vote on a pure disclosure provision anytime this calendar year. In that spirit, I have an alternative.

I ask unanimous consent that all remaining time on the motion to proceed to H.R. 3204, the compounding bill, be yielded back; that the Senate proceed to H.R. 3204; that the bill be read a third time and passed right now and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; I further ask that the Senate then proceed to the consideration of S. 1197, the Defense authorization bill; that my amendment which is at the desk be called up and that a Democratic side-by-side amendment be in order to be called up; that notwithstanding rule XXII, those amendments remain in order and that both amendments be subject to a 60-vote affirmative threshold for adoption.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. Reserving the right to object, the Senator from Louisiana has been holding up things in the Senate for weeks. What he has now requested of the Senate is that every other Senator take second fiddle to him. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. VITTER. Madam President, again, I am open to any reasonable path forward that would produce this one, simple, straightforward vote on pure disclosure, information that I think should clearly be public information. So as a third alternative, I ask unanimous consent that the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. 1629 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; I further ask consent that there be 60 minutes of debate divided in the usual form; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the bill be read a third time and the Senate proceed to a vote on passage of the bill; and that a 60-affirmative vote threshold be required for passage.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. REID. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. VITTER. Madam President, reclaiming the floor and wrapping up, I continue to find that very unfortunate and, frankly, really unreasonable. We, each of us as Members of the Senate, made an important election about how to handle this ObamaCare exemption issue. Some folks have classified a good part of their staff as not official staff—magic wand, somehow. They work here, they get a paycheck, they are on government property, they do official business, but they are not official staff. This is a charade, and at a minimum I think the public should know how each office and each Member is handling that situation. That is the only thing my disclosure proposals, which I have been asking for a vote on, would require. That is the only thing I am asking for a vote on this calendar year. I think offering these three unanimous consent routes to that is very reasonable and would also expedite consideration of many other matters, including the bill on the Senate floor right now. It is unfortunate that that reasonable route forward was not chosen and blocked in multiple ways, but I will certainly continue pursuing this important objective.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. WARREN). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The Senator from Connecticut is recognized.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Senator BLUMENTHAL pertaining to the introduction of S. 1714 are printed in today's RECORD under ''Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.'')

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

## HEALTH CARE REFORM

Mr. NELSON. Madam President, I think the President did the right thing today. The whole idea of health insurance reform was to get people into health insurance that do not have health insurance. The idea was not for those who had insurance, unless they wanted to improve that insurance or they did not have the insurance they needed.

The idea, certainly, was not that if they had insurance they were satisfied with, that they were not going to be able to keep that. That is what the President had said. That is what the President reaffirmed today. I think the President did the right thing.

Insurance is a very complicated subject. In all that we are hearing about in the setting up of those different health insurance exchanges in each of the States, you are creating a new pool of people, both young and old, both sick and healthy, and you spread that health risk over a larger number of people. If it is a typical population of young and old, not just all old, and not just all sick, the more you can spread that health risk over an average population, the more you can bring down the cost of that health insurance. That is basically the principle of health insurance.

So, unless we can get the young and healthy people who need health insurance—by the way, they may think they are invincible, but they may also have an accident. Instead of them ending up in the emergency room at the time that they have the accident, or when they really get sick and they do not have health insurance, and they do not pay—guess who pays. All the rest of us pay in our health insurance premiums.

So the whole idea is to reform this by getting as many of the 45 million people that do not have health insurance into the health insurance system. That is what these 50 State insurance exchanges are designed to be. So the issue today did not directly affect that, but for the fact that if those who have health insurance, and they say that they are happy with it, but they are really not because it is a subpar health insurance policy—I call them dog policies. If they realize they have a dog policy, then they see what they can really get in the exchange in a comprehensive policy that will cover maternity and all of the other things, on top of the guarantees that an insurance company cannot cancel them, on top of the guarantees that if they had a preexisting condition, their insurance is not only not going to be canceled but that they will, in fact, be able to get insurance.

What I have described—guess what it is. It is the Affordable Care Act. It is the ability to have health insurance when a big part of our population—45 million people in this country—has not been able to have it.

The narrow little issue addressed today by the President was that some people have health insurance that they like. They ought to be able to keep it. Some people who have health insurance don't realize how much better it could be with much more comprehensive coverage. Once they see the difference, those folks who the President said today can keep those subpar policies are going to want to go into the health insurance exchange. That is what this is all about.

Unfortunately, this has become all balled up in politics. It is a complicated subject. Most of us don't even want to think about it. We want to leave it to our insurance agent, someone who is skilled.

Now, as we are making our own individual choices, which we are able to do by going on a Web site and designing a policy for ourselves, we are empowering ourselves to have the health care coverage we want. In the meantime, we have a lot of turmoil, a lot of strife, and a lot of politics.

Give it some time. And this is a former insurance commissioner speaking, and I know most of the tricks the insurance companies will pull. But give it some time. Down the road, with the insurance companies I have seen, as I have talked with the CEOs, they want to cooperate because they realize this is good for their business as well because now they will be able to offer so

many more policies to people who, in fact, do need that health coverage. Give it a little time. It is going to work. There will be a few twists and turns. We are not going to get rid of the politics because it is the nature of the beast these day, but give it a little time and it will all work out.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware is recognized.

(The remarks of Mr. COONS pertaining to the introduction of S. 1709 are located in today's RECORD under ''Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.'')

Mr. COONS. I yield the floor.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COONS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for such time as I may consume.

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

## MILITARY JUSTICE IMPROVEMENT ACT

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about an amendment I plan to introduce to the National Defense Authorization Act next week. This is an amendment known as the bipartisan Military Justice Improvement Act.

I thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for their leadership in this effort. As we have said from the beginning, this is not a Democrat nor a Republican idea. It is good, plain old common sense. It is the right idea necessary to protect the men and women who fight for our country and our values in uniform every single day. So I thank the broad coalition of supporters for their leadership—former generals and commanders, veterans, advocates—who are making their voices heard so that they know these horrible crimes aren't going to happen to someone else; that the justice system we build is one of which they are deserving. They are urging Congress to use its responsibility of oversight and accountability, to use their role head-on, by finally creating an independent military justice system which gives survivors of these horrific acts of violence a fair shot at justice—a system free of inherent bias and conflicts of interest that currently exists within the chain of command, that will enable survivors to come forward and to hold their perpetrators accountable.

The strong and growing bipartisan coalition of Senators, survivors, veterans, retired generals, commanding officers, and advocates is showing this is not only free from partisan politics and ideology, but it is a promilitary piece of legislation which actually strengthens our military readiness, strengthens unit cohesion, and strengthens good order and discipline.

This week began with all Americans saluting our veterans, honoring our solemn commitment to the brave men and women who join the Armed Services for all the right reasons: To serve our country, defend all that we hold sacred, and make America's military the best the world has ever known.

These men and women put everything on the line to defend our country. Each time they are called to serve, they answer that call. But too often these brave men and women find themselves in the fight of their lives—not on some foreign battlefield in another place against an unknown enemy but within their own ranks, on this soil, among men and women with whom they serve. They are victims of horrific acts of sexual violence.

Sexual assault in the military is not new, but it has been allowed to fester. It has been festering in the shadows for far too long, and when our commanders for the past 25 years have said there is zero tolerance for sexual assault in the military, what they really meant was there is zero accountability—and that is the problem we are facing—going back to the Secretary of Defense under Dick Cheney in 1992. He uttered those words: ''Zero accountability.'' Every Secretary of Defense has since that time said ''zero accountability.'' But our system of justice in the military is broken, and our commanders are the ones who hold all the cards about whether these cases can go forward.

There are those who argue that moving these decisions to independent military prosecutors will somehow undermine good order and discipline. If you had 26,000 cases of unwanted sexual contact, rape, and assault in the military last year alone, you do not have good order and discipline.

Our allies with whom we fight side by side in every conflict—Israel, the UK, Canada, Australia, the Netherlands, Germany—have all already made this decision to say serious crimes deserve the objective review of trained military prosecutors. They should not rest in the chain of command. They should not rest where bias is possible, where conflicts of interest are rampant. It should not be there because the scales of justice are blind. That is the whole point of the American justice system: Blind justice. Not tipped for the defendant, not tipped for the victim. Blind, objective.

We have a Defense Department panel that is actually taking up evidence on this issue. They had a hearing. They asked members from our allies to come and testify about when they made this change. When you took this decision-making out of the chain of command, what happened? Did you have a falling off of good order and discipline? They testified no. The director-general of the Australian Defense Force Legal Service, Paul Cronin, said that Australia had faced the same set of arguments from their military leaders in the past.

> It's a bit like when we opened up to gays in the military in the late 1980s. There was a lot of concern at the time that there would be issues, but not surprisingly there haven't been any.

There are those who argue that somehow our commanders would no longer be accountable. Let me be clear about this. There is nothing in this bill that takes commanders off the hook. They are still responsible, solely responsible, for maintaining good order and discipline, for setting the command climate, for saying these rapes are not going to happen on my watch and, if they do, victims can come forward and know they will be protected. They are responsible for making sure there is no retaliation.

But you know what. Last year alone, of those 3,000 brave survivors who did come forward and report what happened to them, 62 percent were retaliated against—62 percent. That means those command climates failed to protect victims telling their commanders I have been raped; I have been sexually assaulted; I have been brutalized, and justice has to be done.

What does retaliation look like? Commanders saying things such as: It is your own fault; you are to blame; you are the problem. If you report this crime, I am going to write you up on drinking or adultery. Do you really want your military career to end?

For so many victims, that is what happened; they are forced out of the military. All they want to do is serve our country, some of our best and brightest. We are losing them because justice is impossible for them.

Some opponents say this reform will cost too much money. One estimate is that if you had enough lawyers to do all this legal work, it might cost you $113 million, $4,000 a victim. That is an absurd argument. Are you really telling me it costs too much to prosecute rapists in the military? Are you really telling me it costs too much to have enough lawyers to take these cases to trial? Are you really telling me it costs too much to have a criminal justice system that honors the men and women who serve in this military? You cannot possibly be saying that. You cannot possibly be saying that.

It is also an argument that makes no sense. Do you know how much it costs our military to have 26,000 sexual assaults, rapes, and unwanted sexual contacts every year in our military? Do you know what that costs? The RAND Corporation actually did an estimate. They said having this kind of rampant sexual assault, rape in our military, cost the military—because they lose so many of these good men and women there have to be new people retrained—$3.6 billion last year alone. That is the cost. That is a cost we should not be willing to pay.

Last argument. Our opponents say that commanders will actually move