emphasis should be on early intervention; that our mental health system should be the sole focus of this place so we can stop these murders before they happen. But as we know, often we can't see these things coming.

The case of Matthew Tarto is such an illustration. Neighbors said they never saw any signs of trouble from this household. In fact, one neighbor remembers seeing the father and the son taking walks together through the neighborhood just days and weeks before this happened.

Matthew was an amazing guy: honor roll student, great athlete, friendly, happy-go-lucky kid, but in an awful murder-suicide, he was taken from us, as well as his father.

Another 16-year-old 3 days beforehand was gunned down in the Back of the Yards neighborhood of Chicago. Angel Cano was killed with a gunshot wound to the head. He was pronounced dead on the scene, according to the Cook County Medical Examiner's Office.

His father had brought his oldest son to Chicago from Mexico in 2004 in search of a better life. His father said his son just desperately wanted to be someone. His son, at 16 years old, had dreams of becoming a singer or a professional soccer player. He was always down at the local soccer fields playing soccer, endlessly, teaching other young kids how to be better soccer players. At 16, he still had this dream. Yet apparently on the way back from the soccer fields that evening, he was gunned down. The police have said it may be gang related, but the family says that Angel was never, ever affiliated with any gangs.

Then, lastly, the story of Jamica Woods. Ms. Woods was 37 years old. The night before she died, on May 20, her boyfriend uploaded pictures onto his Facebook page of a shotgun, along with pictures of a shotgun shell, that he had recently bought at Walmart. He uploaded the pictures because he had already set about a plan to kill his girlfriend the next night.

According to police, Ms. Woods had taken out an emergency protective order against her boyfriend last December, but she had never gone about the process of finalizing it. She was in the process of kicking her boyfriend out when she got killed. Had she just taken a few more steps, it is possible he would have never been able to buy that gun in the first place. If she had taken those steps to fill out a protective order and if that order had been filed and if the Walmart had run a background check and found that protective order, it is possible she would still be alive today.

Frankly, there are hundreds, if not thousands, of men and women across this country who are alive today because of that law—because of that law that came so very close to saving Jamica Woods: a protective order being filed due to domestic violence, a gun purchase being stopped because of that order.

One of the reasons we have that law on the books today is the advocacy of Senator FRANK LAUTENBERG. Senator FRANK LAUTENBERG, who died this week, made it his life's cause to try to make the streets of his State of New Jersey safer. He was advocating right up until his final days on the floor of this Chamber to enact a ban on high-capacity magazines such as the one that killed 20 little 6- and 7-year-olds in Connecticut.

But he was successful in passing through this Chamber a piece of legislation that keeps guns out of the hands of people who have been convicted of domestic violence. It is a law that has worked. It is a law that has saved the

lives of hundreds, if not thousands, of men and women all across this country. It is a reminder that this place can do something about the 4,670 people who have died since Newtown due to gun violence.

FRANK LAUTENBERG knew this place had the power to save lives by enacting commonsense gun violence legislation—in his case, just a simple rule that if someone has been convicted of domestic violence, maybe they shouldn't get their hands on a gun.

Senator LAUTENBERG's work is a reminder that whether it is next month, later this year or next year, we still have work to do to try to honor the memories of the thousands of victims of gun violence all across this country.

I yield the floor.

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

IMMIGRATION

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, I rise this afternoon to say a few words about the immigration reform bill that, as I understand it, we will begin discussing next week. As the son of an immigrant, somebody who came to this country at the age of 17 without a nickel in his pocket and who was able to send his two kids to college, needless to say I support immigration. Our country is unique in the world. Our country is great because we are the sons and daughters of immigrants. I think we should all be very proud of that.

I also commend the Judiciary Committee, Senator LEAHY and Senator SCHUMER and Senator DURBIN—all of those people who have been working very hard on what I consider to be a good and strong immigration reform bill. Here are some of the very strong components of that bill that I hope every Member of the Senate would support: That is the need for a pathway to citizenship for the 11 million undocumented immigrants in this country. Bringing undocumented workers out of the shadows and giving them legal status will make it more difficult for employers to undercut the wages and benefits of all workers and, in my view, will be good for the entire economy.

I have always—and continue to—strongly support the DREAM Act part of the immigration reform bill, which is to make sure that children of illegal immigrants who are brought into this country by their parents years and years ago are allowed to become citizens.

I strongly support a number of the provisions that deal with agriculture. Some years ago I was in Immokalee, FL, a place that I suspect has some of the most exploited workers in America. They pick the tomatoes which go to the fast-food restaurants throughout this country. I can tell everyone that in the State of Vermont, we have dairy farms that are now dependent on foreign labor, and it is important that we treat those workers with dignity and give them legal status. It is extremely important to have an approach which provides legal status for agricultural workers.

I obviously support making sure our borders are strong and that we stop illegal immigration as best we can, and I applaud the committee for including all of those provisions in the immigration bill that is going to come to the Senate I expect next week.

What I worry about very much, and have deep concerns about in terms of the current legislation, is that while we have made a good step forward in terms of improving our economy as to where it was in the midst of the financial crisis, we still have a long way to go. The real unemployment rate in America is not 7.5 percent. That is the official unemployment rate. The real unemployment rate is closer to 14 percent. If we include those people who have given up looking for work in high-unemployment areas and people who are working part time and want to work full time, the real unemployment rate is closer to 14 percent. In other words, if we include unemployment among minorities as well as the young people in this country, we continue to have a very serious unemployment problem in the United States of America, and it is an issue with which we have to deal. I have a number of ideas on how to deal with it. One thing we sure as heck do not want to do is make a bad situation worse.

It seems to me that in a moment when our middle class continues to disappear, when millions of workers are working longer hours for lower wages, when median-family income has gone down by $5,000 since 1999, it does not make a lot of sense to me that we have an immigration reform bill which includes a massive increase in temporary guest worker programs that will allow large multinational corporations to import hundreds of thousands of temporary blue-collar and white-collar guest workers.

One of my major concerns is that corporate America is sort of using immigration reform as a means to continue their effort to lower wages in the United States of America, and we must not allow that to happen.

We all know we have a serious crisis in terms of the high cost of a college education, which is another issue we are going to be dealing with soon on the floor. One thing I can say—and I suspect I speak for a number of other Members in Congress—is if we didn't come from a family with a lot of money and we needed to get some financial help in order to pay for college, we worked in the summertime. I find it alarming that within this bill we are looking at a situation in which we are importing a lot of young people from Europe and elsewhere to fill jobs which young people in this country need in the summertime to allow them to get going in terms of their careers and allow them to make a few bucks in order to help them with their college education.

I understand that jobs such as a waiter, waitress, or busboy—and I did some of that when I was a kid—are not glamorous jobs. But you know what. They help a little bit as far as paying for college. I know it is not glamorous to work as a lifeguard, at the front desk of a hotel or resort, as a ski instructor, as a cook or chef in a kitchen, as a chambermaid, or as a landscaper. The jobs I just mentioned will not pay huge amounts of money, but for someone who needs to figure out how to pay for college in the fall, those jobs help. For someone who needs some experience in order to get their career off the ground, those jobs help. I am concerned that kids in this country are going to be looking for jobs and employers are going to say: Well, actually we don't have any jobs; the job has been filled by some young person from Eastern Europe. So I want us to take that issue into account.

Theoretically the J–1 Program is supposed to bring young people into this country so they can learn about our culture. It is a program to expose young people from around the world to American culture, and that is a good thing. I believe in that. I believe young people in America should have the opportunity to go abroad, and young people from around the world should have the opportunity to learn about America. It is a good thing.

I fear this J–1 Program is being exploited by corporations such as Hershey's and McDonald's in an effort to simply bring students from abroad to work at low-paying jobs in the United States.

Supporters of the temporary H–2B Guest Worker Program claim there are not enough Americans willing to do these types of jobs; that in essence what they are saying is the young American people are too lazy to work at these jobs. I do not accept that. I truly do not accept it. I think it is a slap in the face not only to our young people but to the many working people who do not have much in the way of an education and want to work so they can earn some money. It is a slap in the face to say to those people: No, we are going to have to bring people in from abroad to do those jobs, such as being a waiter, waitress, chambermaid, or lifeguard. These are not high-tech skilled jobs; these are jobs our young people can do and need to do.

I have a great concern about the transformation of the J–1 Program from being a program dealing with American culture to being one where corporations are exploiting young people from abroad to work in low-paying jobs in the United States.

I also find it interesting that instead of raising wages in this country to attract workers, what many of these companies are doing is bringing in people from abroad. We know what supply and demand is about. What we learned in economics 101 in college is that if an employer cannot find a certain type of worker, the way to entice that worker is to raise wages. Instead of raising wages, what employers are saying is: We have huge amounts of cheap labor all over the world. Instead of raising wages for American workers, we are going to bring in cheap labor from around the world, and I think that is wrong. I think as we deal with this legislation, this is an issue we have to address front and center.

When we talk about H–2B jobs, what we are talking about is people who may be working as a landscaper, amusement park worker, housekeeper, waiter, or waitress. Further, during the summer, businesses are using guest worker programs to hire young people from other countries to be lifeguards.

Maybe I am mistaken, but I kind of think there are young people in this country who can work as lifeguards and hold other positions in some of the resorts all over this country. We are talking jobs such as being a ski instructor in Vermont. I can tell everyone that in the State of Vermont, we have a whole lot of young people who are very good at skiing and can teach skiing. We don't need people from Europe to take those jobs away from young Americans.

Let me be clear—and I find this to be interesting, if not ironic—the same corporations and businesses that support a massive expansion in guest worker programs coincidentally happen to be the same exact corporations that are opposed to raising the minimum wage. These are the same corporations that support the outsourcing of American jobs, not to mention the same corporations which in some cases have reduced wages and benefits for American workers at a time when corporate America is making record-breaking profits.

In too many cases the H–2B Program for lower skilled guest workers, as well as the H–1B Program for high-skilled guest workers, is being used by employers to drive down the wages and benefits of American workers and to replace American workers with cheap labor from abroad.

Here is what it comes down to: supply and demand. If the employers of this country need labor, let them start raising wages for American workers rather than bringing in cheap labor from all over this world. The immigration reform bill that passed the Senate Judiciary Committee could increase the number of low-skilled—I hear speeches here that we are going to have these genius high-tech guys who are going to start companies and create all kinds of jobs. Great. That is not what we are talking about here. We are talking about an immigration reform bill from the Judiciary Committee that could increase the number of low-skilled guest workers by as much as 800 percent over the next 5 years and could more than triple the number of temporary white-collar guest workers coming into this country. During the next 5 years, H–1B high-skilled visas could go from 85,000 to as many as 230,000. The number of H–2B low-skilled visas could go from 65,000 to as many as 325,000. The new W visa program for low-skilled workers could go as high as 200,000.

The first question the American people and Members have to ask is, is unemployment throughout America in States such as Arizona, Oklahoma, Vermont, Michigan so low right now that we desperately need more and more foreign workers to fill jobs Americans cannot fill?

The high-tech industry tells us they need the H–1B Program so they can hire the best and the brightest science, technology, engineering, and math workers in the world, and that there are not qualified American workers in these fields. Let me be the first to admit that in some cases I believe that is true. I have spoken to employers in Vermont. I suspect it is true all over this country, that there are areas where companies cannot find the skilled workers they need so they need employees from abroad, and to the degree that is true, let us address that issue. But let's also give some facts which suggest that may not be quite as true as some of the employers and corporations are saying.

In 2010, 54 percent of H–1B guest workers were employed in entry-level jobs. So the argument is: Hey, we need all of these brilliant guys who are going to start companies and create jobs. In 2010, 54 percent of the H–1B guest workers were employed in entry-level jobs and performed ''routine tasks requiring limited judgment'' according to the Government Accountability Office.

In 2010 the official U.S. unemployment rate averaged more than 9.6 percent per month. Why couldn't these types of jobs be performed by Americans?

So, again, the point is—I know some of my friends say: Every one of these guys is some genius who is going to start a company. I wish that were the case. Many of these are lower wage, entry-level jobs that certainly American workers could do.

Further, only 6 percent of H–1B visas were given to workers with highly specialized skills in 2010. That is the issue I keep hearing about, highly specialized skills, but only 6 percent of H–1B visas went to those folks. More than 80 percent of H–1B guest workers are paid wages that are less than American workers in comparable positions, according to the Economic Policy Institute. Over 9 million Americans have degrees in a STEM-related field, but only about 3 million have a job in that area.

Last year the top 10 employers of H–1B guest workers were all offshore outsourcing companies. Let me repeat that. One of the great crises we have faced in the last 30 years is that companies have shut down in America, moved abroad, and gotten cheap labor abroad. The top 10 employers of H–1B guest workers were all offshore outsourcing companies. These firms are responsible for shifting huge numbers of American information technology jobs to India and other countries. Nearly half of all H–1B visas go to offshore outsourcing firms, while less than 3 percent of them apply to become permanent residents.

Further, half of all recent college graduates majoring in computer and information science did not receive jobs in the information technology sector. In other words, we have large numbers of Americans who are graduating with degrees who can handle these jobs. Yet we are bringing in large numbers of people from abroad to do them. It doesn't make a whole lot of sense to me.

Not only would the Senate immigration bill greatly expand the number of H–1B guest workers, it also would provide an unlimited number of green cards to foreign graduates who receive a master's degree or a Ph.D. in a STEM-related field. If we are going to provide green cards to every foreign student with an advanced STEM degree, what purpose does the H–1B program serve other than to suppress the wages of American workers who are already struggling? At the very least I believe we should prohibit offshore outsourcing firms from hiring temporary guest workers.

Under the Senate immigration bill, the number of college-educated H–1B guest workers and STEM green card holders who are under 30 years of age will exceed the number of jobs that are available for young information technology graduates. What message does that send to young people in our country who are interested in pursuing careers in information technology?

Making matters even worse, I am very concerned that Senator HATCH was able to gut the very modest reforms to the H–1B program designed to prevent companies from replacing American workers with H–1B guest workers. At a minimum it is essential that these proworker reforms be put back into the bill before it is passed by the full Senate.

This country was built by immigrants. I am a son of an immigrant, and many of us are. I believe we are a nation that wants to see comprehensive immigration reform passed. I certainly do.

Again, I wish to congratulate all of those people who have worked on this bill because there are a lot of very important and positive provisions in the bill. But I think we have to improve the bill as it leaves committee and as it comes to the floor of the Senate. What we want to make certain of is

that at a time when this country continues to struggle economically, when millions of people are working longer hours for lower wages, when minority unemployment is extraordinarily high, we do not take any action that lowers wages or increases unemployment for American workers.

Again, my congratulations to those who worked on this bill, but we have a whole lot of work to do as the bill reaches the floor, and I intend to be working with my colleagues to make those improvements.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MANCHIN). The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I say to the Senator from Vermont that I appreciate much of what he had to say, and I look forward to working with him to see how we can best address some of his very legitimate concerns.

I would point out to my friend from Vermont that there is going to be a requirement for any of these foreign workers that first the job be advertised in a variety of ways to make sure there are no American workers who would take these jobs. I hope that to some degree resolves some of his concerns. But I paid close attention to his statement, and I look forward to addressing some of those very legitimate concerns. I thank the Senator from Vermont.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment and call up McCain amendment No. 956.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Louisiana.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I object. Reserving the right to object, I have some difficulty with the amendment the Senator from Arizona wishes to discuss. I have been trying to get a vote on amendment No. 1113 on flood insurance, and one of the Members from the other side is holding it up. So until we get things worked out—and I hope the Senator from Arizona will appreciate the predicament we are in. I am happy for the Senator to discuss his amendment, but to call up an amendment and to then vote on it, I would have to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I appreciate the Senator from Louisiana allowing me to discuss my amendment. I am deeply appreciative.

This amendment would eliminate a proposed catfish inspection program within the U.S. Department of Agriculture, USDA. The Government Accountability Office, GAO, warns that this catfish program will be ''duplicative'' and ''wasteful'' of federal resources. I am grateful for the support of my colleagues who have cosponsored this amendment: Senators SHAHEEN, CRAPO, COBURN, CANTWELL, MURRAY, WARNER, AYOTTE, RISCH, KIRK, LAUTENBERG, and INHOFE.

Mr. President, I will ask to add the following senators as cosponsors to this amendment: Senators WHITEHOUSE, REED, HELLER, and COWAN.

When Congress passed the 2008 Farm Bill, a small provision was quietly added in conference that requires USDA to establish an office to inspect catfish. Just catfish. According to USDA, setting up the catfish office will cost taxpayers about $30 million, and then cost another $15 million a year to operate. At least 95 new government inspectors would be hired, trained, and placed throughout the United States to inspect catfish. I support ensuring that our Nation's food supply is safe—except that USDA is not in the business of inspecting catfish or any other seafood. USDA is responsible for inspecting meat, poultry, and egg products. All other food, including seafood, is inspected and certified by the Food and Drug Administration, FDA.

There is no such thing as ''USDA Grade A seafood.'' So why should we spend millions in taxpayer dollars every year to inspect catfish? GAO asked the same question and in 4 different reports concluded that the catfish office is duplicative of FDA functions and explicitly recommended that Congress repeal it.

It's ''duplicative'' because we would be wasting tax dollars on having USDA inspectors doing the same work alongside FDA inspectors. This would be a burden to any business that stores, processes or distributes seafood.

According to a GAO report titled ''Actions Needed to Reduce Fragmentation, Overlap, and Duplication,'' GAO said: ''We suggest that Congress repeal the provisions that assigned USDA responsibilities for examining and inspecting catfish'' because ''USDA plans are essentially the same as FDA's hazard analysis requirements.''

In another report published in 2011, GAO said the USDA catfish program ''fragments our food safety system'' and ''splits up seafood oversight between FDA and USDA, expending scarce resources.''

In another GAO report, simply titled—''Responsibility for Inspecting Catfish Should Not Be Assigned to USDA,'' GAO said: ''[USDA] uses outdated and limited information as its scientific bases for catfish inspection'' and that ''the cost effectiveness of the catfish inspection program is unclear because USDA would oversee a small fraction of all seafood imports while FDA, using its enhanced authorities, could undertake oversight of all imported seafood.''

GAO is not the only critic of the catfish office. The Centers for Disease Control reports that of the 1.8 billion catfish meals enjoyed by Americans, only two people get sick a year. FDA requires foreign producers to abide by the same food safety standards as domestic facilities and turns away unsafe seafood. In fact, USDA itself says there is no benefit for having them inspect catfish. A report issued in 2010 by the USDA Food Safety Inspection Service said, ''There is substantial uncertainty regarding the actual effectiveness of the catfish inspection program'' and that there is ''no rational relationship'' between the Catfish Office and human health. That is probably why the President's Budget for FY2014 proposes to eliminate the program. If USDA can't justify a catfish inspection program—how can anyone in Congress?

The USDA catfish does nothing to enhance food safety. GAO says it's a sham. USDA says it's a sham. FDA says it's a sham. OMB says it's a sham. So why did Congress propose it in 2008? It turns out there's a group of domestic catfish farmers in two or three southern States that are having a difficult time competing against catfish importers. In classic Farm Bill politics, they worked up some talking points about how Americans need a whole new government agency to inspect foreign catfish imports.

Unfortunately, there are grave trade implications if we don't repeal the catfish program. Trade experts warn that Vietnam and other Asian exporters of catfish have a strong case that the USDA Catfish Office would constitute a WTO violation.

I have a letter from former Congressman and WTO appellate judge Jim Baucus to Congress concerning the WTO risk posed by this catfish office. He says, ''There was, and still is no meaningful evidence that catfish, domestic or imported, posed a significant health hazard when Congress acted in 2008 to shift [catfish] jurisdiction from FDA to USDA, in essence singling out catfish from all other seafood products.'' He goes on to say, ''the United States would face a daunting challenge in defending the catfish rule . . . it will be giving other nations an opening to enact 'copycat legislation' which will disadvantage our exports.'' This is ''particularly inopportune'' in the face of Trans-Pacific Partnership, TPP, negations that are important to American exporters.

The trade concern is that USDA catfish office is a de facto trade barrier on foreign imports. It is meant to enrich the domestic catfish industry. The USDA would ban catfish imports for 5–7 years while USDA duplicates FDA's rules for foreign catfish farms. During that time, American farmers, dairymen, cattle growers risk WTO retaliation against a $20 billion export market for American soybean, pork, beef, dairy, and poultry exports.

Is it worth sacrificing the export markets of our American beef producers, wheat and soy farmers just because southern catfish farmers don't want to compete? Absolutely not.

USDA catfish office serves no public health purpose and duplicates FDA work in inspecting catfish. It wastes millions of tax dollars just so that southern catfish farmers will have less competition. My amendment would eliminate the USDA catfish office just as GAO recommends.

I urge my colleagues to support this amendment.

I also wish to say to the distinguished managers of the bill that there are a number of amendments—my colleague from Oklahoma has them—and it is going to be regrettable if we are not able to take up and address these amendments. It is not really what we had agreed to when we took up the bill. So I hope there will be another opportunity.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I do not like at all objecting to the McCain amendment, but I am compelled to because I have been literally trying for several weeks now—not just on this bill but the previous bill—to get a vote, just a vote. I will even take a 60-vote threshold. I am not asking for a 53-vote threshold; I will accept a 60-vote threshold on an amendment that will make it clear that we could grandfather in flood insurance rates until an affordability study that was supposed to be done is done.

The interesting thing about this is that my amendment has no score. It wouldn't cost the Federal Government anything if this amendment were to pass. It is a zero score. It simply delays for 3 years a certain category of flood insurance premium until an affordability study can be conducted. It is a zero score.

Unfortunately, the Senator from Pennsylvania, to my knowledge, is still holding up this amendment. So I know there are other Republicans who would like to offer amendments, but I am going to object to the offering or voting on any Republican amendments until the Senator from Pennsylvania allows me to have a vote on my amendment.

I hate to be here because I don't like being in this position, but I have no choice because I can't even get the Republicans to vote on the flood insurance amendment. They can vote no. The amendment may not pass. I think I have the 60 votes to pass it. I hope it will. We have explained it. It is important not just to Louisiana but to New York, California, New Jersey, and even Virginia has some issues.

Please understand, because I have a lot of respect for Senator COBURN—he and I work together on the Homeland Security Committee. I know this program has to be self-sustaining over time. No one depends on it to be self-sustaining more than the people in Florida and Louisiana and California. But there is a right way to get it self-sustaining and there is a wrong way. The wrong way is going to blow up the dreams of people who built their homes according to official flood maps, who did everything they were supposed to do under the official flood maps, and then when those maps changed, their rates then can go up 25 percent, compounded for the next 5 years, not only pricing them out of the market but making their homes unsellable, and it affects banks in these communities.

This is not just a Louisiana issue. I am proud to advocate so much for my State that when people come here and see me, they say: Oh, there she goes again, advocating for Louisiana. I wear that as a badge of honor. Let me be clear. My State has the 32 lowest kinds of rates of insurance on these claims. I am not even in the top three. This is affecting States—and I read them out earlier. Let me just say for the record that the top 10 States affected are Rhode Island, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Vermont, New York, Maine, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Alaska, New Hampshire, Illinois, Michigan, West Virginia, Missouri, Indiana, Iowa, California, and Ohio. These are the States with the highest premiums now, and they could double or triple—actually almost triple—in the next 5 years.

Maybe some of these rates need to go up. Interestingly, when the recalculations are done, some of the rates around the country will go down. I am not disagreeing with that. What I am disagreeing with is the rapid rate in which it is going to happen, and it is going to have catastrophic effects on many communities—not all but many—and I happen to represent some of those on which it will. So my realtors have asked me to stand up for this. My homebuilders have called with concerns. My community bankers are very concerned.

I wish to thank the Senator from Michigan and the Senator from Mississippi. I know they are doing their very best job to move this bill forward. I think they have been quite fair, giving people on both sides an opportunity for amendments. I have been very patient. I have not objected to many amendments. The irony of this is that even the Toomey amendment—the Senator from Pennsylvania, my friend, who was going to end a program that was vitally important to my State, I even allowed him to have a vote on that. I mean, it is a terrible amendment for Louisiana. We were happy we beat the amendment, but I even allowed him to have a debate. I could have stopped it. I am one Senator here. One Senator can stop anything. But I am not trying to stop this, I am just trying to advance a vote on flood insurance.

So maybe Senator COBURN and Senator MCCAIN can be more convincing to their colleague from Pennsylvania than I have been. But I will just say for the record that if I have to stay on the floor until the end of the week, I will have to stay here, but I will object to any Republican amendment until we get a vote on the Landrieu-Vitter, et al., Schumer, Gillibrand, Menendez—and our good friend Senator LAUTENBERG who just passed was also a supporter. I would like to keep his name on it, if I could.

I yield the floor, and I am very sorry, I say to my colleague from Oklahoma.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I somewhat associate myself with the remarks of the Senator from Louisiana. We have unwound because we don't want to have real debates and real votes. We just fixed the flood insurance program. We didn't fix it well enough, and if Senator LANDRIEU is allowed her amendment, I will vote against it, but I think she ought to be able to have her amendment.

The reason the Senate isn't working is because we want to use a procedure that has never before been used except in the last 2 or 3 years in this body, and that is to limit the rights of Senators to offer amendments.

The fact is that Senator LANDRIEU may, in fact, win her amendment, but there is another chance. The House may not go along with it. There will be a conference committee. It may not go anywhere. She didn't win this when we fixed the flood insurance. She wasn't for us raising it to the extent we did. We didn't raise it nearly enough to make it healthy yet. And delaying the 3 years will markedly hurt the Flood Insurance Program, which is operated through FEMA, and I am the ranking member on that subcommittee. But the fact is that she ought to be able to offer her amendment. I agree with that.

So what I am going to do is painfully go through and talk about every amendment I have for the farm bill. I understand there will be objections. If there are objections to mine—and even if the Landrieu amendment gets cleared, I am going to object to everybody else's until mine are cleared.

So we can either keep going around in this circle or we can start acting like grownups and have debate. Even if a Member doesn't like an amendment, we can vote on it. And if a Member is not capable of defending their vote on any issue, they don't have any business being here in the first place.

But to not vote, to not allow the managers of the bill to operate the bill the way they want to operate it and put it on the table—because the majority leader is going to file cloture, and so all of these amendments are going to fall, which may be pleasing to the managers—I don't know—and only the germane amendments are going to be available, and they are going to be under a time constraint. So the American people are actually going to get cheated out of a full and rigorous debate on what ought to be changed in this bill.

So I am going to act as though the amendments are approved even though they are not, and I am going to debate the amendments. I am going to propose every one of them, and I am going to let the Senator from Louisiana object, and then she can explain to her constituents the dysfunction of the Senate. It does not just happen on the Republican side, I would remind my colleague from Louisiana. There are plenty of unilateral objections on the other side. And if we are going to operate this way, then nothing is going to happen in the Senate.

With that, I will begin.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. COBURN. I will be happy to yield for a question.

Ms. STABENOW. I thank the Senator.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I thank my friend. Before the Senator proceeds with his unanimous consent request, I would ask the Senator if he would agree that when we brought the farm bill to the floor the last time, we had 73 votes and it was done in a large agreement, but we worked through every one of them. I agree. My preference is—as I know our distinguished ranking member's preference is—to be able to work through amendments and to have votes and so on. Would the Senator agree that process worked last time—and I know my friend did not end up voting for the final bill, but we did work through a process of 73 votes; it was a very long day or 2 days, I think, actually—and that would be a good way to proceed on this bill?

Mr. COBURN. I agree.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I certainly yield back to my friend, but I just want to indicate that is what we have been working on doing, and we do, in fact, have objections from various Members for various reasons. But we have been spending our time hoping to come up with—even postcloture it would be our desire to come up with a finite list of amendments that we could then move forward and get an agreement to vote on because I am very happy to have additional votes on the bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendment be set aside and Coburn amendment No. 1003 be called up.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Ms. LANDRIEU. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I am going to talk about this amendment. This is an amendment that prohibits—let me set the stage for it. We are going to have somewhere between a $500 billion and $700 billion deficit. We have $17.5 trillion worth of debt today. What this amendment does is it prohibits people who are tax evaders from receiving government assistance, including grants, contracts, loans, and tax credits provided in the farm bill, with the exception of SNAP. So we are still going to take care of the food provision. Even if they refuse to pay their taxes, we are going to still provide them food. But we are not going to allow them, with this amendment, to take advantage of other programs within the farm bill or any other area that is associated with direct grants or associated with the Agriculture bill.

The most critical issues facing our country today—and everybody knows how to solve it. We know what has to be done to save Medicare. We know what has to be done to save Social Security. We know we need to reform the Tax Code so we generate more jobs, we generate more income to the Federal Government. We know all that. But we have billions of dollars that are owed—it is not being contested; it is owed—and then we turn around to those same people who owe us billions of dollars and give them programs and benefits. Whether it be conservation payments or whether it be crop insurance or whatever it is, we turn around and give them money. I think the average taxpaying American does not agree with that.

Part of being a responsible citizen is paying the taxes you owe. We are not talking about things that are in dispute. We are talking about settled agreements that are not paid, and they continue to not be paid, and it is billions of dollars.

This provision would not apply if the individual is currently paying the taxes, interest, and penalties that are owed to the IRS: if the individual and the IRS have worked out a compromise on the amount of taxes, interest, and penalties and it is in the process of being repaid; if the individual has not exhausted his or her right to due process under the law; if the individual has filed a joint return and successfully contends that he or she should not be fully liable for the taxes in a joint return because of something the other party to the return did or did not do. Further, this provision would not apply to SNAP payments provided in the bill.

Farm income is subject to very little scrutiny and reporting requirements. In fact, there was a 78-percent reporting gap in farm income reported to the IRS just last year—a 78-percent gap. This is by far the largest gap in individual income reporting to the IRS.

In a time of strict budgets and when many in Washington are calling for an increase in revenue, it is inappropriate for us to continue to provide funding to individuals who owe back taxes and are not in compliance with their obligations. Total taxes owed in the United States in 2006 were $2.66 trillion. The gross tax gap for that year—taxes owed but not collected—was $450 billion. The net tax gap in 2006—taxes still not paid after late payments enforced—was still $385 billion. Now the President wants another $600 billion or $800 billion. What we have to do is start figuring out ways to collect the taxes that are owed.

According to the Internal Revenue Service, the difference between the amount legally owed in taxes and the amount actually collected was this $385 billion. That is the most recent year the IRS can give us—5-year-old data. Mr. President, $28 billion that was owed was because people failed to file. Underpayment was $46 billion, and intentional underreporting of income was $376 billion.

So what this amendment does is it just puts a prohibition in place. It says: You cannot have this money if you owe X money and it is settled, it is not under dispute. So it is not about not giving people their rights. It has already been adjudicated. Why would we not want to do that with the farm bill? Can you think of a reason why we would not want the people who owe taxes, who already have agreed they owe the taxes—that we are going to give them money, and they are not going to pay the taxes they owe the Federal Government?

It is a commonsense amendment. We are not going to get a vote on that, and we are not going to get a vote on it because we have cowardly Members of the Senate—and I am not talking about the Senator from Louisiana—who refuse to come down here and voice their objections to bills and refuse to debate why they will not allow an amendment that does something for the future, that actually will make a difference in a kid's life in the future, that will actually increase some income so we can afford the Flood Insurance Program we have. They will not come down and debate it and express an opinion why they will not allow a vote on it. It dishonors the Senate.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendment be set aside and amendment No. 1004 be called up.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I object to that as well, but I know the Senator wants to speak about it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, this amendment ends conservation payments to millionaires—people who make a million bucks a year.

We have a rule at the USDA that says people making $1 million a year are not supposed to get these payments. But guess what the USDA does. They waive the rule. What this amendment would do is say you cannot waive the rule.

If you, again, are talking about our debt, the very well-heeled, the very well-connected are getting a majority of the conservation payments in this country. They are the ones most capable of doing conservation on their own land, and do, but now they do it with the assistance of my or the President pro tempore's grandchildren because what we are actually doing is paying them dollars that our grandkids are going to have to pay back. What we are doing with this program is incentivizing people to do what they are already going to do in their best interests.

All I am saying is, enforce the rule, the law today. Do not give the Department of Agriculture the ability to waive. If somebody is making $1 million a year, they do not need our help right now. Our kids need that help, our grandkids need that help, our schools need that help. They do not need that help.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, will the Senator yield for actually a question and a clarification?

Mr. COBURN. Absolutely.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. I have good news for the Senator. On page 309 of the bill, based on the fact that we took the amendments from last time, his language is in the bill. It was part of the 73 amendments that were offered. As I indicated earlier, we included everything that was, in fact, passed by the Senate on the floor last time so that people would know that their amendments were included in the bill. There was one exception to that, which was the Coburn-Durbin amendment, which was, in fact, revoted on and is now a part of the bill. But I refer the Senator to page 309, section 2610, ''Adjusted Gross Income Limitation For Conservation Programs.'' So the Senator is correct. It was passed last time. And the good news is that it is in the bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. COBURN. Well, Mr. President, I thank the chairman of the committee. I will double-check that with my staff. This excludes something that was in the bill, so I will have to look at what the old bill said to be able to concur with that. If that is the case, then there should not be any problem with accepting this amendment if, in fact, it is not complete because it is the intent of the authors—both the chair and the ranking member—that this limitation be a part of this farm bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, if I might, I say to the Senator, we will work with you and look at the intent, and it is the intent. I would also just in passing indicate that hopefully we will have an opportunity, as we come to a universe of amendments, as we did last year, to have the Senator's previous amendment that he talked about, which is also one that I support.

So as we work through this, again, what we need to do is what we did last time: to come up with a universe—it can be large or small—and in the interest of time make sure a variety of Senators have the opportunity to offer different amendments as well—not just one or two Senators but that a number of Senators have the opportunity to—and hopefully Members will be willing to come together and put together a list that includes Senator LANDRIEU's flood insurance amendment, which is absolutely critical. We have other amendments. Senator GRASSLEY has an amendment we have been working on to pair with Senator LANDRIEU's that we would like very much to put together. I would be very interested in including Senator COBURN's amendment No. 1003, which he talked about previously, because I think it makes sense.

So right now we are at a point where we just have to get people positively working together on a list that we can move through together. But the good news is, I say to Senator COBURN, the one you are speaking about, I believe, is as you had offered it last time. But we will be happy to work with the Senator.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. COBURN. I thank the chairman of the committee.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendment be set aside and amendment No. 1005 be called up.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Ms. LANDRIEU. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, 3½ years ago, with the debt limit increase, my colleagues and I overwhelmingly voted to ask the GAO to study duplicative programs in the Federal Government. This last April they gave the third in what will be a continuing rollout of the programs in the Federal Government.

I will say that the Director of the OMB followed another amendment that I offered directing that all the programs of the Federal Government be published. They made their first stab at that. This was last week. Director Burwell, in whom I have the utmost confidence at OMB—a stellar individual—made the first attempt. The problem is, what is a program in the Federal Government? There is no definition. So we have a rough start in an attempt to do that.

But what the GAO has done—and they are magnificent employees—over the last 3½ years is identified at least $250 billion of waste and duplication that we ought to be getting rid of.

Here is an amendment that is not highly prescriptive but recognizes what GAO told us about food assistance programs—domestic food assistance programs. We did not make any attempt in this bill to streamline those or consolidate them or put metrics on them. So this amendment tries to bring that together through the USDA to put, No. 1, metrics on them; and, No. 2, combine the ones that are duplicative so we can actually be effective in what we intend them to be, but also be efficient.

Those are two words that hardly ever happen in Washington, ''efficiency'' and ''effectiveness.'' GAO found signs of overlap and inefficient use of the resources within the 18 different programs. Now, we have 18 different programs. Three of them are outside of the Department of Agriculture. One of them is in Homeland Security.

First of all, there should not be a food assistance program in the Department of Homeland Security. Two of them are at HHS. We should not have duplicative bureaucracies in those other two departments when we have a bureaucracy in Agriculture. But of those 18 programs, what they found was the following: In 11 of the 18 programs, there was not enough research to even determine whether the programs were effective.

We do not know if what we are doing is working because never when we pass these programs do we require a metric or some type of method to assess their effectiveness. So that is one of the things this amendment will do. It allows the Department of Agriculture to do that. As a matter of fact, it mandates it. Is it effective? What parameters are you using to say it is effective? In other words, if the American taxpayers are going to spend money on this program, ought they to know whether it works? I mean, only in Washington do we do programs and not know whether they work and not ask whether they work.

So in 11 of the 18 programs there is not enough knowledge even at the Department of Agriculture to know whether they are working. This amendment requires the Department of Agriculture to evaluate the following 10 programs: Child and Adult Care Food Program, the Community Food Projects Competitive Grant Program, the Emergency Food and Shelter National Board Program, the Grants to the American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian Program, the Organizations for Nutrition and Support Services Program, the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations, the Fresh Fruit and Vegetables Program, the Senior Farmer Market Nutrition Program, the Summer Food Service Program, the Emergency Food Assistance Program, and the WIC Farmers Nutritional Program.

Now, let me just mention one of these. The Summer Food Service Program, as announced by KOTV in Tulsa, OK, just last night, no matter who you are they are going to feed you two meals a day in the summer, whether you make $100,000 a year or whether you are in need of a meal. So, first of all, we have a problem with that program. We ought to be supplying food for people who need food, not for people who do not need food. Smart people are going to take advantage of that and say: Man, I can get two meals a day. I am not in need, but since it is free I am going to take it.

Last summer we served 180,000 meals in Tulsa. A large proportion of those were not people in need. So I have no objection to helping people who have need, but here is a program that has no limits on it and no metrics on it. It is a wide open program—well intentioned, but there is not a metric and there is not a limitation.

So here is all we are saying with this amendment: Here are 10 programs, Department of Agriculture. Determine whether they are effective. And, by the way, how did you determine that? What were the parameters you used to do that?

That is just common sense. Why would we not want to know if the programs are working? Why would we not want to know if they are efficient and

effective? Why shouldn't we look at it when we are running—we are down to 24 cents on the dollar that we are just borrowing against our kids' future from 48. That is because of the economy growing last year to the tune of $360 billion coming in, and $620 billion over the next 10 years in tax increases on the very wealthy in this country. So we are down to 24 cents, but we are still borrowing 24 cents out of every dollar we spend. Why would we not want to spend the time to make sure these programs are effective and efficient?

It is very straightforward. This amendment also eliminates one program, the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, and moves any incomplete or ongoing projects to the appropriate USDA programs. USDA proposed eliminating this program which targets low-income pregnant women, children, persons age 60 or over, but Congress continued to fund the program. The reason they wanted to get rid of it is because there are already programs that duplicate this one. Yet here we find it is still going to get funded. It is going to get authorized. Even USDA says we do not need this program.

It is the only program we have—in 2012, the program was funded at $177 million, and it duplicates SNAP, Grants to Native Americans, the Home Delivered Nutrition Program. In other words, USDA already recognizes it is a duplicative program. They have asked for it to be eliminated. We did not eliminate it. So this amendment would eliminate it.

This amendment also eliminates the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program and moves the nonduplicate function to the WIC Farmers Nutrition Program. Both of these programs do exactly the same thing. They provide grants to participating States to offer vouchers and coupons and electronic benefit cards to low-income participants that may be used in farmers' markets, roadside stands, and other approved venues to purchase fresh produce.

They provide exactly the same assistance to women, children, and seniors and should be combined. GAO says they should be combined. USDA says they should be combined. But they are not combined in the bill. All cost savings from the elimination of those consolidations and three eliminations are directed toward providing food assistance. In other words, none of the money comes back out. It goes back into programs that have proven to be effective.

This amendment also directs the USDA to coordinate with the Health and Human Services Administration on Aging to identify and address fragmentation, overlap, and duplication between the programs providing food services on Indian reservations where we have a real need. So we are not just looking for duplication, we are looking for gaps in service.

It also requires them to report their recommendations back to Congress. Since I do not want to use my big slides today I will use my small slides.

Here are the food assistance programs, all 18 of them. Fifteen are run at the Department of Agriculture, two are run through HHS, and one through Homeland Security. Yet GAO says we can collapse these 18 into 10 and be more effective and get better nutrition to the people in at-risk groups. We have not done it. So it is like we asked GAO to do all of this work, and then we did not pay any attention to it.

I ask that the pending amendment be set aside and amendment No. 1006 be called up.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Ms. LANDRIEU. I object. May I say something? First of all——

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Would the Senator yield?

Mr. COBURN. I will yield for a question, but I will not yield the floor. I will be happy to yield for a question.

Ms. LANDRIEU. I would ask the Senator, does he know that some of us are very sympathetic with the amendments he is offering, and does he know some of us would actually really like to vote on some of those amendments? I am sure he is aware. Is he aware that I am sorry that I have to object, but it is the only way I can get my amendment up.

Mr. COBURN. I would respond to the Senator from Louisiana, I have no ill will toward her objection. I stated it plainly before. I believe the Senate ought to have any and all amendments prior to cloture. I think Senators have the right to offer anything they think is pertinent to this country on any bill that is going through here. I used that tactic for the first 3 years I was in the Senate. Nobody objected. Now that we have become so partisan and so cowardly that we are afraid to vote on issues, and that we abuse the rights in the Senate to the detriment of the whole body, I hold no ill will against the Senator for objecting.

The point is, is the country worse off for it? I am sure some of my colleagues do not want to have to vote on some of my amendments. I understand that. There are amendments I do not like voting on either, but I have no problem going home and taking a stand. The fact is we can figure out what we are for and what we are against. You know, the fact is, when it goes through here it does not mean it is law. What it means is it has to be conferenced with the House. We ought to let it roll. We ought to open the spigot and let things roll in the Senate, have the votes.

We used to have 10 and 12 votes at a time. We used to do bills. Come down and all morning long we would be offering amendments. We would have committee hearings and other things in the afternoon. At 4 o'clock we would come down and vote, 9, 10, 8 amendments. The next day we would do the same thing. The next day we would do the same thing.

So the fact is, if we really want to get our country back, if we really want the confidence of the American people to return to those who represent them in Washington, we have to start saying, you know, you cannot win everything. I am going to try. If I lose, I lose. But I tried hard. That is how we ought to play the game.

The fact that we have people abusing the process on both sides, not just one side—I will never forget, former Senator Akaka, one of the loveliest men I have ever met in my life, when I first came to the Senate and offered an amendment that was not germane, he objected to it. One of my colleagues stood up and said: Senator Akaka, do you really mean that? You have to understand where that starts. If you object to his amendment, that means in the future I am going to be objecting to your amendment, and we have not done that. What we actually want is a freewheeling, open amendment process so people can be heard.

The fact is I represent 4 million people. The Senators from California represent 37 million. Everybody's voice ought to be heard. We each ought to be able to have our voice heard. We each ought to be able to offer amendments. We ought to be able to get votes on those amendments. What are we afraid of? Is the next election really that important that we do not want to allow people to offer their ideas, in what used to be the greatest deliberative body? It certainly is not now. It is not anywhere close. Do we really not want ideas to be offered and debated and the American people to understand what is at stake?

I mean, what I have offered today maybe not everybody would agree with, but you cannot disagree that it does not make sense; that it is not common sense; that we should not be more efficient and more effective; that we should worry about the future as we worry about the present; that we ought not to be spending 24 cents out of every dollar by borrowing it from other people in the world or having Ben Bernanke print it at the Federal Reserve.

We can solve these problems. The grown-ups need to stand and say we are going to have debate, we are going to have amendments, even if we do not like them.

So I have no ill will toward the Senator from Louisiana. I have ill will for the process that has devolved. I think the shame is that the American people are being shortchanged by the lack of debate and lack of votes.

I think this amendment, even though objected to, is another critical area where we do not have our eye on the ball. This is an amendment that relates to the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program. What it does is in this bill it has been increased, the amount of money has been increased to $70 million a year. It was at $55 million in 2012. There is nothing wrong with having this block grant program, but I want to show you how we can save $75 million over the next 5 years. And $75 million is not chump change, it is $75 million.

The amendment freezes spending for the specialty crop block grant at $55 million authorized by the bill. The amendment prioritizes food safety and access to affordable foods for schoolchildren and low-income families. One-third of the projects funded by the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program last year were for marketing and promotion. They were not for kids, they were not for seniors, they were spending money to promote.

Let me show you who got the money. Let's see. We spent money to promote the emotional benefits of real flowers and plants in the home. That has to be a priority right now; is it not? We are going to borrow $500 billion this year. We are going to spend money to make sure everyone in America knows the emotional value of having real flowers and plants in the home. That is a priority right now. How about grant funds for floats that travel to fairs and festivals and encourage people to eat more fruits and vegetables? That has to be a priority. We are going to pay for a float that goes around to all these festivals so we can promote eating. People know about eating properly. Could we spend that dollar in a better way and get a better effect?

How about wine receptions and tasting? By the way, the Market Access Program already covers it, but we take money from this block grant program and promote wines in China and in Taiwan. We do it also with the Market Access Program. Here is an absolute direct duplication. We are spending millions of dollars promoting something that another program is designed to promote, and we didn't do anything about that.

How about a short video showcasing pear growers and promoting State wines in Mexico and in India? Again, duplication of what the Market Access Program does, but we take from the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program. We have one program for market access and promotion and then we take a different program and use it for exactly the same thing.

Specifically, the amendment requires that no less than 80 percent of the total funding appropriated for the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program be spent on the following: increasing access, availability and affordability of specialty crops for children, youth, families and others at risk, including but not limited to specialty crops for meals served at schools and food banks; ensuring food safety; protecting crops from plant pests and disease; and production of specialty crops.

That is what it was originally set up for, by the way. It wasn't set up to promote wines in India or China or Taiwan or Brazil or Mexico. So part of it is the way we wrote the bill that allows USDA to give grants that go outside the original purposes of it. Funds could still be spent on marketing promotion but not at the expense of crops and consumers.

I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendment be set aside and Coburn amendment No. 1007 be called up.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Ms. LANDRIEU. Reserving the right to object, may I ask the good Senator from Oklahoma, since he has talked about three amendments, may I ask unanimous consent for my amendment, to see if anybody would object to it?

Mr. COBURN. I would be happy to yield a limited time for the Senator to ask for unanimous consent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the Senator from Louisiana is recognized.

Ms. LANDRIEU. I will try to do this in less than 3 minutes.

I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendment be set aside and the following amendments be made pending en bloc: Landrieu No. 1113, Johnson No. 1117, Cardin No. 1159, and Grassley No. 1097; that the time until 5 p.m. today be equally divided and controlled in the usual form and that at 5 p.m. the Senate proceed to vote on the amendments listed; that there be 2 minutes of debate prior to each vote; that no second-degree amendments be in order to any of the amendments prior to the votes and that the amendments be subject to a 60-affirmative-vote threshold.

I would also like to add that I would not object personally to having one of Senator COBURN's amendments added to this list, but this is the list I was given to ask unanimous consent for—just four amendments, two on flood insurance and the Grassley amendment on freedom of information regarding EPA.

So we would have votes, all of them requiring a 60-vote threshold, with both sides having a side-by-side, which we sometimes do in this body so if someone wants to vote no they can then have something to vote yes for. This is the most reasonable way I could present this list to help us get a vote on flood insurance and another important amendment to Senator GRASSLEY, a Republican. I am a Democrat, Senator GRASSLEY is a Republican, so it is very balanced on each side.

So I am asking unanimous consent to try to get a vote this afternoon.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, the Senator from Louisiana is proposing an amendment that I strongly disagree with the substance on. Despite that, I don't object to her having a vote on her amendment. What I object to is the fact there are only four Senators who get to have amendments.

We have a list of maybe a dozen, maybe it is 15 amendments, that Senators from our side have been requesting to have considered and they have been objected to all week long. Now we are told that soon we can expect the majority leader to file a cloture motion on the bill which will lead to shutting off this bill entirely. This seems to me a clear strategy to block amendments.

So far we have had 10 rollcall votes on amendments on this bill. Of those, three have been Republican. Last year, the farm bill had 42 rollcall votes. What I would like to do is work this out right now, and we can do that, as far as I am concerned, if these amendments could be made in order. Maybe there are others on your side, and I would welcome them.

I have no objection to the Senator from Louisiana having a vote on her amendment, but I don't think we should be doing just these four or some subset thereof and continuing to shut out all the other Senators who have been trying to get their amendments agreed to.

So, for that reason, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Louisiana.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I would respond to the Senator from Pennsylvania, then I will relinquish the floor to the managers of the bill because it is their responsibility and they have been doing a great job trying to help us get through the farm bill.

I wish to thank the Senator from Pennsylvania because this is real progress. He said he will not object to a vote on our amendment on flood insurance. I appreciate that because I know he has strong objections to it. I may not win the vote, but the people in my State have asked me to do everything I can to fight for them. This is a very serious issue in the State of Louisiana, in Texas, in Florida, in Rhode Island, in Maine, in Massachusetts, in Vermont, and even in Pennsylvania.

So I thank the Senator. Let me yield the floor back to the chairman of the committee to see what could potentially be worked out, but I am so happy the Senator will not object to a flood insurance amendment if we can ever get to one.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma has the floor.

Does the Senator from Oklahoma yield?

Mr. COBURN. I yield to the chairman of the committee.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. I realize the Senator from Oklahoma has the floor and he wishes to continue with his amendments.

I wish to speak to all the Members who are on the floor as well as those who are in their offices, because, as everyone knows—again, to hearken back to the last time around we did this—we had 73 amendments. Not all of them took a recorded vote, but we did come up with a finite list. It was 73. It was a big list, but we came up with a list.

That is what we are trying to do now. We have been working with colleagues. We want that list. No one wants that more than I and Senator COCHRAN—to come up with a group of amendments,

so everyone knows what we will be voting on so we can begin to move through that.

I indicated we had included in the bill the amendments we had voted on the floor the last time. I did make one error that my staff reminded me of. There was one we did vote on that is not in here, which was the amendment of Senator MCCAIN on catfish. That was not included, in deference to those who had objected. But everything else that was of substance, as I understand, is in the underlying bill.

I also do want to note the distinguished Senator from Oklahoma did have a significant amendment that came very early in this process. In fact, it was one I did not support, but he won his amendment. We could have blocked it. I could have objected, because I don't support the policy, but I did not do that. So the Senator's amendment did pass, even though I voted no and do not support it. So from my perspective, as the chair of the committee, I am happy to have debate. I am happier when I win than when I lose, but I am happy to have debate.

We want to put together a universe of amendments. Right now we don't, at this point, have time to go through 150 amendments. So we have to find out what is a priority for everyone, put together a finite list, and we are going to continue to work on that. If the majority leader files cloture, we can still continue to do that. We can put together a finite list, vitiate the cloture vote, and move to a vote on a group of amendments.

That would be my preference. I know it would be the preference of Senator COCHRAN as well. So we are going to continue to work on that, whether cloture is filed or not—see if we can't come together with a group of amendments and, hopefully, we will be able to get that done. That is my preference on how to do a bill. We will continue to attempt to make that happen.

I appreciate the time allotted, with the Senator from Oklahoma yielding to me, and we will continue to work with him as well as all Members to move to a place where we can have an opportunity for amendments to be offered in a timely manner to get the bill done.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the request of the Senator from Oklahoma to set aside the pending amendment?

Ms. STABENOW. On behalf of Senator LANDRIEU, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I think I am starting to hear the Senate starting to work the way it should, and so I am going to offer a unanimous consent request that the list she presently has, with the ranking member, the Senator from Mississippi, of a large number of amendments be considered as read and in order; that the list the Senator proffered, which went through both cloakrooms this afternoon, I ask unanimous consent that be agreed to and those be filed and considered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Ms. STABENOW. Reserving the right to object, that is, unfortunately, an unrealistic motion from my perspective. We have to work with Members. Many Members, including the Senator who is speaking, have multiple amendments and we need to get a list of priorities from people so we have a smaller list we can work with to get this done in a timely manner.

So I object at this point. I would like very much to see us get together a list but to do this in a way where some Members have many amendments and others have very few——

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. COBURN. Since objection is heard, it was my understanding the Senator from Michigan had an agreed-upon list that was sent to both cloakrooms.

Ms. STABENOW. No. I wish I did.

Mr. COBURN. Failing that, what I would propose, based on what I have heard out here this afternoon, is that the chairman put it together and let's try it and let's ask unanimous consent.

The fact is the chairman and ranking member of this committee have worked hard to get this bill. We can do this bill. But one thing the Senator said in her statement is she wants a finite list. That is fine. What we want to do is have an open amendment process. So as the Senator considers that, let's move it.

Here is what will happen, and here is what used to happen in the Senate, for my colleagues who are new. People file all sorts of amendments, including me, and about half of them we wouldn't bring up. So we don't know in this universe of 150 how many are truly serious, how many are done filing an amendment and made a statement, such as I did on one amendment changing the name of SNAP. I have no intention of calling that up, but I wished to make a statement about whether it is really nutrition—the Supplemental Nutrition Access Program. So I would suggest the chairman and ranking member put that out there. Give it to me and let me offer a unanimous consent request on the floor live. We have had a great debate. We understand what the problems are. Let's start voting. Let's start debating and voting.

When we consider all the time huddled in a group of staffers, we don't do anything. We don't debate the bill, we don't vote the bill, and so, consequently, the American people get shortchanged. So I will offer that unanimous consent request. I will not even participate in what is in the mix. I believe the process ought to move forward, whether I win or not. The fact is it is selfishness on the part of our colleagues, because they do not want to vote on something, that keeps us from doing the country's work.

I believe we are at a seminal moment right now in the Senate where we can change what is happening in this body if, in fact, we will lead in doing that. I know the President pro tempore wants to see that happen. I believe my colleague from Michigan wants to see that happen. I know the ranking member has had that philosophy for years in the Senate. He taught it to me. I learned that from him.

I offered a lot of amendments that he opposed and didn't like, some of them affecting Mississippi, and he beat me every time. But he never said, You can't offer the amendment.

I think we are at a seminal moment. Let's start moving things. What I will do is call on the ranking member and the chairman: Give me that list. Let me go fight for it. Let's break this beaver dam in the Senate, and let's start acting like grownups here.

Ms. STABENOW. Would the Senator be willing to yield?

Mr. COBURN. I would be willing to yield for a question.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Let me first say that if I am hearing the Senator right, he will work with us to move forward on a unanimous consent request on a list of amendments. I certainly would welcome his doing that.

I also do need to indicate we spent last week and this week moving amendments. We started moving amendments. The Senator's was one of the very first ones we did vote on. We have been working together today, trying to move in small groups amendments to be able to get things moving, now facing objections as we do that. But we did have the opportunity to do a number of amendments last week and have moved forward to vote on some. We will continue to do that with colleagues. That is our intent.

Again, if my friend will remember, this is the second time around for us. We have already done this once. We are back doing it again. We want to get it done. We want to have the opportunity for people to offer more amendments.

Mr. COBURN. I know there is a question in there somewhere.

Ms. STABENOW. Yes, there is a question. If I might say to my friend I am hearing that he is desiring to work with us in order to get together a list. Is that correct?

Mr. COBURN. That is correct.

Mr. President, I have a unanimous consent, and I want to preface this unanimous consent. There are 150 amendments, I think the chairman said, or thereabouts. A lot of those aren't going to require votes; some are. I ask unanimous consent that every amendment that has been filed at this point be considered as read and considered debatable and votable.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Ms. STABENOW. There is objection.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. COBURN. If an objection is heard—I retain my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. COBURN. I would appreciate my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma has the floor.

Mr. COBURN. Let me make this point. If the Senator from Michigan wouldn't have objected, we could start voting tonight, we could vote tomorrow, we could get through those. Half of those will be pulled, and we would be almost to the same number of votes you would have had, that you did have, the last time the bill came to the floor. So do we really want to break this logjam? Let me offer it again. We can move this thing. Let's just do it. Let's go out and vote. Let's take the tough votes. Some of us are going to get bruised. Big deal. We are all grownups. Let's have the votes. Let's move amendments. Let's debate in the Senate. Let's do the country's business. Instead, we are not going to do it.

There is a compromise. More than half of those will be withdrawn. My colleagues know that. Let's put them all in order. Let's vote them, let's take care of it, and let's be grown up and get the Senate back to where it is supposed to be.

I am going to offer my unanimous consent one more time, that every amendment that has been filed today as of now be considered as read and pending.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Ms. STABENOW. Reserving the right to object, let me indicate, as the manager of this bill, I appreciate the advice we are receiving from the Senator from Oklahoma, and we will certainly look forward to working with him and receiving his advice. We are managing the bill on the floor. We appreciate very much the efforts of the Senator to come down and move things in the direction he wishes. We will continue to manage this bill in a way that is fair and open and work with all of our colleagues and look forward to getting this done.

I would—also reserving the right to object—indicate we have a bill in front of us that affects 16 million people and their jobs. We have a bill that is $24 billion in deficit reduction, unlike any other bill that has come before us in bipartisan deficit reduction. We have a bill in front of us that has eliminated 100 different authorizations or programs because of duplication, which I know is near and dear to the heart of the Senator from Oklahoma.

We have a bill right now worthy of voting on and passing. We will continue to work with all of our colleagues to move this forward to get this done on behalf of the 16 million men and women who work in agriculture. We will certainly take his ideas under consideration as we move forward to manage this bill.

I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, fair and balanced consideration to our colleagues is allowing them to have amendments, and the Senator just objected to that. So that is where we are. That doesn't keep her from managing the bill. The Senator still gets to set the priorities of what comes up when. But here lies the problem in the Senate: There are obviously some amendments in there they don't want to vote on; otherwise, we would not have heard an objection. So it is not just Senator TOOMEY, who has now said he would not object to Senator LANDRIEU's amendment, it is other objections of people who won't come down here to the floor and show their constituency what they are objecting to. In other words, it is darkness. It is not light, it is not transparency, it is not of good character, it is not of good moral fiber. What it is, is the least of these, the lowest of these, who refuse to participate in an open and honest debate about what is going to happen in our country.

I call on all my colleagues, Republican and Democrat alike. We know what has to happen to open the Senate. Let's vote. Let's vote. For my colleagues on the Republican side objecting, I disagree. Go ahead and vote. For my colleagues on the Democratic side, let's vote. Let the chips fall. The American people decide who is to come up here. Gaming this system by hiding behind an anonymous objection, putting it through the chairman—I am proud to see the Senator from Louisiana. She came down here, she showed courage and said, Here is why I am doing it. She spoke honestly to her constituents back home and also to the Members of this body. We don't have enough of that.

We had an opportunity just then to move this bill, restore the Senate to the way it should function, and we chose not to do it. The American people have got to be shaking their head right now in disgust, because had the time been spent, instead of figuring out what is OK and what is not OK, actually debating and then voting amendments, we could have voted 30 or 40 amendments by now on this bill. But we chose not to do it. Some of us chose not to do it.

Kindergarten is out around most of the rest of the country, except in the Senate, and it is still in session here. We ought to be disgusted with ourselves, and the American people ought to be disgusted with us as well, because we are not allowing this body to do what our Founders intended it to do. I am going to spend a minute talking about that.

This place is very different than the House. No matter who is in charge, the tendency is to overuse the power of the majority. But what our Founders intended was the Senate to be totally different than the House. The reason 6-year terms were put there was so you wouldn't be susceptible to the political influence of reelection, so you would become a long-term thinker, and that your motivation would be primarily a motivation for the best will of this country and not your State or your political career.

The assessment of the Senate today is that we have lost our focus. It is about politics, not our country. It is about the short term, not the long term. It is about anything but the best interests of the country.

Here we have commonsense amendments. I appreciate the fact that the chairman and ranking member have included some of mine in what they were proffering, but let's include them all. What is so bad about voting on a stupid amendment? If it is really stupid, they are either going to withdraw it or lose big. If it is really controversial, the American people want to see us debate and vote on controversial topics. They do not want to see us duck our responsibilities.

We have met the enemy. The enemy is us.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, since I have an objection to that amendment 1007, I ask unanimous consent that amendment No. 1008 be called up.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, on behalf of Senator LANDRIEU, I would object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, even though the amendment has been objected to, I am going to talk about it.

The amendment is to require the Rural Utilities Service of the Department of Agriculture to ensure that the grants and loans it makes to provide access to broadband telecommunications services in rural areas are made to rural areas that don't already have access to broadband.

Wait a minute. Why would we want an amendment to do that? This is an amendment to tell them to do what they are supposed to be doing.

Over the years, the rural broadband program has seen a large amount of Federal funding. In 2009, the Department of Agriculture broadband program received $2.5 billion from the stimulus bill. The inspector general examined the Rural Utilities Service broadband loan and guarantee program, and what he found was that a large majority of the funds went to areas that already had broadband services. In other words, they didn't spend the money where we don't have broadband; they spent the money where we already do.

Specifically, this inspector general found that 148 communities that received broadband service funded by this program were within 30 miles of cities with more than 200,000 people—including the cities of Chicago and Las Vegas.

Some of the Federal funds going to broadband programs originate from the Department of Commerce as well. So we have the Department of Agriculture

and the Department of Commerce both doing the same thing.

The issue is highlighted by the problems with the broadband program that occurred in West Virginia, the President pro tempore's State. Specifically, the State could not handle nor had the use for the routers that were delivered to them. Put simply, the libraries and schools didn't have the need for the powerful stuff that was sent to them. So we wasted the money. It was a $24 million error.

You get to $1 billion $1 million at a time, and you get to $1 trillion $1 billion at a time.

What this amendment does is make them spend the money where we don't have broadband, not where we do. In other words, it prioritizes—which most of us would agree to—that broadband funds through this grant program go to areas that don't have broadband rather than areas that already do. So let's wire the whole country first before we upgrade everybody else.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendment be set aside, and amendment No. 1010 be brought up.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Ms. STABENOW. There is objection. On behalf of Senator LANDRIEU, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, this amendment is very controversial, I know, amongst my colleagues. But I have practiced medicine for 25 years, and before that I ran a pretty successful business.

The Department of Health and Human Services delayed the implementation of ICD–10. Let me explain what that is. ICD–10 is a new diagnostic code book. Why is that important? Well, we use ICD–9 now, which helps us write the diagnostic codes. Whether you are in a hospital, a clinic, a doctor's office, an outpatient surgery center, a home health, whatever it is, those diagnostic codes categorize what we actually did for you. Well-intentioned public health experts thought we aren't broad enough in what we do with the ICD–9, International Classification of Diseases, so as a part of the Affordable Care Act, ICD–10 was implemented.

There is nothing wrong with updating it, but let me explain to you what we did. We went from 18,000 codes of diseases to 140,000 codes, the cost of which, at a minimum, in the health care system under various studies will be at least $5 billion a year in added costs.

Will there be some benefit? Yes, to the public health experts who study disease patterns there will be some limited benefit. The question we have to ask is, What is our biggest problem with health care? Our biggest problem with health care is it costs too much. What we have done with ICD–10 is, just the implementation—I am talking $5 billion a year from here on. The implementation is going to cost $10 to $15 billion to put it in. What this amendment would do is make a significant delay in the implementation of ICD–10.

The implementation of the Affordable Care Act is going to cost enough as it is. This would refocus us on what is important. It is important that providers spend time with patients, not spend time trying to figure out how they fill out a disease code. For any of you who doubt the significance of this now, if there are 18,000 codes now—most doctors write the disease code. They don't have a staff to do that. When you go from 18,000 to 140,000, what are your doctors going to be doing? They are not going to take care of you, they are going to be spending time looking at a book that has 140,000 diagnostic codes and listing that. So we are going to take time away from patient care.

Why is it important that the doctors get it right? Because the penalties under Medicare for mislabeling are severe and the sanctions are severe—penalties of 1 percent to 2 percent payment per year on your total billing to Medicare or Medicaid. So the costs associated with ICD–10 are enormous. So it is not only hard and costly to implement it, but it takes people away, the very doctors we want spending time with patients. It limits that because they are going to be spending more time filling out paperwork for the Federal Government.

The other thing it will do is it will not improve health care outcomes at all. It does nothing to improve health care outcomes. It will not improve the first patient, so there is no positive benefit in the short run or medium term to the patient. The only limited benefit would be to long-term studies of public health.

Let me give some diagnostic codes to think about how foolish this is.

The new codes account for injury sites ranging from opera houses to chicken coops to squash courts. Not only do you have to list what an injury was, you then have to go through this book and find out where it was. Was it on a ranch? Was it in the coral? Was it in the chicken coop? If you mislabel it, you are under threat of penalty from CMS.

How about nine different codes where you got hurt around a mobile home? How about a burn due to water skis? How about walking into a lamp post? If you hit your head it is important for public health officials to know that you walked into a lamp post.

It includes 300 different codes related to every different animal. So if you got a bite from a rat or a chipmunk or a squirrel, there are 312 different codes around each one of those animals.

It has 72 codes pertaining to birds. You got pooped on, you got pecked at, you got bit—72 separate codes.

How about bitten by a turtle or, the second one, struck by a turtle? Or walked on a turtle? Or kicked a turtle? That is how much foolishness is in ICD–10. We are going to ask our doctors to spend time figuring out 160,000 different codes, disease related, when 18,000 does it just fine right now. What this would do would forego the implementation of ICD–10.

I ask the present amendment be set aside and amendment No. 1076 be called up.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Ms. STABENOW. On behalf of Senator LANDRIEU, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. COBURN. I understand the objection. I have no ill will toward my chairman or ranking member for their objection.

What this amendment does is during sequester, it prohibits performance awards in the Senior Executive Service. We are paying performance bonuses right now during sequester. The Office of Management and Budget has ordered a freeze on most bonuses for Federal workers during sequestration, but the current law provides an exemption for members of the Senior Executive Service who are among the most highly paid Federal Government employees. This amendment closes that exemption loophole. If we are all going to suffer, everybody is going to suffer. Just because you work in the Senior Executive Service doesn't mean you should not have to participate and lead on the sacrifice this country is going to have to be making and is making. This treats SES personnel just like every other Federal employee.

I ask the pending amendment be set aside—actually, I think I will stop with that—one other.

Mr. President, I ask amendment No. 1152 be called up.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Ms. STABENOW. Reserving the right to object, I will object, Mr. President, but I would like to ask my friend, given all the amendments, if we were able to accept all of his amendments would he be supporting the bill?

Mr. COBURN. I have not made that decision.

Ms. STABENOW. I object on behalf of Senator LANDRIEU.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. COBURN. I will tell you how I go through looking at the farm bill. I believe farmers ought to farm. I don't believe they ought to farm the government. I think you all, over the last few years, have done a good job changing that scenario.

I believe food security is an important part of what America can do for both our country and our world. I also know our farmers are some of our hardest working people.

Having said all of that, there are a ton of programs in here that do not directly benefit food security in this country or the American public. When we still have the well-heeled, well-connected in this country taking advantage of farm programs, from pro athletes to everything else, who use the

farm program as a method, as a tax hedge, and use the supplemental systems, by eliminating direct payments, you have done a great deal.

I am all for crop insurance. I think it ought to be a little more costly and spread around. I think crop insurance in terms of the commissions paid to the people who sell it are a little too rich. There are a lot of people who would like to have that book of business for a whole lot less money. We have not done that. It will be a balance to me as I look at improvements.

I congratulate the chairman and ranking member for making progress on the farm bill. We have a long way to go. This amendment relates to one of those, which is how do we I make sure, if we are going to take taxpayer money and help people with their needs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, how do we make sure we are doing it in a way that actually gives them nutritious food?

As a physician who has cared for obesity and heart disease and cancer and high blood pressure for years, diet is a big factor on that. Senator HARKIN and I have an amendment together, this amendment, which would create a pilot project in two States to allow States to use a nutrition assessment for setting what can be brought with SNAP. That is what this amendment does.

A lot of the companies do not like it. A lot of people say: How can you do that? But I remind our colleagues, for many of the people who do not buy nutritious food when we are helping them, we are paying for it twice. That is because when they make poor choices with our money to buy their food, they are creating disease categories that we are going to pay for in the future, with our money, for their disease.

So the idea of trying a pilot project in two States where they use nutritional value to make a determination of what food products are eligible and what are not for the SNAP program, this is a try that most people out in the country would like to see.

Most Americans want to help anybody who needs help, but I hear it all the time when people say: I see people buying stuff I don't buy or I can't afford to buy with their SNAP card.

There is no good way to do that other than do it on a nutritional basis. That is the only way we should look at that. If we are going to help somebody we ought to help them.

There is a great book by Marvin Olasky. It is called ''The Tragedy of American Compassion.'' He talks about how to help people. You do not help people by giving them a blank check. You help people in short term. You help them as long as they have a need. But you help them in a way that they get to help themselves and by that they get to help themselves and get their dignity back.

Senator HARKIN and I have agreed that this is a pilot project that will have to be evaluated at the end of 2 years. All the costs of it have to be borne by the States. We have checked out all the computer companies. There is no problem in putting limitations on UPC codes or anything on all the checkout items. It is not an issue. We have done all the homework on it.

It would be interesting to see, once we do a nutritional evaluation and a limitation on SNAP products, what would happen to the health of the people we are helping. That is the amendment he and I have worked on together. We would love to see it go. We think it is time for that to happen. It certainty will be good.

The key is, can we help people get back to being self-reliant? I don't want us to be a big brother, but I also want to make sure the money we are stealing from our kids, from their future, actually does help somebody and doesn't hurt them.

With that, I again congratulate both the chairman and ranking member for the bill they brought. It has marked improvements. I thank them for their patience dealing with me today on the floor. I very much regret that you have objected to a way to move this bill forward because it doesn't just have implications for this bill. The courage to stand up and say let's do that will have great implications for how this body functions for the next 16 months. I think we are going to miss a big opportunity if we do not do that.

I would love to see the Senate go back to operating the way it did when I first came here. My hopes were dashed, however, with that objection.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

REMEMBERING FRANK R. LAUTENBERG

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I have been listening to this debate with my colleagues, but I came to share a few thoughts about the passing of our dear friend Senator FRANK LAUTENBERG. He was a dear friend, a colleague. When I originally sat in the Senate, he sat right behind me. We shared seats together on the Commerce Committee. I can tell you FRANK's wit was as quick as his downhill slalom skiing. He always had something funny to say.

We knew him as somebody who had been in one of the largest computer services companies, ADP, and helped get that company started, and as somebody who represented veterans as one of the last World War II veterans in this body. He served here for almost 30 years.

What always amazed me about Frank is that he brought that business attitude to the Senate when it came to legislating; that is, results matter. Because of that, he had a long list of legislative accomplishments.

I don't know if everybody, because of the turnover in the Senate, realized how many things FRANK accomplished: banning smoking on airplanes, lowering the threshold for drunk driving, better protection against toxic chemicals, helping to improve the everyday safety of Americans, improving the quality of our environmental laws in the United States. He also had an amendment that helped allow for better refugee status, for members of historically persecuted groups to easily get refugee status in the United States.

He did many different things while he was in the Senate, and he worked very hard because of that experience in World War II and being a veteran and going to school on the GI bill—somebody who lost his father at a very early age. He used that GI bill to get the education he needed to do these incredible things.

When Frank had a victory, he didn't stop at that victory, he kept going. After he and DICK DURBIN helped ban smoking on commercial flights, he followed that with a provision to the Transportation appropriations bill that extended the ban to include all Federal buildings.

In the same kind of fervor, once he helped make our drunk driving laws stronger, he continued to try to implement stronger measures as a key player in establishing a national blood alcohol level at 0.08 percent. At the time, many States decided to do otherwise, but Frank worked to try to champion this at the Federal level, and as a result he helped to save tens of thousands of lives.

He was also a huge champion of our environment. He championed ocean acidification issues before they were probably really known by a lot of people in America. He understood that this was a looming disaster and that we needed to do more research for marine life, our economy, and our way of life.

He also knew and understood that Americans needed protection from toxic pollutants. Well, that is something most of us would say: Yes, we don't like toxic pollutants. Back in 1986 he wrote a bill that created a public database about toxins released in the United States. That was certainly brave for somebody from New Jersey because it was a leading chemical-producing State. The fact that Frank took that on showed a lot of tenacity and a lot of courage, and just as he did on the other things, he followed that up.

Recently, he introduced the Safe Chemicals Act to improve the understanding and reporting of chemicals found in products that make their way into the hands of Americans every single day.

He also championed improving our transportation system. I asked him: Frank, how did you already get a train station named for you on the Jersey line? Anyone who has taken the Amtrak up to New York has had a chance to see that one of the stops in Secaucus is named the FRANK R. LAUTENBERG Station. He had been a great champion for Amtrak, but he was also a great champion for freight and freight mobility. He knew it was important to New Jersey as a major port in our country, and he wanted to make sure that not

only people but products got to where they needed to go and got there on time.

We all like to think we are remembered by the American people for the accomplishments we have, and I am not sure whether they will remember all of the things FRANK LAUTENBERG did to contribute to their way of life. One thing I can say is that when I think about his advocacy for a modernized GI bill or banning smoking on planes, he touched the lives of millions of Americans.

He also had tenacity. He had the tenacity once to help a boy from New Jersey who had been involved in a domestic dispute where the father had lost custody. The young boy at that time, Sean Goldman, who was from New Jersey, had been taken by a family member and was in Brazil. His father tried going through the Brazilian courts for years to get him back. He really wasn't successful until FRANK LAUTENBERG joined the fight. Frank brought the same tenacity he had shown in the past and held up a generalized system of preferences bill—which remove tariffs on $2.7 billion worth of Brazilian goods—here in the Senate. He knew that threatening to hold up that bill would get their attention, and he was right. He literally got them to do something and return this young boy, Sean Goldman, to his father. FRANK really cared about results. He knew it was important to get that father and son reunited, and he knew the importance of getting results for his constituency in New Jersey.

We will miss FRANK. We will miss all of his legislative actions, his standing on the Senate floor and giving a speech or, as he would say, giving heck to somebody. Oftentimes it was somebody on the other side or somebody he thought was a big giant doing too many things that needed to be challenged. He will be remembered as part of a great generation of Americans who were successful in so many ways. He lived the American dream, came to the Senate and was a contributor. He will be remembered for his tenacity and standing and fighting for people.

We are going to miss you, FRANK.

I yield the floor.

Mr. COCHRAN. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. WARREN). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

IRAN ELECTIONS

Mr. HOEVEN. Madam President, I rise to speak about S. Res. 154. S. Res. 154 is a resolution I submitted last month with Senator BLUMENTHAL. It calls for fair and free elections in Iran and points out that the Iranian regime is fundamentally illegitimate.

Americans believe in the power of elections. We believe voting means something. The rest of the world also understands and respects that elections are powerful events. Most countries that hold elections want to channel the will of their people into the governing of their country.

The Supreme Leader of Iran believes in the power of elections too, but he does not respect them. He himself has never been elected, and he knows a free election might threaten his power base. So he ensures that a truly free election is impossible for the Iranian people.

In past elections fraud has been rampant. The government has cracked down on public dissent and moved against media sources that are not officially sanctioned.

But most of all, Iran's Supreme Leader has developed the unfortunate habit of selecting which candidates may be permitted to run for office.

Hundreds of candidates were prohibited from running for Parliament last year and hundreds more were denied the right to run for President this year. Apparently, the Supreme Leader believes there is too much at stake to risk anyone other than a handpicked candidate to prevail at the voting booth.

The restrictions on candidates are so strict it almost seems it would be easier for the Supreme Leader to cancel the elections altogether and just appoint a President. But the Supreme Leader wants the legitimacy conferred by elections as badly as he wants to retain full control of the Iranian regime.

There are lots of analysts in the United States and elsewhere who attempt to understand which way Iran is going based on which candidates stand for election and which ones prevail. Some candidates are judged to be reformers, others conservatives, and so forth.

But this analysis gives the Iranian regime more legitimacy than it deserves. Because dissent is stifled, because candidates are blocked for political reasons, and, most of all, because the Supreme Leader holds all of the levers of power, Iran's regime cannot be seen to have legitimacy.

Consider that the current Supreme Leader came to power in 1989. He has never been held accountable to the people of Iran, but he is in full control of the country. He controls the defense and foreign policy outright.

He has the power to veto anything that comes from Parliament. He vets candidates for Parliament, and he helps choose the members of the Assembly of Experts and the Guardian Council—the very governing bodies that formally oversee the Supreme Leader. Simply put, power in Iran begins and ends with the Supreme Leader.

On June 14, Iran will elect a new President. While much will be said about who wins that election, we already know what the outcome will be. The Supreme Leader will continue to dominate Iran, run roughshod over the rights of the people of Iran, and deny the Iranian people the ability to chart their own future.

For this reason I urge my colleagues to join Senator BLUMENTHAL and myself in supporting S. Res. 154. Our resolution points out, first, that Iran has a terrible track record of fraudulent and illegitimate elections; two, that Iran crushes the right to free speech and to a free press; and, three, that true power in Iran remains firmly in the grip of the Supreme Leader.

Our resolution calls on Iran to correct these injustices. It makes clear that the United States will not view Iran's regime as a legitimate expression of the will of its people unless and until its elections are free and truly fair, until those at the highest level of power are made accountable.

Holding autocracy responsible is important not only to the Iranian people but to the people of the world at large.

We face an enormous challenge in trying to get Iran to abandon its nuclear program, and we would be dangerously mistaken if we believed that the winner of the June 14 election will somehow represent the Iranian people.

We must remember—and remind the world—that if Iran continues to work toward a nuclear weapon, it will be because that is the course plotted and pursued by the Supreme Leader. The June 14 elections, unfortunately, will not change that reality.

I hope my colleagues will join us in standing with the Iranian people and against an unelected and illegitimate regime bent on a dangerous course of action.

I hope we can adopt this resolution to demonstrate that we are not fooled by elections that give voters false choices and install leaders determined to threaten the security of other nations.

Only true and fair elections that hold Iran's leaders accountable to the Iranian people will produce a government that deserves to be seen by the world as legitimate. I call on my Senate colleagues to send that message loud and clear to Tehran.

I now yield the floor to my esteemed colleague from the State of Connecticut who is joining me in this resolution, Senator BLUMENTHAL. I wish to thank him for his support of this resolution and for his willingness to not only speak up but to stand up for the people of Iran.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, I thank my colleague Senator HOEVEN for his leadership on this issue, for his dedication to this cause, his perseverance and persistence in support of democracy.

This resolution, in fact, is all about democracy in a land that has been deprived of it for far too long. Unless Americans think this cause of democracy is far removed and inconsequential to their lives, Americans know elections have consequences. In this instance, the consequences have ramifications across the world because it is

the authoritarian, undemocratic regime of Iran that is pursuing nuclear weapons without regard to the well-being of its people.

If it does not answer to its people, if it is undemocratic and authoritarian, it can continue to pursue this nonsensical, thoughtless, lawless course of seeking to arm itself with nuclear weapons. That is bad not only for the Iranian people but for the American people and for the people of the world.

I rise today in support of the Hoeven-Blumenthal resolution calling for free and fair elections in Iran and condemning the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran for its ongoing violation of human rights.

On June 14, Iran will hold what looks to be yet another round of elections that are not fair, not free, and certainly not democratic—a sham, a charade that demeans even the pretense of democracy. On June 14 Iranians will elect a new president, but they will do so in an environment filled with systematic fraud and manipulation. They will be faced with a ballot hand-selected by the Supreme Leader, because he and his aides have prohibited literally hundreds of candidates from running. They have accepted only eight candidates for this election.

They are doing so in a country with severe restrictions on freedom of expression and assembly and without media freedom. We ought to note and, as my colleague Senator HOEVEN says so well, remind the world that the real power in Iran continues to rest with the Supreme Leader who controls foreign policy and defense and can veto any decision made by the President or the Parliament. The Supreme Leader has been in power since 1989. He has never been subject to an election or popular referendum of any kind. That is why Senator HOEVEN and I are again offering this resolution supporting political reform and freedom in Iran, and strongly siding with the Iranian people on behalf of the American people in the struggle for democracy. I thank Senator HOEVEN and so many of my colleagues who worked with us before when we sponsored a similar resolution last year condemning the 2012 elections which were neither free nor fair.

We rise again to speak this truth to power. The Iranian people are denied basic and fundamental universal human rights and continue to suffer a repressive leadership that denies the validity of their views. As a global leader on human rights and a beacon to the world on democratic values, this body has an obligation to stand with the people of Iran and demand accountability from their leaders.

Other countries around the world are struggling for democracy, and our ally in the Middle East, Israel, exemplifies it as a shining model. I am reminded of how many people in that region are denied rights and freedoms. But we should reaffirm at every opportunity our commitment to democracy and urge the Iranian Government to hold free elections, end arbitrary detentions, stop harassing people who fight for basic rights and freedoms, and reform their political process.

I also want to commend President Obama for tightening sanctions on Iran's currency and auto industry, which should prevent the government from procuring some equipment used in nuclear programs. I support continuing efforts to show Iran that we are serious when we say they must halt their nuclear weapons development program. People look to the United States for democracy and freedom. They watch what we do and what we say on this floor of the greatest deliberative body in the world.

We must be unequivocal and remind the world how important it is to stand with the people of Iran, which is what the Hoeven-Blumenthal resolution does. I thank again my colleague Senator HOEVEN.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senator from Ohio, Mr. BROWN, speak after me for up to 10 minutes.

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

Mr. BARRASSO. I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

HEALTH CARE

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I come to the floor today as millions of students in high school and colleges across the country have recently graduated. I had an opportunity to attend a number of commencements across Wyoming to speak to a number of students who were graduating. I note that President Obama has also been out giving graduation speeches this year. At Ohio State University, the President criticized those of us who warn that government does not always have the best answer. The President suggested that anyone who thinks Washington has grown too inefficient or too ineffective is somehow opposed to democracy entirely. That is what President Obama told new college graduates. It is absurd, but that is exactly what he had to say. He told them he wants to give everyone, as he says, ''a fair shake.'' What he did not tell these young people, these young men and woman, is that his policies—the policies he has been promoting and passing—have actually been hurting them and millions of other young Americans.

He made no mention of the heavy burdens he has heaped on their backs, or the damage his policies have done to our economy. President Obama did not say anything about it, but those graduates are actually going to figure it out very quickly. They are going to see what they are getting from President Obama is not at all a fair shake.

The first thing they will notice is how difficult it is for them to find a good job in the Obama economy. One of the things the Wall Street Journal had to say in an article by Dan Henninger:

> In Campaign 2012, Barack Obama promised the youth vote a rose garden. What they've got instead, as far as the eye can see, is an employment wasteland.

According to a report by the Center for American Progress, the unemployment rate for Americans under age 24 is 16.2 percent. Their study estimated that even when this group eventually starts earning a paycheck, these young Americans, they will collectively suffer reduced earnings of about $20 billion over the next decade. It works out to about $22,000 for each one of those young men and young women.

The Center for American Progress, which did this study and did this report, is actually a very liberal think tank. Here is what else they said: ''Employment prospects for young Americans are dismal.'' This is what the liberal think tank is saying. ''The employment prospects for young Americans are dismal by both historical and by international comparisons.''

We know young people who do find jobs are often stuck with part-time work. What they are looking for is a career. It has been nearly 4 years since the recession ended. Since then we have had a much weaker economic recovery than we should have. In the first quarter of this year alone, the economy grew at an annual rate of 2.4 percent. Wages have continued to stagnate. The average work week continues to shrink.

Why would that be? Why would we see wages stagnating? Why would the average work week shrink? Why are employment prospects so dismal for young Americans? One big reason is the weight of government regulations on our economy. Businesses want to grow. They want to hire. But they have been buried under a mountain of new rules and Washington mandates.

So far in 2013, the Obama administration has released more than 32,000 pages of new regulations. All of that new redtape is strangling our economy and making it tougher for businesses to create jobs for these young graduates.

One part of this—and I have warned about it before—is the new mandate in the President's health care law. It says businesses with 50 or more full-time workers have to provide expensive government-approved health insurance. The law does not say ''expensive'' government-approved health insurance, but the government-approved health insurance is turning out to be expensive.

A lot of us on this side of the aisle predicted the President's mandates

were going to do terrible things to the economy. Well, that is exactly what happened. That is exactly what happened. It is one of the reasons we have had such weak job creation. The new jobs we do get, well, they are concentrated in businesses that basically use hourly workers.

I have come to the floor and talked about one small business after another that is saying they are keeping workers to less than 30 hours. That usually hits people without work experience. It hits people like new graduates, just starting out, especially hard. Of course, the President didn't mention any of that at his graduation speeches.

There is another thing the President hasn't told young people. It has to do with the sticker shock a lot of them are going to have when they try to buy health insurance. One reason is because the health care law forces young healthy people to pay more so that older sicker people can pay less. Another reason is because the Obama administration has come up with a long list of things insurance policies have to cover. Remember, none of these extras is free; they are just prepaid at higher premiums. Young people won't be able to just get the insurance they want that is right for them or that they can afford. No. Now they will have to pay for the Obama administration mandated and approved health insurance. It is going to be much more expensive, and it may actually do them no medical good.

Why should Washington tell a single 23-year-old woman she has to pay for prostate cancer screening? Why should a 22-year-old man with no children have to pay for a plan that covers pediatric eye exams? Young people don't need many of these mandated services, they do not want them, and they don't want to pay for them. Yet they are mandated to buy them. Again, President Obama is making young people pay more for health insurance so that someone else might pay less.

How much more are they going to have to pay? Well, according to one survey of insurance companies, younger and healthier people can expect average premium increases of 169 percent next year. While some people are going to get government subsidies to help cover part of this extra cost, not everyone will. Even with the subsidies, a lot of young people are still going to pay much more than they would have without the President's health care law. We haven't heard the President talk much about that during his graduation speeches.

Young people and future generations have already been saddled with $6 trillion in new debt since President Obama took office. Washington's debt is now more than $53,000 for every man, woman, and child in the United States. These are people who will end up spending the rest of their lives paying higher taxes to cover that debt and the interest on the debt. President Obama's latest budget called for young people to pay even more by increasing the debt another $7 trillion over the next decade. That is something else he didn't happen to tell young people during his graduation speeches.

That doesn't mean Washington Democrats are keeping quiet. According to an article by Bloomberg, they are trying hard to sell the President's health care law. Here is how they put it in the article by Bloomberg:

> The White House has told all cabinet members and senior officials to use commencement speeches to drive home for graduating college students and their parents the benefits they gain from a provision of the law that allows young adults to stay on their families' insurance plans until they turn 26.

Other Democrats are trying to say the same thing. NANCY PELOSI sent out a 78-page booklet telling Democrats in the House how to spin this unpopular health care law. I have a copy of it here. It is astonishing. Roll Call wrote about it the other day. The article is entitled ''Democrats Unleash a Binder Full of Obamacare Messaging.'' One of the suggestions was to find one or two young adults in your district who are now on their parents' plan because of the new law. That is what NANCY PELOSI is recommending to the Democrats. That is the sales pitch. The President wants young people to believe they are getting free insurance. He doesn't want them to see all the ways the health care law is going to hurt them. That is what the President is telling young people. That is his message. That is what he wants other Washington Democrats to tell everyone too.

Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius is leading the cheers. She says she plans to travel around the country to spread the word about enrollment. The enrollment she is talking about is trying to get people to sign up for the health care law's insurance exchanges. She especially needs young healthy people to sign up for the exchanges, such as these new graduates. In the Wall Street Journal, Dr. Ezekiel Emanuel spelled out why in an op-ed. Remember, he was one of the President's top advisers in creating the health care law. He is also the brother of former White House Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel. This is what he had to say. He wrote that young people ''are bewildered about the health care reform in general and exchanges in particular.'' The title is ''Health Care Exchanges Will Need the Young Invincibles.''

Just yesterday the Los Angeles Times front page read ''Young adults a hurdle for health act.'' Dr. Emanuel is concerned these young people won't see the Obama exchanges as being in their best interest. Well, of course they won't see it as being in their best interest, and that is because the exchanges are not in their best interest. That is why the Los Angeles Times is right—''Young adults a hurdle for health act.'' The solution, Ezekiel Emanuel writes, is that ''every commencement address by an administration official should encourage young graduates to get health insurance.''

That is not going to be an easy sell for this administration. A recent Harvard poll of 18-to-24-year-old college students found that only 42 percent approve of how the President has handled health care. Young people are skeptical about the health care law. They are being told they have to buy expensive insurance that they may not need or may not want and that is not right for them because if they do not, the only people in the exchanges will be the old and the sick, and the whole thing will collapse under its own weight. For the President, that would be a terrible political disaster, and apparently this administration is willing to do whatever it takes to avoid that disaster.

According to the Washington Post, Secretary Sebelius is now going hat in hand to health industry officials asking them to donate to nonprofit groups in trying to enroll more people in the exchanges. At best, the Sebelius shakedown is a conflict of interest. And this latest scandal will only make young people more skeptical of the President's sales job on his health care law.

Young people understand they will have to pay more for health coverage so that older people will pay less. Young people understand they are being told to do something that is not in their best interest, and the reason they are being told to do it is to give the President a political win—not because they will get better health care but to give the President a political win. They understand the President's bad economy means they may not find a job, but they are supposed to be OK with that because mom and dad are allowed to pay their bills for a couple more years. Young people know a Cabinet Secretary shouldn't pressure businesses to support organizations that share the President's political agenda. They understand all of that even if the President won't say it to them during commencement speeches. If the President really wants to give young people a speech they will remember, he will tell them the truth about how terrible these policies are for them.

The President should leave the spin for the campaign trail and then come back to Washington and be ready to sit down and work with Republicans on policies that work for our economy, that work for young people, that work for future generations, and that work for all Americans.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. I thank the Senator from Wyoming for his unanimous consent request, and I ask unanimous consent that after I conclude my remarks, the Senator from Rhode Island Mr. WHITEHOUSE be recognized for up to 15 minutes.

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

U.S.-CHINA TRADE DEFICIT

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, today new U.S.-China trade deficit figures from April show a 34-percent increase since March. Last month our trade deficit with the world's second largest economy was more than $24 billion. I remember about a dozen years ago when the Senate and the House approved PNTR—permanent normal trade relations—with China. Around that time the bilateral yearly trade deficit with China was barely $10 billion. Today, just for last month, it was $24 billion. It has persistently and consistently been over $200 billion a year in recent history.

This kind of trade deficit keeps our domestic companies on the defensive. It means workers in Ohio, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, throughout the Midwest, and across America are prevented from unlocking their potential. Our manufacturers are still the most productive in the world. Our workers are the most skilled and the most productive in the world. Their productivity continues to go up and up and up, in part because of globalization; however, their wages have been stagnant. That is part of the price our country has paid for globalization.

Our workers can't compete when China cheats. How can we win the future when our manufacturers can't win contracts because China doesn't play fair? In many ways China and so many of our trading partners practice trade according to their national interest. Yet we in the United States practice trade according to some economics textbook that has been out of print for the last 20 years.

Despite universal agreement that China continues to manipulate its currency to gain an artificial advantage over American-made goods, no action has been taken down the hall by the House of Representatives and no action has been taken down the street at the White House. No action has been taken by the House despite widespread support for legislation this Chamber passed in October 2011. That legislation, worked on by many of my colleagues, would establish new criteria for the Treasury Department to identify countries that misalign their currency. The bill would trigger tough consequences for those countries which engage in such unfair trade practices. It would allow for industries harmed by currency manipulation to seek relief, the way they do for other export subsidies, which several industries in my State have sought, such as steel pipe producers in Lorain, where I visited last week, in Youngstown.

We can solve this problem. The major reason there have been new investments in the Lorain U.S. Steel plant, at V&M Star in Youngstown, at Wheatland Tube, also in the Mahoning Valley, stabilization in jobs, and growth in jobs is because we have enforced trade laws. We can solve this problem further with currency reform. That is why Senator SESSIONS, a Republican from Alabama, and I will join our colleagues, including Senators Schumer, Collins, Stabenow, and Burr, tomorrow when we reintroduce this bill. Why? Because more nations are engaged in this practice, and it is clear we don't have the tools to address it.

It is no longer just China manipulating its currency. There are a number of other countries—especially in East Asia—that are engaging in this practice, and, as I said, we don't have the tools to address it.

In 2009, as nations were seeking to restore stability to financial markets and respond to the global financial crisis, G–20 leaders met in Pittsburgh to set a framework that would better promote more evenly balanced trade. Among the steps to be taken would be a more market-oriented exchange rate—something China obviously isn't familiar with—and a move away from the practice of adopting artificial, manipulated exchange rates not based on market forces.

While this appeared to be a step in the right direction, there has been too little to show for the good intentions stated back in 2009. Here is what we know. Workers and manufacturers still face an unfair advantage from currency manipulation. By keeping the value of the RMB—the Chinese currency—artificially low, China drives foreign corporations to shift production there because it makes exports to China more expensive and it makes Chinese exports back into the United States cheaper.

It has only been in recent history that business after business after business, as we have seen in the United States, has developed a business plan that involves shutting down production in Lima, OH, move that production to Beijing, and then sell back to the United States of America. Never really in history has that been a widely adopted business plan in a country—shut down production in Springfield, MA, or Springfield, OH, move that production to Shihan, China, or Wuhan, China, get tax breaks for doing it, and then sell those products back into the United States. Part of the reason for that is currency manipulation.

This continued undervaluation has caused serious harm for this economy. It has cost American jobs. The first President Bush said in the 1980s that $1 billion in trade surplus or trade deficit could translate into some 12,000 jobs—meaning that if there is a trade deficit with a country, it costs this country 12,000 jobs. Multiply that by a $500 billion, $600 billion, or $700 billion trade deficit, and see what we get.

A December 2012 report by the Peterson Institute for International Economics found that currency manipulation by foreign governments had cost the U.S. from 1 to 5 million jobs and increased the U.S. trade deficit by $200 billion to $500 billion per year.

Think of that. By addressing currency manipulation now, we could create up to 5 million jobs and reduce our trade deficit by tens of billions of dollars, and doing so wouldn't cost taxpayers a cent.

But let's look for a moment beyond the numbers. Workers in my home State who work hard and play by the rules at Titan Tire in Bryan, OH, American Aluminum Extrusions in Stark County, Wheatland Tube in Trumbull County, the people who make coated paper and lightweight thermal paper in southern Ohio, the Ohioans who forge steel into products we all use—these women and men deserve a chance to earn a living without companies in other countries illegally dumping goods—or legally if we don't do anything about currency—on our markets. We can't afford to sit idly by while our trade deficit grows and our domestic manufacturing base erodes.

By addressing currency manipulation and other unfair trade practices, we create American jobs and position ourselves to meet the challenges and opportunities of globalization.

I look forward to continued debate and action on finally penalizing the countries that cheat on trade.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, I would like to yield 5 minutes to my friend Senator BLUNT and then reclaim the floor.

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

Mr. BLUNT. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as if in morning business.

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

Mr. BLUNT. I appreciate my good friend Senator WHITEHOUSE yielding the time for me.

REMEMBERING FRANK R. LAUTENBERG

Mr. BLUNT. I would like to talk for a few minutes about Senator LAUTENBERG and what he brought to this body and what he brought to public service.

I represent Missouri in the Senate, and in the House I represented southwest Missouri. Many times in the last 2½ years, Senator LAUTENBERG wanted to talk about going to basic training at Camp Crowder near Neosho, MO, as a young man barely on the edge of his twenties—I am not sure which edge of his twenties it was, but he was serving in World War II, first as a teenager and then as a man barely in his twenties—and what it was like to be surrounded by small communities, all of which were smaller than the camp at which the enlisted men were training, and what it was like when they had some free time and could go to any of these communities where they probably outnumbered the community. He always remembered that part of his training with some pleasure. The story was always different from the story before, but I am sure all the stories happened.

But what he was really talking about to me every time was that commitment to service that particularly our World War II veterans brought to this body. And we all know, after the reflections of the last 2 days, that he was the

last of the World War II veterans to serve here and likely to be the last of the World War II veterans to ever serve here, and the spirit of service they all brought was reflected in Senator LAUTENBERG in lots of ways.

All you would have to do is look at our voting record to know there were lots of areas at the end of the day we didn't agree on, but somehow we managed to do that and still appreciate the commitment to public service that he reflected, and I think he appreciated that in me.

One of the chances I missed here was the opportunity to serve with him on the surface subcommittee in Commerce. He was going to be the chairman of that committee for this Congress, and I was going to be the leading Republican and was looking forward to that because this was one area where I thought we were going to find and would have found a lot of common ground. Senator LAUTENBERG's understanding of transportation, his understanding beyond most of us of the importance of passenger rail and rail generally and how you need to integrate this system so that it works the best and the most efficiently, was clearly one of the areas where he had spent a lot of time over the years.

Remember, Senator LAUTENBERG was here as a Senator, and then he decided to retire and then called back into public service. At a time when most people would have made that decision and moved on, he came back and served here, as it turned out, for the rest of his life of service.

It was an honor for us to get to serve with him. It was an honor for me to get to serve with him. It is a disappointment for me that I didn't get to learn more about this issue he and I were about to join hands on together.

But there is a lot we should learn from his service and the service of that World War II generation. I hope that is one of the things we will be reflecting on over the next few days as we reflect on his career of service and that whole generation of service. We really do see that moment pass with Senator Inouye and Senator LAUTENBERG and others who have served here just in recent years, all gone. But if we could look at the times they could come together in that spirit of World War II to make things happen, we would all learn an important lesson.

I join his family and his friends and his colleagues in missing him and missing his service.

I am pleased to yield the time back to my good friend Mr. WHITEHOUSE, who gave me the time to say these words.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

GASPEE DAYS

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, American summertime is when we celebrate and commemorate the patriots who fought to establish and protect this great Republic. From Memorial Day through Independence Day and on to Veterans Day, communities across this country turn out star-spangled bunting and gather for parades, cookouts, and wreath layings to reflect on the heroes and events that embody our Nation's great spirit.

June in Rhode Island is marked by the annual celebration of *Gaspee* Days, when we recognize and celebrate one of the earliest acts of defiance against the British Crown in our American struggle for independence. Most Americans remember and I know the Presiding Senator from Massachusetts certainly is well aware of the Boston Tea Party when, in fact, literally spirited Bostonians clamored onto the decks of the East India Company's ships and dumped tea bags into Boston Harbor to protest British taxation without representation.

I am sure throwing tea bags into the harbor is a very big deal, but there was another milestone in the path to the Revolutionary War that is too often overlooked. It is the story of 60 brave Rhode Islanders who, more than a year before the Tea Party in Boston, risked their lives in defiance of oppression more than 240 years ago and drew the first blood in what became the revolutionary conflict.

In the years before the Revolutionary War, one of the most notorious of the armed customs vessels patrolling Rhode Island's Narragansett Bay, imposing the authority of the British Crown, was Her Majesty's ship *Gaspee*. The ship and its captain, Lieutenant William Dudingston, were known for destroying fishing vessels, seizing cargo, and flagging down ships only to harass, humiliate, and interrogate the colonials.

A 100-year-old report says:

> This unprincipled ruffian had ruthlessly ravaged the Rhode Island coast for several months, destroying unoffending fishing vessels, and confiscating everything he could lay hands on. The attack on the ''Gaspe'' caused the first bloodshed in the struggle for American independence, and was the first resistance to the British navy.

How did it come about? Well, on June 9, 1772, Rhode Island ship captain Benjamin Lindsey was en route to Providence from Newport, sailing in his packet sloop the *Hannah*, when he was accosted and ordered to yield for inspection by the *Gaspee*. Captain Lindsey had had enough of the *Gaspee*. He ignored the command and raced up Narragansett Bay, ignoring warning shots fired at him by the *Gaspee*. As the *Gaspee* gave chase, Captain Lindsey—who was a wily Rhode Island ship captain—realized that his ship was lighter and drew less water than the *Gaspee*, so he sped north toward Pawtuxet Cove, toward the shallows off of Namquid Point. The *Hannah* shot over these shallows, but the heavier *Gaspee* grounded and stuck firm. The British ship and her crew were caught stranded in a falling tide and would need to wait many hours for a rising tide to free the hulking *Gaspee*.

Captain Lindsey continued on his way to Providence and rallied a group of Rhode Island patriots at Sabin's Tavern. Together, the group resolved to put an end to the *Gaspee*'s menace to Rhode Island waters. They may have shared one thing with their Boston compatriots: They may have been spirited themselves.

That night the men embarked down Narragansett Bay in eight longboats with muffled oars. They encircled the stranded *Gaspee* and called on Lieutenant Dudingston to surrender his ship. Dudingston refused and ordered his men to fire on anyone who tried to board. The Rhode Islanders forced their way onto the *Gaspee*'s deck, and in the struggle Lieutenant Dudingston was wounded, shot with a musket ball. Right there in the waters off Warwick, RI, the very first blood in the conflict that was to become the American Revolution thus was drawn.

The brave patriots took the captive Englishmen ashore and returned to the *Gaspee* to rid Narragansett Bay of her noxious presence once and for all. Near daylight on June 10, they set her afire. The blaze spread to the ship's powder magazine, and the resulting blast echoed across Narragansett Bay as airborne fragments of this former ship splashed down into the water.

The incident prompted a special commission instructed by King George III to deliver any persons indicted in the burning of the *Gaspee* to the Royal Navy for transport to England for trial and execution.

Samuel Adams, in a letter published in the Newport Mercury on December 21, 1772, and reprinted in the Providence Gazette on December 26, called it ''a court of inquisition, more horrid than that of Spain or Portugal. The persons who are the commissioners of this new-fangled court are vested with most exorbitant and unconstitutional power.'' A few days later he wrote that ''an Attack upon the Liberties of one Colony is an Attack upon the Liberties of all; and therefore in this Instance all should be ready to yield Assistance to Rhode Island.''

In a letter to a friend in Rhode Island, John Adams, the future President, summed up the tension felt across the Colonies:

> ''We are all in a fury here about . . . the Commission for trying the Rhode Islanders for Burning the Gaspee. I wonder how your Colony happens to sleep so securely in a whole skin, when her sisters are so worried and tormented.''

King George III offered a handsome reward for information leading to the arrest of those responsible for the burning and destruction of his revenue cutter. But Rhode Islanders are a loyal bunch—the reward went unclaimed.

The site of Rhode Island's opening salvo in the American Revolution is now named Gaspee Point. The annual Gaspee Days celebration has grown to span several weeks each June and includes an arts and crafts festival, a walking tour with students playing the roles of Colonialists, an encampment of local militia, a parade down Narragansett Parkway in Warwick, and, of

course, a mock burning of the HMS *Gaspee*.

My friend, State Representative Joe McNamara, and the Gaspee Days Committee work each year to make these events the best they can be and to remind our State and Nation of the bravery of those few dozen souls. Indeed, this year another Rhode Islander Mark Tracy, a pediatric neurologist at Hasbro Children's Hospital, was able to acquire original news stories from 1772 that related this incident and gave them to the Gaspee Committee. I will note that he was able to get them rather inexpensively because ''the auction house concentrated on describing the batches of newspapers—from the estate of an unnamed Providence collector—in terms of the coming Boston Tea Party and other events,'' paying no attention to the fact that Rhode Island's greater act and prior act was actually enclosed and described in these newspapers.

This summer will also mark another historic anniversary for Rhode Island because it was in July of 1663—350 years ago this summer—that King Charles II granted a royal charter establishing the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations.

''To hold forth a lively experiment,'' it declared ''that a most flourishing civil state may stand and best be maintained . . . with a full liberty in religious concernments.''

This charter provided in Rhode Island the world's first formal establishment of freedom of religion, distinguishing us from the rigid theocracy of Massachusetts, I am sorry to say, where ideological conformity was enforced by the gallows and the lash.

This charter has been called America's Magna Carta, for it is the first formal document in all of history granting the separation of church and state, along with extraordinary freedoms of speech, to a political entity. This ''lively experiment'' in Rhode Island blazed a path for American freedom of religion, one of our greatest national blessings. And, more practically, this liberty also allowed trading networks of Quakers and Baptists and Jews to connect in Newport and created their abundant wealth and commerce.

That freedom of religion, that freedom of conscience was the great legacy of Rhode Island's founder Roger Williams, who had been banished from Massachusetts for his beliefs about religious tolerance. Williams established his new colony as ''a shelter for persons,'' as he said, ''distressed for conscience.'' His battle for freedom of conscience, won and reflected in the King Charles Charter, is the reason his statue stands right out there, outside the Chamber of the Senate.

I know these events and the patriots whose efforts allowed for their success are not forgotten in my home State. This summer we will gather in these ways to celebrate Rhode Island's independent streak. We will recall the courage and zeal of these men and women who embodied those most American values—freedom of conscience and freedom from tyranny, values that ignited a revolution in the summer of 1776.

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. MERKLEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. MERKLEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to enter into a colloquy with Senator STABENOW.

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

MONSANTO PROTECTION ACT

Mr. MERKLEY. Madam President, I rise to talk about an issue that is important to many Oregonians, section 735 of the continuing resolution, also known as the Monsanto Protection Act. I appreciate this opportunity to engage in a dialog about it with Senator STABENOW, who, as the chair of the committee, is doing a magnificent job of guiding this farm bill through the Senate.

The Monsanto Protection Act refers to a policy rider the House slipped into the recently passed continuing resolution and sent over to the Senate. Because of the time-urgent consideration of this must-pass legislation—necessary to avert a government shutdown—this policy rider slipped through without examination or debate.

That outcome is unfortunate and unacceptable because the content of the policy rider is nothing short of astounding. It allows the unrestricted sale and planting of new variants of genetically modified seeds that a court ruled have not been properly examined for their effect on other farmers, the environment, and human health.

The impact on other farmers can be significant. The current situation in Oregon of GMO wheat escaping a field test—resulting in several nations suspending the import of white wheat from the United States—underscores the fact that poorly regulated GMO cultivation can pose a significant threat to farmers who are not cultivating GMO crops.

Equally troubling to the policy rider's allowance of unrestricted sale and planting of GMO seeds is the fact that the Monsanto Protection Act instructs the seed producers to ignore a ruling of the court, thereby raising profound questions about the constitutional separation of powers and the ability of our courts to hold agencies accountable.

Moreover, while there is undoubtedly some difference in this legislative body on the wisdom of the core policy, there should be outrage on all sides about the manner in which this policy rider was adopted. I have certainly heard that outrage from my constituents in Oregon. They have come to my townhalls to protest, and more than 2,200 have written to me.

In an accountable and transparent legislative system, the Monsanto Protection Act would have had to be considered by the Agriculture Committee, complete with testimony by relevant parties. If the committee had approved the act, there would have been a subsequent opportunity to debate it on the floor of this Chamber. Complete transparency with a full opportunity for the public to weigh in is essential.

Since these features of an accountable and transparent legislative system were not honored and because I think the policy itself is unacceptable, I have offered an amendment to the farm bill which would repeal this rider in its entirety. To this point, my efforts to introduce that amendment have been objected to, and it takes unanimous consent. This type of rider has no place in an appropriations bill to fund the Federal Government, and a bill that interferes with our system of checks and balances should never have become law.

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, I absolutely understand Senator MERKLEY's concerns about the issue and the concerns of many people about this issue. There has been a long-running understanding that we should not be legislating on appropriations, and I share the concern of my colleague that the Agriculture Committee and other appropriate committees didn't have an opportunity to engage in this debate.

As the Senator from Oregon knows, this language was included in the continuing resolution, the bill that funds the government, and that bill will expire on September 30 of this year. I agree with my colleague; we should not extend that provision through the appropriations process. We should have the same type of full and transparent process that both Senator MERKLEY and I have talked about today.

I wish to assure my friend that I think it would be inappropriate for that language to be adopted in a conference committee or otherwise adopted in a manner designed to bypass open debate in the relevant committees and this Chamber.

I will do my best to oppose any effort to add this kind of extension in the conference committee on this farm bill or to otherwise extend it without appropriate legislative examination.

Mr. MERKLEY. Madam President, I thank Senator STABENOW. I deeply appreciate the commitment of my colleague to ensure that the Monsanto Protection Act is not tucked into subsequent legislation in a manner that bypasses full committee examination and Senate debate.

The farm bill is extremely important to our Nation. The Senator from Michigan has worked with me to incorporate a number of provisions that are important to the farmers in Oregon, including disaster programs, responding to forest fires, specialty crop research

programs, improvements in insurance for organic farmers, and low-cost loans offered through rural electrical co-ops for energy-saving home and business renovations.

It has been a real pleasure to work with Senator STABENOW on those provisions and, again, I thank the Senator for her support for them and for advocating responsible legislative examination of measures such as the Monsanto Protection Act.

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, I thank the Senator from Oregon for his advocacy on so many important policies in this legislation. We worked together closely on forest fires. Senator MERKLEY and I have been on the phone many times. He wanted to make sure I was aware of what has happened to farmers, homeowners, and landowners in Oregon.

We share a great interest in so many areas as it relates to our organic growers and rural development as well as what is happening in terms of energy efficiency, and, as my friend mentioned, rural electric co-ops.

I thank Senator MERKLEY for his leadership in many areas, and I look forward to working with the Senator from Oregon as we bring the farm bill to a final vote.

Mr. MERKLEY. Madam President, again, I thank the chair for her leadership. I know how much she looks forward to the conclusion of this process as we try to enable folks to have various amendments which are appropriate for the farm bill debated on the floor.

I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

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

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

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 15 minutes as in morning business.

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

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, the last week we were here, I gave my weekly ''Time To Wake Up'' speech, as usual. It is a speech I wrote well earlier. In a truly and, unfortunately, almost eerie coincidence, in my speech last week I spoke about a variety of natural disasters, including—and I will quote my own speech—''cyclones in Oklahoma.'' I said that in the same hour the cyclone touched down in Moore, OK.

When people are suffering in the wake of a calamity such as that, they need to hear one thing from Washington; that is, how can we help. That is all they need to hear. No one likes to be chided when what they need is help and comfort.

J.E. Reynolds of the Daily Oklahoman wrote: ''Victims and survivors need help, not a sermon in the first hours following a storm.'' I agree. I agree very much. My thoughts are with the victims of those Oklahoma storms and with everyone who is working to pick up the pieces.

Far from seeking to exploit their tragedy, I had no idea of the weather in Oklahoma that was happening virtually at the time I gave the speech, mentioning Oklahoma cyclones among other examples of extreme weather. But the eerie timing was what it was, and it did not send that single simple message: How can we help? So I am sorry. I have apologized to my Oklahoma colleagues for the unfortunate coincidence of timing of my earlier remarks, and I, of course, stand ready to help them speed relief to their State.

It is, of course, impossible to say that any single weather event is caused by climate change, and that is not something I have ever said. What is true is that climate change is altering weather patterns. Scientists have studied these changes in weather patterns, and they have modeled what is to come. Most are convinced that increases in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather will be a result of the megatons of carbon pollution we continue to emit.

The way I have described it is that climate change ''loads the dice'' for extreme weather. We might not know which roll is caused by the loaded dice. We are going to get a 6 or a 7 or a 12 or a 2 sooner or later anyway, but the extreme weather will come more often because of this. We cannot pretend this isn't happening. We just hit 400 parts per million of carbon in the atmosphere, measured at the NOAA observatory on Mauna Loa in Hawaii.

What does 400 parts per million mean? Well, look at it this way: For at least 800,000 years, and perhaps millions, we have been in a range on Earth between 170 and 300 parts per million of carbon in our atmosphere—800,000 years, minimum. Homo sapiens as a species have only been around for about 200,000 years, but just since the industrial revolution and the ''Great Carbon Dump'' began, we have blown out of the 170- to 300-parts-per-million range and have now hit 400.

This is very serious. We already see the effects. In Alaska, permafrost is melting and native villages once protected by winter ice are being eroded into the sea. In the Carolinas, roads to the Outer Banks have to be raised as seas rise and storms worsen. Coral reefs are fading off in Florida and in the Caribbean. In Rhode Island, we have measured almost 10 inches of sea level rise since the 1930s. Rhode Island fishermen going out to sea from Point Judith are reporting ''real anomalies . . . things just aren't making sense.''

All of these effects from climate change hit our farmers too. Since before the founding of this Republic, our farmers have relied on the Sun, the rain, and the land to provide us their bounty. In 2011, farming and the industries that rely directly on agriculture accounted for almost 5 percent of the entire U.S. economy. But growing conditions in the United States are changing. More and more of our rainfall is coming in heavy downpours. Since 1991, the amount of rain falling in what scientists call ''extreme precipitation events''—the amount of rain falling in extreme precipitation events has been above the 1901-to-1960 average in every region of the country.

In the Northeast where I am from extreme precipitation has increased 74 percent just between 1958 and 2010. That matters to our farmers. The very seasons are shifting. During the last two decades, the average frost-free season was about 10 days longer than during that period between 1901 and 1960. In the Southwest it is an astonishing 3 weeks longer. That matters to our farmers.

Average temperature in the contiguous United States has increased by about 1.5 degrees Fahrenheit since records began in 1895. Most of that increase occurred since the 1980s, and 2012 was the warmest year ever. That matters to our farmers.

This chart shows the extent of the U.S. drought in August of 2012. The red and the dark areas indicate extreme and exceptional drought. These conditions lasted most of the year. That matters to our farmers.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture Chief Economist Joseph Glauber testified before the Agriculture Committee that ''the heat and rainfall deficit conditions that characterized the summer of 2012 were well outside the range of normal weather variation.'' That is precisely what scientists mean when they say climate change ''loads the dice'' for extreme weather.

Climate change doesn't cause specific heat waves but the average temperature shifts to warmer weather and the extremes move with it.

The New York Botanical Garden has seen apricot trees blossom in February. The Audubon Society of Rhode Island has reported cherry trees in Providence blooming as early as December. This could affect farmers too.

Jeff Send, a Michigan cherry farmer, explained to the Agriculture Committee that the record warm March temperatures brought his region's cherry trees out of dormancy early and exposed them to later freezes. In Michigan he said:

> We have the capacity to produce 275 million pounds of tart cherries. In 2012, our total was 11.6 million pounds.

A potential of 275 million pounds; actual crop, 11.6 million pounds, less than one-twentieth, all because of that early warming and that early bloom and the freezes that then killed them.

These changes I keep speaking about will continue if we go on polluting our atmosphere with greenhouse gases. As the harmful effects of climate change become more prevalent, our agricultural policies should reflect the threat

posed to farming and food production by these changes. Yet in the farm bill climate change and extreme weather are not mentioned once.

Well, let me correct myself. They are mentioned once. The bill makes reference to an earlier law from 1990, and in the title of that 1990 law the words ''climate change'' appear. So by referring to the 1990 law, the farm bill once mentions climate change. But with all of this going on, that is the only reference. And the reason is that our Republican colleagues will oppose legislation if it even mentions the words ''climate change.''

We can't get around using the name of a statute that passed 20-plus years ago, if ''climate change'' is in the name, so that one had to go in. But, otherwise, climate change is not mentioned in the farm bill, despite all of this activity and effect on farming.

It is not that there aren't things we could do. The Bicameral Task Force on Climate Change, which I cochair with Representative WAXMAN, Senator CARDIN, and Representative MARKEY, asked stakeholders in the agriculture economy about carbon pollution and our resiliency to climate change.

The National Farmers Union, which represents more than 200,000 family farmers, ranchers, and rural members, responded—this is the National Farmers Union:

> Mitigating and adapting to climate change is of significant concern to our membership and will be a defining trend that shapes the world.

That is the National Farmers Union on climate change. It will be ''a defining trend that shapes the world.''

Cap-and-trade legislation, the Farmers Union said, would provide a boon to farming and forest lands that take the lead on reducing greenhouse gases. The National Sustainable Agricultural Coalition encouraged a comprehensive approach. An effective policy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, wrote the group, ''should have as its cornerstone the support and promotion of sustainable organic cultural systems throughout USDA's programs and initiatives.''

Even the American Farm Bureau Federation, which has at times opposed climate change legislation, expressed clear support for farming practices that keep carbon out of the atmosphere and for investments in biofuels and in renewable energy.

We are grateful to all of the scientific and industry leaders who have shared their ideas with the Bicameral Task Force on Climate Change. We need active and willing partners in the effort to ensure our farms can meet the needs of a strong nation.

They are not alone. Responsible people across the spectrum want us to act on carbon and climate. Responsible people such as the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the United States of America, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, and dozens of major scientific societies—virtually every major one—and the folks in the corporate sector who run Apple and Ford and Nike and Coca Cola—get it. Republicans such as Ronald Reagan's Secretary of State George Schultz, former House Science Committee chair Sherry Boehlert, former Utah Governor and GOP Presidential candidate John Huntsman—responsible people across the spectrum get it. The scientists at NASA get it, and they are telling us to get serious. They are the ones who took a robot the size of an SUV and sent it millions of miles to Mars where they landed it safely on the surface of Mars and now they are driving it around. Do we think they might know what they are talking about? They get it. All across the spectrum, people get it. They are on one side getting something done about climate change.

On the other side are the polluters with their familiar retinue of cranks, extremists, and front organizations. That is basically it. And for some reason, the Republican Party—the great American Republican Party—has chosen to hitch its wagon to the polluters. I do not get it. I do not see how that works out for them.

Every day the pollution gets worse, and every day the evidence that this is serious gets stronger. I do not know why the Republican Party of Theodore Roosevelt wants to paint itself as the party that went with the polluters and not the scientists; that went with the fringe extreme against the responsible center. It has to be a bad bet. It is a crazy bet.

To make that bet you have to believe God will intervene and perform some magic, in violation of His own laws of physics and chemistry. Is that a bet you want to take? You have to believe that the market will work, even though the market is flagrantly skewed. Is that a bet you want to make? And you have to believe the people who have a vested interest to lie and disbelieve the people who have no conflict of interest, unless you are prepared to think that the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Catholic bishops and all the major scientific organizations all have a conflict of interest. Does that sound very sensible? Does that sound like where you want to hitch the wagon of one of America's great political parties?

Let me close, as we talk about climate change in the context of the farm bill, by quoting our friend Senator TESTER, who recently spelled out the crisis facing our farmers in an op-ed in USA Today.

I ask unanimous consent that op-ed be printed at the conclusion of my remarks.

Senator TESTER and his wife Sharla have been farming for almost 40 years—the same land that his grandparents homesteaded. This is how our friend from Montana described the changes he sees:

> When I was younger, frequent bone-chilling winds whipped snow off the Rocky Mountain Front and brought bitterly cold days that reached -30 degrees. Today, we have only a handful of days that even reach 0 degrees. Changes in the weather are forcing Sharla and I to change how we operate our farm. It's now more difficult to know when to plant to take advantage of the rains.
>
> Some might say the end of bitter winters will be a boon for Montana's economy. But with milder winters, we've seen the sawfly come out earlier to destroy our crops before they can be harvested. Montana's deep freezes also used to kill off the pine bark beetle, which today kills millions of acres of trees across the American West.

He writes:

> Montanans already understand that climate change is affecting our daily lives. The argument isn't whether the world is changing, it's how to respond.

I will say, once again, it is time—it is well past time—for us in Congress to wake up to the urgent challenge of our time. There is a lot at stake. There is a lot at stake for all of us. There is a lot at stake for every State, and there is a lot at stake for every generation, particularly for the generations that are to follow.

So often I hear my Republican colleagues expressing concern about what our debt will do to future generations. Fine. What will a ruined climate do to future generations? What will acidified seas do to future generations? What will worse extreme weather and rising seas do to future generations?

There is indeed a lot at stake, and it is time to wake up. It is time to take action.

I yield the floor.

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

[From USA Today, Apr. 5, 2013]

CLIMATE CHANGE ALREADY FELT BY FARMERS

Montanans already understand that climate change is affecting our daily lives. The argument isn't whether the world is changing, it's how to respond.

I am a third-generation farmer from north-central Montana. My wife, Sharla, and I farm the same land homesteaded by my grandparents a century ago, continuing a Montana tradition of making a living off the land. We've farmed this land for nearly 40 years.

For the average American, particularly those of us from rural America, the political conversation about climate change seems worlds away. For us, warmer winters and extreme weather events are already presenting new challenges for our way of life.

It's an experience with climate change that too often goes unreported and overlooked. But as a nation we must start paying attention, because the experiences of America's farmers, ranchers, and sportsmen and women will change the debate if policymakers start listening.

Scientists tell us that climate change will bring shorter, warmer and drier winters to Montana. I see it every time I get on my tractor.

When I was younger, frequent bone-chilling winds whipped snow off the Rocky Mountain Front and brought bitterly cold days that reached -30 degrees. Today, we have only a handful of days that even reach 0 degrees. Changes in the weather are forcing Sharla and I to change how we operate our farm. It's now more difficult to know when to plant to take advantage of the rains.

Some might say the end of bitter winters will be a boon for Montana's economy. But

with milder winters, we've seen the sawfly come out earlier to destroy our crops before they can be harvested. Montana's deep freezes also used to kill off the pine bark beetle, which today kills millions of acres of trees across the American West.

Those dead trees—many of which litter our National Forests—combined with historic drought to make 2012's record-setting wildfires possible. Last year's blazes, which burned Colorado suburbs, National Parks and more than 1 million acres in Montana, will become commonplace as the West continues to heat up. And I fear that epic droughts and floods will continue to be regular stories in the national news.

Montana's economy depends in part on the natural beauty of our state. Our outdoor economy generates nearly $6 billion each year. But decimated forests, wildfires and lost wildlife habitat put our outdoor economy at risk.

Our economy also depends on our state's number one industry: agriculture. Montana's farmers and ranchers feed our state and our nation, but back-to-back years of record flooding and drought are testing even the hardiest of our producers.

Montanans already understand that climate change is affecting our daily lives. The argument isn't whether the world is changing, it's how to respond.

History will judge us based on what we do next. In the Senate, I am pushing to develop more sources of renewable energy. I still fill up my tractor with diesel fuel because there are no better options available, but by encouraging the development of wind, water, next-generation biofuels and other renewables, we will create new jobs as we cut the emissions that warm our planet and increase our energy options. That's why I introduced my Public Lands Renewable Energy Development Act (http://www.wildlifemanagementinstitute.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=562:bipartisan-senate-bill-would-establish-renewable-energy-leasing-process&catid=34:ONB%20Articles&ltemid=54) to streamline the permitting for renewable energy projects on public lands.

I've also proposed my Forest Jobs and Recreation Act (http://www.tester.senate.gov/?p=issue&id=70). For decades, conservationists and loggers fought to control Montana's forests while our trees became fodder for fire and infestation. My bill brought Montanans together to set aside some lands for recreation while requiring logging in others. By better taking care of our forests, we will reduce the growing threat of wildfire.

These are important steps, but achieving a comprehensive solution to climate change and energy development and use will require all Americans to work together before it's too late. Last year was the hottest year on record (http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2013-01-08/national/36207396_1_noaa-analysis-climate-change-thomas-r-karl) in the United States. We are increasingly victims of strong and frequent natural disasters that leave us struggling to pay for both prevention and recovery efforts.

Folks in rural America are already adapting to the new realities brought by climate change. For farmers like me, it means erratic weather is putting my ability to make a living off the land and produce food at risk.

But for folks devastated by Hurricane Sandy or picking up the pieces from last year's wildfires, the ongoing political debate over climate change is even more frustrating. They know action is needed. They're calling for change. The only question is when we are going to listen.

Jon Tester is the junior Senator from Montana. He and his wife, Sharla, still farm the 1,800 acres his grandparents homesteaded in 1912.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KING). The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, before my friend leaves the floor, I appreciate very much him doing his utmost to keep our eye on the problem we have facing this country. We have no more important issue in the world than this issue, period. So I appreciate very much the Senator from Rhode Island keeping us focused on this.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. I thank the majority leader.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have a cloture motion at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on S. 954, a bill to reauthorize agricultural programs through 2018.

Harry Reid, Debbie Stabenow, Amy Klobuchar, Christopher A. Coons, Sherrod Brown, Tom Harkin, Benjamin L. Cardin, Heidi Heitkamp, Patrick J. Leahy, Michael F. Bennet, Joe Donnelly, Al Franken, Max Baucus, Patty Murray, Tim Johnson, Mark Udall, Jon Tester.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—S. 1003 AND S. 953

CLOTURE MOTIONS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that it be considered as if the following motions to proceed were made: motion to proceed to Calendar No. 76, S. 1003, and motion to proceed to Calendar No. 74, S. 953; further, that the cloture motions, which are at the desk, be reported in the order the motions were considered made; finally, that the mandatory quorum required under rule XXII be waived for these cloture motions and the cloture motion for S. 954.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The cloture motions having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motions.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to S. 1003, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to reset interest rates for new student loans.

Mitch McConnell, John Cornyn, Lamar Alexander, Kelly Ayotte, David Vitter, Thad Cochran, Orrin G. Hatch, John Thune, Rob Portman, Lisa Murkowski, Michael B. Enzi, John Barrasso, John McCain, Roger F. Wicker, Roy Blunt, Johnny Isakson, Daniel Coats.

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 74, S. 953, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to extend the reduced interest rate for undergraduate Federal Direct Stafford Loans, to modify required distribution rules for pensions plans, to limit earnings stripping by expatriated entities, to provide for modifications related to the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund, and for other purposes.

Harry Reid, Jack Reed, Tom Harkin, Richard J. Durbin, Patty Murray, Benjamin L. Cardin, Al Franken, Amy Klobuchar, Jeff Merkley, Jon Tester, Sherrod Brown, Barbara A. Mikulski, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Elizabeth Warren, Charles E. Schumer, Sheldon Whitehouse, Barbara Boxer.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 10 a.m. on Thursday, June 6, the Senate proceed to vote on the motion to invoke cloture on S. 954; that upon the conclusion of that vote and notwithstanding cloture having been invoked, if invoked, the Senate then proceed to vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 76, S. 1003; that upon the conclusion of the vote and notwithstanding cloture having been invoked, if invoked, the Senate proceed to vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 74, S. 953; that upon the conclusion of the vote and notwithstanding cloture having been invoked, if invoked, the Senate resume consideration of S. 954, postcloture, if cloture was invoked on the bill; that upon disposition of S. 954, if cloture had been invoked on one of the motions to proceed, the Senate then resume that motion to proceed postcloture; further, if cloture was invoked on both motions to proceed, the Senate consider the motions, postcloture, in the order in which cloture was invoked; finally, if the motion to proceed to S. 1003 is agreed to, and notwithstanding cloture having been invoked on the other motion to proceed to S. 953, the Senate resume the following motion to proceed, postcloture, upon disposition of S. 1003.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

TRIBUTE TO KRYS BART

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the leadership of Krys Bart, the president and CEO of the Reno-Tahoe Airport Authority. Krys has worked at the airport authority for 14 years and transformed the airport into a modern facility that welcomes visitors from across the United States and the world to Northern Nevada.

Krys arrived in Northern Nevada in 1998 at a turning point for the airport.

Decisions by the previous management team had negatively impacted employee morale and hurt the airport authority's reputation in the community. With her steady leadership, Krys focused on achievable goals to deliver results for airport passengers and improve the airport authority's reputation. Krys helped direct more than $500 million in infrastructure upgrades at the airport, including upgrading runways, taxiways, safety systems, and noise mitigation programs. I worked with Krys to secure more than $250 million in Federal funding for Reno-Tahoe, including a new $27 million air traffic control tower. These infrastructure upgrades not only created jobs in Northern Nevada, but they also improved the passenger experience for flyers. In fact, the Reno-Tahoe Airport was recognized as one of the top five most efficient airports in North America three times under Krys' leadership.

Krys' reputation as an innovative Nevada leader has been recognized on a national scale by major industry groups and associations. She was selected by her peers to serve as the chair of the board of the American Association of Airport Executives, the largest airport association in the world. Krys is a frequent lecturer at international aviation conferences, sharing the best management practices from her time as an airport executive. In 2011, Krys received the Distinguished Service Award from the American Association of Airport Executives. In 2008, she was chair of the American Association of Airport Executives, and the Airport Revenue News named her the 2006 Airport Manager of the Year. These are just a few of the many awards and accomplishments that have followed Krys throughout her career, and it is a testament to the respect she has earned as one of the Nation's great airport managers.

Later this year, Krys will step down as the president of the Reno-Tahoe Airport Authority after a long and distinguished career in the aviation industry. While Krys' departure is a loss for the greater Reno community, her work to improve the airport and the greater community will benefit Nevadans for decades to come. I am pleased to recognize Krys' accomplishments before the Senate today and I wish her all the best in her retirement.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I was absent for the vote on an amendment to S. 954 on Monday, June 3, 2013. Had I been present, I would have voted in favor of amendment No. 987. Alfalfa growers face unique risk management challenges and the amendment would require the U.S. Department of Agriculture to develop improved crop insurance policies for this crop.

I have been closely monitoring reports of widespread loss of alfalfa in Minnesota this spring. Following last year's drought, this loss of alfalfa is particularly troubling for cattle and dairy producers. I am working closely with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Minnesota farmers to remove barriers for planting forages and also to expand opportunities for grazing livestock on conservation program acres. I will continue to push for immediate relief for Minnesota agriculture producers.

TRIBUTE TO CAPTAIN JAMES T. LOEBLEIN

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, today I honor a superb leader, liaison, and warrior. After more than 3 years of service as Director of the Navy Senate Liaison Office, CAPT James T. Loeblein is very deservedly moving on and moving up to assume the responsibilities of a rear admiral, lower half. On this occasion, I believe it is fitting to recognize Captain Loeblein's distinguished service and dedication to fostering the relationship between the U.S. Navy and this Chamber.

The captain is a 1985 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy. In addition to serving as the executive officer of the USS John S. McCain DDG 56, he has held both command-at-sea and major command. Captain Loeblein has also served as executive assistant to commander, U.S. Third Fleet, and as chief of staff and Maritime Operations Center (MOC) director, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command/U.S. Fifth Fleet in Manama, Bahrain. Captain Loeblein reported as director, Navy Senate Liaison, in May 2010.

Over the course of the last 3 years, Captain Loeblein has led 37 congressional delegations to 47 different countries. He has escorted 44 Members of Congress, 48 personal and professional staff members, and I have had the pleasure of traveling with Captain Loeblein on many of these trips. He has distinguished himself by going above and beyond the call of duty to facilitate and successfully execute each and every trip, despite any number of weather, aircraft, and diplomatic complications.

This Chamber will feel Captain Loeblein's absence. I join many past and present Members of Congress in my gratitude and appreciation to Captain Loeblein for his outstanding leadership and his unwavering support of the missions of the U.S. Navy, the Senate Armed Services Committee, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, and others. I wish him and his wife CAPT Carol Loeblein ''fair winds and following seas.''

OBSERVING PRIDE MONTH

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, when Governor Christine Gregoire signed the Washington State marriage equality bill into law last year, it was a day of joy for all of the loving, committed LGBT couples of Washington—and for all who love, respect, and support them. And when voters approved the law in a referendum last November, we showed the Nation once again that we can change the course of history and give true voice and meaning to the idea that all are created equal. This law takes us one important step closer towards true equality for LGBT families across Washington State. It is proof of the incredible power a community can have when we come together to fight for equality. Washington is now 1 of 12 States to have affirmed the right for LGBT couples to marry—an amazing sign of progress in our Nation.

I am proud to work with my colleagues in the Senate to achieve equal rights for LGBT Americans in Washington State and across the country. Earlier this year, I joined 172 Members of the House of Representatives and 39 Senators in filing an amicus brief to the U.S. Supreme Court in United States v. Windsor, arguing the Defense of Marriage Act is unconstitutional and should be struck down. And, as a senior member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, I led a letter to Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki calling for an expedited waiver process to grant every same-sex spouse of a veteran burial rights in our national cemeteries.

There is much to celebrate today, but still so much more to be done to ensure equal rights for LGBT Americans. As we look back upon our recent victories, we must also recommit to our efforts and harness the energy we used to achieve marriage equality last year to continue this fight. From our immigration and employment laws to our policies for veterans and military families, there is still plenty of work to be done to ensure all Americans, including members of our LGBT community, are treated equally.

Equal protection under the law is a fundamental right in our country. No one should suffer discrimination because of their race, religion, national origin, age, sex, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity. Whether applying for a job, finding a home, eating in a restaurant, seeking credit, serving in our military, or attending school, we must ensure all citizens are treated fairly and equally. To me, the fight for equality for the LGBT community is a fight for what it means to be American. That is why Pride Month is so important.

Each June, Pride Month brings our community together to honor diversity, equality, and love. And this year, we can celebrate some truly historic gains as LGBT couples are finally able to express their commitment to each other in the same way so many other Washingtonians have throughout our State's history—by joining in marriage and saying ''I do.''

Pride Month is a time to commemorate our accomplishments and recharge for the fight ahead. We have many more opportunities to advance our efforts in the coming months and years, and we will not give up until we have

achieved full equality under the law for all Washingtonians and all Americans. I wish to thank the countless organizations that have led us to the victories and accomplishments we celebrate in June. When we gather together in moments such as this, we speak with one unified voice for the cause of equality and give true meaning to our Founders' belief that all are created equal. I am proud to fight for the LGBT community in Washington and across the country, and I will continue to ensure the voices of LGBT Americans and their allies are heard in the United States Senate.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING COLORADO EXPORTERS

• Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, today I wish to congratulate four outstanding businesses that have won the President's ''E'' Award for their role in advancing Colorado's export industry. The ''E'' Award was created by President John F. Kennedy in 1961 to recognize companies that have made significant contributions to increasing American exports. It is one of the highest honors an export company can receive.

Many of these companies are small- and medium-sized firms—the lifeblood of our economy—and we can proudly say that of the 57 businesses honored, 4 were from our home State of Colorado: Frederick Exports, World Trade Center Denver, Geotech Environmental Equipment, and Lightning Eliminators. These innovative companies are strengthening our State's economy, creating jobs, and paving the way for other businesses in the State interested in exporting their products and services overseas.

In 2012, American exports hit an all-time record high of $2.2 trillion and Colorado exports increased by more than 10 percent growing to $8.1 billion. These businesses are a perfect example of how companies across the State can take advantage of this trend by tapping the growing international market. These achievements not only benefit these individual businesses, but they increase economic development for our State.

The World Trade Center Denver and Frederick Export, both based in Denver, were honored for assisting and facilitating export activities. The World Trade Center Denver educates businesses throughout the Rocky Mountain region about international trade and connects these businesses to the more than 300 World Trade Centers located in 100 countries. With over 250 members locally, the World Trade Center Denver has helped countless local businesses expand their markets and build strategic partnerships.

Frederick Export is an export management company that has successfully helped more businesses in Colorado export their products and services abroad and grow their customer base. Companies represented by Frederick Export have seen growth of 20 percent or more each year.

Denver-based Geotech Environmental Equipment and Boulder-based Lightening Eliminators were recognized for showing sustained export growth. Lightning Eliminators, a leading supplier of lightning protection and prevention products and services, has grown its exports by nearly 200 percent over the past 4 years. Lightning Eliminators exports its innovative, patented lightning protection technology to such faraway places as Bangladesh, Nigeria, and Taiwan.

Geotech Environment Equipment provides quality environmental equipment to more than 20,000 companies worldwide and employs almost 100 people. Its exports have grown 40 percent over the past 4 years.

The pioneering spirit and innovative nature of Coloradans like these are spurring new job growth, driving our economy, and moving our State forward. I join the White House in honoring the contributions these companies have made to both Colorado and the country. I look forward to seeing their future progress and thank them for the vital part they have played in helping our State thrive.•

RECOGNIZING EXCEPTIONAL NEVADA STUDENTS

• Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize three of Nevada's brightest students—Caolinn Mejza, Sharon Fang, and Justin Joseph—for earning the prestigious title of Presidential Scholar from the U.S. Department of Education. Presidential scholars are chosen for outstanding test scores, essays, grades, and community service commitments.

The White House Commission on Presidential Scholars named only 141 scholars throughout the United States this year. Caolinn Mejza, who attends the Las Vegas Academy of International Studies, Performing & Visual Arts, Sharon Fang of Clark High School, and Justin Joseph of Valley High School will represent Nevada as our State's winners. Each Presidential scholar will receive a medallion at a ceremony on June 16 in Washington, DC.

While honoring these students' academic achievements, it is also important to recognize the value and importance of education in our State. We must continue to support teachers and to improve our education system for students at all stages. I am dedicated to increasing the quality of education and ensuring that every student graduates prepared to enter college or the workforce.

On behalf of the residents of the Silver State, I am proud to recognize Caolinn, Sharon, and Justin for their accomplishments and their contributions to our State. They are undoubtedly some of the finest and most talented students in Nevada. Today, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating these exceptional young Nevadans.•

CONGRATULATING CEASAR SALICCHI

• Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today I wish to congratulate Ceasar Salicchi for being named a Distinguished Nevadan by the Nevada System of Higher Education Board of Regents during the commencement ceremony at the University of Nevada, Reno, UNR. Mr. Salicchi is a military veteran and advocate for people with disabilities. He is truly deserving of this prestigious honor, which is awarded to current and former Nevadans who have made significant contributions to the cultural, economic, and scientific or social advancement of Nevada and its people.

Mr. Salicchi served in the U.S. Army from 1946 to 1947. After he contracted polio at the age of 25 in 1952, he became an advocate for others with disabilities. He is a founding member of the Elko Association for Retarded Children, established in 1969, and served as the office manager for Elko General Hospital from 1962 to 1970. Mr. Salicchi went on to serve four different Nevada Governors as a committee member for the Developmental Disabilities Act as well as the Employ the Handicapped Act. His lifetime dedication to serving those with disabilities is inspiring.

Not only is Mr. Salicchi a strong advocate and proponent for those with disabilities, but he is also a dedicated public servant. He has served the people and community of Elko County with dignity and honor as the county treasurer from 1971 to 2006.

Today, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Ceasar Salicchi for his accomplishments and contributions to Nevada. I hope Mr. Salicchi's example of public service and advocacy will be an example to all of us of the power that one individual can have on the positive progression of the Silver State and its people. He is a truly a distinguished Nevadan and has earned our admiration and gratitude.•

TRIBUTE TO ARTHUR H. WILSON

• Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I rise to ask that this body pay high tribute to an outstanding leader and trusted advocate for our nation's injured and ill veterans, their families, and survivors. I am referring to Arthur H. Wilson, the chief executive officer and national adjutant of the Disabled American Veterans. Mr. Wilson, after dedicating 47 years of service to our nation's veterans, is retiring as leader of that august group of 1.2 million veterans. His steadfast devotion and dedication in leading DAV has made the organization the Nation's premier veterans service organization offering assistance, compassion, and support to our injured heroes.

DAV is a service organization representing the brave men and women

who have suffered and survived wartime military service. Founded in 1920 by those wounded in World War I, DAV has been a devoted advocate for 92 years on behalf of those who have sacrificed for our freedom.

Mr. Wilson served with distinction in the U.S. Air Force as a runway construction specialist from 1962 to 1966, including service in Southeast Asia. He joined DAV as a national service officer trainee in Atlanta following his honorable discharge in 1966. He was subsequently assigned as a national service officer in Buffalo, NY, and Philadelphia, PA, and later held supervisory positions in DAV's national appeals office at the Department of Veterans Affairs' Board of Veterans Appeals in Washington, DC, in 1974.

In 1976, Mr. Wilson was promoted to management duties at DAV's National Service and Legislative Headquarters in Washington, DC, serving for 12 years as national service director before being appointed Executive Director of the Washington headquarters in 1993.

For the past 19 years, Mr. Wilson has served as national adjutant and chief executive Officer of DAV.

He is retiring from his distinguished career as only the sixth national adjutant in the history of the organization. He also serves as president of the Disabled Veterans' LIFE Memorial Foundation working to build the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial in Washington, DC, and is a member of the board of trustees of the USS Intrepid Museum Foundation.

I ask my colleagues to join me in extending our nation's thanks to Arthur Wilson for his dedication and commitment to our nation's veterans and his leadership of DAV. His devotion to America's wartime heroes serves as a brilliant example to all citizens of our nation.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Pate, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 12:25 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 126. An act to direct the Secretary of the Interior to enter into an agreement to provide for management of the free-roaming wild horses in and around the Currituck National Wildlife Refuge.

H.R. 885. An act to expand the boundary of the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1206. An act to grant the Secretary of the Interior permanent authority to authorize States to issue electronic duck stamps, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1919. An act to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act with respect to the pharmaceutical distribution supply chain, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the House has passed the following bill, without amendment:

S. 622. An act to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to reauthorize user fee programs relating to new animal drugs and generic new animal drugs.

The message further announced that the House has agreed to the following resolution:

H. Res. 242. Resolution relative to the death of the Honorable Frank R. Lautenberg, a Senator from the State of New Jersey.

MEASURES REFERRED

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

H.R. 885. An act to expand the boundary of San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 1206. An act to grant the Secretary of the Interior permanent authority to authorize States to issue electronic duck stamps, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

H.R. 1919. An act to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act with respect to the pharmaceutical distribution supply chain, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

MEASURES DISCHARGED

The following bill was discharged from the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, and referred as indicated:

S. 993; A bill to authorize and request the President to award the Medal of Honor to James Megellas, formerly of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, and currently of Colleyville, Texas, for acts of valor on January 28, 1945, during the Battle of the Bulge in World War II; to the Committee on Armed Services.

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–1732. A communication from the Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''United States Standards for Grades of Almonds in the Shell'' (Docket No. AMS–FV–11–0046) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 28, 2013; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1733. A communication from the Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Pork Promotion, Research, and Consumer Information Program; Section 610 Review'' (Docket No. AMS–LS–07–0143) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 28, 2013; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1734. A communication from the Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Lamb Promotion, Research, and Information Order; Amendment to the Order to Raise the Assessment Rate'' (Docket No. AMS–LS–11–0038) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 28, 2013; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1735. A communication from the Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Mandatory Country of Origin Labeling of Beef, Pork, Lamb, Chicken, Goat Meat, Wild and Farm-Raised Fish and Shellfish, Perishable Agricultural Commodities, Peanuts, Pecans, Ginseng, and Macadamia Nuts'' (Docket No. AMS–LS–13–0004) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 28, 2013; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1736. A communication from the Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Revision of Regulations Defining Bona Fide Cotton Spot Markets'' (Docket No. AMS–CN–12–0024) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 28, 2013; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1737. A communication from the Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Milk in the Northeast and Other Marketing Areas; Order Amending the Orders'' (Docket No. AMS–DA–07–0026; AO–14–A77) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 28, 2013; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1738. A communication from the Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Milk in the Northeast and Other Marketing Areas; Termination of Proceeding on Proposed Amendments to Tentative Marketing Agreements and Orders'' (Docket No. AMS–DA–13–0016; AO–14–A74) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 28, 2013; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1739. A communication from the Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Cranberries Grown in States of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Jersey, Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota, Oregon, Washington, and Long Island in the State of New York; Changing Reporting Requirements'' (Docket No. AMS–FV–12–0002; FV12–929–1 FIR) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 28, 2013; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1740. A communication from the Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Oranges and Grapefruit Grown in

Lower Rio Grande Valley in Texas; Increased Assessment Rate'' (Docket No. AMS–FV–12–0038; FV12–906–1 FR) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 28, 2013; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1741. A communication from the Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Pears Grown in Oregon and Washington; Committee Membership Reapportionment for Processed Pears'' (Docket No. AMS–FV–12–0032; FV12–927–3 FR) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 28, 2013; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1742. A communication from the Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Pears Grown in Oregon and Washington; Modification of the Assessment Rate for Fresh Pears'' (Docket No. AMS–FV–12–0030; FV12–927–1 FR) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 28, 2013; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1743. A communication from the Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Onions Grown in South Texas; Increased Assessment Rate'' (Docket No. AMS–FV–12–0039; FV12–959–1 FR) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 28, 2013; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1744. A communication from the Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Irish Potatoes Grown in Colorado; Modification of the Handling Regulation for Area No. 2'' (Docket No. AMS–FV–12–0043; FV12–948–1 FIR) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 28, 2013; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1745. A communication from the Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Irish Potatoes Grown in Washington; Decreased Assessment Rate'' (Docket No. AMS–FV–13–0010; FV13–946–1 IR) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 28, 2013; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1746. A communication from the Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Domestic Dates Produced or Packed in Riverside County, California; Decreased Assessment Rate'' (Docket No. AMS–FV–12–0035; FV12–987–1 FIR) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 28, 2013; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1747. A communication from the Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Olives Grown in California; Decreased Assessment Rate'' (Docket No. AMS–FV–12–0076; FV13–932–1 IR) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 28, 2013; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1748. A communication from the Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Oranges, Grapefruit, Tangerines, and Tangelos Grown in Florida; Redistricting and Reapportionment of Grower Members, and Changing the Qualifications for Grower Membership on the Citrus Administrative Committee'' (Docket No. AMS–FV–11–0076; FV11–905–1 FR) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 28, 2013; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1749. A communication from the Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Pears Grown in Oregon and Washington; Assessment Rate Decrease for Processed Pears'' (Docket No. AMS–FV–12–0031; FV12–927–2 FIR) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 28, 2013; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1750. A communication from the Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Apricots Grown in Designated Counties in Washington; Temporary Suspension of Handling Regulations'' (Docket No. AMS–FV–12–0028; FV12–922–2 FIR) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 28, 2013; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1751. A communication from the Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Marketing Order Regulating the Handling of Spearmint Oil Produced in the Far West; Revision of the Salable Quantity and Allotment Percentage for Class 1 (Scotch) and Class 3 (Native) Spearmint Oil for the 2012–2013 Marketing Year'' (Docket No. AMS–FV–11–0088; FV12–985–1A FIR) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 28, 2013; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1752. A communication from the Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Vidalia Onions Grown in Georgia; Change in Reporting and Assessment Requirements'' (Docket No. AMS–FV–12–0071; FV13–955–1 IR) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 28, 2013; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1753. A communication from the Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Irish Potatoes Grown in Colorado; Reestablishment of Membership on the Colorado Potato Administrative Committee, Area No. 2'' (Docket No. AMS–FV–12–0044; FV12–948–2 FR) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 28, 2013; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1754. A communication from the Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Oranges, Grapefruit, Tangerines, and Tangelos Grown in Florida; Relaxing Size and Grade Requirements on Valencia and Other Late Type Oranges'' (Docket No. AMS–FV–13–0009; FV13–905–2 IR) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 28, 2013; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1755. A communication from the Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Sweet Cherries Grown in Designated Counties in Washington; Decreased Assessment Rate'' (Docket No. AMS–FV–12–0026; FV12–923–1 FIR) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 28, 2013; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1756. A communication from the Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Tomatoes Grown in Florida; Decreased Assessment Rate'' (Docket No. AMS–FV–12–0051; FV12–966–1 FIR) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 28, 2013; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1757. A communication from the Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Oranges, Grapefruit, Tangerines, and Tangelos Grown in Florida; Increased Assessment Rate'' (Docket No. AMS–FV–12–0045; FV12–905–1 FR) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 28, 2013; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1758. A communication from the Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Apricots Grown in Designated Counties in Washington; Decreased Assessment Rate'' (Docket No. AMS–FV–12–0027; FV12–922–1 FIR) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 28, 2013; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1759. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Azoxystrobin; Pesticide Tolerance; Technical Correction'' (FRL No. 9387–4) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 29, 2013; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1760. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Guarhydroxypropyltrimethylammonium chloride; Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance'' (FRL No. 9387–2) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 29, 2013; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1761. A communication from the Secretary of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Core Principles and Other Requirements for Swap Execution Facilities'' (RIN3038–AD18) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 30, 2013; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1762. A communication from the Secretary of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Procedures to Establish Appropriate Minimum Block Sizes for Large Notional Off-Facility Swaps and Block Trades'' (RIN3038–AD08) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office

of the President of the Senate on May 30, 2013; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1763. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition, Technology and Logistics), transmitting, pursuant to law, Selected Acquisition Reports (SARs) for the quarter ending December 31, 2012 (DCN OSS 2013–0764); to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–1764. A communication from the Acting Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), transmitting the report of two (2) officers authorized to wear the insignia of the grade of major general and brigadier general, respectively, in accordance with title 10, United States Code, section 777; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–1765. A communication from the Acting Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), transmitting a report on the approved retirement of Vice Admiral Joseph D. Kernan, United States Navy, and his advancement to the grade of vice admiral on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–1766. A communication from the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Legislative Affairs), transmitting legislative proposals and accompanying reports relative to the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–1767. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to blocking property of the Government of the Russian Federation relating to the disposition of highly enriched uranium extracted from nuclear weapons that was declared in Executive Order 13617 of June 25, 2012; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–1768. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to North Korea that was declared in Executive Order 13466 of June 26, 2008; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–1769. A communication from the Chairman of the Board of Governors, Federal Reserve System, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Report to the Congress on the Profitability of Credit Card Operations of Depository Institutions''; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–1770. A communication from the Attorney, Legal Division, Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendments to the 2013 Escrows Final Rule under the Truth in Lending Act (Regulation Z)'' ((RIN3170–AA37) (Docket No. CFPB–2013–0009)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 29, 2013; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–1771. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans and Designation of Areas for Air Quality Planning Purposes; State of California; Redesignation of San Diego County to Attainment for the 1997 8-Hour Ozone Standard'' (FRL No. 9818–1) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 29, 2013; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–1772. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Oklahoma: Final Authorization of State Hazardous Waste Management Program Revision'' (FRL No. 9817–6) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 29, 2013; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–1773. A communication from the Chief of the Trade and Commercial Regulations Branch, Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''United States - Korea Free Trade Agreement'' (RIN1515–AD86) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 28, 2013; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–1774. A communication from the Acting Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, an addendum to a certification, transmittal number: DDTC 13–090, of the proposed sale or export of defense articles and/or defense services to a Middle East country regarding any possible affects such a sale might have relating to Israel's Qualitative Military Edge over military threats to Israel; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–1775. A joint communication from the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joints Chiefs of Staff, transmitting a request relative to distinguished visitor trips to Afghanistan for the period of June 1 through October 1, 2013; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–1776. A communication from the Acting Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act (DDTC 13–064); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–1777. A communication from the Acting Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act (DDTC 13–026); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–1778. A communication from the Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to the Case-Zablocki Act, 1 U.S.C. 112b, as amended, the report of the texts and background statements of international agreements, other than treaties (List 2013–0084 - 2013–0098); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–1779. A communication from the President and CEO of the African Development Foundation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Foundation's Congressional Budget Justification for fiscal year 2014; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–1780. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Department of Education, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Final Priority; Technical Assistance to Improve State Data Capacity—National Technical Assistance Center to Improve State Capacity to Accurately Collect and Report IDEA Data'' (CFDA No. 84.373Y) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 29, 2013; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–1781. A communication from the Acting Chief Policy Officer, Legislative and Regulatory Department, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Benefits Payable in Terminated Single-Employer Plans; Interest Assumptions for Valuing and Paying Benefits'' (29 CFR Part 4022) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 23, 2013; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–1782. A communication from the White House Liaison, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of General Counsel, Department of Health and Human Services, received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 29, 2013; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

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 Mrs. HAGAN (for herself, Mrs. MURRAY, and Ms. BALDWIN):

S. 1087. A bill to award grants to encourage State educational agencies, local educational agencies, and schools to utilize technology to improve student achievement and college and career readiness, the skills of teachers and school leaders, and the efficiency and productivity of education systems at all levels; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. FRANKEN (for himself, Mrs. MURRAY, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. CASEY, Mr. LEAHY, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. BEGICH, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. BENNET, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. HARKIN, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. BROWN, Mr. COWAN, Ms. WARREN, Mrs. HAGAN, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. COONS, Mr. MURPHY, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. REED, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. CARDIN, and Mr. MERKLEY):

S. 1088. A bill to end discrimination based on actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity in public schools, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. MANCHIN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, and Mr. BOOZMAN):

S. 1089. A bill to provide for a prescription drug take-back program for members of the Armed Forces and veterans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. RUBIO:

S. 1090. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to consolidate the current education tax incentives into one credit against income tax for higher education expenses, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. MIKULSKI:

S. 1091. A bill to provide for the issuance of an Alzheimer's Disease Research Semipostal Stamp; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself, Mrs. MCCASKILL, and Mr. SCHATZ):

S. 1092. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to require an Inspector General investigation of allegations of retaliatory personnel actions taken in response to making protected communications regarding sexual assault; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. COCHRAN:

S. 1093. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 130 Caldwell Drive in Hazlehurst, Mississippi, as the ''First Lieutenant Alvin Chester Cockrell, Jr. Post Office Building''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. HARKIN (for himself, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. SANDERS,

Mr. CASEY, Mrs. HAGAN, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. BENNET, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. MURPHY, and Ms. WARREN):

S. 1094. A bill to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. UDALL of New Mexico (for himself and Mr. HEINRICH):

S. 1095. A bill to amend the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in order to limit the penalties to a State that does not meet its maintenance of effort level of funding to a one-time penalty; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. BAUCUS (for himself, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, and Ms. COLLINS):

S. 1096. A bill to establish an Office of Rural Education Policy in the Department of Education; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. PAUL:

S. Res. 159. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate condemning the targeting of Tea Party groups by the Internal Revenue Service and calling for an investigation; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. REID:

S. Res. 160. A resolution relative to the memorial observances of the Honorable Frank R. Lautenberg, late a Senator from the State of New Jersey; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. REID, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. ALEXANDER, Ms. AYOTTE, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BAUCUS, Mr. BEGICH, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. BROWN, Mr. BURR, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. CARPER, Mr. CASEY, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. COATS, Mr. COBURN, Mr. COCHRAN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. COONS, Mr. CORKER, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. COWAN, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. DONNELLY, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. ENZI, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. FRANKEN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mrs. HAGAN, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. HATCH, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. HELLER, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. JOHANNS, Mr. JOHNSON of Wisconsin, Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota, Mr. KAINE, Mr. KING, Mr. KIRK, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. LEE, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. MCCAIN, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. MORAN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. MURPHY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. NELSON, Mr. PAUL, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. PRYOR, Mr. REED, Mr. RISCH, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. SESSIONS, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. SHELBY, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. TESTER, Mr. THUNE, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, Mr. VITTER, Mr. WARNER, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. WICKER, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. Res. 161. A resolution relative to the death of the Honorable Frank R. Lautenberg, Senator from the State of New Jersey; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself, Mr. CHAMBLISS, and Mr. MURPHY):

S. Res. 162. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate with respect to childhood stroke and recognizing May 2013 as ''National Pediatric Stroke Awareness Month''; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. REID:

S. Con. Res. 18. A concurrent resolution providing for the use of the catafalque situated in the Exhibition Hall of the Capitol Visitor Center in connection with memorial services to be conducted in the United States Senate Chamber for the Honorable Frank R. Lautenberg, late a Senator from the State of New Jersey; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 104

At the request of Mr. VITTER, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 104, a bill to provide for congressional approval of national monuments and restricts on the use of national monuments.

S. 267

At the request of Mr. ROCKEFELLER, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 267, a bill to prevent, deter, and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing through port State measures.

S. 269

At the request of Mr. ROCKEFELLER, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 269, a bill to establish uniform administrative and enforcement authorities for the enforcement of the High Seas Driftnet Fishing Moratorium Protection Act and similar statutes, and for other purposes.

S. 316

At the request of Mr. SANDERS, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU) was added as a cosponsor of S. 316, a bill to recalculate and restore retirement annuity obligations of the United States Postal Service, to eliminate the requirement that the United States Postal Service prefund the Postal Service Retiree Health Benefits Fund, to place restrictions on the closure of postal facilities, to create incentives for innovation for the United States Postal Service, to maintain levels of postal service, and for other purposes.

S. 360

At the request of Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. BAUCUS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 360, a bill to amend the Public Lands Corps Act of 1993 to expand the authorization of the Secretaries of Agriculture, Commerce, and the Interior to provide service opportunities for young Americans; help restore the nation's natural, cultural, historic, archaeological, recreational and scenic resources; train a new generation of public land managers and enthusiasts; and promote the value of public service.

S. 381

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 381, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the World War II members of the ''Doolittle Tokyo Raiders'', for outstanding heroism, valor, skill, and service to the United States in conducting the bombings of Tokyo.

S. 397

At the request of Mr. NELSON, the names of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) were added as cosponsors of S. 397, a bill to posthumously award a Congressional Gold Medal to Lena Horne in recognition of her achievements and contributions to American culture and the civil rights movement.

S. 403

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the names of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN), the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 403, a bill to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to address and take action to prevent bullying and harassment of students.

S. 462

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the names of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) and the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) were added as cosponsors of S. 462, a bill to enhance the strategic partnership between the United States and Israel.

S. 500

At the request of Mr. SANDERS, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 500, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to apply payroll taxes to remuneration and earnings from self-employment up to the contribution and benefit base and to remuneration in excess of $250,000.

S. 557

At the request of Mrs. HAGAN, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. BEGICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 557, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to improve access to medication therapy management under part D of the Medicare program.

S. 596

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 596, a bill to establish pilot projects under the Medicare program to provide incentives for home health agencies to furnish remote patient monitoring services that reduce expenditures under such program.

S. 650

At the request of Ms. LANDRIEU, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 650, a bill to amend title XXVII of the Public Health Service Act to preserve consumer and employer access to licensed independent insurance producers.

S. 669

At the request of Mr. PRYOR, the name of the Senator from Wyoming

(Mr. ENZI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 669, a bill to make permanent the Internal Revenue Service Free File program.

S. 699

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 699, a bill to reallocate Federal judgeships for the courts of appeals, and for other purposes.

S. 728

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 728, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the exclusion from gross income for employer-provided health coverage for employees' spouses and dependent children to coverage provided to other eligible designated beneficiaries of employees.

S. 783

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 783, a bill to amend the Helium Act to improve helium stewardship, and for other purposes.

S. 789

At the request of Mr. BAUCUS, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 789, a bill to grant the Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the First Special Service Force, in recognition of its superior service during World War II.

S. 820

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 820, a bill to provide for a uniform national standard for the housing and treatment of egg-laying hens, and for other purposes.

S. 842

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the names of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) and the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. ROCKEFELLER) were added as cosponsors of S. 842, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for an extension of the Medicare-dependent hospital (MDH) program and the increased payments under the Medicare low-volume hospital program.

S. 871

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the names of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 871, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to enhance assistance for victims of sexual assault committed by members of the Armed Forces, and for other purposes.

S. 888

At the request of Mr. JOHANNS, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. BAUCUS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 888, a bill to provide end user exemptions from certain provisions of the Commodity Exchange Act and the Securities Exchange Act of 1934.

S. 896

At the request of Mr. BEGICH, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 896, a bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to repeal the Government pension offset and windfall elimination provisions.

S. 918

At the request of Mr. COONS, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 918, a bill to award grants in order to establish longitudinal personal college readiness and savings online platforms for low-income students.

S. 953

At the request of Mr. REED, the names of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) and the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI) were added as cosponsors of S. 953, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to extend the reduced interest rate for undergraduate Federal Direct Stafford Loans, to modify required distribution rules for pension plans, to limit earnings stripping by expatriated entities, to provide for modifications related to the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund, and for other purposes.

S. 967

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the names of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 967, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to modify various authorities relating to procedures for courts-martial under the Uniform Code of Military Justice, and for other purposes.

S. 971

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the names of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN), the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING), the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) and the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) were added as cosponsors of S. 971, a bill to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to exempt the conduct of silvicultural activities from national pollutant discharge elimination system permitting requirements.

S. 988

At the request of Mr. LEE, the names of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) and the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT) were added as cosponsors of S. 988, a bill to provide for an accounting of total United States contributions to the United Nations.

S. 1007

At the request of Mr. KING, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1007, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to include biomass heating appliances for tax credits available for energy-efficient building property and energy property.

S. 1009

At the request of Mr. VITTER, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. PRYOR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1009, a bill to reauthorize and modernize the Toxic Substances Control Act, and for other purposes.

S. 1012

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1012, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to improve operations of recovery auditors under the Medicare integrity program, to increase transparency and accuracy in audits conducted by contractors, and for other purposes.

S. 1035

At the request of Mr. KING, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1035, a bill to require an independent alternative analysis of the consideration of the use of targeted lethal force against a particular, known United States person knowingly engaged in acts of international terrorism against the United States and for other purposes.

S. 1038

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1038, a bill to eliminate racial profiling by law enforcement, and for other purposes.

S.J. RES. 15

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 15, a joint resolution removing the deadline for the ratification of the equal rights amendment.

S. RES. 154

At the request of Mr. HOEVEN, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 154, a resolution supporting political reform in Iran and for other purposes.

S. RES. 157

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. HARKIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 157, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that telephone service must be improved in rural areas of the United States and that no entity may unreasonably discriminate against telephone users in those areas.

AMENDMENT NO. 1118

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the names of the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI) and the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 1118 intended to be proposed to S. 954, an original bill to reauthorize agricultural programs through 2018.

AMENDMENT NO. 1151

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the names of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET), the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. JOHANNS) and the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 1151 intended to be proposed to S. 954, an original bill to reauthorize agricultural programs through 2018.

At the request of Mr. UDALL of Colorado, the name of the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 1151 intended to be proposed to S. 954, supra.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. MANCHIN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, and Mr. BOOZMAN):

S. 1089. A bill to provide for a prescription drug take-back program for members of the Armed Forces and veterans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the Servicemembers and Veterans Prescription Drug Safety Act of 2013, with my colleagues Senators BLUMENTHAL, BOXER, MANCHIN, MURKOWSKI, and BOOZMAN. This bill would require the Attorney General to establish drug take-back programs in coordination with both the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The number of reported suicide deaths in the U.S. military surged to a record 349 in 2012, which is more than the number of servicemembers who lost their lives in combat while serving our nation in Afghanistan during the same period of time. According to the Department of Veterans Affairs, the number of suicides among veterans has reached an astounding rate of 22 each day based on data collected from more than 21 states.

These losses are unacceptable. We are losing dozens of America's finest each month, squandering precious talent that our nation needs and depriving families of their loved ones. Today's soldiers are tomorrow's veterans; their mental health needs must be met now to avoid future suicides.

There is substantial evidence that prescription drug abuse is a major factor in military and veteran suicides. In its January 2012 report, Army 2020: Generating Health and Discipline in the Force, the Army found that 29 percent of suicides involved individuals with a known history of psychotropic medication use, including anti-depressants, anti-anxiety medicine, anti-psychotics, and other controlled substances such as opioids.

This report recommended the establishment of a military drug take-back program to help combat prescription drug abuse in the ranks. Given that more than 49,000 soldiers were issued three or more psychotropic or controlled substance prescriptions last year, and an estimated 3,500 soldiers illicitly used prescription drugs, it is past time we act on this recommendation and implement a military drug take-back program.

In Afghanistan, we have invested billions of dollars and devoted some of the military's best minds to protect our soldiers and give them the tools they need to reduce the threat of an improvised explosive devise attack. Unfortunately, we have not focused sufficient resources or creativity to suicide prevention. While I applaud the military's, and especially the Army's, and VA's efforts to address this threat seriously, we must do more.

At present, only the Drug Enforcement Administration, DEA, has the inherent authority to conduct a drug take-back program. Three years ago, the Congress passed the Secure and Responsible Drug Disposal Act of 2010, which provided the Attorney General the flexibility necessary to delegate similar authority to other agencies for the collection and disposal of controlled substances. Since that time, the Attorney General has not sufficiently exercised his existing authority to provide this much needed assistance to the Department of Defense and the VA. The DEA recently proposed new regulations to expand the options available to collect controlled substances for purposes of disposal. Unfortunately, the proposed regulations fall short because they fail to authorize the Department of Defense or the VA to collect controlled substances through appropriate mechanisms.

DEA has concerns that DOD and VA cannot maintain the same strict accountability of drugs to prevent the misuse, abuse, or sales in the black market. I am confident, however, that the DOD—the institution that has developed and implemented programs for the handling of nuclear weapons and classified information—and the VA are capable of conducting drug take-back programs with the utmost accountability and highest of standards.

Excluding the DOD and VA from conducting drug take-back programs is detrimental to efforts to reduce controlled substance abuse, decrease nonmedical use of prescription drugs, prevent diversion of controlled substances, and limit the possibility for accidental overdose and death for our servicemembers and veterans, or their family members. This legislation will provide the necessary authority to give both departments an effective drug-take back program that will help address the scourge of suicide.

The loss of even one servicemember or veteran to a potentially preventable suicide involving controlled substance abuse or misuse is unacceptable. I look forward to working with my colleagues to pass this important, life-saving legislation.

By Mr. HARKIN (for himself, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. CASEY, Mrs. HAGAN, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. BENNET, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. MURPHY, and Ms. WARREN):

S. 1094. A bill to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, throughout my career in public service I have been committed to ensuring that all children in this country receive a quality education. Today, I join my Democratic colleagues on the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, which I chair, in introducing a bill to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, ESEA, which has become better known in recent years as the No Child Left Behind Act, NCLB. In my view, our bill will appropriately redefine the Federal role in education in this country and will focus our collective efforts to improve the lives of our most vulnerable children.

I want to start with a few words about the Federal role in education, since ESEA, in large measure, determines that role. While it is certainly true that education is primarily a State and local function, the Federal Government also plays an important role, and a well-educated citizenry is clearly in the national interest. A cardinal Federal role is to ensure all Americans, regardless of race, gender, national origin, religion and disability have the same equal opportunity to a good education. Likewise, the Constitution expressly states that our national government was formed to ''promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty.'' The general welfare is greatly endangered when the populace is not adequately educated. And, education is critical to liberty.

ESEA was first passed in 1965 in order to provide aid to States and school districts to improve education for children from low-income families. And in 1975, Congress passed the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, later renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, to assist States and districts in educating children with disabilities. For more than 40 years, the Federal government has trained its focus on the mission that all children should have the chance to fulfill their full potential.

The No Child Left Behind Act represented a departure from previous reauthorizations of ESEA. Lawmakers felt compelled to be more prescriptive with States to ensure that they improved their low-performing schools and focused on closing pernicious student achievement gaps. NCLB defined ''adequate yearly progress'' for schools and districts; it required districts to put aside money to implement public school choice and tutoring in schools identified for improvement; it included a list of rigorous interventions for low-performing schools and an additional category of ''restructuring'' for the most chronically low-performing schools with even more severe consequences. NCLB reflected good intentions. However, as we have seen over the course of the past 12 years, those good intentions did not translate to good policy on-the-ground. Many States lowered expectations for students with the standards and assessments they developed. Many local

schools and teachers were branded failing when some of their students did not meet the rigid benchmarks the Federal Government had set—even though in many instances students had made substantial progress. Districts felt hamstrung by the requirement to spend money on reforms that simply did not meet the needs of many students.

The Secretary of Education has given schools a reprieve from these onerous requirements through a flexibility agreement that States have undertaken voluntarily. While this reflects a positive change for the time being, it is no substitute for a new law. The actions of the Secretary, while laudable, may only last as long as this administration. What will happen in 2016? Will the flexibility agreements stay in place or will States be forced to revert to the requirements of what will then be a 15-year-old law that reflects old thinking?

The bill I am introducing along with HELP Committee Democrats follows a different course than NCLB, and one similar to the flexibility agreements instituted by the U.S. Department of Education. We ask for a system of shared responsibility with States and school districts. I believe that we are entering an era in which the Federal Government can work in partnership with States to improve our Nation's schools, while continuing to provide a backstop to avoid returning to old ways. Our bill gets rid of AYP, but sets Federal parameters for State-and locally-designed accountability systems. These systems must: cover all students, including students with disabilities and English learners; continue to measure and report on the performance of all schools; expect sufficient progress for all schools and subgroups of students; and provide for local interventions in low-performing schools or schools with low-achieving student subgroups beyond the lowest performing 5 percent. States that have received a waiver from the Secretary in the past two years can continue to operate under the agreements they made. States without a waiver will develop accountability plans that set schools on a path to attain the same levels of student achievement as the top 10 percent of schools in their State. However, if States have a different accountability system in mind, they can develop one that is equally ambitious to the ones above, subject to approval by the Secretary of Education, an important safeguard on the quality and integrity of these systems.

Our bill sets the high bar of ensuring that students who graduate from high school are college- and career-ready. It narrows the Federal focus to turning around persistently low-achieving schools and our Nation's dropout factories—those schools that graduate less than 60 percent of their students—as well as schools with significant student achievement gaps.

Our bill also asks States to put greater emphasis on the learning of children in the early years because we know that so many of our children, particularly children from low-income families, have gaps in learning before they even enter the school door. I have often said that learning begins at birth and the preparation for learning begins before birth. For the first time in the law's history, it is a purpose of Title I to provide children access to high-quality early learning experiences so that they come to school ready to learn. Our bill also encourages States to begin providing full-day kindergarten if they do not do so already. It also asks States to have, or establish, early learning and development guidelines that describe what children should know and be able to do before they enter kindergarten so that States can address gaps in learning as early as possible.

Our bill also takes the significant step of closing the ''comparability loophole'' so that funds provided through Title I of ESEA will finally serve as additional dollars for our neediest students, and Title I schools will get their fair share of Federal resources. It also provides districts with more flexibility in how States and districts spend their Federal funds while ensuring that the resources designated to serve our most disadvantaged students get to those students. The bill creates a Professional Growth and Improvement System that requires the development of rigorous and fair teacher and principal evaluations, and provides these critical school staff with the support they need to continually improve teaching and learning. It also leverages opportunities for more children to access high quality early learning programs and adds new protections for some of our most vulnerable children—homeless students and students in foster care—so that they will be better served by schools.

Our bill strategically consolidates programs and focuses grant funds on a smaller number of programs to allow for greater flexibility, and supports districts in extending the school day and year, strengthening their literacy, science, math or technology programs, fostering safe and healthy students, and offering a more well-rounded curriculum that includes the arts and physical education. It invests in effective programs to train and support principals and teachers for high-need schools. And, it fosters innovation through new programs like Race to the Top, Investing in Innovation, and Promise Neighborhoods.

I believe this is a very good bill and I am proud of our efforts. We owe it to our kids and our nation to produce a law that provides States and districts with the certainty, support and resources they need to make meaningful strides in improving our educational system. To that end, I would note that historically, education policy in Congress has been done in a bipartisan fashion. I want to give appropriate credit to the Ranking Member of the HELP Committee, the distinguished senior Senator from Tennessee, Senator ALEXANDER. We worked in good faith for many months to attempt to forge an agreement on a path forward. However, in the end, there were certain fundamental issues on which we could not agree. That is why, along with other HELP Committee Democrats, I have decided to move forward with a Democratic bill. It is my strong hope that Senate Republicans will recognize the significant changes that we have made in this bill to address their concerns, and will work with us to reconcile remaining disagreements so that together we can pass a law that provides children with a greater chance at reaching their full potential. It is the duty and responsibility of members of Congress in both houses to replace the No Child Left Behind Act with a new and better law.

This bill represents significant change, and change is difficult. We must work to together to move from a culture of minimal compliance with Federal requirements to one of shared innovation, shared responsibility and success for all students. I look forward to working towards this new partnership and to the next chapter of an effective Federal role in promoting educational excellence and equity.

By Mr. BAUCUS (for himself, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, and Ms. COLLINS):

S. 1096. A bill to establish an Office of Rural Education Policy in the Department of Education; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, in 1865, Horace Greeley wrote in the New York Tribune, ''Go West, young man, and grow up with the country.''

For decades, Greeley's words captured the imagination of a country, and millions of families flocked to the West for a glimpse of the American dream. Rural America continues to thrive, and places like my home State of Montana offer an excellent place to raise a family. But there is a no question that rural and frontier America present unique circumstances that differ substantially from our more urban neighbors.

While rural education is becoming an increasingly large and important part of the U.S. public school system, the unique challenges and opportunities within rural communities are often misunderstood or overlooked. According to the Digest of Education Statistics reported annually by the National Center for Education Statistics, the number of students attending rural schools increased by over 11 percent, from 10.5 million in 2004 to nearly 11.7 million by 2008. Rural students now comprise almost one fourth of the Nation's public school enrollment. And nearly one-third of all schools in the nation are located in rural areas.

Yet despite the significant percentage enrolled in rural schools, the importance of rural education is often obscured by the fact that rural students

are—naturally—widely-dispersed, located in small, geographically isolated school districts. The size, diversity, and complexity of rural education support a greater policy focus on the unique challenges and solutions for rural education.

Montana is the fourth largest State by land mass, totaling over 147,000 square miles. More than half of Montana's 830 schools enroll less than 100 students. From Eureka to Ekalaka, from Scobey to Darby, these small schools dot the landscape, providing not only a learning environment but often a thriving community center.

Montana's rural communities are doing an excellent job educating our next generation. Overall, Montana graduation rates are higher than the national average. Montana students taking the National Assessment of Educational Progress, NAEP, in 2011 scored higher than the national average in both reading and math.

But despite the success of Montana's rural schools, they also face a unique set of challenges that their urban-centric peers may not even comprehend.

For example, rural schools report greater difficulties in recruiting and retaining qualified teachers, due to inability to offer competitive salaries, geographic isolation, and for some, severe weather. Rural districts often have fewer personnel. The district superintendent is often also the high school principal. He or she may also be the Title I coordinator, the math curriculum specialist, and sometimes also the bus driver. In isolated areas, schools face challenges in providing professional development and training for teachers and principals. Small rural districts are often located long distances from other districts, towns, and universities, drastically reducing opportunities to partner or collaborate. Additionally, the long distances students must travel between school and home make it more difficult to participate in traditional remedial services, mentoring, and after-school programs.

And while Horace Greeley encouraged us to ''Go West'', many of the Department of Education's recent initiatives have failed to do just that. In the first two rounds of the Race to the Top competitive grant, only one State west of the Mississippi received funding.

And in some cases, even good intentions have created adverse consequences. The first round of the Investing in Innovation, i3, competitive grant program provided ''competitive preference points'' for applicants serving at least one rural district, in an effort to encourage and support rural applicants. However, the Department's lack of guidance and independent scorers' lack of understanding of rural areas still left authentically rural programs at a clear disadvantage. The Rural School & Community Trust highlighted in its report Taking Advantage that this ''rural preference'' instead had the effect of inducing urban applicants to include minimal rural participation merely in order to gain the additional scoring points for primarily urban projects. While the Department has made strides to improve the competitive chances of rural applicants, funding under the I3 grant continues to be directed to more urban school districts.

I am joined today by my colleagues Senator ROCKEFELLER of West Virginia and Senator COLLINS of Maine in reintroducing the Office of Rural Education Policy Act. This bipartisan bill will establish the Office of Rural Education Policy, housed at the Department of Education's Office of Elementary & Secondary Education. This Office and its Director will be tasked with coordinating the activities related to rural education and advising the Secretary on issues important to rural schools and districts. The legislation requires the Department to consider the impact of proposed rules and regulations on rural education and to produce an annual report on the condition of rural education. The goal of this bill is to allow rural schools to focus their time and resources on students in the classroom rather than red tape in the bureaucracy.

The Office of Rural Education Policy will be tasked with establishing a clearinghouse for collecting and disseminating information related to the unique challenges of rural areas, as well as, the innovative efforts underway in rural schools to tackle these challenges.

We have received strong support from dozens of organizations, including: American Association of Community Colleges, American Association of School Administrators, Alliance for Excellent Education, Center for Rural Affairs, Coalition for Community Schools, Council for Opportunity in Education, Montana School Board Association, Montana State Superintendents Association, Montana Rural Education Association, National Association of Development Organizations, National Education Association, National Farmers Union, National School Board Association, Organizations Concerned about Rural Education, Rural School and Community Trust, and Save the Children. I want to thank all the supporters of the bill, and want to particularly thank the efforts of the Rural School and Community Trust for its steadfast commitment to this proposal.

I look forward to working with my colleagues here in the Senate to move this legislation, to ensure our rural students and schools across the country are given a fair shake.

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. 1096

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 ''Office of Rural Education Policy Act''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) The Secretary of Education has recognized that ''[r]ural schools have unique challenges and benefits'', but a recent report by the Rural School and Community Trust refers to the ''paucity of rural education research in the United States''.

(2) Rural education is becoming an increasingly large and important part of the United States public school system. According to the Digest of Education Statistics reported annually by the National Center for Education Statistics, the number of students attending rural schools increased by more than 11 percent, from 10,500,000 to nearly 11,700,000, between the 2004–2005 and 2008–2009 school years. The share of the Nation's public school enrollment attending rural schools increased from 21.6 percent to 23.8 percent. In school year 2008–2009, these students attended 31,635 rural schools, nearly one-third of all schools in the United States.

(3) Despite the overall growth of rural education, rural students represent a demographic minority in all but 3 States, according to the National Center for Education Statistics.

(4) Rural education is becoming increasingly diverse. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, the increase in rural enrollment between the 2004–2005 and 2008–2009 school years was disproportionally among students of color. Enrollment of children of color in rural schools increased by 31 percent, and the proportion of students enrolled in rural schools who are children of color increased from 23.0 to 26.5 percent. More than one-third of rural students in 12 States are children of color, according to research by the Rural School and Community Trust (Why Rural Matters 2009).

(5) Rural education is varied and diverse across the Nation. In school year 2007–2008, the national average rate of student poverty in rural school districts, as measured by the rate of participation in federally subsidized meals programs, was 39.1 percent, but ranged from 9.7 percent in Connecticut to 71.9 percent in New Mexico, according to the National Center for Education Statistics.

(6) Even policy measures intended to help rural schools can have unintended consequences. In awarding competitive grants under the Investing in Innovation Fund program under section 14007 of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Public Law 111–5), the Secretary of Education attempted to encourage and support rural applicants by providing additional points for proposals to serve at least 1 rural local educational agency. But according to research by the Rural School and Community Trust (Taking Advantage, 2010), this ''rural preference'' mainly had the effect of inducing urban applicants to include rural participation merely in order to gain additional scoring points for primarily urban projects.

(7) Rural schools generally utilize distance education more often for both students and teachers. A fall 2008 survey of public schools by the National Center for Education Statistics found that rural schools were 1½ times more likely to provide students access for online distance learning than schools in cities. A September 2004 study from the Government Accountability Office reported that rural school districts used distance learning for teacher training more often than nonrural school districts.

(8) The National Center for Education Statistics reports that base salaries of both the lowest and highest paid teachers are lower in

rural schools than any other community type.

(b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this Act are—

(1) to establish an Office of Rural Education Policy in the Department of Education; and

(2) to provide input to the Secretary of Education regarding the impact of proposed changes in law, regulations, policies, rules, and budgets on rural schools and communities.

SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF OFFICE OF RURAL EDUCATION POLICY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Title II of the Department of Education Organization Act (20 U.S.C. 3411 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"SEC. 221. OFFICE OF RURAL EDUCATION POLICY.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—There shall be, in the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education of the Department, an Office of Rural Education Policy (referred to in this section as the 'Office').

''(b) DIRECTOR; DUTIES.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Office shall be headed by a Director, who shall advise the Secretary on the characteristics and needs of rural schools and the effects of current policies and proposed statutory, regulatory, administrative, and budgetary changes on State educational agencies, and local educational agencies, that serve schools with a locale code of 32, 33, 41, 42, or 43, as determined by the Secretary.

''(2) ADDITIONAL DUTIES OF THE DIRECTOR.—In addition to advising the Secretary with respect to the matters described in paragraph (1), the Director of the Office of Rural Education Policy (referred to in this section as the 'Director'), through the Office, shall—

''(A) establish and maintain a clearinghouse for collecting and disseminating information on—

''(i) teacher and principal recruitment and retention at rural elementary schools and rural secondary schools;

''(ii) access to, and implementation and use of, technology and distance learning at such schools;

''(iii) rigorous coursework delivery through distance learning at such schools;

''(iv) student achievement at such schools, including the achievement of low-income and minority students;

''(v) innovative approaches in rural education to increase student achievement;

''(vi) higher education and career readiness and secondary school completion of students enrolled in such schools;

''(vii) access to, and quality of, early childhood development for children located in rural areas;

''(viii) access to, or partnerships with, community-based organizations in rural areas;

''(ix) the availability of professional development opportunities for rural teachers and principals;

''(x) the availability of Federal and other grants and assistance that are specifically geared or applicable to rural schools; and

''(xi) the financing of such schools;

''(B) identify innovative research and demonstration projects on topics of importance to rural elementary schools and rural secondary schools, including gaps in such research, and recommend such topics for study by the Institute of Education Sciences and other research agencies;

''(C) coordinate the activities within the Department that relate to rural education;

''(D) provide information to the Secretary and others in the Department with respect to the activities of other Federal departments and agencies that relate to rural education, including activities relating to rural housing, rural agricultural services, rural transportation, rural economic development, rural career and technical training, rural health care, rural disability services, and rural mental health;

''(E) coordinate with the Bureau of Indian Education, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Department of the Interior, and the schools administered by such agencies regarding rural education;

''(F) provide, directly or through grants, cooperative agreements, or contracts, technical assistance and other activities as necessary to support activities related to improving education in rural areas; and

''(G) produce an annual report on the condition of rural education that is delivered to the members of the Education and the Workforce Committee of the House of Representatives and the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee of the Senate and published on the Department's Web site.

''(c) IMPACT ANALYSES OF RULES AND REGULATIONS ON RURAL SCHOOLS.—

''(1) PROPOSED RULEMAKING.—Whenever the Secretary publishes a general notice of proposed rulemaking for any rule or regulation that may have a significant impact on State educational agencies or local educational agencies serving schools with a locale code of 32, 33, 41, 42, or 43, as determined by the Secretary, the Secretary (acting through the Director) shall prepare and make available for public comment an initial regulatory impact analysis. Such analysis shall describe the impact of the proposed rule or regulation on such State educational agencies and local educational agencies and shall set forth, with respect to such agencies, the matters required under section 603 of title 5, United States Code, to be set forth with respect to small entities. The initial regulatory impact analysis (or a summary) shall be published in the Federal Register at the time of the publication of general notice of proposed rulemaking for the rule or regulation.

''(2) FINAL RULE.—Whenever the Secretary promulgates a final version of a rule or regulation with respect to which an initial regulatory impact analysis is required by paragraph (1), the Secretary (acting through the Director) shall prepare a final regulatory impact analysis with respect to the final version of such rule or regulation. Such analysis shall set forth, with respect to State educational agencies and local educational agencies serving schools with a locale code of 32, 33, 41, 42, or 43, as determined by the Secretary, the matters required under section 604 of title 5, United States Code, to be set forth with respect to small entities. The Secretary shall make copies of the final regulatory impact analysis available to the public and shall publish, in the Federal Register at the time of publication of the final version of the rule or regulation, a statement describing how a member of the public may obtain a copy of such analysis.

''(3) REGULATORY FLEXIBILITY ANALYSIS.—If a regulatory flexibility analysis is required by chapter 6 of title 5, United States Code, for a rule or regulation to which this subsection applies, such analysis shall specifically address the impact of the rule or regulation on State educational agencies and local educational agencies serving schools with a locale code of 32, 33, 41, 42, or 43, as determined by the Secretary.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Section 221(c) of the Department of Education Organization Act, as added by subsection (a), shall apply to regulations proposed more than 30 days after the date of enactment of this Act.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 159—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE CONDEMNING THE TARGETING OF TEA PARTY GROUPS BY THE INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE AND CALLING FOR AN INVESTIGATION

Mr. PAUL submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Finance:

S. RES. 159

Whereas it is a well-founded principle that the power to tax involves the power to destroy;

Whereas employees of the Internal Revenue Service (commonly known as the ''IRS'') have publicly admitted that the IRS targeted Tea Party groups in a manner that infringes on the free association rights and free speech rights of those groups;

Whereas the IRS admitted that employees of the IRS engaged in politically discriminatory actions;

Whereas the IRS used the taxing power as a political tool to intimidate Tea Party groups from engaging in free speech;

Whereas, according to media reports, as early as in 2010, the IRS was targeting Tea Party groups;

Whereas President Obama is aware that a Federal agency under his control has admitted to targeting Tea Party groups;

Whereas, according to media reports, a report by the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration indicates that some Tea Party groups withdrew applications for tax-exempt status as a result of the discriminatory actions of the IRS;

Whereas, according to the Washington Post, in late June 2011, employees of the IRS discussed giving special attention to case files in which groups made statements that ''criticize[d] how the country is being run'' and educated the people of the United States ''on the Constitution and Bill of Rights'' and targeting groups interested in limiting government; and

Whereas the discriminatory actions of the IRS impacted the free speech rights of the groups targeted by the IRS: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that—

(1) the Internal Revenue Service engaged in discriminatory behavior;

(2) Congress should use existing authority—

(A) to investigate potential criminal wrongdoing by individuals who authorized or were involved in targeting people of the United States based on their political views; and

(B) to determine if other entities in the administration of President Obama were involved in or were aware of the discrimination and did not take action to stop the actions of the Internal Revenue Service;

(3) President Obama should terminate the individuals responsible for targeting and willfully discriminating against Tea Party groups and other conservative groups; and

(4) the Senate condemns the actions of all individuals and entities involved in the infringement of the First Amendment rights of members of the Tea Party and other affected groups.

SENATE RESOLUTION 160—RELATIVE TO THE MEMORIAL OBSERVANCES OF THE HONORABLE FRANK R. LAUTENBERG, LATE A SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY

Mr. REID of Nevada submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 160

Whereas, The Senate has heard with profound sorrow and deep regret the announcement of the death of the Honorable Frank R. Lautenberg, late a Senator from the State of New Jersey: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the memorial observances of the Honorable Frank R. Lautenberg, late a Senator from the State of New Jersey be held in the Senate Chamber on Thursday, June 6, 2013, beginning at 2:00 p.m., and that the Senate attend the same.

Resolved, That paragraph 1 of Rule IV of the Rules for the Regulation of the Senate Wing of the United States Capitol (prohibiting the taking of pictures in the Senate Chamber) be temporarily suspended for the sole and specific purpose of permitting the Senate Photographic Studio to photograph this memorial observance.

Resolved, That the Sergeant at Arms be directed to make necessary and appropriate arrangements in connection with the memorial observances in the Senate Chamber.

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate communicate these resolutions to the House of Representatives, transmit an enrolled copy thereof to the family of the deceased, and invite the House of Representatives and the family of the deceased to attend the memorial observances in the Senate Chamber.

Resolved, That invitations be extended to the President of the United States, the Vice President of the United States, and the members of the Cabinet, the Chief Justice and Associate Justices of the Supreme Court of the United States, the Diplomatic Corps (through the Secretary of State), the Chief of Staff of the Army, the Chief of Naval Operations of the Navy, the Major General Commandant of the Marine Corps, the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, and the Commandant of the Coast Guard to attend the memorial observances in the Senate Chamber.

SENATE RESOLUTION 161—RELATIVE TO THE DEATH OF THE HONORABLE FRANK R. LAUTENBERG, SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY

Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. REID, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. ALEXANDER, Ms. AYOTTE, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BAUCUS, Mr. BEGICH, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. BROWN, Mr. BURR, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. CARPER, Mr. CASEY, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. COATS, Mr. COBURN, Mr. COCHRAN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. COONS, Mr. CORKER, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. COWAN, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. DONNELLY, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. ENZI, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. FRANKEN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mrs. HAGAN, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. HATCH, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. HELLER, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. JOHANNS, Mr. JOHNSON of Wisconsin, Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota, Mr. KAINE, Mr. KING, Mr. KIRK, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. LEE, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. MCCAIN, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. MORAN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. MURPHY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. NELSON, Mr. PAUL, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. PRYOR, Mr. REED, Mr. RISCH, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. SESSIONS, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. SHELBY, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. TESTER, Mr. THUNE, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, Mr. VITTER, Mr. WARNER, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. WICKER, and Mr. WYDEN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 161

Whereas the Honorable Frank R. Lautenberg served the people of the State of New Jersey for over 28 years in the United States Senate;

Whereas the Honorable Frank R. Lautenberg was the longest serving United States Senator from the State of New Jersey;

Whereas the Honorable Frank R. Lautenberg cast 9,267 roll call votes—more than any other United States Senator from the State of New Jersey and the 40th most in United States Senate history;

Whereas the Honorable Frank R. Lautenberg served on multiple Committees in the Senate including the Committee on the Environment and Public Works; the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation; and the Committee on Appropriations; and served as Chairman of the Environment and Public Works Subcommittee on Superfund, Toxics, and Environmental Health; the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Subcommittee on Surface Transportation and Merchant Marine Infrastructure, Safety, and Security; the Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation; and the Appropriations Subcommittee on Financial Services, and General Government;

Whereas the Honorable Frank R. Lautenberg enlisted in the United States Army at the age of 18 and served in the European Theater during World War II;

Whereas the Honorable Frank R. Lautenberg was able to attend Columbia University as a result of G.I. Bill benefits following his military service;

Whereas the Honorable Frank R. Lautenberg co-founded the company Automatic Data Processing (ADP) and worked as its Chief Executive Officer, helping it become one of America's most successful companies;

Whereas the Honorable Frank R. Lautenberg dedicated his Senate career to improving the environment and public health, strengthening our nation's transportation systems, and working tirelessly on behalf of the people of New Jersey: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That—

(1) the Senate has heard with profound sorrow and deep regret the announcement of the death of the Honorable Frank R. Lautenberg, Senator from the State of New Jersey;

(2) the Secretary of the Senate shall transmit this resolution to the House of Representatives and transmit an enrolled copy thereof to the family of the deceased; and

(3) when the Senate adjourns today, it stand adjourned as a further mark of respect to the memory of the deceased Senator.

SENATE RESOLUTION 162—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE WITH RESPECT TO CHILDHOOD STROKE AND RECOGNIZING MAY 2013 AS ''NATIONAL PEDIATRIC STROKE AWARENESS MONTH''

Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself, Mr. CHAMBLISS, and Mr. MURPHY) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 162

Whereas a stroke, also known as cerebrovascular disease, is an acute neurologic injury that occurs when the blood supply to a part of the brain is interrupted by a clot in the artery or a burst of the artery;

Whereas a stroke is a medical emergency that can cause permanent neurologic damage or even death if not promptly diagnosed and treated;

Whereas stroke occurs in approximately 1 out of every 3,500 live births, and has an overall annual incidence of 4.6 per 100,000 children age 19 and under;

Whereas a stroke can occur before birth;

Whereas stroke is among the top 12 causes of death for children between the ages of 1 and 14 in the United States;

Whereas 20 to 40 percent of children who have suffered a stroke die as a result;

Whereas stroke recurs within 5 years in 10 percent of children who have had an ischemic or hemorrhagic stroke;

Whereas the death rate for children who experience a stroke before the age of 1 year is the highest out of all child age groups;

Whereas there are no approved therapies for the treatment of acute stroke in infants and children;

Whereas approximately 60 percent of infants and children who have a pediatric stroke will have serious, permanent neurological disabilities, including paralysis, seizures, speech and vision problems, and attention, learning, and behavioral difficulties;

Whereas those disabilities may require ongoing physical therapy and surgeries;

Whereas the permanent health concerns and treatments resulting from strokes that occur during childhood and young adulthood have a considerable impact on children, families, and society;

Whereas not enough is known about the cause, treatment, and prevention of pediatric stroke;

Whereas medical research is the only means by which the people of the United States can identify and develop effective treatment and prevention strategies for pediatric stroke; and

Whereas early diagnosis and treatment of pediatric stroke greatly improves the chances that the affected child will recover and not experience a recurrence: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes May 2013 as ''National Pediatric Stroke Awareness Month'';

(2) urges the people of the United States to support the efforts, programs, services, and organizations that work to enhance public awareness of pediatric stroke;

(3) supports the work of the National Institutes of Health in pursuit of medical progress on the matter of pediatric stroke; and

(4) urges continued coordination and cooperation between the Federal Government, State and local governments, researchers, families, and the public to improve treatments and prognoses for children who suffer strokes.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 18—PROVIDING FOR THE USE OF THE CATAFALQUE SITUATED IN THE EXHIBITION HALL OF THE CAPITOL VISITOR CENTER IN CONNECTION WITH MEMORIAL SERVICES TO BE CONDUCTED IN THE UNITED STATES SENATE CHAMBER FOR THE HONORABLE FRANK R. LAUTENBERG, LATE A SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY

Mr. REID of Nevada submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. CON. RES. 18

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That the Architect of the Capitol is authorized and directed to transfer the catafalque which is situated in the Exhibition Hall of the Capitol Visitor Center to the Senate Chamber so that such catafalque may be used in connection with services to be conducted there for the Honorable Frank R. Lautenberg, late a Senator from the State of New Jersey.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 1156. Mr. COBURN (for himself, Mr. BURR, Mr. ALEXANDER, and Mr. ISAKSON) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 954, to reauthorize agricultural programs through 2018; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1157. Mr. HARKIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 954, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1158. Mr. BOOZMAN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 954, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1159. Mr. CARDIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 954, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1160. Mr. PRYOR submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 954, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1161. Mr. PRYOR submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 954, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1162. Mr. JOHANNS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 954, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1163. Mr. HOEVEN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 954, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 1156. Mr. COBURN (for himself, Mr. BURR, Mr. ALEXANDER, and Mr. ISAKSON) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 954, to reauthorize agricultural programs through 2018; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 1150, after line 15, insert the following:

SEC. 12213. INTEREST RATES.

(a) INTEREST RATE PROVISIONS.—Section 455(b)(7) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087e(b)(7)) is amended by adding at the end of the following:

''(E) INTEREST RATE PROVISIONS FOR NEW LOANS ON OR AFTER JULY 1, 2013.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding the preceding paragraphs of this subsection or subparagraph (A) or (B), for Federal Direct Stafford Loans, Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loans, and Federal Direct PLUS Loans, for which the first disbursement is made on or after July 1, 2013, the applicable rate of interest shall, during any 12-month period beginning on July 1 and ending on June 30, be determined on the preceding June 1 and be equal to—

''(I) the bond equivalent rate of 10-year Treasury bills auctioned at the final auction held prior to such June 1; plus

''(II) 3.0 percent.

''(ii) CONSULTATION.—The Secretary shall determine the applicable rate of interest under this subparagraph after consultation with the Secretary of the Treasury and shall publish such rate in the Federal Register as soon as practicable after the date of determination.

''(iii) RATE.—The applicable rate of interest determined under clause (i) for a Federal Direct Stafford Loan, a Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loan, or a Federal Direct PLUS Loan shall be fixed for the period of the Loan.''.

(b) SAVINGS FOR DEFICIT REDUCTION.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall determine the savings to the Federal Government resulting from the amendment made by subsection (a).

(c) AMOUNT TO BE USED FOR DEFICIT REDUCTION.—Any savings determined under subsection (b) shall be transferred to the Treasury for deficit reduction.

SA 1157. Mr. HARKIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 954, to reauthorize agricultural programs through 2018; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

Beginning on page 998, strike line 25 and all that follows through page 999, line 14, and insert the following:

(ii) in paragraph (4), by striking subparagraph (A) and inserting the following:

''(A) GRANTS.—The amount of a grant under this subsection shall not exceed the lesser of—

''(i) $500,000; and

''(ii) 25 percent of the cost of the activity carried out using funds from the grant.''; and

(iii) by adding at the end the following:

''(5) TIERED APPLICATION PROCESS.—

SA 1158. Mr. BOOZMAN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 954, to reauthorize agricultural programs through 2018; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 628, between lines 13 and 14, insert the following:

''SEC. 3502. RIGHTS-OF-WAY FOR RURAL WATER PROJECTS.

''The Secretary shall waive land use fees for rights-of-way issued or reauthorized for any rural water project on National Forest System land that is federally financed (including a project that receives Federal funds under section 3501 or from a State drinking water treatment revolving loan fund established under section 1452 of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j–12)).

SA 1159. Mr. CARDIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 954, to reauthorize agricultural programs through 2018; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 1150, after line 15, add the following:

SEC. 12_____. STRICT COMPLIANCE WITH EXISTING PROTECTIONS FOR PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION.

The Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency shall comply with all applicable laws (including section 552a of title 5, United States Code (commonly known as the ''Privacy Act of 1974'') and section 552 of title 5, United States Code (commonly known as the ''Freedom of Information Act'')) that pertain to the disclosure of any personally identifiable information, including, as applicable, the personally identifiable information of any owner, operator, or employee of a livestock or farming operation.

SA 1160. Mr. PRYOR submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 954, to reauthorize agricultural programs through 2018; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 1150, after line 15, add the following:

SEC. 12_____. FELLOWSHIP AND SCHOLARS PROGRAM.

Section 226B of the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 6934(c)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''The duties of the Office shall be to'' and inserting ''(1) FARMERS AND RANCHERS.—The Office shall'';

(2) by redesignating paragraphs (1) through (7) as subparagraphs (A) through (G), respectively; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(2) FELLOWSHIP AND SCHOLARS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Office shall continue, through the agencies and offices of the Department, competitive fellowship and scholars programs for the purpose of promoting the study of food and agricultural sciences (as defined in section 1404 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3103)) at—

''(i) 1890 Institutions (as defined in section 2 of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7601);

''(ii) 1994 Institutions (as defined in section 2 of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7601)); and

''(iii) Hispanic-serving institutions (as defined in section 1404 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3103)).

''(B) APPOINTMENTS.—The Secretary may make a noncompetitive appointment of a fellowship or scholars program participant leading to term, career, or career-conditional employment within the Department upon a participant obtaining an academic degree, subject to the condition that the applicant is adequately equipped to perform the duties of the position, without regard to the provisions of title 5, United States Code, governing appointments in the competitive service.''.

SA 1161. Mr. PRYOR submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 954, to reauthorize agricultural programs through 2018; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 250, strike line 12 and insert the following:

''rolled in this program.

''(e) CONSULTATION.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—After an easement has been acquired under the program, the Secretary shall consult with the landowner to

assist with the completion of the terms of the easement.

''(2) REQUIREMENTS.—In providing the consultation required under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall provide to the landowner—

''(A) once every 30 days during the term of easement, a status update with respect to the easement, including a list of outstanding items to be performed by the landowner and the Secretary in order for the terms of the easement to be completed; and

''(B) an estimate of the number of days needed to complete the terms of the easement.

''(3) NOTIFICATION.—The Secretary shall notify the landowner of any changes to the estimate provided under paragraph (2)(B), including an explanation of the reason for the changes.''.

SA 1162. Mr. JOHANNS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 954, to reauthorize agricultural programs through 2018; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 174, between lines 6 and 7, insert the following:

SEC. 1615. PROHIBITION ON USE OF FUNDS TO DELAY COMPLIANCE WITH WTO DECISIONS.

None of the funds made available by this Act (including funds of the Commodity Credit Corporation) may be used by the Secretary to make payments or influence a foreign government or organization (including the Brazilian Cotton Institute) for the purpose of delaying compliance with a decision of the World Trade Organization.

SA 1163. Mr. HOEVEN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 954, to reauthorize agricultural programs through 2018; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 1111, after line 20, add the following:

SEC. 11___. SPECIAL PROVISIONS.

As soon as practicable after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall remove from the Special Provisions of crop insurance related to prevented planting any limitation that would apply to acreage that—

(1) would be prevented from the proper and timely planting of the crop when weather and other conditions are normal for the area in which the acreage is located.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 4, 2013, at 9:30 a.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 4, 2013, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled ''Iran Sanctions: Ensuring Robust Enforcement, and Assessing Next Steps.''

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

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 4, 2013, at 10 a.m. in room SD–366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 4, 2013, at 2:30 p.m.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS, TECHNOLOGY, AND THE INTERNET

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Communications, Technology, and the Internet of the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 4, 2013, at 2:30 p.m. in room 253 of the Russell Senate Office Building.

The Committee will hold a hearing entitled, ''State of Wireless Communications.''

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

RELATIVE TO THE DEATH OF FRANK R. LAUTENBERG

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 161.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 161) relative to the death of the Honorable Frank R. Lautenberg, Senator from the State of New Jersey.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 161) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

NATIONAL PEDIATRIC STROKE AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 162.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 162) expressing the sense of the Senate with respect to childhood stroke and recognizing May 2013 as ''National Pediatric Stroke Awareness Month.''

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 162) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

DISCHARGE AND REFERRAL—S. 993

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs be discharged from further consideration of S. 993 and that the bill be referred to the Committee on Armed Services.

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

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, JUNE 6, 2013

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9 a.m. on June 6, 2013; that following the pledge and prayer, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; that following any leader remarks, the Senate resume consideration of the farm bill under the previous order; that notwithstanding the Senate not being in session, the filing deadline for first-degree amendments to S. 954 be 1 p.m. on Wednesday and the filing deadline for second-degree amendments be 9:45 a.m. on Thursday.

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

PROGRAM

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the Senate will not be in session tomorrow to allow Senators to attend Senator LAUTENBERG's funeral. I would just mention, I just spoke to the Sergeant at Arms Office and the Secretary's Office. They are very impressed with the effusive outpouring of respect for Senator LAUTENBERG. We have four airplanes going up there. It is so wonderful. I am so impressed.

On Thursday, at 10 a.m., there will be three rollcall votes: one on the farm bill, two on the motions to proceed to student loans.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL THURSDAY, JUNE 6, 2013, AT 9 A.M.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the

Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it adjourn under the provisions of S. Res. 161 as a further mark of respect to the memory of the late Senator FRANK R. LAUTENBERG of New Jersey.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate stands adjourned until 9 a.m. on Thursday, June 6, and does so under the provisions of S. Res. 161 as a further mark of respect to the late Senator FRANK R. LAUTENBERG of New Jersey.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 7:14 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, June 6, 2013, at 9 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

THE JUDICIARY

PATRICIA ANN MILLETT, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA CIRCUIT, VICE JOHN G. ROBERTS, JR., ELEVATED.

CORNELIA T. L. PILLARD, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA CIRCUIT, VICE DOUGLAS H. GINSBURG, RETIRED.

ROBERT LEON WILKINS, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA CIRCUIT, VICE DAVID BRYAN SENTELLE, RETIRED.

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING ARMY NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12211:

To be major general

BRIG. GEN. KEITH D. JONES

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

ACKNOWLEDGING DR. VICKI BARBER'S SERVICE TO CALIFORNIA'S EDUCATION

HON. TOM McCLINTOCK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. McCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Dr. Vicki Barber who will be retiring from the El Dorado County Office of Education after an exceptional 30 years of service.

Dr. Barber began her career with the El Dorado County Office of Education in July 1983 and rose through the ranks, first becoming elected as County Superintendent of Schools in 1994. Dr. Barber's success is best exemplified through the numerous awards and recognitions she has received during her 19-year tenure as County Superintendent.

Twice she has been named Superintendent of the Year by the Small School Districts' Association and the Regional Association of California School Administrators. Most recently Dr. Barber was given the honor of Exemplary Leader in the region by the American Leadership Forum. Dr. Barber's true commitment to the field of education and her dedication to the job are shown through these awards.

Dr. Barber is also a board member of the Boys and Girls Club, Marshall Hospital, El Dorado County Chamber of Commerce and has held leadership positions in various local and statewide organizations. She plans to continue her role as an advocate and contributor to public education after her retirement on June 30, 2013. Her legacy will live on in the El Dorado County Office of Education, and she will remain a fine example of the culture of service that ought to be reflected in every public official.

It is my honor to rise today in appreciation and acknowledgement of her service to our community.

RECOGNIZING THOMAS 'TE' CAULFIELD

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize my good friend Thomas 'Te' Caulfield as he receives the "Civil Pride Award." Te's admirable work contributes greatly to the strength and vitality of our neighborhood in South Buffalo, New York.

Te is a pillar in our tight-knit community. He embodies the Celtic values of hard work, loyalty, righteousness, and an inimitable sense of humor. Through his genuine love of Irish culture, Te builds a deep sense of community.

Born and raised in South Buffalo, Te is a graduate of St. Thomas Aquinas, and attended high school at Nichols. Te earned his bachelor's degree from Buffalo State College, and went to Vermont College for his master's degree in Irish Studies. Te has held positions as an adjunct lecturer, speaking to students at the University at Buffalo, Hilbert College, Daemon College and Ameri-Corps.

A lifelong student, Te's extensive research includes the study of Irish language through Scoil Cultur na hEireann, Irish song and dance through Comhaltas Ceoltrori Eireann, Irish Gaelic identity, the Irish Famine in North Ulster, integrated education in Northern Ireland, and the study of Irish history through music.

A dual citizen of the United States and Ireland and a member of the Irish American Cultural Institute, Irish Cultural and Folk Art Association, and the American Conference of Irish Studies, Te applies his research practically to advance cultural exchange. His efforts with the City of Buffalo Street Sign Project can be seen in the dual English and Gaelic street signs on each street in the South Buffalo Irish Heritage District.

Te is involved in countless community organizations and annual events, often serving as the Master of Ceremonies or as one of the lead event coordinators. To name only a few, they include the South Buffalo Irish Feis, South Buffalo Education Center, the Greater Buffalo Feis, American Conference of Irish Studies, American Society of Public Administrators, Goin' South, Notre Dame Academy, Nichols Alumni Board, Buffalo Board of Education Ethics Committee, South Buffalo Reunion, Ride for Roswell, and multiple races, including the Buffalo Marathon and the race we celebrate today, the Mount Mercy Academy 5k.

Te's love of his culture is matched only by his love for his family. Te is partner and best friend to Nancy Krug, father of Liam and Lauren Caulfield, a graduate of the Mount Mercy Academy class of 1992, and grandfather to Mairead and Brian Caulfield, the children of Liam and his wife Mary Kay.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me to recognize the great works and spirit of Te Caulfield. I am grateful for the generosity and passion he so willingly shares with us, and I am honored to call him my friend.

HONORING CHARLES MOORE

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable public servant, Mr. Charles Moore. Mr. Moore passed away March 14, 2006 and was married to the former Alfolonia Matthews, the father of 5 children, and grandfather of 3.

Mr. Moore was a native Greenvillian. His entire life has been lived in Greenville except for a brief period when he served in the United States Marine Corps during World War II. After coming home and completing his high school requirements, he realized he had to make a decision. Either he would leave Greenville or stay and make it a better place for all to live. He chose the latter.

His goals and aspirations were achieved by the following: getting involved in voter registration in the 1950's; getting involved with the inception of Delta Ministry in Greenville, in 1966; helping organize the effort to bring Headstart to his community in 1966; helping organize the effort to integrate Greenville Public Schools in 1968; spearheading the organization of Herbert Lee Center where civil rights meetings were held, which still exists; coordinating several Washington County campaigns; recipient of the Harriet Tubman Award, from the Magnolia Bar Association in 1966; and, recipient of the Point of Pride Award March in 1966.

Mr. Moore was a member of the Church of Christ Holiness, past Commander and lifetime member of Veteran of Foreign Wars (VFW), past president of the Greenville Travel Club, retired member of the National Association of Letter Carrier Union (NALC) and the past President of Branch 516 of the NALC. He was also a member of the Secretary of State Dick Molpus Task Force. He filed a discrimination complaint that resulted in Blacks being promoted to managerial positions in the United States Post Office. He was a member of the NAACP since 1946 until his death. He was elected to the City Council, Ward 4 in July 1990 and re-elected for a 4 year term in October 1993. Also, he held the position of vice-mayor of the City of Greenville.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mr. Charles Moore for his dedication to serving others and giving back to the African American community.

TRIBUTE TO REENA JASANI

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to interact with some of the brightest students in the 22nd Congressional District who serve on my Congressional Youth Advisory Council. I have gained much by listening to the high school students who are the future of this great nation. They provide important insight into the concerns of our younger constituents and hopefully get a better sense of the importance of being an active participant in the political process. Many of the students have written short essays on a variety of topics and I am pleased to share these with my House colleagues.

Reena Jasani is a junior at Travis High School in Fort Bend County, Texas. Her essay topic is: Select an important event that has occurred in the past 50 years and explain how that event has changed our country.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF COLUMBINE

For every student waking up that morning on April 20, 1999 it was just another regular day, full of the usual tests, lectures, lessons,

and homework. However, for the students of Columbine High School that day became much more. The seemingly normal school day abruptly transformed into a day full of terror, pain, confusion, and shock, as two senior students tried to bomb the school and shoot anyone and everyone in the way, resulting in the deadliest mass murder America had ever seen in one of its high school campuses. This event led to changes in school policy, intensified concern over gun control, and fear among Americans.

After the shooting, schools nationwide have strengthened their security and made improvements to prevent such an event. Schools instituted new security measures like metal detectors and see-through backpacks. Additionally, they numbered doors and rooms for an easier public safety response if this were to ever happen again. Most schools renewed anti-bullying and adopted a zero tolerance system for students in possession of weapons or students threatening others. Analysis of the common factors in perpetrators by the United States Secret Service concluded that schools should pay more attention to the behaviors of students, noticing potential attackers and being especially aware of them. Most attackers tended to feel bullied, reverting to shooting as some sort of revenge. If teachers paid close attention to students being bullied, they could try and put an end to it. Without the bullying present, the student would most likely be happier and not try to avenge.

The shooting also affected the way in which the police force handled situations with an active shooter. Instead of surrounding buildings, setting up perimeters, and containing the damage, a new tactic designed for the presence of an active shooter interested in killing hostages rather than taking them has been utilized. Now, police officers are trained to move toward the sound of gunfire and stop the shooter. The goal is to prevent the shooter from killing or injuring more victims, meaning police officers have to walk past injured victims until they have stopped the shooter. This tactic has helped tremendously at the later shootings in school campuses.

The Columbine shooting also aroused fear among Americans, for now schools, places that nearly every child went to every weekday across the nation, seemed unsafe. Schools became potential targets, with the perpetrators walking along side by side other students. The idea of spending nearly seven hours a day, five times a week, for about ten months a year with someone who may pull out a gun one day and start shooting terrified both kids and their parents. However, time and improved security and safety helped allay these fears.

April 20, 1999 will forever remain a day marked by alarm, fright, trepidation, and hurt. The mass murder at Columbine High School has not only affected the security of schools and the tactic of the police, but also the hearts and minds of Americans, for before, it was hard to imagine that such a terrible thing would ever happen.

EXPRESSING CONCERN FOR THE HEALTH OF ATHLETES IN THE NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE

HON. JOE GARCIA

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. GARCIA. Mr. Speaker, like most Americans, there are few things that I enjoy more than a Sunday tailgate with friends and family. Football and the NFL are an intricate part of our nation's cultural and social fabric.

Football is America's favorite sport because it is exciting to watch, but that excitement—the clashing of helmets and tackles—takes a terrible toll on the bodies of our nation's athletes and on their families.

A recent study from the American Academy of Neurology found that NFL players are four times more likely than the general U.S. population to die from Alzheimer's or ALS.1 This is only the latest piece in a body of evidence showing that the risks of repetitive head impacts, if not properly treated, can be severe and irreversible.

The scientific research, which shows a link between concussions and long-term injury to NFL athletes—is incontrovertible. And so, I call upon the NFL to do everything in its power to protect its athletes and warn them of long-term dangers to their mental and neurological well-being.

Far too many of our nation's favorite athletes have paid a terrible price for the brain trauma they sustained while playing in the NFL.

After taking his own life last May, Junior Seau, a former Miami Dolphin and one of the top linebackers in NFL history, was diagnosed with chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE), a progressive and debilitating disease associated with repeated head trauma. When asked whether the game the whole family loved was worth it, Seau's oldest son Tyler tearfully replied: "I'm not sure. But it's not worth it for me to not have a dad. So to me, it's not worth it."

While the NFL has taken some positive steps regarding the safety of current players, we need it to take the necessary action to mitigate the risks of debilitating brain injury. Last season we saw high-profile players being sent back onto the field immediately after sustaining concussions. This is unsustainable and unfair to athletes and their families. It is also unfair to taxpayers. As a 2008 congressional research services report revealed, when our athletes cannot afford to address their injuries, the cost falls upon the taxpayers.

The NFL has the power not only to give these former players and their families the care and support they deserve, but also to ensure that the game is safer for future generations. As a Member of Congress, and most importantly, as a football fan, I ask that the NFL make use of that power.

HONORING JOHANNA ZURNDORFER

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, for the sick and homebound Johanna Zurndorfer is a direct contact with Conservative Synagogue Adath Israel of Riverdale where for the past 23 years she has spent countless hours visiting sick members and organizing volunteers who would call the homebound every Friday afternoon to wish them a Shabbat Shalom. She has also served as a member of the Board of Trustees.

Johanna was born in Rexingen, Germany, before Hitler came to power, at a time when a family could enjoy a rich Jewish life in a small rural town. She went to a local Jewish day school and then attended a high school in a neighboring town bicycling there 5 miles roundtrip. At 16 she apprenticed as a bookkeeper.

By 1936, her family knew it was time to leave Germany and Johanna went to live with her sister in New York City. She took the only job she could find as a housekeeper and later as a dental assistant, going to night school to learn English. Her mother followed her to the States in 1938 staying with her children until she passed away at 101.

Johanna's husband-to-be, Fred, made his own way to New York from Rexingen, by way of Chicago. Nine years her senior, it only took one date for him to propose to her. They married and moved to Inwood, where they raised two children, Eddie and Susan. Johanna and Fred were co-founders of Ohav Shalom, a shul with mostly German Jewish immigrants that served as the center of their Jewish life for many years.

Johanna and Fred moved to Riverdale in 1979 and soon joined CSAIR. It was after a difficult time in her life that she turned to CSAIR to fill a void in her life. The Sisterhood served as her first introduction to synagogue activism. From there she established new long lasting friendships and to this day, Johanna continues to contribute to the synagogue's life.

IT is an honor to join Conservative Synagogue Adath Israel of Riverdale and three generations of her family in showing the pride all feel in what Johanna has done for the community and whose only motive was to help those who needed help.

HONORING MR. MORTON H. ABRAMOWITZ

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise with great solemnity to honor the life and service of a great man, Mr. Morton H. Abramowitz.

Morton "Mort" was a tireless resident of Niagara Falls, NY who dedicated himself to the residents and to the betterment of his hometown.

Mort was a lifelong resident of Niagara Falls and proudly served his country in World War II as a Non-Commissioned Officer. He earned a degree in business from the University of Michigan as well as his Juris Doctor of Law Degree from the University at Buffalo.

Mort was a distinguished attorney in Niagara Falls as well as former Niagara Falls City Manager, former Niagara County Attorney and was currently the legal advisor for the Niagara Falls City Council and Niagara Falls Library Board. Mort recognized the importance and inherent value in serving in a community, through his commitment to service in local government, and also through his devotion to his local congregation, the former Temple Beth Israel in Niagara Falls and Rotary International of the Niagara Falls, NY chapter, where he served as past-President. Mort also served as past President of the Jewish Federation and the Health Systems Agency.

Mort also served as a volunteer for the Salvation Army and the American Red Cross. Service was a very important part of his life. One of Mort's quotes was "service is the highest honor of any public servant."

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for allowing me a few moments to honor the life and service of

Morton H. Abramowitz. I ask my colleagues to join me in offering our sincere condolences to the family he leaves behind.

IN RECOGNITION OF NATIONAL PREECLAMPSIA AWARENESS MONTH

HON. LOIS CAPPS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the end of the first Preeclampsia Awareness Month.

Preeclampsia is a life–threatening disorder that can occur during pregnancy or the postpartum period and is one of the leading causes of maternal mortality and morbidity. Each day hundreds of women and babies are affected by this condition, which is marked by a rapid rise in blood pressure that can lead to seizure, stroke, organ failure or death. Any pregnant woman is at risk, but symptoms are often dismissed as typical pregnancy complaints. Knowing the warning signs can help lead to more timely diagnoses and improve health outcomes for both the woman and her child.

Unfortunately, few people are adequately aware and informed of the risks. That is why I worked with my colleagues Representative ROYBAL-ALLARD and Representative MOORE to add Preeclampsia Awareness Month to the National Health Observances Calendar.

We must improve the full scope of maternal health and need continued research to advance the field and improve the standard of care. In the meantime, we must build awareness to ensure women understand preeclampsia and are prepared to appropriately respond to warning signs.

Together we can eliminate preventable maternal death and disability by aligning resources, tools, and knowledge to address our most troublesome challenges. And this is exactly what the California Maternal Quality Care Collaborative is doing in my home state. Just this year the Preeclampsia Collaborative began to help hospitals manage preeclampsia, reduce complications, and improve care for patients. I hope that as preeclampsia awareness grows this will be one of many initiatives across the country focused on helping providers deliver comprehensive, high quality maternal healthcare.

Thank you to the Preeclampsia Foundation and the many groups who worked tirelessly on behalf of women across the country to secure a national recognition. I am proud to be able to help commemorate the end of the first ever Preeclampsia Awareness Month and excited to see what the future brings.

HONORING RABBI ZVI DERSHOWITZ

HON. BRAD SHERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Rabbi Zvi Dershowitz of Los Angeles, on the occasion of his 85th birthday. On this happy occasion, it is a privilege for me to honor Rabbi Dershowitz, who I came to know through his leadership in the Los Angeles Jewish community and whose life–long contributions have made their mark in so many areas—Jewish youth and adult education, the struggle to free Soviet Jewry, advocacy on behalf of Iranian Jewish immigrants fleeing Iran, and more. Through his years as teacher, camp director, rabbi, counselor, and human rights advocate, he has touched many thousands of lives.

Perhaps it was his own experience as a refugee that influenced so much of the work Rabbi Dershowitz would later engage in on behalf of those fleeing oppression. When Zvi, whose Czech name was Hugo, was 10 years old, Germany invaded Czechoslovakia. Young Zvi's grandfather Sholem gathered the family and said, ''Hitler is different. You have to leave.'' The family left the country on the last day of 1938, thirty–three days before Hitler's forces marched into the industrial city of Brno, the city where he was born and enjoyed his childhood. On February 2nd, 1939, with his parents Aaron and Ruth and sister Lili, the family moved to Williamsburg, a neighborhood in the Brooklyn borough of New York City. There he grew up, learning English, studying, and playing kickball.

Zvi spent his spare time working to support the nascent State of Israel. In 1949, he spent a year of leadership training, working and studying in Jerusalem. Zvi helped refugees from Yemen and elsewhere settle into the newly independent State of Israel.

Inspired by his parents' love for Israel and Judaism, Zvi came back to Brooklyn and attended Mesivta Torah Vodaath and received his rabbinical ordination in 1953.

Rabbi Dershowitz is married to Tova. He met his bride of nearly 60 years recruiting for staff for Camp Soleil in Ithaca, New York. Guitelle Tova Russekoff, originally from Scranton, Pennsylvania, was a student at Jewish Theological Seminary Teacher's Institute at the time they met. They married and settled in Morristown, New Jersey.

Rabbi Dershowitz held several pulpits, at Congregation Beth Shalom in Kansas City and Temple of Aaron in St. Paul, Minnesota. During that period, Rabbi Dershowitz was recruited to become director of Herzl Camp in Wisconsin. One of his campers was Bobby Zimmerman, who later changed his name to Bob Dylan. Rabbi Dershowitz laughs when he recalls telling the teenage Bobby to ''stop banging on the piano.'' Years later, Dylan would become a guest at Rabbi and Tova Dershowitz's family Passover seder.

At camp, Rabbi Dershowitz's philosophy was to focus on creating an atmosphere in which campers would feel the joy of Judaism. The number of campers at Herzl Camp doubled during his tenure. In 1961, he accepted an appointment from renowned educator Shlomo Bardin to direct the Brandeis–Bardin Institute in Simi Valley.

Once in California, Rabbi Dershowitz pursued his love of Jewish education particularly with young people, at Camp Ramah in Ojai, where he served as director from 1963 to 1973. During that period, he was invited to build the adult education program at Sinai Temple in Los Angeles, one of the most well known synagogues in the country. He eventually became Associate Rabbi at Sinai Temple, a post he held for some three decades and where he now serves as Rabbi Emeritus. Rabbi Dershowitz's tenure there witnessed much growth and vibrancy, but also leadership transitions. Throughout these challenging years for the synagogue, Rabbi Dershowitz was the glue that held the congregation together and he saw it through many achievements.

Rabbi Dershowitz has contributed to Jewish communal life in diverse ways, including serving often neglected populations. For several years he led services, singing and discussions with Alzheimer patients at an old age home, bringing joy and meaning to a special population. To this this day, Rabbi Dershowitz conducts religious services at a home for the elderly while maintaining a hectic schedule, which includes teaching weekly classes at the University of Judaism, now American Jewish University.

Rabbi Dershowitz and Tova have traveled to many places around the world. At each place, they would meet with the Jewish community, become enriched by their experiences and seek to do whatever they could to be helpful. One visit to the former Soviet Union was different from their other travels, however. It was on this trip that they were able to take in a large load of books that would help Jews in Russia learn Hebrew, something that at the time was not permitted. Rabbi Dershowitz's advocacy in support of Soviet Jews continued for many years thereafter.

During his time at Sinai Temple, the synagogue witnessed an influx of Jews fleeing the Iranian Revolution. Many Jews had difficulty getting out of Iran but Rabbi Dershowitz worked with Congress and the Executive Branch and helped secure visas for countless Jews who today make up a significant and wonderful part of the synagogue. For the work he did to help them enter this country and for the work he continued to do to help integrate them into the Los Angeles community, he has become well–known and well–loved among the Persian Jewish community.

Rabbi Dershowitz remains highly engaged with Sinai's membership, officiating at the lifecycle events of many of its members.

While his professional work is rich and rewarding, his wife, children, grandchildren and great grandchild remain the top priority for Rabbi Dershowitz—and he and Tova consider them to be their greatest achievements.

It is a privilege to pay tribute to Rabbi Dershowitz, who has been an inspiration to so many in his community and around the country.

HONORING COACH DOUG WILLIAMS, HEAD FOOTBALL COACH AT GRAMBLING STATE UNIVERSITY

HON. RODNEY ALEXANDER

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and commend Coach Doug Williams on his 25th anniversary as the first African American quarterback to start and also win a Super Bowl. During this historic game, Williams also received the recognition of the Most Valuable Player for his performance that led to the Washington Redskins victory over the

Denver Broncos in Super Bowl XXII. Currently, Williams serves as the head football coach at Grambling State University.

A 1978 graduate of Grambling, Williams enjoyed a stellar college career for the G-Men. Highlights from his four seasons as the team's starting quarterback include leading the Tigers to three Southern Athletic Conference championships and a compiled record of 35 wins to only five losses.

The 1977 season was especially outstanding for Williams. Along with leading the country in touchdown passes and yards, he was named All-American quarterback by the Associated Press and finished fourth in the Heisman Trophy voting. Overall, he was twice named the Black College Player of the Year and his career totals in passing yards, total offense yards, and touchdown passes were NCAA records.

Williams was selected in the first round in the 1978 NFL draft by the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. In the next four years the Buccaneers made the playoffs three times, and in 1979 Williams led the franchise, who had never won a postseason game before his arrival, to the NFC Championship game.

Williams signed with the Washington Redskins in 1986, and in Super Bowl XXII made history. He led his team to a 42–10 defeat of the Denver Broncos, where Williams threw for four touchdowns and collected post-game MVP honors.

Williams returned to Grambling in 1997, but this time as the head football coach. He left for a brief time to rejoin the Tampa Bay Buccaneers as a personell executive and director of professional scouting. His combined stints as head coach at Grambling have facilitated three Southwestern Athletic Conference championships—the most recent coming in 2011.

He and his wife, Raunda, are the proud parents of eight children: Ashley, Adrian, Doug Jr., Jasmine, Laura, Temessia, Carmeleta, and Lee.

Williams' career has brought honor and pride to his family, friends, community, and the state of Louisiana. I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating him on all of his successes.

IN HONOR OF SHADY BROOK FARM

HON. MICHAEL G. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, for 100 years, members of the Fleming family have farmed Bucks County's rich soil, turning land into bountiful acres of produce for local consumption and wholesale markets. Today, the descendants of T. Herman Fleming carry on the tradition at Shady Brook Farm in Lower Makefield Township, Bucks County. In 1945, the Fleming patriarch's eldest son, Ed, took over the first farm in Andalusia and, in 1960, purchased 90 acres in rural Lower Makefield. The growing tradition continued with Ed's sons, Ed Jr. and Dave, followed by Dave's children, Dave Jr., Paul and Amy, and Wendy, the daughter of Ed Jr., at the helm. Within the circle of highways, homes and office buildings, Shady Brook Farm is a snapshot of both the historic and future farm, a destination for visitors who enjoy the Garden Center, country fresh market and seasonal entertainment. And so we acknowledge the remarkable heritage of the Fleming family on the farm's 100th birthday, with best wishes for continued success.

HONORING SARAH H. JOHNSON

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable public servant, Mrs. Sarah H. Johnson.

Mrs. Johnson was born on March 10, 1938 in Charleston, South Carolina, to Louisa Hutchinson. She grew up in Anniston, Alabama, and attended the public schools of that city. Upon graduation from Cobb Avenue High School as valedictorian of her class, she attended Clark College in Atlanta, Georgia, for one year, at the end of which she married a ministerial student, Ned Howard Johnson. To this marriage were born four children: Geneva Louise Johnson, Ned Howard Johnson, Jr., Yvonne Elizabeth Johnson and Karen Yvette Johnson. The Johnson family moved to Greenville, Mississippi, in 1964. After she and Mr. Johnson divorced in 1967, Mrs. Johnson married Cornelius Carter on December 24, 1977, but continues to use Sarah H. Johnson as her professional name.

Mrs. Johnson is a black woman who has been active on behalf of her race and her community. She has achieved much and received numerous honors in her lifetime, foremost of which is the fact that after two successful political campaigns in 1973, she was elected the first black member of the Greenville, Mississippi, City Council.

Mrs. Johnson has held several administrative positions in local government and has been active in local and national politics. She was employed by Mississippi Action for Community Education and was area director for People's Educational Program, a county-wide Headstart program. She is a former member and vice-chairperson of the Mississippi Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights and a former member of the Continuing Committee of the International Women's Year. She served as a 1972 Fellow of the Mississippi Institute of Politics and during the Carter Administration attended affairs by invitation at the White House several times. In 1979, she ran as a part of a slate for the Public Service Commission in the Central District of Mississippi.

Aside from her interest in politics and civic affairs, Mrs. Johnson has been active in several other spheres of life. In 1974, she earned a radio licensing diploma from Elkins Institute in Memphis, Tennessee. That same year she took three Federal Communications Commission examinations and received her first-class radio operator's license. She has also graduated from the Mississippi Realtor's Institute and is currently in the process of taking exams to acquire a real-estate broker's license from the Mississippi Real Estate Commission. She is a member of Revels Memorial United Methodist Church and a former member of the Board of Church and Society, a national board of the United Methodist Church.

Among her numerous citations and awards, Mrs. Johnson was presented the Woman of the Year Award by the Utility Club at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York City on June 8, 1975. Her biography appears in Who's Who Among Black Americans; and she is listed in the National Roster of Black Elected Officials, Mississippi's Black Women, and the History of Blacks in Greenville, Mississippi, from 1868 to 1975. She also has a street honoring her name, Sarah Johnson, in Greenville, Mississippi.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mrs. Sarah H. Johnson for her dedication to serving others and giving back to the African American community.

A REFLECTION ON OUR NATION IN WAR

HON. JIM McDERMOTT

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I submit an important op-ed concerning our nation in war. Sebastian Junger is an author and documentarian whose work includes the book War and the film Restrepo, which tells the story of a platon of U.S. soldiers in the Korengal Valley in Afghanistan.

For the past year, I have been working with Mr. Junger and Karl Marlantes, a decorated Marine veteran and accomplished author, to start a national conversation about what it means for our country to go to war. Mr. Junger's op-ed perfectly encapsulates the reason that Congressman WALTER JONES and I introduced the bipartisan bill, H.R. 1492, ''To establish the Commission on America and its Veterans.''

Forty-three years ago, I left the military with a heart and head full of other people's stories from the Vietnam War. As a psychiatrist, I felt the anguish and confusion that my patients experienced as they came home to a country that did not understand, or take responsibility for America's battles abroad. As Mr. Junger points out, ''The country approved, financed and justified war—and sent the soldiers to fight it.''

This is a nation in a perpetual state of war. Vaguely defined missions under banner of combating extremism have desensitized the American people. News comes as someone else's problem in someone else's country. Few understand how it can corrode our nation's fabric. Yet war is not something we can afford to forget.

Consider the 1991 Gulf War, a conflict that lasted for less than two months. Today, we continue to spend billions per year paying compensation, pension, and disability benefits to more than 200,000 veterans. 40,000 of those veterans struggle from long-term disabilities, some of which we are still only beginning to understand as part of ''Gulf War syndrome.''

Mr. Junger's reflections on war extend beyond the economic or political dimensions, though both are important for our national security. It's about our moral duty to own the wars our soldiers fight.S0634

VETERANS NEED TO SHARE THE MORAL BURDEN OF WAR

(By Sebastian Junger)

[From the Washington Post, May 24, 2013]

Recently I was a guest on a national television show, and the host expressed some indignation when I said that soldiers in Afghanistan don't much discuss the war

they're fighting. The soldiers are mostly in their teens, I pointed out. Why would we expect them to evaluate U.S. foreign policy?

The host had made the classic error of thinking that war belongs to the soldiers who fight it. That is a standard of accountability not applied to, say, oil-rig workers or police. The environment is collapsing and anti-crime measures can be deeply flawed, but we don't expect people in those fields to discuss national policy on their lunch breaks.

Soldiers, though, are a special case. Perhaps war is so obscene that even the people who supported it don't want to hear the details or acknowledge their role. Soldiers face myriad challenges when they return home, but one of the most destructive is the sense that their country doesn't quite realize that it—and not just the soldiers—went to war. The country approved, financed and justified war—and sent the soldiers to fight it. This is important because it returns the moral burden of war to its rightful place: with the entire nation. If a soldier inadvertently kills a civilian in Baghdad, we all helped kill that civilian. If a soldier loses his arm in Afghanistan, we all lost something.

The growing cultural gap between American society and our military is dangerous and unhealthy. The sense that war belongs exclusively to the soldiers and generals may be one of the most destructive expressions of this gap. Both sides are to blame. I know many soldiers who don't want to be called heroes—a grotesquely misused word—or told that they did their duty; some don't want to be thanked. Soldiers know all too well how much killing—mostly of civilians—goes on in war. Congratulations make them feel that people back home have no idea what happens when a human body encounters the machinery of war.

I am no pacifist. I'm glad the police in my home town of New York carry guns, and every war I have ever covered as a journalist has been ended by armed Western intervention. I approved of all of it, including our entry into Afghanistan. (In 2001, U.S. forces effectively ended a civil war that had killed as many as 400,000 Afghans during the previous decade and forced the exodus of millions more. The situation there today is the lowest level of civilian suffering in Afghanistan in 30 years.) But the obscenity of war is not diminished when that conflict is righteous or necessary or noble. And when soldiers come home spiritually polluted by the killing that they committed, or even just witnessed, many hope that their country will share the moral responsibility of such a grave event.

Their country doesn't. Liberals often say that it's not their problem because they opposed the war. Conservatives tend to call soldiers ''heroes'' and pat them on the back. Neither response is honest or helpful. Neither addresses the epidemic of post-traumatic stress disorder afflicting our veterans. Rates of suicide, alcoholism, fatal car accidents and incarceration are far higher for veterans than for most of the civilian population. One study predicted that in the next decade 400,000 to 500,000 veterans will have criminal cases in the courts. Our collective avoidance of this problem is unjust and hypocritical. It is also going to be very costly.

Civilians tend to do things that make them, not the veterans, feel better. Yellow ribbons and parades do little to help with the emotional aftermath of combat. War has been part of human culture for tens of thousands of years, and most tribal societies were engaged in some form of warfare when encountered by Western explorers. It might be productive to study how some societies reintegrated their young fighters after the intimate carnage of Stone Age combat. It is striking, in fact, how rarely combat trauma is mentioned in ethnographic studies of cultures.

Typically, warriors were welcomed home by their entire community and underwent rituals to spiritually cleanse them of the effect of killing. Otherwise, they were considered too polluted to be around women and children. Often there was a celebration in which the fighters described the battle in great, bloody detail. Every man knew he was fighting for his community, and every person in the community knew that their lives depended on these young men. These gatherings must have been enormously cathartic for both the fighters and the people they were defending. A question like the one recently posed to me wouldn't begin to make sense in a culture such as the Yanomami of Brazil and Venezuela or the Comanche.

Our enormously complex society can't just start performing tribal rituals designed to diminish combat trauma, but there may be things we can do. The therapeutic power of storytelling, for example, could give combat veterans an emotional outlet and allow civilians to demonstrate their personal involvement. On Memorial Day or Veterans Day, in addition to traditional parades, communities could make their city or town hall available for vets to tell their stories. Each could get, say, 10 minutes to tell his or her experience at war.

Attendance could not be mandatory, but on that day ''I support the troops'' would mean spending hours listening to our vets. We would hear a lot of anger and pain. We would also hear a lot of pride. Some of what would be said would make you uncomfortable, whether you are liberal or conservative, military or nonmilitary, young or old. But there is no point in having a conversation about war that is not completely honest.

Let them speak. They deserve it. In addition to getting our veterans back, we might get our nation back as well.

TRIBUTE TO SARAH CURTIS

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to interact with some of the brightest students in the 22nd Congressional District who serve on my Congressional Youth Advisory Council. I have gained much by listening to the high school students who are the future of this great nation. They provide important insight into the concerns of our younger constituents and hopefully get a better sense of the importance of being an active participant in the political process. Many of the students have written short essays on a variety of topics and I am pleased to share these with my House colleagues.

Sarah Curtis is a junior at George Ranch High School in Fort Bend County, Texas. Her essay topic is: Select an important event that has occurred in the past 50 years and explain how that event has changed our country.

Within the past 50 years, our nation has seen great divides socially created by monumental governmental decisions. In the year 1973, the law allowed legal abortions within the United States passed under the court ruling of Roe v. Wade. By creating this abominable law that now prohibits state and federal unrecognizing of the law, new corporations have begun to boom, those such as Planned Parenthood. Morally and ethically wrong, a law that allows the legality of the killing of our unborn is practically manslaughter and an unjust crime against humanity. This court ruling has created such a massive divide within our country that even politics are being decided through this law. Liberals have taken a more pro-choice (proabortion) stance while the conservatives of the U.S. take a more pro-life (against abortion) stand. Even those who see this law as a sacrilegious act against God have recognized the monstrosity situation this has become. Religious leaders, as of recently, have been forced, under Obama Care to offer abortions, even though it goes against everything they morally believe. Our country has been known in the past to be the ''promised land'' or ''the land of the free'', but forcing laws down everybody's throats and creating a divide between our own people not exactly unite us united against one cause, but rather against each other for different causes. Because of one court decision 40 years ago, the repercussions are still being dealt with today with the killing of the innocent and unborn being so normal and legal. Roe v. Wade may have been a court case about one woman claiming to have been raped, and wanting to legally have an abortion, but she was not raped, and ended up having the child before the case ever appeared in court anyway. So what was the point of one woman's want to not have a child costing our nation nearly 800,000 unborn children per year.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE OUTSTANDING IMPACT THE BALDWIN CENTER HAS MADE ON THE COMMUNITY OF PONTIAC, MICHIGAN

HON. GARY C. PETERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. PETERS of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize talented staff and dedicated volunteers of the Baldwin Center in Pontiac, Michigan, for the outstanding work they engage in every day to fulfill its mission to feed, clothe, educate and empower the disadvantaged residents in the Pontiac community.

Like so many great community organizations, the Baldwin Center traces its foundation to people of immense compassion and faith, who have been committed to making a difference in their community. Created as an outreach program of the Baldwin Avenue United Methodist Church in 1981 to respond to increasing need in the community, the Baldwin Center has grown into a multifaceted, comprehensive human service agency that serves thousands annually. The Center's first programs provided children with food and recreation, but quickly expanded to include a soup kitchen, tutoring services and emergency shelter. In 2006, the congregation of Baldwin Avenue moved and the Baldwin Center remained at its current location, becoming a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

Over the decades it has served the Greater Pontiac Community, the Baldwin Center has significantly increased both the size and scope of the support it offers to area residents.

Today the Center offers more than twenty-five different programs which fulfill its core mission, including programs that feed, clothe, provide educational enrichment for children and adults, and offer critical health care related services. Among its most widely used programs are its Clothing Closet which offered almost fifteen thousand low-income individuals and families access to clean clothing, sheets, blankets and other smaller household items, including victims of domestic abuse. Furthermore, in 2012, the Baldwin Family Soup Kitchen provided over eighty-three thousand meals to residents that are food insecure; include more than nine thousand children. However, its programs are not limited to just basic necessities; the Baldwin Center also offers a GED program, ESL classes and nutrition education sessions, as well as flu shots and blood pressure screenings.

In the economic downturn, the Baldwin Center, like so many human service agencies across our nation, saw an increase in demand coupled with a decrease in funding. However, the fourteen staff under the leadership of Executive Director Lisa Machesky and the dedicated army of three thousand volunteers have not only risen to meet this challenge, but have continued to excel in providing vital services to Pontiac area residents who are in need. Just last year, the Center added a computer lab that offers adults access to the important resources they need to achieve success.

Mr. Speaker, organizations like the Baldwin Center occupy a vital position in our communities. During our times of prosperity, they ensure that no one is left behind, and in times of economic challenge, they are on the front lines of holding families, neighborhoods and communities together. The impact the Baldwin Center has made on the lives of thousands in the Greater Pontiac area has enriched many neighborhoods. Again, I commend Lisa Machesky and her staff, as well as the thousands of volunteers, for the daily work they do to empower the entire community. Pontiac is a brighter city because of the Baldwin Center and I look forward to continuing our joint endeavors to empower all segments of the community to achieve success.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JEFF DENHAM

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. DENHAM. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 130, I missed a vote on H.R. 291, the Black Hills Cemetery Act (Noem, R–SD) because I was unavoidably detained.

Had I been present, I would have voted ''aye.''

IN HONOR OF GLORIA HALL

HON. MICHAEL G. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, Bucks County is in the forefront of Pennsylvania land preservation because of individual leaders such as Gloria Hall, who founded The Friends of the Farmstead in 1986 and helped launch the successful, countywide ''Save the Farms'' campaign. Since 1989, Bucks County's farmland preservation program has saved 157 farms and over 14,000 acres. Gloria Hall has inspired farm families — and the greater community — to safeguard the land for future generations. In so doing, she epitomizes environmental stewardship at its best and; therefore, is most deserving of the George M. Bush Farmland Preservation Award from the Bucks County Conservation District and acknowledged by the Bucks County Board of Commissioners on June 5, 2013. I thank Gloria Hall for her dedicated 25–year effort to save Bucks County's farms for future generations.

SAFEGUARDING AMERICA'S PHARMACEUTICALS ACT OF 2013

SPEECH OF

HON. ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 3, 2013

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, although this bill takes important steps to secure our nation's pharmaceutical supply chain, we need to do more to protect patients and the public health.

For over a year, I have been investigating the problem of so–called ''gray market'' drug companies that take advantage of critical drug shortages to charge exorbitant prices.

Working with the Senate Commerce Committee and the Senate HELP Committee, we identified numerous cases in which gray market drug companies were able to get their hands on shortage drugs when hospitals and other providers could not. And in many cases, these middleman companies exploited national drug shortages by charging exorbitant mark–ups for drugs used to treat cancer and other life threatening conditions.

This kind of price gouging is unconscionable, and it represents a serious threat to patients' health and safety.

Our investigation found that in more than two–thirds of cases, prescription drugs entered the gray market through pharmacies. These pharmacies purchased their drugs from authorized distributors, but instead of dispensing them to providers or patients in accordance with state laws, the pharmacies re–sold them to gray market wholesalers.

For these reasons, I introduced the Gray Market Drug Reform and Transparency Act to implement reforms in this area and to protect consumers and providers from exploitation.

I am encouraged that the bill before us takes up one of my proposals, which is to require wholesalers to register and report annually to the FDA, including on their disciplinary actions. Although this is a step in the right direction, the bill fails to make this information publicly available, which is critical to consumers, healthcare providers, and state boards of pharmacy.

The bill also fails to close the primary loophole by which drugs enter the gray market, by prohibiting wholesalers from buying drugs from pharmacies.

We need to put an end to unethical profiteering at the expense of patients with cancer and other critical illnesses, and I hope we can add these common sense provisions to H.R. 1919 in conference negotiations.

CONGRATULATING DENNY ZANE AND MOVE LA

HON. JULIA BROWNLEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Ms. BROWNLEY of California. Mr. Speaker, today I congratulate Mr. Denny Zane and Move LA, as the 2013 recipients of the John Leighton Chase Legacy Award from the Westside Urban Forum. Move LA received this award for its advocacy for transportation development in the Los Angeles region. Mr. Zane, the Executive Director of Move LA, garnered this award for his positive contributions to the Los Angeles region over a period spanning more than three decades.

This award's namesake, John Leighton Chase, passed in 2010. He had been a renowned West Hollywood urban designer, writer and advocate of civic spaces and vernacular architecture (which is focused on local needs, reflects local traditions and is constructed with local materials). The Westside Urban Forum, that bestowed this deserved award on Mr. Zane and Move LA, has for over twenty years been a prominent organization dedicated to land-use issues impacting the west side of Los Angeles.

Mr. Zane has been a persistent advocate in the Los Angeles region for ''smart growth'' in local development and for bringing best practices to local communities, with a focus on soliciting broad input from varied constituencies, protecting local jobs, generating local revenue and limiting adverse traffic impacts. In 2007, seeking to support development of a robust Los Angeles regional transit system—a goal that had been announced already by Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaragosa—Mr. Zane, a former Mayor of Santa Monica, succeeded, with the help of the Annenberg Foundation, in bringing together a powerful coalition of major local stakeholders, including business, labor, environmental, and political leaders and in forming Move LA. In 2008, Mr. Zane and Move LA impressively led a successful effort to achieve the required two-thirds majority vote favoring a local tax measure that is expected to generate for regional transportation development in excess of $40 billion over 30 years.

Mr. Zane served the public in many ways as Mayor, as a City Councilmember, as the director of the local Coalition for Clean Air, as a local teacher and now in his role with Move LA. His resolute commitment to public service has strengthened our community and for that we owe him our heartfelt gratitude.

I have personally known Mr. Zane for many years and am most pleased to join the Westside Urban Forum in honoring Move LA for its contributions to regional transportation and Mr. Zane for his legacy of successful community activism.

HONORING THE EMERGENCY RESPONSE PERSONNEL OF CENTRAL MAINE REGIONAL COMMUNICATIONS, SOMERSET REGIONAL COMMUNICATIONS CENTER AND LIFEFLIGHT OF MAINE COMMUNICATIONS

HON. MICHAEL H. MICHAUD

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the courageous acts and professionalism of dispatchers from Central Maine Regional Communications (CMRCC), Somerset Regional Communications Center (SRCC), and LifeFlight of Maine Communications in the rescue of a grievously injured snowmobiler. These agencies were the recipients of the Critical Incident of the Year Award from the Maine chapter of the National Emergency Numbers Association.

On the morning of March 8, 2012, Bonnie Sancomb and several others embarked on a snowmobile ride in Somerset County, Maine. During the course of the adventure Ms. Sancomb missed a tight turn, which catapulted her 45 feet from the marked trail and pinned her underneath the 500-pound sled. All the while, the snowmobile track continued to turn, shredding Ms. Sancomb's clothes and eventually her skin, exposing her internal organs.

About 15 minutes later, the rest of Ms. Sancomb's party realized her absence and backtracked to the scene of the accident. A member of the party dialed 911 and was received by a dispatcher at CMRCC, who immediately notified SRCC, mobilizing Maine Warden Service units and LifeFlight of Maine. Complicating the response efforts was the fact that the accident occurred in a remote Unorganized Territory, 13 miles outside of Rockwood Township. All parties remained in constant contact during the rescue mission, which was critically important as the accident's location was determined solely from the GPS coordinates of the caller's cell phone.

After close to an hour of sustained communication, LifeFlight of Maine arrived first on the scene and began treating Ms. Sancomb, who only had a few minutes left to live. The truly incredible and coordinated communication efforts by the dispatchers and rescue workers from CMRCC, SRCC and LifeFlight are responsible for saving Ms. Sancomb's life.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in commending Jennifer Berube, Darren Curtis, Joanna Kenefick, Jessica Mihalik, Susan Poulin, Shane Hunt, Margaret Parady, Stephen Crowe, JR Roebuck, and all other dispatchers and first responders involved, for their courageous and truly professional display of emergency communications.

HONORING MRS. CELAINE GORDON COLEMAN

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mrs. Celaine Gordon Coleman, who is a remarkable public servant.

Mrs. Celaine Gordon Coleman who is 95 years old was born June 29, 1917 in the Lebanon Community of Holmes County, says it seems that "folks have forgotten about what we went through to make things better for these children today. The children need to know their history. Folks don't talk about it much anymore."

The daughter of the late Eddie and Celaine Gordon, Mrs. Coleman did whatever she could to help move the civil rights movement in Holmes County. "I used to cook for them," she said. She was also one of the early pioneers of the Head Start Program as it came to the hills of Holmes County. She served as a cook for years at the Mt. Olive Head Start Program.

Mrs. Coleman also served the Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church as Sunday School Secretary for 50-plus years. The church is one of the oldest black churches in Holmes County and it was once a very prominent church school for blacks. Although her health will not permit her to attend now, she once had perfect church attendance.

Mrs. Coleman would walk for miles sometimes just to attend church. On muddy days she would carry her good shoes in her hand and put them on once she got to the church, and she would be on time as well. Through her hard-working spirit, she was also instrumental in positively impacting the lives of many black children in Holmes County. She is the widow of the late Mr. Monroe Coleman and the mother of three adult children.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mrs. Celaine Gordon Coleman for her dedication to serving others and giving back to the African American community.

HONORING RIVERDALE TEMPLE

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, a centerpiece of any community can usually be found in a neighborhood religious institution. In Riverdale one such institution is the Riverdale Temple which is celebrating its 65th year as a liberal Jewish congregation.

In February 1947 a small group met in the Riverdale Neighborhood House to discuss the establishment of a new temple. By September, the charter establishing it was signed and 67 families founded the Riverdale Temple, the first Jewish congregation in Riverdale. The Honorable Francis J. Bloustein was named first president and a dynamic rabbi infused with enthusiasm for the new project, Charles E. Shulman, was recruited from Chicago to become the first rabbi of the "liberal congregation."

The new Riverdale Temple initially met at the Arrowhead Inn and a Religious School, Sisterhood, and Youth Group were formed. In 1952, the building was demolished and the Riverdale Temple was homeless. These difficult times drew the congregants closer and services were conducted first at Christ Church, then at Riverdale Presbyterian Church, and Religious School classes moved from the Riverdale Country School to the Fieldston School. Yom Kippur services were held in Horace Mann School. In June 1953, the cornerstone for the new Riverdale Temple was laid, in March 1954, the new building was opened and, in September 1954, the building was formally dedicated.

All are welcome at the Riverdale Temple no matter what their approach to Judaism or degree of Jewish literacy. The temple is founded on the principals of faith, mitzvot and tikkun olam and offers communal support. It has a beautiful sanctuary with a rich and evolving musical tradition.

I congratulate the Riverdale Temple on 65 years of giving unstintingly to the community and in its tradition of welcoming everyone. I have visited the Temple many times and have felt its inspiration and its warmth. It has truly brought the Riverdale and surrounding communities closer together.

MS. SYDNEY EVERETT

HON. WM. LACY CLAY

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Miss Sydney Everett, an outstanding high school graduate of Metro Academic & Classical High School in the great city of St. Louis, Missouri. Indeed, there are many recent high school graduates who deserve significant accolades for their commendable academic achievements. However, Sydney is a rare instance of intellectual rigor coupled with an enduring and heartfelt commitment to the well-being of her community. Given her extensive track record of high academic standings and numerous extracurricular activities, Sydney was offered over $1.2 million in school based scholarships and academic grants from nine institutions of higher education.

Sydney Everett's story is that of a young American woman whose tenacity and resolve have allowed her to thrive in her academics and extracurricular activities. While attending Metro Academy, she immersed herself in the most rigorous curriculum available at her high school as a candidate for a full International Baccalaureate diploma. She has always challenged herself to broaden her understanding and extend the horizon of her knowledge. Yet, her drive extends far beyond the walls of the classroom.

Sydney is deeply involved in the functions of her school with an extensive and well-rounded resume of extracurricular activities including her involvement in her school's student council, concert band, policy debate team, and literary magazine. Moreover, she genuinely values the time she gives back to the St. Louis community as a volunteer at a local church and elementary school.

Before her junior year, Sydney served as a Congressional Page and proudly represented my district in the United States House of Representatives. Additionally, she participated in my Congressional Youth Cabinet, which is an organization I founded to provide outstanding high school students across the St. Louis area with the opportunity to advise myself and my staff on key local and national issues. With her hard work ethic and strong social conscience, Sydney was a valuable advisor to my office.

Sydney has left an indelible impact on her school and her community, and she will be sorely missed when she advances to college.

She will attend Barnard College at Columbia University in the fall and intends to earn a degree in international human rights law with hopes of attending law school and one day representing people and organizations throughout the world that are fighting for human rights.

Mr. Speaker, it is not every day that we come across such talented and caring students like Sydney Everett. Her unique accomplishments serve as an example for every student in St. Louis and across the United States. It is a great honor to recognize her relentless passion for knowledge, unwavering dedication to her community, and humble character in light of such great achievements.

TRIBUTE TO PHILLIP LOPEZ

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to interact with some of the brightest students in the 22nd Congressional District who serve on my Congressional Youth Advisory Council. I have gained much by listening to the high school students who are the future of this great nation. They provide important insight into the concerns of our younger constituents and hopefully get a better sense of the importance of being an active participant in the political process. Many of the students have written short essays on a variety of topics and I am pleased to share these with my House colleagues.

Phillip Lopez is a senior at Clear Lake High School in Harris County, Texas. His essay topic is: Select an important event that has occurred in the past 50 years and explain how that event has changed our country.

Over the past fifty years America has seen an explosion in technology, social changes, and monumental historic events. A man walked on the moon and remade the concept of the frontier. A wall fell that divided a nation, helping bring peace to a decimated land. A plane smashed the security of a great people and showed that terror can strike anywhere. And the demographics of this country have shifted establishing it as a true land of freedom for all who cross its borders. All have shaped this country, but one breakthrough has extended its impacts further than all others. In 1969 the first internet connection was made and revolutionized our society. Over the past forty five years the internet has created innovations that Americans fifty years ago could only dream of. The internet has fostered a new era of social and economic reformation across the nation helping us establish ourselves as the global superpower that we are today.

The age of the internet has allowed Americans to interact with people, places, and events from around the world. For example, the internet has given rise to the popularity of social media sites that enable you to communicate with and learn about others from half the world away. In addition these sites have impacted politics by enabling average citizens to stay more informed with an elected official's policy or daily activities. This web of interactions has led to America becoming a more global power and its people staying connected with information that is occurring anywhere in the world. Furthermore, we can now send and acquire that information faster, quicker, and easier than ever before. With the click of a button anyone can become their own encyclopedia by having the ability to know anything about everything; from the current state of the economy to the price of eggs in China one can find it all. This plethora of available knowledge has led to younger generations developing proficiency in finding it. Furthermore, the news programs have embraced the importance and speed of the internet by enabling people to stay more informed and have more detailed information about current events. However, as a result of the speed at which one can acquire knowledge it is now expected to return information to people much faster, such as quickly responding to a text message or email. This speed of information is made even easier yet more required with the introduction of the web on mobile phones allowing Americans to know anything, anywhere, at any time; as long as you have service. For example, Google Maps has revolutionized the map industry and made paper maps obsolete. Why carry a large, bulky piece of paper when you can find where you are in minutes with a device the size of your hand. Anything that does not fit into the ''faster, quicker, and easier'' category that was created by the internet is not outdated and archaic. The new American society has more knowledge at its disposal than ever before which has propelled us as the leader of the modern world.

The internet has revolutionized the American economy and trade across the world. People can now purchase and sell items online in a process that is faster, easier, and more available to everyone. Online shopping has led to the creation of large companies such as Amazon and EBay. These online companies have opened new markets and made it easier to trade with remote places such as Alaska or small islands. The ability to trade with anyone in the world has helped establish America as a major leader in global trade. The internet has also caused our perception of a store to change. Instead of traveling to a store, one can buy the same good with the push of a button from the comfort of their home. Stores have become somewhat unnecessary and as a result many have gone out of business. Nevertheless the internet has created a nation built on quicker, easier, and cheaper trade across the world Combined with social revolutions regarding education and available knowledge, the internet has quickly changed a nation.

Although it can be perceived as a positive or negative technology the internet has made America an economic superpower. Socially it has allowed this country to become more globally connected and opened the possibilities for endless knowledge. Economically it has revolutionized the way that we trade with other nations and altered our perceptions of traditional shopping methods. The internet has created a shiny future for our society in the world of trade and communications.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, June 3rd, 2013, I missed rollcall vote Nos. 184 and 185 for unavoidable reasons.

Had I been present, I would have voted as follows: Rollcall No. 184: ''yea'' (On motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 1206, the Permanent Electronic Duck Stamp Act of 2013). Rollcall No. 185: ''yea'' (On motion to suspend the rules and pass S. 622, the Animal Drug and Animal Generic Drug User Fee Reauthorization Act of 2013).

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2013 SERVICE ACADEMY APPOINTEES FROM THE 21ST CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF TEXAS

HON. LAMAR SMITH

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the 2013 Service Academy appointees from the 21st Congressional District of Texas.

The following individuals have accepted academy appointments:

Liam Thomas Catoe, Greystone Preparatory School at Schreiner University, United States Naval Academy; Lucas Adrian Fumagalli, New Braunfels High School, United States Air Force Academy; Nathaniel Robert Guney, Greystone Preparatory School at Schreiner University, United States Naval Academy; Dillon Mitchell Launius, Vandegrift High School, United States Air Force Academy; Adam S. Lee, East Central High School, United States Air Force Academy; Kevin Michael McGinty, MacArthur High School, United States Naval Academy; Joshua Andrew McMillen, International School of the Americas, United States Air Force Academy; John Edward Monday, Jr., Boerne—Samuel V. Champion High School, United States Military Academy; Clara Elizabeth Navarro, Rice University, United States Naval Academy; James Lyn Pazdral, Greystone Preparatory School at Schreiner University, United States Military Academy; Albert Dixon Patillo III, Heritage School, United States Military Academy; Rafael David Ramos-Michael, Brackenridge High School, United States Naval Academy; and Kirsten S. Redmon, United States Military Preparatory School/Sam Houston High School, United States Military Academy.

Again, congratulations to these outstanding students. I know they will serve our country well and I trust success will follow them in all their endeavors.

HONORING MRS. BIRDIA BEATRICE CLARK KEGLAR

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable woman who was a champion against human oppression, discrimination, and injustice in Mississippi, Mrs. Birdia Beatrice Clark Keglar. Mrs. Keglar and her family lived in Charleston, MS located in Tallahatchie County, which is one of many counties in the state known by the name "Free State of . . ."

That caliber of courage and stance warrants recognition. Mrs. Keglar was a tiny woman in stature, standing about 4 feet 9 inches and her biggest fear wasn't her height or those she stood up against but rather the negative impact of injustice on African-Americans and society if nothing was done to change things.

The constant threats on her life and acts of violence didn't stop her either.

Mrs. Keglar's fight for equality and empowerment has a place of longevity in Tallahatchie County, Mississippi. The Fox Funeral Home where Mrs. Keglar worked until her death became the location where many of her plans would evolve and manifest. Her journey included but is not limited to:

A march with Dr. Martin Luther King from Selma to Montgomery Alabama for the Voting Rights Act of 1965; and

The organizing of the first local chapter of the NAACP in Tallahatchie County; and

Leading the fight which helped her son, James, become one of the first Black bus drivers in the county; and

When citizens living in the community needed a place to host Sunday school classes, Mrs. Keglar allowed them to be held in her local store; and

The establishing of the first African-American Business and Professional Women's Club in the county; and

When the need came, she crossed county lines helping to lend a hand to secure housing for elderly citizens living in Grenada, Mississippi; and

On January 11, 1966 Mrs. Keglar and Ms. Adlena Hamlett were killed as they traveled back from Jackson, Mississippi after testifying before a Joint Committee chaired by Senator Robert Kennedy. Mrs. Keglar's testimony was about voting discrimination in the State of Mississippi against African-Americans.

It saddens me to report Mr. Speaker that the untimely death of Mrs. Birdia Beatrice Clark Keglar and Ms. Adlena Hamlett are among those unsolved murder cases from the 1960s civil rights era.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mrs. Birdia Beatrice Clark Keglar for her dedication to fighting oppression, discrimination, and injustice in Mississippi.

RECOGNIZING DAVID GOLDSTEIN

HON. JOSÉ E. SERRANO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. David Goldstein for his many years of selfless and compassionate public service in the Bronx.

David has been an exemplary contributor to the Bronx community for more than 13 years, and during that time he has served as mentor and leader to countless professionals. His career in public affairs and community service has been a testament to the importance of unselfish devotion to the well being of others.

Since 2003, David has served as the Chairperson for my office's Military Academy Committee so I have firsthand knowledge of his outstanding professionalism. During his tenure as Chairperson, my office has sent 7 young people to the United States Naval Academy. He has brought a variety of skills to his role with the committee, including sharp intellect, a strong work ethic, and a deeply felt commitment to ensuring that the candidates selected serve our nation in the United States military with honor and distinction.

David's acute appreciation for the needs of the people he serves can be seen in all of his work. During his tenure at the United Parcel Service of America, Inc (UPS) as Government and Community Relations Director for New York City, he established bilateral relationships with not-for-profit organizations, small businesses, local Chambers of Commerce, and various business associations. Recently, as the former Vice President of Operations at the Food Bank for New York City, David developed operational strategies that led the Food Bank to increase their food donations by more than one million pounds. David also worked to redesign the existing community kitchen/food pantry program to become the Food Bank's flagship program for all of New York City. David's unique ability to understand the goals of each of these organizations, and expand them in ways specifically designed to advance these goals in extraordinary ways is what makes him such an exemplary leader.

David has recently taken a position with the Food Bank of Monmouth and Ocean County in New Jersey. As many of my colleagues from New Jersey can attest, Monmouth and Ocean Counties were severely impacted by Hurricane Sandy. I am confident that David will bring the same dedication and effort that accomplished so much for the Bronx and for New York City to this new endeavor. I know David will be successful in this new position, and that he will help the many families who are still recovering from this devastating storm.

David's dedication to helping others, and expanding opportunities for young men and women who wish to serve our country, are truly outstanding. Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in honoring David Goldstein for his remarkable dedication to the people of the Bronx, New York City, and the Tri-State area.

IN SPECIAL RECOGNITION OF ADAM KLEMAN ON HIS OFFER OF APPOINTMENT TO ATTEND THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY

HON. ROBERT E. LATTA

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Speaker, it is my great pleasure to pay special tribute to an outstanding student from Ohio's Fifth Congressional District. I am pleased to announce that Adam Kleman of Fort Jennings, Ohio has accepted an offer of appointment to the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Adam's offer of appointment poises him to attend the United States Air Force Academy this fall with the incoming Class of 2017. Attending one of our nation's military academies not only offers the opportunity to serve our country but also guarantees a world-class education, while placing demands on those who undertake one of the most challenging and rewarding experiences of their lives.

Adam brings an enormous amount of leadership, service, and dedication to the incoming Class of 2017. While attending Fort Jennings High School in Fort Jennings, Ohio, Adam was a Member of the National Honor Society and ranked near the top of his class academically.

Throughout high school, Adam was a member of his school's soccer and track teams and earned varsity letters in both sports. In addition, Adam was a member of the marching and pep bands, as well as the annual high school musical, junior fair board, 4–H, junior leadership, and Boy Scouts of America. I am confident that Adam will carry the lessons of his student and athletic leadership to the Air Force Academy.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Adam Kleman on the acceptance of his appointment to the United States Air Force Academy. Our service academies offer the finest military training and education available. I am positive that Adam will excel during his career at the Air Force Academy, and I ask my colleagues to join me in extending their best wishes to him as he begins his service to the Nation.

HONORING SUSAN SCHWARTZ

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, Susan Schwartz has performed an almost endless array of services for Conservative Synagogue Adath Israel of Riverdale since she first visited the Synagogue in 1984 pregnant with twins.

Initially Susan enrolled in a learners' service that met on Shabbat. Later she was a liaison from the Parents Association to the Board of Trustees, which led to her serving four years as Chair of the Education Board. Afterwards she served on the Board of Trustees and on the Mission Statement Committee.

She has served as a member of the Search Committees for Rabbi, Cantor, Assistant Rabbi, Education Director, and, twice, for an Executive Director. She served as President of CSAIR for five years during which time $1.2 million was raised in a capital campaign to redesign the Sanctuary, Social Hall and main synagogue entrance. Accessibility—both spiritual and physical—was an important aspect of the work that was accomplished during the renovation.

After stepping down as President, Susan spent two years with a wonderful, engaging group of women, studying together for their bat mitzvah, which they celebrated together in 2010. Susan has spent more than 10 years as a member of, or the chair of, the High Holiday honors committee and has had the honor of giving honors and of assisting on the bimah on Shabbat and on the high holidays. She is currently Chair of the Ritual and Religious Life Committee.

Susan is a learning disability specialist and a dedicated advocate for children with special needs. She has specific expertise in child development, reading and literacy, learning disorders, and the development of language skills and higher-level reasoning skills in children and adolescents. She is a significant public voice on learning accommodations and special education services in our schools.

Susan spent 13 years as the Clinical Director of the Institute for Learning and Academic Achievement at the NYU Child Study Center then for two years the Clinical Director of the Learning and Diagnostics Center at the Child Mind Institute. She is currently one of two learning specialists in the Lower School at Friends Seminary in Manhattan.

She hails from a large, close-knit multi-generational family spanning in age from newborn to age 93.

It is a joy and pleasure to join with Conservative Synagogue Adath Israel of Riverdale in honoring Susan Schwartz for her many and myriad accomplishments for the synagogue and, ultimately for her community. We are all better off for her being among us.

TRIBUTE TO RACHEL DANIEL

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to interact with some of the brightest students in the 22nd Congressional District who serve on my Congressional Youth Advisory Council. I have gained much by listening to the high school students who are the future of this great nation. They provide important insight into the concerns of our younger constituents and hopefully get a better sense of the importance of being an active participant in the political process. Many of the students have written short essays on a variety of topics and I am pleased to share these with my House colleagues.

Rachel Daniel is a sophomore at Dawson High School in Brazoria County, Texas. Her essay topic is: In your opinion, why is it important to be involved in the political process?

PROCESSING POLITICS

The purpose of creating this nation, The United States of America, was so that the people could have a say in their leaders and politics and people were willing to go against everything they believed and start a war just to earn the right to this liberty. After all the hardships that the Founding Fathers of our nation suffered through in order for us to have a representative democracy, we the people of the United States of America have not only an obligation towards nation but also towards ourselves. Our nation depends on each and every citizen to make an informed decision as well as pick the best people to represent us, and all citizens of America deserves to have leaders who they support and trust.

We were given the rights and freedoms that many nowadays take for granted, but they really should be treasured, valued, and taken advantage of. That is why it is paramount that every citizen of America takes part in the political process. It is the people's chance to express their views for all to hear and to support what has taken centuries to achieve.

The political process is what holds this nation together. It's when our nation unites in the form of many different parties to decide who is fit to run our nation. The people, who are chosen, are the ones who lead us as a nation with the help of many. If we don't participate in the political process of choosing these leaders and then helping to implement new laws and policies, there is no longer any point of having a representative democracy, and everything that has been fought for will have been fought for in vain. All those lives lost for our freedom and democracy will be lives lost in vain. All the blood, sweat, and tears will be in vain. The political process of our nation is what makes us great. Not our education. Not our manufacturing. But, instead, our political process and the unity of the United States of America.

HONORING MRS. GERTRUDE GRENADA

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a hometown Civil Rights era activist, Mrs. Gertrude Grenada. Mrs. Grenada has shown what can be done through hard work, setting goals, and aiming high.

Mrs. Gertrude Grenada was born March 16, 1933 in Hinds County, MS. Growing up in Bolton, Mississippi, Mrs. Grenada witnessed and experienced a multitude of injustices during an era of legal segregation and Jim Crow. Although at times frightened by intimidation tactics used against her family and others in her community, Mrs. Grenada maintained a resilient and determined spirit to make strides toward ending laws targeting the civil rights and liberties of African Americans.

She received her formal education at the Southern Christian Institute (SCI), located in Edwards, Mississippi. After graduating from SCI, she attended Jackson State University and received a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education. For many years, she played an instrumental part in educating preschool children through the Hinds County HeadStart Program.

In addition to her commitment to education, Mrs. Grenada was very active in local strategizing and planning meetings with Freedom Riders and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Because of her determination to invoke positive change during the Civil Rights Movement, Mrs. Grenada also participated in a number of marches, most notably alongside other well-known Civil Rights pioneers, such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Medgar Evers. In 1972, Mrs. Grenada volunteered her time to assist in the election of her hometown's first African American mayor. Her lifelong efforts toward establishing change in her community will be felt for generations to come.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mrs. Gertrude Grenada for her astounding resolve to actively contribute to the cause during the Civil Rights Era in her community.

INTRODUCTION OF THE DISABLED MILITARY CHILD PROTECTION ACT

HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the Disabled Military Child Protection Act. This important bill would enable military retirees, investing in a Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP), to transfer their benefit to a Special Needs Trust (SNT) to provide long-term care for a disabled child.

Under the SBP, a military retiree can have a portion of his or her monthly retired pay withheld in order to provide, after his or her death, a monthly survivor benefit (55% of base amount of military retired pay at the time of the retiree's death) to a surviving spouse or other eligible recipient(s). However, by directing SBP annuity payments to an SNT, the retiree may ensure that a dependent, disabled child might continue to qualify for certain benefits, such as Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Medicaid, that are means tested. As you know Mr. Speaker, assets placed into an SNT are not generally counted as income or assets for the purposes of determining eligibility for these benefits. Current individual care costs for a disabled child could exceed $100,000 a year if he/she has assets greater than the Medicaid threshold.

A SNT can be created by anyone, but there is no current mechanism for a military member to designate a Trust as the beneficiary of his/her SBP. This legislation would enable a SNT transfer similar to what is available to the general public today. This is an equity issue; currently, civilians can create a SNT for their permanently disabled children to ensure they receive care beyond their guardian's death, and are not subject to an income means-test. It is only fair to allow retired military personnel to prepare for the long-term care of their disabled children.

As of March 2011, CBO estimates that the bill would increase mandatory outlays by $123 million over the 2012–2021 period. The mandatory cost is not directly attributed to DoD, but rather reflects the increased costs to Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Medicaid, since affected dependent children who are currently ineligible for those benefits would become eligible. This legislation would impact approximately 1,065 military dependents who are currently incapacitated beneficiaries under SBP.

This bill would help many Americans who have nobly served our country, like one of my constituents who has a son named Thomas. Thomas was diagnosed with severe autism by the age of 2 and is non-verbal, communicating primarily through hand leading to express he is hungry, wants to take a shower, or go for a car ride. He is unable to independently perform routine activities of daily living such as dressing or tending to his personal hygiene, much less make himself something to eat, ask for help, or let someone know he is in pain. Thomas requires supervision and assistance, around the clock, to ensure his safety needs are met. Other than his severe autism diagnosis, Thomas is healthy and expected to live a normal lifespan. Our constituent, a single parent, is nearly 38 years older than Thomas, and has been diagnosed with prostate cancer. The passage of this bill would allow him the flexibility to plan for Thomas' future care and well-being.

In the name of decency and fairness, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation and allow our military personnel some well-deserved peace of mind, knowing that their disabled children can be adequately provided for long after they are gone.

HONORING THE BRICK STORE MUSEUM IN KENNEBUNKPORT, MAINE

HON. CHELLIE PINGREE

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to congratulate the

Brick Store Museum, located in historic Kennebunkport, Maine, for achieving accreditation from the American Alliance of Museums.

Since 1936, the Brick Store Museum has offered generations of locals and visitors the opportunity to explore the rich history of one of Maine's most prominent port cities.

The Brick Store Museum's focal point is a building constructed in 1825 as a dry goods store by William Lord. The exterior remains much the same as when it was built, giving today's visitors a glimpse of what life was like nearly 200 years ago.

I am proud of the museum's commitment to preserving, interpreting, and exhibiting Kennebunkport's important role in our history. Many students have passed through its rooms, gaining knowledge, understanding, and a stronger attachment to the area where they have grown up.

I share the Brick Store Museum's belief that the history of our oldest towns is crucial to understanding where we are now and where we are headed. As Maine continues to advance into the future, the Brick Store Museum offers an important tether to our past.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, on January 20, 2009, the day President Obama took office, the national debt was $10,626,877,048,913.08.

Today, it is $16,738,788,832,145.30. We've added $6,111,911,783,232.22 to our debt in 4 and a half years. This is $6 trillion in debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

HONORING MR. WALTER BRUCE, JR.

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Walter Bruce, Jr., who is a remarkable public servant.

Mr. Walter Bruce, Jr., an 84-year-old native of Durant, Miss., was born May 30, 1928. He is the son of the late Mr. Walter Bruce, Sr. and the late Mrs. Georgia Bruce. He had seven sisters and six brothers and a loving wife, Louise, who are all deceased.

Mr. Bruce, Jr. was educated in Holmes County and grew up in the country where his parents were small farmers. Historically, he is mostly known for his dedicated work to the civil rights movement in Holmes County. He started the county's Freedom Democratic Party (HFDO). The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party was an American political party created in Mississippi in 1964, during the Civil Rights Movement. It was organized by black and white Mississippians with assistance from the student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and Council of Federated Organizations (COFO) to challenge the legitimacy of the white-only U.S. Democratic Party.

Mr. Bruce participated in marches and boycotts in Holmes County and in Jackson, Miss.. He and others worked with nationally noted activist Fannie Lou Hamer of the Mississippi Delta. He was extremely instrumental in bringing about emergence of black elected officials in Holmes County as well as black police officers.

Prior to his work in the civil rights movement, Mr. Bruce organized an all-black Little League Baseball Team which he headed for 16 years. He is also founder of the legendary gospel singing group, Soul Travelers of Durant, Miss. After 54 years, he still heads the group today.

Mr. Bruce is the father of two adult daughters and four grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mr. Walter Bruce, Jr. for his dedication to serving others and giving back to the African American community.

NATIONAL AZERBAIJAN REPUBLIC DAY

HON. ED WHITFIELD

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. WHITFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to the Republic of Azerbaijan on the occasion of their 95th anniversary.

The Republic of Azerbaijan has been helpful to the United States, committing troops to our efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq and providing airspace and the use of its airports for Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. Azerbaijan has also joined all 12 international conventions on counter-terrorism and they support regional cooperation to fight terrorism through local agreements and participation in NATO, the Organization for Security in Europe, and others. Azerbaijan also provides a key alternative route for the oil and natural gas supplies of Central Asia to reach Europe.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleaques to join me in paying tribute to Azerbaijan's 95th anniversary.

HONORING ERIC MESCH

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, Eric Mesch has been involved in adult Jewish education programming at Conservative Synagogue Adath Israel of Riverdale where he teaches on topics of interest, and for several years, organized the all-night learning program on Shavuot. Last year, Eric organized an event in memory of Matt Fenster z''1, in which members of many different Jewish communities came together to mark the completion of the study of the Mishnah. Eric is also a member of the Board of Directors of Mechon Hadar.

For as long as he can remember, Eric's connection to Jewish study has been intense, complex and defining. He grew up on Staten Island in a Conservative Jewish home and synagogue, but attended the Orthodox Yeshivah of Flatbush in Brooklyn from third grade through high school. Later, as an undergraduate at Yale College, Eric majored in religious studies and also spent a semester at Yeshivat Hamivtar in Israel. After college, Eric attended Columbia Law School, graduating with his J.D. in 1995.

Eric met his wife Rachel while they were undergraduates at Yale but they didn't start dating until his senior and her junior year. Their relationship blossomed over good coffee, something that is still important to them. They married in 1995 and in their first year of married life they lived in Jerusalem where Eric was a law clerk to the Supreme Court of Israel and Rachel continued her graduate work at Hebrew University. They have three children, Abby, Eliza and Sam.

Eric is a partner with the law firm of Dickstein Shapiro LLP, focusing on bankruptcy-related and other complex commercial litigation while Rachel is a professor of French literature and chair of the Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures at Yeshiva University.

I congratulate Eric for all the good work he is doing at the Conservative Synagogue Adath Israel of Riverdale. He had made CSAIR and the Riverdale community a better place.

HONORING THE PLATTE COUNTY FAIR

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating the Platte County Fair for celebrating 150 years of providing entertainment and excitement to its attendees.

The very first Platte County Fair was held in 1858. However, the fair did not become an annual event until 1863. The first fair in 1858 was planned on Oct. 6 and took place only a short time later from Oct. 21–23, with 400 people in attendance.

The fair was a great success and continued until 1860, when the Civil War prevented the fair from taking place during the years of 1861 and 1862. The fair was praised as ''an honor to the soil and people'' and ''a glorious reunion of a prosperous and happy people.''

On December 16, 1861, Platte City was ravaged by a Civil War raid. However, not even the devastation of Platte City was enough to keep its resilient citizens down. Just 22 months later, proud Platte Countians filled the fairgrounds for the First Annual Platte County Fair, which was held October 21–23, 1863.

The fair has been held annually since 1863, establishing itself as the oldest continuously running county fair west of the Mississippi River. The entire event is privately held and sponsored by a not-for-profit organization run by volunteers. The fair now spans four days, featuring many great events such as the demolition derby, a truck and tractor pull, the Queen contest, and more. The Platte County Fair is also home to many great sources of entertainment including a floral hall, a carnival, a fiddle contest, and the Dirty Shame Saloon, to name a few.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you join me in applauding the Platte County Fair for celebrating

their 150th anniversary and providing a great source of pride and excitement to Platte County. I wish them 150 more years of greatness to come.

TRIBUTE TO SHANNON WU

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to interact with some of the brightest students in the 22nd Congressional District who serve on my Congressional Youth Advisory Council. I have gained much by listening to the high school students who are the future of this great nation. They provide important insight into the concerns of our younger constituents and hopefully get a better sense of the importance of being an active participant in the political process. Many of the students have written short essays on a variety of topics and I am pleased to share these with my House colleagues.

Shannon Wu is a senior at Dawson High School in Brazoria County, Texas. Her essay topic is: In your opinion, why is it important to be involved in the political process?

As the age of 18 creeps up on me slowly around the corner, the thought that I will be a legal adult and will be able to become a registered voter looms overhead. As a senior in high school, some of my peers are already 18, and were 18 at the time of the 2012 presidential election, and yet, I constantly hear them griping and complaining about who's president and which legislations are passed and which aren't. Yet, these are the same exact people who don't seize their rights and actually vote.

What ground does the government have to say that all their decisions are based off the voice of their constituents when less than 60% of the people are actually voting? As our country enters a more progressive era, both socially and economically, it's the most detrimental time for citizens to become involved in the political process. The new issues and concerns that have emerged within the past few decades are some of the most controversial topics to have ever been brought to the table. Thus, without political participation, how will the government act accordingly to the views of the citizens?

Because bills are created and passed in the three branches of the government, and our congressmen, senators, and president are the ones who vote to pass or veto a bill, people believe that voting on the matter won't make a difference. However, it is more important than it ever was to have input from the constituents in order to smooth out the bumps and bubbles in the laws governing out country. Furthermore, by getting involved in the political process, citizens will be able to select a candidate that encompasses the ideals and values of the greater majority of the people and create their own ''check'' upon the government by electing those they deem qualified and supportive of their opinions. This then protects democracy and reducing the possibilities of tyranny, oligarchy, and anarchy. Most importantly, the government will pass laws that will be enforced, and, if people become involved in the political system, these rules will reflect the desires of the majority of the constituents, rather than the thoughts of politicians.

HONORING DR. WILLIAM TRULY

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable public servant, Dr. William Truly, who was the first elected mayor of Canton, Mississippi in May 2009.

Originally from New Smyrna Beach, Fla., Mayor Truly relocated to Canton, MS in 1978, after completing medical school at Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tenn.

Dr. Truly became an active member of the community. In 1996 he founded the Truly Medical Center that was one of five medical centers in Canton, MS. He has long served as an advocate for justice and a voice for the people of Canton, including serving as an Alderman-At-Large.

During his inauguration, Dr. Truly pledged to take the ''City of Lights'' (Canton, MS) in a new direction by increasing economic development and seeking more industry.

Since taking office, Mayor Truly has also set out on an ambitious agenda to revitalize Canton by focusing on improvements to public safety, education and making government more accessible to citizens. He is an active participant in his community and currently serves on a number of different Boards.

In addition to being the city's leader, Mayor Truly continues to practice medicine at different hospitals as the Chief Medical Director. Dr. Truly is married to the former Wassie Booker and has five children.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Dr. William Truly for his dedication to serving others in need.

RECOGNIZING TERRI LYNCH FOR HER EXTRAORDINARY WORK ON BEHALF OF OLDER VIRGINIANS

HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and recognize the outstanding contributions of Terri Lynch in making Arlington and the Commonwealth of Virginia a better place to live in your twilight years.

Terri Lynch, MPA, has been the director of the Arlington County Agency on Aging since 1982. She helped to establish a network of services and programs in the Arlington Aging & Disability Services Division, including many that became state and national models. She consistently provided assistance and expertise to the Arlington Commission on Aging and Commission on Long-Term Care Residences. In 2006, she provided primary staff support for the County-Board's Elder Readiness Task Force that assessed the status of Arlington's capacity to serve older adults.

Ms. Lynch was president of the Virginia Association of Area Agencies on Aging from 2000 to 2002. She was a cofounding director and vice chair of the Consumer Consortium on Assisted Living from 1996 to 2003. She has served on the Policy Board for the Northern Virginia Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, the Advisory Committee for the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, the Board for the Virginia Elder Rights Coalition, and the Virginia Legal Services Corporation Board. She is a founding member of Northern Virginia Womenade, a giving circle that aids nonprofit organizations.

Ms. Lynch has been a long-standing driving force in the Northern Virginia Aging Network, comprised of the region's agencies on aging and commissions on aging, as well as aging service and advocacy groups. NVAN has produced a state legislative platform since 1983, which has resulted in advances in community-based aging services, accessibility, housing, mental health and long-term care.

Ms. Lynch has been a leader in the field of aging at the local, state and national levels. She has received more than 20 distinguished honors, letters of appreciation and superior performance awards. She received the prestigious Winston Award from the Arlington County Bar Foundation in 2007 which recognizes members of the local community for longstanding public service, promotion of democratic ideals and the advancement of the rule of law. She received the Culpepper Garden Elder Services Award in 2009.

Ms. Lynch has been recognized multiple times by elected officials, policy-makers, community advocates and colleagues. They acknowledge her creativity, strategic thinking, administrative and advocacy skills, energy, and sheer ability to make things happen for the benefit of older people. She is always innovative, ahead of the curve, and exercises leadership that counts for elders. Ms. Lynch is retiring on June 28, 2013, and I salute her long track record of success and the positive differences she has made. I look forward to her continuing work in the public interest.

INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION TO AMEND THE INTERNAL REVENUE CODE OF 1986 TO PROVIDE A CREDIT AGAINST TAX FOR HURRICANE AND TORNADO MITIGATION EXPENDITURES

HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, today I introduced the Hurricane and Tornado Mitigation Investment Act of 2013. This legislation seeks to encourage individuals and businesses to take proactive preparedness measures to protect their property from potential storm damage. Recent tornado outbreaks across the country this spring, and the impending start of the Atlantic hurricane season, remind us that weather-related emergencies and disasters are ever-present. The bill would amend the Internal Revenue Code to allow individual and business taxpayers in certain states a tax credit for a portion of their qualified hurricane and tornado mitigation property expenditures for any taxable year. They would be eligible when they take steps to improve the strength of a roof deck attachment; create a secondary water barrier; improve the durability of a roof covering; brace gable-end walls; reinforce the connections between a roof and supporting wall; protect against windborne debris; or protect exterior doors and garages. In short, this

legislation will help communities mitigate against future weather related hazards. Taking mitigation steps now can make a huge difference. In many cases, it may help to reduce loss of life and property damage, while saving money and reducing insurance rates in the long run. I look forward to working with my colleagues to move this legislation through Congress.

THE JACK OF HEARTS

HON. JEFF FORTENBERRY

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Mr. Speaker, on April 6, 2013, something remarkable occurred at Memorial Stadium. During the University of Nebraska football team's spring game, seven-year-old Jack Hoffman sprinted 69 yards down the field to score a touchdown with over 60,000 fans watching him. But his amazing touchdown is nothing compared to the courage he displays in his two-year battle with brain cancer. I am proud to call young Jack a Husker and would like to submit this tribute poem written on his behalf by Albert Carey Caswell.

THE JACK OF HEARTS

(By Albert Carey Caswell)

The . . .
The Jack of Hearts . . .
Oh how you've so done your part!
To so inspire us with but your little heart!
For you are but a work of art!
Jack be nimble!
Jack be quick!
Oh Jack how all of our hearts you've so hit!
For you are a champion,
that our Lord has so picked!
Running down that football field,
as your heart would not yield!
As to our Nation,
what your most courageous little big heart so revealed!
Giving us all such a lift!
For you are one fine Husker,
as we are all so very sure of this!
All at what your little heart can muster,
is but to all of us such a great gift!
As you have brought us all to,
such tears of bliss!
Yea, Jack be nimble!
Yea, Jack be quick!
Jack be Strong!
As Jack you so battle on and on!
As like your Husker's on those fields of green,
Jack you so fight with all your being!
For already Jack,
your short life is like a song!
A song of courage!
A song of faith!
Who against all odds,
will not so wave!
Teaching us all,
so how to behave!
And children,
as Heroes should not have to be!
But, sadly sometimes . . .
through them our Lord so shows us all what we need!
For you are a brave as a Navy Seal,
or a Special Forces member of The United States Army,
or a member of The United States Air Force we've seen,
or a member of The United States Marines!
And Jack,
as you ran down that football field . . .
Our Nation's hearts,
we all so hope that you could feel!
All in what your great heart has revealed!
And as you scored that touchdown,
and they held you way up high!
I wonder if you could but hear all of our tears,
as we so all began to cry!
Saying Jack,
we are with you every step of the way!
And in Oklahoma on this day,
even the Sooner's became Husker fans as did they!
As Congressman Fortenbury would say,
we're Nebraska, and This Is How We Roll each day!
For in The Game of Life Jack,
you've gone deep!
As why in our thoughts and prayers,
you we will so ever keep!
So win that battle!
So win that fight!
For your heart is the brightest of the bright!
And one day,
we will see you in college playing at Nebraska under the lights!
And if your betting against Little Jack,
well you better not!
Because,
a Jack of Heart's . . . beats any hand that you've so got!
So Jack, as you so lay your little head down to sleep!
We pray to our Lord to watch over you so to keep!
And remember Jack our Nation,
now carries you all in our hearts so very deep!
The Jack of Hearts, who to our hearts and souls does so speak!
We Are The Huskers,
and This Is How We Roll!

HONORING LILLIE PITTMAN

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a resourceful and ambitious woman, Mrs. Lille Brown Pittman. Lillie has shown what can be done through hard work, dedication and a desire to serve others.

Lille Pittman, a resident of Delta City, Mississippi was born on July 4, 1940 to Tobias and Charlotte Bell. She graduated from Henry Weathers High School in Rolling Fork, MS in 1959. At the age of 22, she moved to California where she met and married Benjamin Brown and to that union they had three children, Anthony, Antoinette, and Patrice.

While in California, she worked for Raytheon as a Quality Control Inspector and for Hewlett Packard for 5 years as a Quality Assurance Inspector. In 1974, Lille returned to Mississippi with her three children. She was later employed with Asemco and Head Start until she was hit by the entrepreneurial bug. Ms. Pittman applied and obtained a small business loan to purchase the Delta City Trading Post in 1981 which she successfully operated for 8 years. In the midst of operating The Delta City Trading Post, she also created Brown's Janitorial Services, where she had several contracts with the United States Corps of Engineers.

In 1987, Lillie Pittman became the first African American woman to be elected to the Sharkey County Board of Supervisors. During her term in office, she made many accomplishments that brought jobs to the community and was awarded a grant to help low-income homeowners repair their homes.

Although she only served one term, Lillie continued to work effortlessly for her District in Sharkey County. She continues to fight for better jobs, schools, and living conditions for the people of the community.

Her ongoing contributions include petitioning for better water quality in Delta City, working with children in Anguilla, MS to create a community garden, and working with the current County Supervisor to clean up the over grown roadways with the Summer Youth Program. Mrs. Lillie Brown Pittman is currently doing what she calls her greatest work, being a grandmother of four, Salena, Sydney, Margaret Alexander, and Noah.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mrs. Lillie Brown Pittman for her dedication for change and serving her community.

HONORING SAMUEL MATZNER

HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of a talented young musician in the 8th Congressional District, Samuel Matzner of Arlington County, Virginia. Samuel was selected on March 4th to participate in the first ever National Youth Orchestra of the United States of America.

Sam plays the Viola at Wakefield High School, as well as for the Washington Metropolitan Youth Orchestra. Due to his extraordinary abilities, he will join a group of 120 of the finest young musicians in the country aged 16–19, representing a selection process that included all 50 states, who will act as musical ambassadors during their worldwide tour in July. Organized by the famed Carnegie Hall in New York City, the group will travel to New York for two weeks of rehearsals at Purchase College, State University of New York, and then embark on an international tour that includes Moscow, St. Petersburg, and London.

The National Youth Orchestra of the United States of America is a unique and un-paralleled opportunity for young, high school-aged musicians in the United States to be recognized as the pinnacle of our musical training system. The success of Venezuela's El Sistema has generated increased international interest in the value of youth orchestras, and I am thrilled that Carnegie Hall has spearheaded this initiative to showcase our nation's talent and reinvigorate interest in youth musicianship at home and abroad.

Mr. Speaker, we are proud of these cultural ambassadors, and their commitment to musical excellence. I look forward to hearing the orchestra play, and wish them the best of luck on their tour.

TRIBUTE TO WALKER SHORES

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to interact with some of the brightest students in

the 22nd Congressional District who serve on my Congressional Youth Advisory Council. I have gained much by listening to the high school students who are the future of this great nation. They provide important insight into the concerns of our younger constituents and hopefully get a better sense of the importance of being an active participant in the political process. Many of the students have written short essays on a variety of topics and I am pleased to share these with my House colleagues.

Walker Shores is a junior at Austin High School in Fort Bend County, Texas. His essay topic is: Select an important event that has occurred in the past 50 years and explain how that event has changed our country.

On the 4th of November, 1979, several hundred Iranian students inspired by anti-American statements and speeches from their ''Supreme Leader'', Ruhollah Khomeini, invaded the United States Embassy in Tehran. Due to the aftermath of the recent revolution, and inflamed by the support and endorsement of the regime the wayward students had come to love, what was supposed to last only a few hours became a 444 day nightmare for the fifty two American diplomats, aides, attaches, and Marine Embassy Guards held within Tehran.

The sitting president, Jimmy Carter, immediately attempted diplomatic means to persuade the Iranians to see reason. However, after almost a year with no progress in the negotiations, President Carter was convinced by his cabinet to organize a military strike in Iran to free the hostages, using the newly created Delta Force. Operation Eagle Claw was scheduled to take place on April 24, 1980.

Due to a lack of communication between all of the services involved, and an absence of a clear chain of command, the operation was a failure. Two helicopters were disabled by a sandstorm and another due to electronic failures, then a fourth helicopter collided with a C–130 tanker, destroying both of the vehicles and killing eight service members. The fiasco among the fledgeling special forces community was the catalyst for the creation of SOCOM, or Special Operations Command. This organization would help Delta Force, the Navy SEALS, and the Green Berets become the immeasurably powerful foreign policy tool that they are today.

At Jimmy Carter's last State of the Union speech, our thirty ninth president did something rather out of character, changing the way America would treat the Persian Gulf region forever. For the first three years of Carter's administration, he advocated peace and diplomacy as the primary, if not only, response to challenges and crises around the world. He tried to cut down on the United State's consumption of oil, and symbolically shut off the lights on the White House Christmas Tree to save power. However, due to the overthrow of the once ardently pro-U.S. Iranian regime under his administration, this speech had a more somber tone. At the time, there were still hostages in Tehran, and there were severe fluctuations in the price of oil in the United States due to the dubiousness of the middle eastern oil supply. In the most groundbreaking speech of his career, Carter pledged to use American resources, and military unit if need be, to explicitly protect overseas sources of oil.

This was the first time that The United States had made a foreign policy statement to commit their military to defend natural resources. This decree dramatically shaped how the United States treated the region, and how future presidents would be obliged to act. Both the new foreign policy doctrine and the creation of SOCOM were two of the direct results of the hostage taking at the American embassy in Tehran on November 4th, 1979.

OZARK BEACH DAM 100 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

HON. BILLY LONG

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. LONG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 100th Anniversary of Empire District Electric Company's Ozark Beach Dam.

In early 1911, two businessmen from St. Louis formed the Ozark Power and Water Company and obtained permission from Congress to erect a hydroelectric dam across the White River at Ozark Beach.

Unfortunately, the financial backing the men had secured was lost. At this point, the Ambursen Hydraulic Construction Co. of Boston became involved with the project. They took the plan for the dam to the Henry L. Doherty & Company of New York, a company that had been investing in electric and gas companies in Missouri and Kansas, primarily due to the lead and other mining operations that were springing up in the states. The Doherty Company, which later formed the basis of the Empire District Electric Company through the consolidation of several utilities, began work on the dam.

The dam was completed and the White River was officially closed off on March 20, 1913, creating Lake Taneycomo. Power began flowing on September 1, 1913.

Upon completion, the dam housed five, 25-cycle turbines that were rated at two megawatts each. Energy from the dam was carried north to the Nichol Street Substation in Springfield on steel towers and then west to Joplin. This line carried 66,000 volts of electricity which involved considerable pioneering since transmission facilities were limited in the ''Ozark'' country. The 150-mile line was also considered an engineering achievement, since transformers, insulators, switching, and the general design were just being developed for such a high voltage.

With the exception of some reinforcement work completed on the dam in the early 1920's, the dam remained unchanged until the early 1930's when the original 25-cycle equipment was replaced. The power house interior was redesigned to house new vertical water wheels and four, four-megawatt, 60-cycle generators were installed.

In 1995, the plant received further modernization. Following installation of some control equipment, the plant became remotely operated from the Company's Systems Operation Center in Joplin.

Starting in 2002, each one of the turbines was replaced with stainless steel turbines with additional horsepower improvements. The turbines were replaced one per year with the last one coming online in March 2005.

With the exception of several modernization upgrades, the dam stands much the same as it was when finished in 1913. It provides the Empire District system with 16 megawatts of power and the Taney County area with a beautiful recreational area.

I would like to take this opportunity to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of Empire District Electric Company's Ozark Beach Dam.

HONORING CHARLES MOORE

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable public servant. Mr. Charles Moore. Mr. Moore passed away March 14, 2006 and was married to the former Alfolonia Matthews, the father of 5 children, and grandfather of 3.

Mr. Moore was a native Greenvillian. His entire life has been lived in Greenville except for a brief period when he served in the United States Marine Corps during World War II. After coming home and completing his high school requirements, he realized he had to make a decision. Either he would leave Greenville or stay and make it a better place for all to live. He chose the latter.

His goals and aspirations were achieved by the following: getting involved in voter registration in the 1950's; getting involved with the inception of Delta Ministry in Greenville, in 1966; helping organize the effort to bring Headstart to his community in 1966; helping organize the effort to integrate Greenville Public Schools in 1968; spearheading the organization of Herbert Lee Center where civil rights meetings were held, which still exists; coordinating several Washington County campaigns; recipient of the Harriet Tubman Award, from the Magnolia Bar Association in 1966; and, recipient of the Point of Pride Award March in 1966.

Mr. Moore was a member of the Church of Christ Holiness, past Commander and lifetime member of Veteran of Foreign Wars (VFW), past president of the Greenville Travel Club, retired member of the National Association of Letter Carrier Union (NALC) and the past President of Branch 516 of the NALC. He was also a member of the Secretary of State Dick Molpus Task Force. He filed a discrimination complaint that resulted in Blacks being promoted to managerial positions in the United States Post Office. He was a member of the NAACP since 1946 until his death. He was elected to the City Council, Ward 4 in July 1990 and re-elected for a 4 year term in October 1993. Also, he held the position of vice-mayor of the City of Greenville.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mr. Charles Moore for his dedication to serving others and giving back to the African American community.

REMEMBERING TIANANMEN SQUARE'S MARTYRS FOR FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY

HON. KEITH J. ROTHFUS

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark the twenty-fourth anniversary of the massacre of unarmed civilian protesters in Beijing's Tiananmen Square.

1989 was a momentous year in human history. We saw a new birth of freedom in many nations that had suppressed their people for more than a generation.

That year, we also witnessed the People's Republic of China violently crush those who had the courage to stand up to their government. These protesters came from all walks of life. They were mothers, fathers, sons, and daughters. Many were students. They were united in their thirst for democracy and in their desire for the universal human freedoms of assembly and expression.

They were silenced because they dared to defy their government. However, no government can crush the universal aspiration of people to be free.

These protesters became martyrs in the cause for human rights and their thirst for freedom lives on in those who continue to struggle for human rights and dignity in China and around the world.

We will never forget the heroes of Tiananmen Square.

ANNIVERSARY OF THE 1989 TIANANMEN SQUARE MASSACRE

HON. TIM HUELSKAMP

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. HUELSKAMP. Mr. Speaker, today marks the tragic anniversary of the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre in China. On this day, 24 years ago, the Chinese government harshly cracked down on pro-democracy, freedom-seeking student protesters and murdered hundreds, possibly thousands of peaceful demonstrators. Simply put, these men and women demanded and deserved liberty and died striving for this basic human urge. This is why it is crucial that we rededicate ourselves to defending and protecting the Constitution upon which our great nation was formed. As long as we fight to uphold this inspired document, we protect human liberty; we defend freedom; we give life to people's dreams; we empower hardworking families and individuals. This is a sacred duty we must not take lightly—especially as we remember the brave victims of Tiananmen Square.

HONORING RABBI JUDITH LEWIS & OTTO KUCERA

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, Rabbi Judith S. Lewis became the rabbi of Riverdale Temple in the summer of 2006, after celebrating her 25th year in the rabbinate in 2005. She was part of the first generation of women rabbis, becoming ordained at a time when there were fewer than a dozen women in the Reform rabbinate. She was awarded an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from the Hebrew Union College—Jewish Institute of Religion, where she was ordained in 1980. Her undergraduate degree was in Philosophy, from Oberlin College in Ohio.

Rabbi Lewis was born and raised in Rochester, New York where her extended family participated in every congregation of every denomination. A favorite recollection from childhood is the successive observance of Jewish holidays at each congregation. After services ended at her family's Reform synagogue, they would often go to join her grandparents in their Conservative congregation, and finally join aunts and uncles at the Orthodox synagogue to finish the celebration of the holiday.

Otto Kucera was born and raised in Astoria, Queens, above his family's funeral home. After graduating from American Academy McAllister Institute he joined the family business. Aside from several years in Boston, as a family owner of several independent funeral homes, he has been with Riverside Funeral Chapels and their associates for over 40 years.

The diversity and proximity of the Jewish population in Riverdale is both familiar and welcome to Rabbi Lewis who believes that a Reform congregation has a vital role to play in the ongoing creativity of modern Jewish life. As the oldest Jewish institution in Riverdale, this congregation has a rich and noteworthy heritage of involvement with the community which she looks forward to promoting and sustaining.

Otto and his wife, Isabell, had three children, Peter, Jennifer, and Veronica. Peter is a funeral director in Schenectady, New York. Jenny was a production manager for Penguin Publications after graduating from Rutgers University and married her husband Joel. They live in Massachusetts with their two children.

Rabbi Lewis introduced the Tot Shabbat, adult bnei mitzvah classes, and she and Otto conduct congregational trips to Israel. Her willingness to try new modes of worship and her spirit of experimentation are attracting new young families to the congregation.

Otto and Rabbi Lewis got to know each other outside of their respective professional roles 12 years ago, when introducing their son and daughter to each other. Instead, they married each other four years later.

I offer my congratulations to Rabbi Lewis and Otto for all they have accomplished for the Temple, both individually and together. They are an example of all that can be done when working together.

HONORING FRANK CRUMP, JR.

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a decorous and determined man Mr. Frank Crump, Jr., who has shown what can be done through tenacity, dedication and a desire to serve others.

Mr. Crump, a resident of Vicksburg, Mississippi was born on May 26, 1927 to Frank Crump, Sr. and Angeline Turner Crump.

In 1941 Mr. Crump enlisted in the United States Navy where he attended Ships Cook School and Airplane Mechanics. After being honorably discharged from the United States Navy, he graduated from Alcorn State University in 1951 with a Bachelors Degree and in 1978 he earned a Masters Degree from the University of Southern Mississippi.

During the summer of 1964; Mr. Crump was instrumental in coordinating the Vicksburg Citizens' Appeal, a newspaper aimed at publicizing news events involving black's worldwide and social events happening in the black community. He also played an intricate role in Freedom Summer, whose mission was to register black voters and initiate a slow sunset for Jim Crow laws.

Mr. Crump has held various positions in education. He was: the Building Grounds Clerk and Mathematics and Physical Science Instructor at Alcorn from 1950–1952; from 1952–1958, while in Chicago, Illinois he worked as postal clerk, aircraft assembler for Ford Motor Company, bus driver and instructor for the Chicago Transit Authority. After returning to Mississippi he worked as a Mathematics Instructor at Mixon Junior High, Utica, MS; Mathematics, Drafting and Physics Instructor at Temple High School, Vicksburg, MS; and Mathematics Instructor at Tallulah High School, Tallulah, LA. Also Mr. Crump served in several capacities at Hinds Community College, Utica Campus including Mathematics Instructor, Vocational-Technical Administrator and Dean of Vocational-Technical Education.

Mr. Frank Crump, Jr. is the recipient of several accolades including: Recognition for Military Services during the Period of the Cold War; Instructor of the Year and Christian Leadership Award through Music to name a few. Similarly, he is a member of several social and civic organizations.

Mr. Crump is married to Orelia Peterson Crump and to that union they had four children.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mr. Frank Crump, Jr. for his unwavering dedication to education and social equality.

RECOGNIZING THE ORGANIZATION OF KOREAN AMERICAN WOMEN ON THE OCCASION OF ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Organization of Korean American Women (OKAW) on the occasion of its 50th anniversary.

Nearly 1 out of every 4 of the residents in the 11th Congressional District of Virginia is foreign born. Asian Americans comprise the largest ethnic group, including a large Korean American community. The transition to a new home country can be daunting; adapting to different customs and learning a new language are only two of the challenges that face every immigrant. OKAW has distinguished itself

through its services to assist those adapting to their new home so they can become full participants in our American society.

OKAW also supports The House of Hope and the Artemis Shelter which serve the needs of the most vulnerable immigrants—women who are struggling with poverty or are victims of domestic violence, abuse, or persecution. These organizations provide women with financial support, shelter, and legal assistance so they can gain the skills necessary to overcome language and cultural barriers and become self-sufficient.

These efforts are truly commendable, but as activists and humanitarians, OKAW has again expanded its reach to address another need—support of our wounded warriors and their families. The upcoming anniversary gala will include a special tribute to veterans of the Korean War. In addition, OKAW will make a special contribution of $20,000 to two organizations which provide assistance to our wounded warriors and their families.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the Organization of Korean American Women on the occasion of its 50th anniversary and in commending OKAW for its decades of service to our community.

RECOGNIZING THE BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA MEDAL OF MERIT AWARD TO CHRISTOPHER MAYHEW

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the heroic acts of Christopher Mayhew who was recently awarded the Medal of Merit by the Boy Scouts of America for providing first aid to the victim of a car accident. A Medal of Merit, is presented for an outstanding act of service of a rare or exceptional nature that reflects an uncommon degree of concern for the well being of others. Since it was instituted in 1946, just 6,229 have been awarded.

Christopher, who joined Troop 1131 in 2008, is currently a Life Scout and has been a Patrol Leader and an Assistant Senior Patrol Leader. He was 15 at the time of the incident.

On July 27, 2012, Christopher and his family were returning from Virginia Beach. Suddenly, a car in front of them swerved and went off the road, flipping over as it went down an embankment. Christopher immediately directed his mother to stop the car to help.

He jumped out of the car, asked his mother to dial 911 and ran down the hill to the wrecked car, which was barely visible from the road. The car had landed on its wheels and the driver and passenger were able to get out of the car. The driver had numerous cuts from broken glass, some deep, on his arms, face and head. Christopher ran back to his own car and retrieved the only first aid supplies he could find—paper napkins and a bottle of water—and ran back down to help clean up the driver's cuts and apply pressure to one deep cut to slow the bleeding. He continued to provide first aid until the rescue squad arrived. For his actions Christopher received a letter of Commendation from the Chief of the James City County Volunteer Fire Department, whose EMT unit was the one on the scene.

The Boy Scouts' Medal of Merit awards nomination process is a long and involved one. To determine if an action is worthy of special recognition, witnesses to the event must first contact the Unit Leader. The Unit Leader gathers facts and documentation to make a determination if the event warrants further attention. If so, he submits the information to an Area Council.

If the Awards Committee at the Area Council decides the nomination is worthy of consideration, it conducts face–to–face interviews of the Scout and witnesses. The Awards Committee may then submit the nomination to the National Scout Headquarters in Irving, Texas. The nomination is then reviewed at the National Council of the Boy Scouts of America, and if approved, the National Court of Honor makes the award. In 2012, just 126 Scouts earned the Medal of Merit.

Christopher's heroic actions exemplify the Scout motto: Be Prepared! The founder of the Boy Scouts in England, Robert Baden–Powell explained that to Be Prepared ''means you are always in a state of readiness in mind and body to do your duty.'' Christopher was prepared through his training to provide first aid, but technical skills alone could not have prepared him for the situation he confronted that day. More importantly, he was prepared mentally to react immediately and had the fortitude to risk his own safety in order to help others.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in recognizing Christopher Mayhew of Fairfax County, Virginia, for the remarkable bravery and skill he demonstrated in this harrowing situation and in congratulating him on this well–deserved honor. I also thank the Boy Scouts for continuing to teach young men to be prepared to serve others in need.

SMALL BUSINESS TAX EQUITY ACT OF 2013

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, since California first passed a medical marijuana initiative in 1996, 19 states and the District of Columbia have approved medical marijuana programs. In addition, voters in Washington and Colorado recently voted to allow the sale and use of recreational marijuana. Yet any business associated with these expanding industries faces a legal gray area between federal and state law. While states have expanded legal economic opportunities, federal drug, tax, and banking laws continue to limit these emerging small businesses.

It's long been recognized that marijuana has therapeutic values. People use it to deal with chronic paralyzing pain, the nausea associated with chemotherapy, the symptoms of Multiple Sclerosis and more and more of our veterans now use it to help with PTSD. At least one million people now receive legal medical marijuana treatment.

What, however, remains illegal is for the thousands of legitimate businesses providing a legal product to treat their business expenses like every other business and deduct them from their operating income.

Decades ago, a drug dealer claimed the cost of his yacht and weapons as legitimate business expenses. Congress responded by making expenses associated with a Schedule I or Schedule II controlled substance ineligible for deduction. This change has since ensnared the thousands of legitimate marijuana businesses operating in compliance with state law, who are now paying a federal income tax double or triple the effective tax rate of most businesses. These businesses cannot claim the work opportunity tax credit if they hire a veteran. They cannot depreciate their American-made irrigation equipment. The deductions that any other business could take for the construction or operating costs of their facilities are unavailable to them.

This is why I am introducing the Small Business Tax Equity Act, bipartisan legislation to allow marijuana businesses operating in compliance with state law to deduct their legitimate expenses. It will only have effect in states which have legalized aspects of marijuana use.

Legal businesses in America are taxed on their income, not on their gross revenues, except for the otherwise legal operation of marijuana businesses. Our failure to update federal tax law forces these businesses to discontinue an important service, or to drive it underground, which encourages evasion. This bill conforms federal tax law to state law and ensures the fair treatment of a legal industry.

RECOGNIZING THE FIRST ANNUAL GREATER SPRINGFIELD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE ''ABOVE AND BEYOND'' AWARDS

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize an outstanding group of first responders and public safety officers who have been honored with the First Annual Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce ''Above and Beyond'' Award.

These awards honor Fairfax County Firefighters, EMTs, Police Officers and Sheriff's Deputies who give back to the Greater Springfield area by providing service to the community outside their normal duties.

In addition to the immeasurable contributions made every day in the line of duty, these men and women have distinguished themselves through their extraordinary efforts in the community, which largely go unseen. They willingly volunteer their personal time, energies, and support to activities for the betterment of our children, our neighborhoods, and our quality of life.

It is my honor to enter the names of the following individuals into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD:

Captain II Fred Brandell, who is assigned to Company 5 at the Franconia Fire Station, has led his crew to become one the nation's top fundraising fire stations for the Muscular Dystrophy Association and also in serving at the Central Virginia Burn Camp, where young people who have suffered a traumatic burn can have fun like every other kid.

Detective Monica Meeks of the Fairfax County Police Department's Franconia Station is passionate about victims' rights and the prevention of domestic violence. She lectures at

community events and organizes seminars at schools. She works closely with area abuse shelters whether she is on or off duty. During the holidays she arranges for truckloads of toys, supplies, and gift cards to be donated and transported to children's shelters throughout the county.

Private First Class Omecihuatl Mann serves in the Fairfax County Sheriff's Office's Records/Transportation Section. She also devotes hundreds of hours to the Fairfax County Public Library system as a weekly library volunteer and board member of the Friends of the Library. She has collected and distributed more than 10,000 books in the past four years. Beneficiaries include the Fairfax County Adult Detention Center and NOVACO, which provides transitional housing and services for mothers and children, who have fled situations of domestic abuse.

Private First Class James L. Thur is assigned to the Fairfax County Police Department's West Springfield District Station. Besides his own patrol officer responsibilities, he ensures his coworkers are well equipped and able to complete their duties. PFC Thur will drop what he is doing to assist with any cruiser issue, ranging from a burned out light bulb to a dropped transmission. In his spare time, he serves as a volunteer fire fighter.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating and thanking each of the brave men and women who go above and beyond the call of duty to serve our community. They are part of The Bravest and The Finest who collectively ensure that Fairfax County remains one of the nation's safest communities in which to live, work, and raise a family. Moreover, the volunteer service exhibited by these honorees is one of the hallmarks of what has made Fairfax the thriving community it is today, and because of their efforts, that tradition will carry on for future generations.

RECOGNIZING THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF ST. MATTHEW'S LUTHERAN DAY SCHOOL

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the St. Matthew's Lutheran Day School of Prince William County, Virginia, on the occasion of its 40th anniversary, and to recognize the school for its continued dedication to the education of our youngest citizens.

St. Matthew's Lutheran Day School was established after Senior Pastor David Bohannon went door-to-door in 1971 to gauge the interest of the surrounding community for early childhood education opportunities. The day school, open to any member of the surrounding community, began in 1973 with 88 children. Now there are 250 students enrolled at St. Matthew's. The school has served several thousand children from Prince William County since 1973. St. Matthew's students graduate well-prepared for elementary, secondary, and post secondary education.

I commend the administration at St. Matthew's for using a comprehensive curriculum that focuses not only on academic learning but also on imaginative play and hands-on learning. Activities at the Day School include group time, circle time, center time, snack time, playground time, and story time. These activities encourage a positive and interactive learning environment for the three- to five-year-olds served by the St. Matthew's Lutheran Day School.

St. Matthew's began its 40th anniversary celebration entitled ''Early Years Are Learning Years,'' in April with an Open House, during which the school displayed student artwork. The school will continue to celebrate through the end of the year by hosting literacy concerts throughout the community.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the St. Matthew's Lutheran Day School for serving families and children in our community for 40 years. I extend my personal appreciation to the staff of the Day School for their commitment to empowering our children by providing access to a high quality early childhood education.

CONGRATULATING BOLD CITY CHAPTER OF LINKS INCORPORATED'S 20 YEARS OF SERVICE

HON. CORRINE BROWN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Bold City Chapter of Links Incorporated's 20 years of service to the Jacksonville community.

As the representative of Florida's 5th Congressional District, I have followed this chapter's community service efforts for many years and am most impressed with their commitment to the City.

On behalf of my Congressional office and my constituents of Florida's 5th congressional district, I thank the Bold City Chapter of Links for all they do to make Jacksonville a better place. Indeed, our city is extremely fortunate for the service and leadership the Bold City Chapter provided through the chapter's programs over the past 20 years.

This chapter is a symbol of hope to numerous citizens that have been served through the chapter's many accomplishments, most recently the Links Leadership Academy. I am certain that this Academy will serve to develop our next generation of leaders, the future leaders of our City.

COMMEMORATING THE DEDICATION OF SOUTH COUNTY MIDDLE SCHOOL AND TO RECOGNIZE PRINCIPAL MARSHA MANNING FOR BEING NAMED THE 2013 NANCY F. SPRAGUE OUTSTANDING FIRST-YEAR PRINCIPAL

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the dedication of the newest Fairfax County public middle school, South County Middle School in Lorton, Virginia, and to congratulate Principal Marsha Manning on being named the 2013 Nancy F. Sprague Outstanding First-Year Principal for Fairfax County Public Schools.

Responsible for the education of more than 180,000 students, the Fairfax County Public School System (FCPS) is the largest public school system in Commonwealth of Virginia and the 11th largest school system in the nation. With a budget that exceeds $2.4 billion, the school system offers a full range of educational opportunities to each of the students who attend one of its 196 schools. Nearly 75% of local high school graduates go on to some form of post-secondary education, and in 2012, Newsweek magazine designated all eligible FCPS high schools as the most challenging public schools in the nation. In 2012, the average SAT score in Fairfax County was 1654; 140 points higher than the Virginia average and nearly 200 points higher than the national average.

These extraordinary accomplishments at the high school level would not be possible without an exceptional middle school system that thoroughly educates and prepares students in grades 7–8 for the challenges of high school. It is my honor to recognize our newest middle school, South County Middle School in Lorton, Virginia.

Following the transfer of the former Lorton prison property to Fairfax County in 2002, the explosive growth in the southern end of Fairfax County continued to accelerate. In 2005, the doors to a new secondary school opened to accommodate children in grades 7 through 12. The new school, South County Secondary School, had a maximum student capacity of 2,500 and immediately exceeded capacity, requiring a number of temporary trailer classrooms to be installed on site.

In 2008, as Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, I was honored to work with the community and my fellow Supervisors to set aside $10 million from the county budget expressly for the purpose of constructing a new middle school that was desperately needed to alleviate overcrowding and provide an environment conducive to education and our children's well being. South County Middle School opened its doors in September 2012, and on June 5, 2013, we celebrate the formal dedication of this institution.

Principal Marsha Manning has led the school during this inaugural year with professionalism, dedication, and devotion to the children in her charge. Ms. Manning, a 23-year veteran of FCPS, began her career in 1990 teaching English at Washington Irving Middle School. She then went on to serve as an assistant principal at Mark Twain Middle School, and in 2005, helped to open South County Secondary School where she served as a subschool principal. It was a natural fit for her to take the reins as principal of the new South County Middle School, where she, the school, and the students have thrived. She has been described by her colleagues as a person who displays ''hard work, integrity, and exceptional passion'' and is credited with instilling pride and a sense of identity to the school and students—a task that usually takes years. I congratulate Principal Manning on being named the 2013 Nancy F. Sprague Outstanding First-Year Principal, a recognition very well deserved.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in commending the faculty, staff, administration, parents, and entire South County

Community for their unwavering dedication to the students of South County Middle School. The commitment displayed to the education, safety, and well being of our children is instrumental to their health and future success, and it is one of the primary reasons that Fairfax County is often rated as one of the best counties in the country in which to live, work, and raise a family. I thank each of you for your tireless efforts, and wish years of success to the Mustangs of South County Middle School.

COMMENDING LOCAL 2013 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES FOR THEIR DECISION TO ENLIST IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE AND OUR COMMUNITY SALUTES OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA FOR HOSTING THE THIRD ANNUAL HIGH SCHOOL ENLISTEE RECOGNITION CEREMONY

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize 8 graduating seniors in my community for their record of academic and athletic accomplishment and for their admirable decision to enlist in the United States Air Force. I also express my appreciation to Our Community Salutes of Northern Virginia for providing this opportunity to be among the first to say to each of these young men and women: ''Thank you.''

I have had the privilege of working with Our Community Salutes of Northern Virginia since its inception in 2011. That year my office was contacted by one of the founding parents who upon learning that her son and other students at his school who had decided to enlist would not receive any recognition during graduation, joined with other parents to organize the first enlistee recognition ceremony of its kind in the region. The first ceremony recognized 9 students. In two short years that number has grown to 101.

With graduation season upon us, thousands of young people in my community, and millions across the nation, are preparing for the next chapter in their lives. Some will pursue higher education or vocational training, others will seek to enter the workforce immediately, and many will answer the call to serve their community and their country.

The United States of America has distinguished itself from other nations through the entrepreneurship and spirit of our people, the knowledge that we can achieve any goal if we set our minds to it, our inherent compassion and generosity, our fierce patriotism, and the extraordinary sacrifices and dedication to country exhibited by the members of our Armed Forces. The young men and women from our community who will be enlisting possess an abundance of each of these qualities. I join with their families and friends in congratulating and commending the following graduates on their enlistment in the United States Air Force:

Robert Avara; Lance Clark; Megan Cumpas; Megan Drechsler; Julie Jones; Luis Martinez Ramirez; Bradley Mauldin; Anthony Morgan; Kyle Pelar.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in applauding the courage and dedication of these graduates and in assuring them and their families that the full support and resources of the U.S. Congress and the American people will be behind them on every step of their journey in defense of our nation's freedom.

STATEMENT ON H.R. 1919, THE SAFEGUARDING AMERICA'S PHARMACEUTICALS ACT

HON. WILLIAM L. OWENS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express concerns about a provision in H.R. 1919, the Safeguarding America's Pharmaceuticals Act of 2013, raised by a large employer in my district. The legislation passed by voice vote, and like many of my colleagues I support the overall goal and intent of this legislation: namely, to protect more Americans from counterfeit pharmaceuticals. However, I have reservations about certain sections of the bill due to concerns raised in my Congressional District that I hope might be addressed if further action is taken in the Senate.

Section 8 of H.R. 1919 includes language addressing the use of electronic labeling for pharmaceutical drugs, meaning that important consumer information related to usage, side effects and other issues may in some instances be available only over the internet unless a customer specifically asks for drug-related instructions in writing. I remain concerned about the possible effect these provisions will have on seniors and in communities that are underserved or un-served entirely by broadband internet. This legislation if passed in its current form may create a scenario where a customer who shops at a pharmacy that uses the electronic system will be left without critical drug information unless they think to ask for it themselves. For many, this will leave them in the dark about important, potentially life-saving information.

As a representative for a rural community where broadband internet is unavailable in many areas, this presents a real concern. I ask that my colleagues on both sides of the aisle and in both houses of Congress reconsider these provisions should the Senate take action on the bill.

COMMENDING LOCAL 2013 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES FOR THEIR DECISION TO ENLIST IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY AND OUR COMMUNITY SALUTES OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA FOR HOSTING THE THIRD ANNUAL HIGH SCHOOL ENLISTEE RECOGNITION CEREMONY

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize 28 graduating seniors in my community for their record of academic and athletic accomplishment and for their admirable decision to enlist in the United States Army. I also express my appreciation to Our Community Salutes of Northern Virginia for providing this opportunity to be among the first to say to each of these young men and women: ''Thank you.''

I have had the privilege of working with Our Community Salutes of Northern Virginia since its inception in 2011. That year my office was contacted by one of the founding parents who upon learning that her son and other students at his school who had decided to enlist would not receive any recognition during graduation, joined with other parents to organize the first enlistee recognition ceremony of its kind in the region. The first ceremony recognized 9 students. In two short years that number has grown to 101.

With graduation season upon us, thousands of young people in my community, and millions across the nation, are preparing for the next chapter in their lives. Some will pursue higher education or vocational training, others will seek to enter the workforce immediately, and many will answer the call to serve their community and their country.

The United States of America has distinguished itself from other nations through the entrepreneurship and spirit of our people, the knowledge that we can achieve any goal if we set our minds to it, our inherent compassion and generosity, our fierce patriotism, and the extraordinary sacrifices and dedication to country exhibited by the members of our Armed Forces. The young men and women from our community who will be enlisting possess an abundance of each of these qualities. I join with their families and friends in congratulating and commending the following graduates on their enlistment in the United States Army:

Eric Alvarez Carranza; Damaris Aparicio; Niel Barasona; James Blersch; Gabriel Brey; Mayerling Castillo; Tyler Cirillo; Andrew Coreas; Stacy Darpoh; Tyler Davis; Timothy Driscoll; Austin Dunn; Zachary Francis; Jocelyn Garcia Gonzalez; David Gillespie; Lewis Green; Icavetta Gregory; Enmanuel Hernandez; Nathaniel Holmes; Rezaul Khan; Joseline Lopez Martinez; Yenis Lopez-Arias; Oscar Luna Rivera; Francis Nguyen; Dino Ponce; Cody Smith; Mathias Sobarzo; Danny Ventura

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in applauding the courage and dedication of these graduates and in assuring them and their families that the full support and resources of the U.S. Congress and the American people will be behind them on every step of their journey in defense of our nation's freedom.

COMMENDING LOCAL 2013 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES FOR THEIR DECISION TO ENLIST IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY AND OUR COMMUNITY SALUTES OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA FOR HOSTING THE THIRD ANNUAL HIGH SCHOOL ENLISTEE RECOGNITION CEREMONY

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize 13 graduating seniors in my community

for their record of academic and athletic accomplishment and for their admirable decision to enlist in the United States Navy. I also express my appreciation to Our Community Salutes of Northern Virginia for providing this opportunity to be among the first to say to each of these young men and women: "Thank you."

I have had the privilege of working with Our Community Salutes of Northern Virginia since its inception in 2011. That year my office was contacted by one of the founding parents who upon learning that her son and other students at his school who had decided to enlist would not receive any recognition during graduation, joined with other parents to organize the first enlistee recognition ceremony of its kind in the region. The first ceremony recognized 9 students. In two short years that number has grown to 101.

With graduation season upon us, thousands of young people in my community, and millions across the nation, are preparing for the next chapter in their lives. Some will pursue higher education or vocational training, others will seek to enter the workforce immediately, and many will answer the call to serve their community and their country.

The United States of America has distinguished itself from other nations through the entrepreneurship and spirit of our people, the knowledge that we can achieve any goal if we set our minds to it, our inherent compassion and generosity, our fierce patriotism, and the extraordinary sacrifices and dedication to country exhibited by the members of our Armed Forces. The young men and women from our community who will be enlisting possess an abundance of each of these qualities. I join with their families and friends in congratulating and commending the following graduates on their enlistment in the United States Navy:

Jessica Blas Salazar; Kafahni Crowell; Tyler Deleeuw; Bryan Ignacio; Jinsuk Lee; Jay Lee; Hasmeed Machuca; Ashley Sager; Timothy Skubal; Daniel Vanderplas; Evertt Vasquez; Christina Vithaya; Lars Yates

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in applauding the courage and dedication of these graduates and in assuring them and their families that the full support and resources of the U.S. Congress and the American people will be behind them on every step of their journey in defense our nation's freedom.

IN TRIBUTE TO THE FALLEN HOUSTON FIREFIGHTERS

HON. AL GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I would like to express my deepest sympathies for the Houston firefighters who perished or were injured due to the blaze at the Southwest Inn and Bhojan Restaurant, which took place on May 31, 2013. Upon visiting the site of the horrific tragedy, I was saddened to see the remains of a building consumed by a pernicious inferno. I was also able to appreciate the courage and spirit necessary to be a firefighter at the scene on that fateful day.

To date, while "in the line of duty," four firefighters have died and many others have been hospitalized due to their injuries in what has become the most lethal day in the history of the Houston Fire Department (HFD). Among the deceased were: an eleven-year-veteran of the HFD, Captain Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) Matthew Renaud, and a recent graduate from the fire academy, Anne Sullivan, along with Firefighter EMT Robert Garner and Engineer Operator EMT Robert Bebee.

Our firefighters selflessly risked their lives and limbs to save as many civilians as possible. While tragedies such as these shock and emotionally devastate us, we should remember the extraordinary heroism displayed by our firefighters: They rushed to the scene battling flames on both the roof as well as within the motel and restaurant, thereby preventing a single civilian fatality.

Mr. Speaker, since the fire, I have visited with firefighters from the HFD at the Houston Professional Firefighters Association Union Hall. I was truly inspired by their dedication to each other and devotion to public safety. As a result, I now have a greater appreciation for what is for me a chilling expression "in the line of duty."

COMMENDING LOCAL 2013 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES FOR THEIR DECISION TO ENLIST IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS AND OUR COMMUNITY SALUTES OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA FOR HOSTING THE THIRD ANNUAL HIGH SCHOOL ENLISTEE RECOGNITION CEREMONY

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize 51 graduating seniors in my community for their record of academic and athletic accomplishment and for their admirable decision to enlist in the United States Marine Corps. I also express my appreciation to Our Community Salutes of Northern Virginia for providing this opportunity to be among the first to say to each of these young men and women: "Thank you."

I have had the privilege of working with Our Community Salutes of Northern Virginia since its inception in 2011. That year my office was contacted by one of the founding parents who upon learning that her son and other students at his school who had decided to enlist would not receive any recognition during graduation, joined with other parents to organize the first enlistee recognition ceremony of its kind in the region. The first ceremony recognized 9 students. In two short years that number has grown to 101.

With graduation season upon us, thousands of young people in my community, and millions across the nation, are preparing for the next chapter in their lives. Some will pursue higher education or vocational training, others will seek to enter the workforce immediately, and many will answer the call to serve their community and their country.

The United States of America has distinguished itself from other nations through the entrepreneurship and spirit of our people, the knowledge that we can achieve any goal if we set our minds to it, our inherent compassion and generosity, our fierce patriotism, and the extraordinary sacrifices and dedication to country exhibited by the members of our Armed Forces. The young men and women from our community who will be enlisting possess an abundance of each of these qualities. I join with their families and friends in congratulating and commending the following graduates on their enlistment in the United States Marine Corps:

Kamo Abdulrahman; Jonathan Aguilar; Kevin Amaya; Jackson Burgess; Benjamin Burruss; Daniel Chhieu; Emily Collins; Latrice Coram; Larry Davis; James Degrafft; Kevin Diaz; Ludvigsen Diaz; Aaron Elassal; Jacob Facas; Mario Fajardo; Azad Fattahi; Ismael Ferman; Christopher Foerter; Spencer Gonsalvez; Veronica Gonzalez; Matthew Gregory; Jeffrey Hong; Nicholas Hunter; Mateusz Laguna; Gwendetta Mabry; Isaac Martinez; Tyreek Minter; Robert Mondloch; Yenifer Montalvo; Matthew Moser; Jason Pabontancara; Omar Paniagua; Tae Park; Erik Ploompuu; Herson Reyes; Jorge Ribera-Pedraza; Carlos Rodriguez; Leonel Santos; Romeo Sarmiento, III; Bradley Sherman; Simranjit Singh; Joshua Skym; David Smith; Kyle Stears; Brittany Thompson; Christian Valencia; Leopoldo Valiente Marquez; Joseph Stephen Vanwijngaarden; Deyvis Vasquez Soto; William Vo; Jaime Zamora

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in applauding the courage and dedication of these graduates and in assuring them and their families that the full support and resources of the U.S. Congress and the American people will be behind them on every step of their journey in defense our nation's freedom.

Daily Digest

HIGHLIGHTS

Senate agreed to S. Res. 161, relative to the death of Senator Frank R. Lautenberg, of New Jersey.

The House passed H.R. 2216, Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2014.

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S3915–S3964

Measures Introduced: Ten bills and five resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 1087–1096, S. Res. 159–162, and S. Con. Res. 18. **Pages S3954–55**

Measures Passed:

Providing for the Use of the Catafalque: Senate agreed to S. Con. Res. 18, providing for the use of the catafalque situated in the Exhibition Hall of the Capitol Visitor Center in connection with memorial services to be conducted in the United States Senate Chamber for the Honorable Frank R. Lautenberg, late a Senator from the State of New Jersey. **Page S3926**

Relative to the Memorial Observances of Senator Frank R. Lautenberg: Senate agreed to S. Res. 160, relative to the memorial observances of the Honorable Frank R. Lautenberg, late a Senator from the State of New Jersey. **Pages S3926–27**

Relative to the Death of Senator Frank R. Lautenberg: Senate agreed to S. Res. 161, relative to the death of the Honorable Frank R. Lautenberg, Senator from the State of New Jersey. **Page S3963**

National Pediatric Stroke Awareness Month: Senate agreed to S. Res. 162, expressing the sense of the Senate with respect to childhood stroke and recognizing May 2013 as "National Pediatric Stroke Awareness Month". **Page S3963**

Measures Considered:

Farm Bill—Agreement: Senate continued consideration of S. 954, to reauthorize agricultural programs through 2018, taking action on the following amendment proposed thereto: **Pages S3923–26 S3927–49**

Pending:

Stabenow (for Leahy) Amendment No. 998, to establish a pilot program for gigabit Internet projects in rural areas. **Page S3923**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the bill, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, and pursuant to the unanimous-consent agreement of Tuesday, June 4, 2013, a vote on cloture will occur at 10 a.m., on Thursday, June 6, 2013. **Page S3949**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that Senate resume consideration of the bill at approximately 9:00 a.m., on Thursday, June 6, 2013, and that notwithstanding the Senate not being in session, the filing deadline for first-degree amendments to the bill be 1:00 p.m., on Wednesday, June 5, 2013, and the filing deadline for second-degree amendments to the bill be at 9:45 a.m., on Thursday, June 6, 2013. **Page S3949**

Student Loans—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the motion to proceed to consideration of S. 1003, to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to reset interest rates for new student loans. **Page S3949**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the motion to proceed to consideration of the bill, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, and pursuant to the unanimous-consent agreement of Tuesday, June 4, 2013, a vote on cloture will occur upon conclusion of the vote on the motion to invoke cloture on S. 954, and notwithstanding cloture having been invoked, if invoked. **Page S3949**

Student Loan Affordability Act—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the motion to proceed to consideration of S. 953, to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to extend the reduced interest rate for undergraduate Federal Direct Stafford Loans, to modify required distribution rules for pension plans, to

limit earnings stripping by expatriated entities, to provide for modifications related to the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund. **Page S3949**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the motion to proceed to consideration of the bill, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, and pursuant to the unanimous-consent agreement of Tuesday, June 4, 2013, a vote on cloture will occur upon conclusion of the vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to consideration of S. 1003, and notwithstanding cloture having been invoked, if invoked. **Page S3949**

Cloture Motions—Agreement: A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that at 10:00 a.m., on Thursday, June 6, 2013, Senate vote on the motion to invoke cloture on S. 954, to reauthorize agricultural programs through 2018; that upon the conclusion of that vote, and notwithstanding cloture having been invoked, if invoked, Senate vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to consideration of S. 1003, to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to reset interest rates for new student loans; that upon conclusion of the vote, and notwithstanding cloture having been invoked, if invoked, Senate vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to consideration of S. 953, to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to extend the reduced interest rate for undergraduate Federal Direct Stafford Loans, to modify required distribution rules for pension plans, to limit earnings stripping by expatriated entities, to provide for modifications related to the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund; that upon conclusion of the vote, and notwithstanding cloture having been invoked, if invoked, Senate resume consideration of S. 954, to reauthorize agricultural programs through 2018, post-cloture, if cloture was invoked on the bill; that upon disposition of S. 954, to reauthorize agricultural programs through 2018, if cloture had been invoked on one of the motions to proceed, Senate then resume that motion to proceed, post-cloture; if cloture was invoked on both motions to proceed, Senate consider the motions, post-cloture in the order in which cloture was invoked; and if the motion to proceed to S. 1003, to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to reset interest rates for new student loans, is agreed to, and notwithstanding cloture having been invoked on the other motion to proceed to S. 953, to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to extend the reduced interest rate for undergraduate Federal Direct Stafford Loans, to modify required distribution rules for pension plans, to limit earnings stripping by expatriated entities, to provide for modifications related to the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund, Senate resume the following motion to proceed, post-cloture, upon disposition of S. 1003, to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to reset interest rates for new student loans. **Page S3949**

Awarding the Medal of Honor to James Megellas—Referral Agreement: A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs be discharged from further consideration of S. 993, to authorize and request the President to award the Medal of Honor to James Megellas, formerly of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, and currently of Colleyville, Texas, for acts of valor on January 28, 1945, during the Battle of the Bulge in World War II, and the bill then be referred to the Committee on Armed Services. **Page S3952**

Nominations Received: Senate received the following nominations:

Patricia Ann Millett, of Virginia, to be United States Circuit Judge for the District of Columbia Circuit.

Cornelia T. L. Pillard, of the District of Columbia, to be United States Circuit Judge for the District of Columbia Circuit.

Robert Leon Wilkins, of the District of Columbia, to be United States Circuit Judge for the District of Columbia Circuit.

1 Army nomination in the rank of general.

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Messages from the House: **Page S3952**

Measures Referred: **Page S3952**

Executive Communications: **Pages S3952–54**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S3955–57**

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Amendments Submitted: **Pages S3962–63**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Page S3963**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 10 a.m. and adjourned, as a further mark of respect to the memory of the late Senator Frank R. Lautenberg, in accordance with S. Res. 161, at 7:14 p.m., until 9 a.m. on Thursday, June 6, 2013. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S3963.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

FEDERAL HOUSING ADMINISTRATION

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and

Related Agencies concluded a hearing to examine an overview of the Federal Housing Administration, after receiving testimony from Carol Galante, Assistant Secretary for Housing, and Federal Housing Administration Commissioner, and David A. Montoya, Inspector General, Office of Inspector General, both of the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

SEXUAL ASSAULTS IN THE MILITARY

Committee on Armed Services: Committee concluded a hearing to examine pending legislation regarding sexual assaults in the military, after receiving testimony from General Martin E. Dempsey, USA, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Raymond T. Odierno, USA, Chief of Staff United States Army, Admiral Jonathan Greenert, USN, Chief of Naval Operations, General James F. Amos, USMC, Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Mark A. Welsh III, USAF, Chief of Staff, United States Air Force, Lieutenant General Dana K. Chipman, JAGC, USA, Judge Advocate General of the United States Army, Vice Admiral Nanette M. DeRenzi, JAGC, USN, Judge Advocate General of the United States Navy, Lieutenant General Richard C. Harding, JAGC, USAF, Judge Advocate General of the United States Air Force, Major General Vaughn A. Ary, USMC, Staff Judge Advocate to the Commandant of the Marine Corps, Brigadier General Richard C. Gross, USA, Legal Counsel to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Colonel Donna W. Martin, USA, Commander, 202nd Military Police Group, Captain Stephen J. Coughlin, USN, Commodore, Destroyer Squadron TWO, Colonel Tracy W. King, USMC, Commander, Combat Logistics Regiment 15, and Colonel Jeannie M. Leavitt, USAF, Commander, 4th Fighter Wing, all of the Department of Defense; Admiral Robert J. Papp, Commandant, and Rear Admiral Frederick J. Kenney, Jr., Judge Advocate General, both of the United States Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security; Nancy Parrish, Protect Our Defenders, Burlingame, California; Anu Bhagwati, Service Women's Action Network, New York, New York; Major General John D. Altenburg, Jr., USA (Ret.), American Bar Association Standing Committee on Armed Forces Law, Springfield, Virginia; and Colonel Lawrence J. Morris, USA (Ret.), Catholic University, Washington, D.C.

IRAN SANCTIONS

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine Iran sanctions, focusing on ensuring robust enforcement, and assessing next steps, after receiving testimony from David S. Cohen, Under Secretary of the Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence; Wendy Sherman, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs; and Eric L. Hirschhorn, Under Secretary of Commerce for Industry and Security.

FISCAL AND ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF AUSTERITY

Committee on the Budget: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the fiscal and economic effects of austerity, after receiving testimony from Lawrence H. Summers, Harvard University, Boston, Massachusetts; and Simon Johnson, Massachusetts Institute of Technology Sloan School of Management, and Salim Furth, The Heritage Foundation Center for Data Analysis, both of Washington, D.C.

STATE OF WIRELESS COMMUNICATIONS

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Subcommittee on Communications, Technology, and the Internet concluded a hearing to examine the state of wireless communications, after receiving testimony from Steve Largent, CTIA The Wireless Association, Steven K. Berry, Competitive Carriers Association, George S. Ford, Phoenix Center for Advanced Legal and Economic Public Policy Studies, and Delara Derakhshani, Consumers Union, all of Washington, D.C.; Doug Webster, Cisco System, Inc., Austin, Texas; and Thomas F. Nagel, Comcast Corporation, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Committee concluded a hearing to examine wildland fire management, after receiving testimony from Thomas Tidwell, Chief, Forest Service, Department of Agriculture; Kim Thorsen, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Public Safety, Resource Protection, and Emergency Services; Doug Decker, Oregon Department of Forestry State Forester, Salem, on behalf of the National Association of State Foresters; Christopher Topik, The Nature Conservancy, Arlington, Virginia; Lynn Jungwirth, The Watershed Center, Hayfork, California; and Diane Vosick, Northern Arizona University Ecological Restoration Institute, Flagstaff.

INTELLIGENCE

Select Committee on Intelligence: Committee held closed hearings on intelligence matters, receiving testimony from officials of the intelligence community.

Committee recessed subject to the call.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 27 public bills, H.R. 2231–2257; and 4 resolutions, H. Res. 245–248 were introduced. **Pages H3094–95**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages H3096–97**

Report Filed: A report was filed today as follows:

Report on the Suballocation of Budget Allocations for Fiscal Year 2014 (H. Rept. 113–96). **Page H3094**

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Brooks (AL) to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. **Page H3019**

Recess: The House recessed at 10:49 a.m. and reconvened at 12 noon. **Page H3024**

Chaplain: The prayer was offered by the guest chaplain, Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami, Kauai Aadheenam Hindu Monastery, Kauai, Hawaii. **Page H3024**

Suspension: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measure:

Ruth Moore Act of 2013: H.R. 671, amended, to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the disability compensation evaluation procedure of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for veterans with mental health conditions related to military sexual trauma. **Pages H3029–32**

Agreed to amend the title so as to read: ''To amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress an annual report on claims for disabilities incurred or aggravated by military sexual trauma, and for other purposes.''. **Page H3032**

Providing for the Use of the Catafalque Situated in the Exhibition Hall of the Capitol Visitor Center: The House agreed to take from the Speaker's table and agree to S. Con. Res. 18, providing for the use of the catafalque situated in the Exhibition Hall of the Capitol Visitor Center in connection with memorial services to be conducted in the United States Senate Chamber for the Honorable Frank R. Lautenberg, late a Senator from the State of New Jersey. **Page H3044**

Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2014: The House passed H.R. 2216, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, by a yea-and-nay vote of 421 yeas to 4 nays, Roll No. 193. **Pages H3032–42, H3044–88**

Rejected the Enyart motion to recommit the bill to the Committee on Appropriations with instructions to report the same back to the House forthwith with an amendment, by a recorded vote of 198 ayes to 227 noes, Roll No. 192. **Pages H3086–88**

Agreed to:

Griffith (VA) amendment (No. 1 printed in the Congressional Record of June 3, 2013) that reduces the amount per unit that may be spent annually for the maintenance and repair of any general or flag officer quarters without 30 days prior notification from $35,000 to $15,000; **Pages H3061–63**

Blumenauer amendment that redirects $35,000,000 in funding within the Medical and Prosthetic Research account for Post-traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injury research; **Pages H3063–64**

Gallego amendment that redirects $5,000,000 in funding within the General Operating Expenses account of the Veterans Benefits Administration for veterans employment; **Pages H3064–65**

Culberson amendment that requires that none of the funds be obligated or expended for the development of an electronic health record except for a health record as set forth in the Joint Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2013–2015 of the Department of Veterans Affairs and Department of Defense, Joint Executive Council; **Pages H3067–72**

Kingston amendment that prohibits funds from being used to pay more than 75 percent of the salary of any senior Department of Veterans Affairs official during the period beginning on July 1, 2014, and ending on September 30, 2014, unless as of July 1, 2014, the percentage of disability compensation claims that are more than 125 days old is less than or equal to 40 percent; **Pages H3074–75**

Kuster amendment that prohibits funds from being used for any conference for which the cost to the agency exceeds $500,000; **Page H3075**

Rothfus amendment (No. 3 printed in the Congressional Record of June 3, 2013) that prohibits funds from being used by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to pay a performance award under section 5384 of title 5, United States Code; **Pages H3075–77**

Grayson amendment that prohibits funds from being used to enter into a contract with any offeror or any of its principals if that offeror has, within a three-year period preceding this offer, been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against it for commission of a fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a public contract or subcontract; violation of Federal or State antitrust statutes relating to

the submission of offers; or commission of embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, tax evasion, violating Federal criminal tax laws, or receiving stolen property; **Page H3077**

Runyan amendment that prohibits funds from being used to propose, plan for, or execute a new or additional Base Realignment and Closure round; **Pages H3077–78**

Murphy (FL) amendment that prohibits funds from being used to award any contract in an amount greater than $1,000,000 for which the Department of Defense did not receive at least two offers; **Page H3078**

Terry amendment that prohibits funds from being used to increase the funding for any major medical facility project which is under construction as of the date of the enactment of this Act, above the amount specified in the prospectus described in subsection (b) of such section 8104 and the detailed estimate of cost described in paragraph (1) of such subsection; **Page H3078**

Engel amendment that prohibits funds from being used to lease or purchase new light duty vehicles for any executive fleet, or for an agency's fleet inventory, except in accordance with Presidential Memorandum—Federal Fleet Performance, dated May 24, 2011; **Pages H3078–79**

Tipton amendment that increases funding, by offset, for Information Technology Systems by $10,000,000 to increase disability claims processing; **Page H3079**

Murphy (FL) amendment that prohibits funds from being used to maintain or improve Department of Defense real property with a zero percent utilization rate according to the Department's real property inventory database, except in the case of maintenance of an historic property or maintenance to prevent a negative environmental impact; and **Pages H3079–80**

Amodei amendment that redirects $44,000,000 in funding within the General Operating Expenses account of the Veterans Benefits Administration for increased staffing in certain regional Veterans Affairs offices (by a recorded vote of 248 ayes to 172 noes, Roll No. 189). **Pages H3065–67, H3084**

Rejected:

Broun (GA) amendment that sought to eliminate funding for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Security Investment Program and apply the $199,700,000 in savings to the spending reduction account; **Pages H3058–61**

Broun (GA) amendment that sought to eliminate funding for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization for the planning, design, and construction of a new headquarters and apply the $38,513,000 in savings to the spending reduction account (by a recorded vote of 151 ayes to 269 noes, Roll No. 188); **Pages H3057–58, H3083–84**

Moran amendment that sought to strike section 413, which prohibits funds from being used to construct, renovate, or expand any facility in the United States to house any individual detained at United States Naval Station, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, for the purposes of detention or imprisonment (by a recorded vote of 170 ayes to 254 noes, Roll No. 190); and **Pages H3072–73, H3084–85**

King (IA) amendment that sought to prohibit funds from being used to implement, administer, or enforce the prevailing wage requirements in subchapter IV of chapter 31 of title 40, United States Code (commonly referred to as the Davis-Bacon Act) (by a recorded vote of 192 ayes to 231 noes, Roll No. 191). **Pages H3080–83, H3085–86**

Withdrawn:

Farr amendment (No. 2 printed in the Congressional Record of June 3, 2013) that was offered and subsequently withdrawn that would have prohibited funds from being used to implement Veterans Health Administration directive 2011–004 regarding "Access to clinical programs for veterans participating in State-approved marijuana programs". **Pages H3073–74**

H. Res. 243, the rule providing for consideration of the bills (H.R. 2216) and (H.R. 2217) was agreed to by a yea-and-nay vote of 227 yeas to 194 nays, Roll No. 187, after the previous question was ordered by a yea-and-nay vote of 229 yeas to 193 nays, Roll No. 186. **Pages H3032–42**

Senate Messages: Message received from the Senate by the Clerk and subsequently presented to the House today and a message received from the Senate today appear on pages H3044.

Quorum Calls—Votes: Three yea-and-nay votes and five recorded votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H3041, H3042, H3083–84, H3084, H3085, H3085–86, H3087–88, H3088. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Committee Meetings

REVIEWING THE PRESIDENT'S FISCAL YEAR 2014 BUDGET PROPOSAL FOR THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Committee on Education and the Workforce: Full Committee held a hearing entitled "Reviewing the President's Fiscal Year 2014 Budget Proposal for the U.S.

Department of Health and Human Services''. Testimony was heard from Kathleen Sebelius, Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services.

OUR NATION OF BUILDERS: HOME ECONOMICS

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Commerce, Manufacturing, and Trade held a hearing entitled ''Our Nation of Builders: Home Economics''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

CONTINUING REPRESSION BY THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations held a hearing entitled ''Continuing Repression by the Vietnamese Government''. Testimony was heard from Joseph Y. Yun, Acting Assistant Secretary, Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Department of State; and Daniel B. Baer, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, Department of State.

EMERGENCY MGMT 2.0

Committee on Homeland Security: Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications held a hearing entitled ''Emergency MGMT 2.0: How #SocialMedia & New Tech are Transforming Preparedness, Response, & Recovery #Disasters #Part1 #Privatesector''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS DISMISSING ELECTION CONTESTS; AND MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on House Administration: Full Committee held a meeting on Committee Resolution dismissing the election contest in CA–43; Committee Resolution dismissing the election contest in TN–9; markup on H.R. 94, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to Prohibit the Use of Public Funds for Political Party Conventions; H.R. 95, to Reduce Federal Spending and the Deficit by Terminating Taxpayer Financing of Presidential Election Campaigns and Party Conventions; and H.R. 1994, the ''Election Assistance Commission Termination Act''. The Committee agreed to the resolutions regarding the election contests in CA–43 and TN–9. The following measures were ordered reported, without amendment: H.R. 94, H.R. 95, and H.R. 1994.

LEGISLATIVE MEASURE

Committee on House Administration: Full Committee held a hearing on H.R. 2115, the ''Voter Registration Efficiency Act''. Testimony was heard from Ken Bennett, Secretary of State, State of Arizona; Chris Thomas, Director of Elections, State of Michigan; and a public witness.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE'S HANDLING OF KNOWN OR SUSPECTED TERRORISTS ADMITTED INTO THE FEDERAL WITNESS SECURITY PROGRAM

Committee on the Judiciary: Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security and Investigations held a hearing entitled ''Department of Justice's Handling of Known or Suspected Terrorists Admitted into the Federal Witness Security Program''. Testimony was heard from Michael Horowitz, Inspector General, Department of Justice; David Harlow, Assistant Director, U.S. Marshals Service, Department of Justice; and Paul O'Brien, Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Criminal Division, Department of Justice.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on the Judiciary: Subcommittee on the Constitution and Civil Justice held a markup on H.R. 1797, the ''District of Columbia Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act''; and H.R. 1944, the ''Private Property Rights Protection Act of 2013''. H.R. 1797 was forwarded, as amended. H.R. 1944 was forwarded, without amendment.

DEFINING SPECIES CONSERVATION SUCCESS: TRIBAL, STATE AND LOCAL STEWARDSHIP VS. FEDERAL COURTROOM BATTLES AND SUE-AND-SETTLE PRACTICES

Committee on Natural Resources: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''Defining Species Conservation Success: Tribal, State and Local Stewardship vs. Federal Courtroom Battles and Sue-and-Settle Practices''. Testimony was heard from Tyler Powell, Deputy Secretary of the Environment, State of Oklahoma; Steve Ferrell, Policy Advisor, Wildlife and Endangered Species, Wyoming Game and Fish Department; and Tom Jankovsky, Garfield County Commissioner, State of Colorado; and public witnesses.

STEM EDUCATION

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''STEM Education: The Administration's Proposed Re-Organization''. Testimony was heard from John Holdren, Director Office of Science and Technology Policy, Executive Office of the President; Joan Ferrini-Mundy, Assistant Director, Directorate for Education and Human Resources, National Science Foundation; and Leland D. Melvin, Associate Administrator for Education, National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

VETERANS' PRIVATE INFORMATION

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a hearing entitled "How Secure is Veterans' Private Information?". Testimony was heard from the following Department of Veterans Affairs officials: Linda A. Halliday, Assistant Inspector General for Audits and Evaluations, Office of Inspector General; Michael Bowman, Director, Information Technology and Security Audits Division, Office of Inspector General; Stephen W. Warren, Acting Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology; and a public witness.

ORGANIZATIONS TARGETED BY INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE

Committee on Ways and Means: Full Committee held a hearing with Organizations Targeted by Internal Revenue Service for Their Personal Beliefs. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

NEW PUBLIC LAWS

(For last listing of Public Laws, see DAILY DIGEST, *p. D508)*

H.R. 258, to amend title 18, United States Code, with respect to fraudulent representations about having received military decorations or medals. Signed on June 3, 2013. (Public Law 113–12)

S. 982, to prohibit the Corps of Engineers from taking certain actions to establish a restricted area prohibiting public access to waters downstream of a dam. Signed on June 3, 2013. (Public Law 113–13)

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR WEDNESDAY, JUNE 5, 2013

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

No meetings/hearings scheduled.

House

Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, FDA, and Related Agencies, markup on Agriculture, Rural Development, FDA, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill for FY 2014, 9:30 a.m., 2362–A Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Defense, markup on Defense Appropriations Bill for FY 2014, 11 a.m., H–140, Capitol. This is a closed hearing.

Committee on Armed Services, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 1960, the "National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014", 10 a.m., 2118 Rayburn.

Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Health, hearing entitled "Reforming SGR: Prioritizing Quality in a Modernized Physician Payment System", 10 a.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Environment and the Economy, markup on "Coal Residuals Reuse and Management Act of 2013"; the "Reducing Excessive Deadline Obligations Act of 2013"; the "Federal Facility Accountability Act of 2013"; and the "Federal and State Partnership for Environmental Protection Act of 2013", 4 p.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Committee on Financial Services, Subcommittee on Capital Markets and Government Sponsored Enterprises, hearing entitled "Examining the Market Power and Impact of Proxy Advisory Firms", 10 a.m., 2128 Rayburn.

Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa, hearing entitled "A Crisis Mismanaged: Obama's Failed Syria Policy", 10 a.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, hearing entitled "U.S. Relations with Vietnam", 2 p.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Regulatory Reform, Commercial and Antitrust Law, hearing on H.R. 1493, the "Sunshine for Regulatory Decrees and Settlements Act of 2013", 10 a.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Full Committee, markup on H.R. 1947, the "Federal Agriculture Reform and Risk Management Act of 2013", 2 p.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Subcommittee on Federal Workforce, U.S. Postal Service and the Census, hearing entitled "OPM's Revolving Fund: A Cycle of Government Waste?", 9:30 a.m., 2247 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Energy and Policy, Health Care and Entitlements, hearing entitled "Up Against the Blend Wall: Examining EPA's Role in the Renewable Fuel Standard", 10 a.m., 2154 Rayburn.

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Subcommittee on Research; and Subcommittee on Technology, hearing entitled "Federal Efforts to Reduce the Impacts of Windstorms", 10 a.m., 2318 Rayburn.

Committee on Small Business, Full Committee, hearing entitled "Reducing Duplication and Promoting Efficiency at The SBA: The Inspector General's View", 1 p.m., 2360 Rayburn.

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment, hearing entitled "A Review of the United States Army Corps of Engineers Chief's Reports", 10 a.m., 2167 Rayburn.

Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Social Security, hearing on How Social Security Protects the Benefits of Those Who Cannot Protect Themselves, 10 a.m., B–318 Rayburn.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

9 a.m., Thursday, June 6

Senate Chamber

Program for Thursday: Senate will resume consideration of S. 954, the Farm bill. At 10 a.m., Senate will vote on the motion to invoke cloture on S. 954, followed by a vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to consideration of S. 1003, Student Loans, and a vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to consideration of S. 953, Student Loan Affordability Act.

The filing deadline for first-degree amendments to S. 954, the Farm bill is at 1 p.m., on Wednesday, June 5, 2013, and the filing deadline for second-degree amendments to the bill is at 9:45 a.m., on Thursday, June 6, 2013.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

10 a.m., Wednesday, June 5

House Chamber

Program for Wednesday: Begin consideration of H.R. 2217—Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act, 2014 (Subject to a Rule).

Extensions of Remarks, as inserted in this issue

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